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Social Media Marketing: How Social Media Has Impacted the Gender Differences That Exist Amongst Sports Fans, and its Effect of Marketers

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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA HAS IMPACTED THE
GENDER DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST AMONGST SPORTS FANS, AND ITS
EFFECT ON MARKETERS

By

Timothy French, B.S.

A Professional Project submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master in Leadership Studies
with a Specialization in Sports Leadership

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ABSTRACT
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA HAS IMPACTED THE
GENDER DIFFERENCES THAT EXIST AMONGST SPORTS FANS, AND ITS
EFFECT ON MARKETERS

Timothy French, B.S.

Marquette University, 2013

This professional research study accessed the current relationship between season ticket holders of Marquette University men's college basketball team and usage of social media. A survey was created based on a modification of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (or SSIS) as well as the Sport Fandom Questionnaire (or SFQ), and included specific questions related to the individual's demographics, social media usage, and experience attending collegiate basketball games. Despite the fact that females are continuing to have an increasing presence in the vast world of sports, marketers and organizations continue to place a strong focus on the needs, interests, and desires of male sports fans. Additionally, the advancement of social media while beneficial for marketers has created a clouded and convoluted world in which consumers and fans receive thousands of messages on any given day. Thus, it is essential that sports marketers understand the connection that social media has to its fans and consumers, as well as the growing role and presence of females in sport.

Questions that were asked prior to the study were: How has the advancement of social media impacted gender differences that exist between sports fans today? What is the relationship between gender differences that exist amongst sports fans in relation to social media usage, preferences, and trends? Collected data and analysis of the results using a t-test reaffirmed previous findings in regards to consumption of sport, identification with a specific team, and social media usage. Males continue to rank higher in terms of consuming sport and identifying with a particular team, and that a connection does exist between fandom and identification. Females continue to use social media more, but males use it more for sports related purposes. There also appears to be a connection between sports and social media for males and females. Males prefer to consume sports and social media to express their opinions as well as for observational and informational reasons. In comparison, females tend to consume sport, identify with a team, and access social media sites primarily to communicate with friends and family.

There has been a gap between previous research studies on gender differences of sports fans in relation to social media users, thus, findings from this study will be beneficial for marketers and organizations that operate within the sports industry. In particular, findings will have an impact on how these professionals and organizations customize their marketing campaigns and successfully incorporate an integrated social media marketing message and campaign that better reaches their targeted consumer base and fan base.

DEDICATION

Timothy French, B.S.

This professional research project is dedicated in loving memory of my great Aunt Bette, who is still the "person closest to perfect" that I know. Thank you for continuing to watch over me as I strive to achieve all of my personal and professional goals in life. I love you and miss you dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Timothy French, B.S.

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Introduction

Gender differences exist between males and females in many aspects of life. There are biological differences based on sexual reproduction organs. Scientists have found emotional differences based on what area of the brain each gender emphasizes. There are physical differences based on such things as average height. Females are also believed to have a longer life expectancy. Gender differences expand to other aspects of our life as well, from how each gender perceives the other gender's ability to drive a motorized vehicle to how long a typical restroom line is at a concert or sporting event. There are also gender differences in how sports fans consume their favorite sport, identify with their favorite team, and connect with others digitally through the use of social media. For marketers and key decision makers in the sports industry, these differences are playing an important role in consumers' purchasing decisions, their entertainment choices, and what they choose to "like" on Facebook, retweet on Twitter, or discuss via social media.

The world of sports is continuing to increase its presence and influence in the daily lives of billions of people around the globe, from planning out what to watch on television during the week to planning a weekend around attending a sporting event. Additionally, social media is continuing to exert its presence and influence in the daily lives of billions of people around the globe, from when and how often Twitter is checked to how often friends on Facebook are updated with a new status. For marketers in the sports industry, social media is continuing to play an important and essential role in connecting with consumers, interacting with fans, and

maximizing an organization's or brand's awareness through digital means online. Nevertheless, consumption of sport, identification with sport, and sport fandom continues to vary amongst sports fans based on gender differences. There are also significant gender differences that exist in relation to social media preferences, trends, and usage patterns. Thus, it appears that the role of sports marketers is becoming more complicated and more demanding in order to satisfy the needs of a specific segment of consumers, sports fans, and social media users.

As sports continues to become more commercialized and globalized in conjunction with the continual rapid advancement of social media, it is essential that marketers working within the sports industry understand the benefits, challenges, and risks associated with using social media. In order to implement social media effectively into an integrated marketing campaign, marketers need to understand differences that exist between sports fans as well as social media users. This study aims to further expand previous studies on gender differences that exist between sports fans and social media users. Furthermore, this study aims to provide a new perspective and insight into the relationship that exists between sports fans and social media. More specifically, the focus of this study is on gender differences between social media users and season ticket holders to the Marquette University men's basketball team located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The results and findings contained in this study will reveal how marketers are better able to target a specific segment of consumers in their marketing campaigns based on gender differences of male and female sports fans and social media users. Ultimately, this study identifies an existing gap between research studies on sports fans in relation to social media, and aims to eliminate that gap by identifying a new and important area of research for marketers, key decision makers, and organizations within the sports industry.

Literature Review

Research on the topic of gender differences that exist amongst sports fans began in the

late 1980's and gained additional emphasis during the 1990's. However, it gradually began to

decline in the early part of this millennium, which was around the same time that social media

began to take a stronghold in the everyday lives of millions of Americans with sites such as

MySpace and Facebook. Over time, this has gradually grown to dozens of sites that include

amongst others Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Google+, and LinkedIn. As a result, the majority of

research on how sports fans consume sport, how they identify with their team, and why they are

motivated to consume sport was mostly conducted prior to the emergence of social media. The

nature of sports fandom is very complex, and the rapid and continual advancement of social

media has only complicated matters more for marketers due to the various avenues of

engagement and interaction that exist for consumers and sports fans online. This literature review

addresses gender differences researchers found to exist amongst sports fans in addition to gender

differences that exist between social media users in terms of trends, preferences, and usage

patterns.

<u>*Gender Differences between Sports Fans*</u>

Consumption of Sports

The first theme to discuss is gender differences that exist between sports fans is the

consumption of sport, which includes one's motivation to consume sports as well as attending a

sporting event. Millions of people in our society today view sports and athletics as one of the

primary forms of leisure activity. More people on the globe are choosing to watch, read, and

listen to sports today than ever before, which is a direct result of the commercialization and

globalization of sport. Every sport is now readily available to be consumed at a moment's notice

whether it is through social media, the Internet, television, the radio, or purchasing a ticket to

attend a game or contest. Furthermore, consumption and interest in female sports are continuing

to increase. As a result of both these factors, more females are choosing to consume sport today

and make it a part of their lives than ever before. This opens the door of opportunity in how

marketers and organizations can connect with the female fan base in their marketing and social

media messages, and maximize on this still relatively untapped market.

Motives to Consume and Consumption Patterns

According to James & Ridinger (2002), a significant increase of sport consumption has

occurred in the female segment of sports fans, and in particular with female fans over the age of

35. This significantly alters the consumption patterns of female sports fans as well as how

marketers cater their messages to reach all consumers and sports fans. In order to gain a better

understanding of why this trend has occurred, it is important to research what motivates female

fans to consume sport in comparison to what motivates male fans. In looking at some studies on

what motivates sports fandom (Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999), males reported

being motivated more by eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, and aesthetics. By

comparison, females reported being motivated more by family. The importance of social

inclusion and family are a significant motivating factor for females to become sports fans and

identify with sports. Furthermore, males were found to have economic and group affiliation

motives that were significantly different from females in the study conducted by Wann,

Schrader, & Wilson (1999), which were not found in the Wann (1995) study. Thus, it appears

that motivations to consume sport can change over a period of time based on transformations to the sports landscape.

A number of other studies (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000; Ridinger & Funk, 2006; Wann, 1999) have also found that social networks and strong social ties that one gains through the consumption of sport are an important motivational factor for why females become sports fans. This includes amongst other things attending sporting events, cheering at sporting events, and watching games with friends and family. These factors are significantly different from the motives of males in which the highest factors rate by these fans are current or past participation in sports in addition to engaging in other forms of more traditional sports behavior such as watching sports on television, reading articles and blogs, or discussing topics with friends. Another study by Robinson & Trail (2005) found significant gender differences in the motives between males and females to consume sport, with the most notable being those of achievement, aesthetics, knowledge, empathy, and family. Male fans rated achievement, aesthetics, and knowledge significantly higher than female fans in addition to being more empathetic toward their team if they lost or played poorly. However, males rated family as an important motive for consuming the sport of basketball higher than females, which is contrary to most other research studies on this topic. Social interaction was also not an important motivational factor for either male or female fans in consuming sport, which is also inconsistent with most other previous studies.

Nevertheless, some researchers have not found any significant gender differences between male and female sports fan in regards to being motivated to consume sport. In looking specifically at men and women's collegiate basketball, James and Ridinger (2002) found that there were no significant differences in the motives rated highest by both male and female fans.

These motives were action in the game, escape from one's daily routine, and drama in the game.

These researchers used the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) for data collection

and analysis, which is a tool that is known to accurately and reliably measure nine motives of

sport consumption by fans. Another study conducted by McDonald, Milne, and Hong (2002)

highlighted that gender similarities also exist between sports fans based on Maslow's hierarchy

of needs, which are physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. Furthermore, this

study found that motivational factors continue to be the most important determinant of sport

consumption behavior by fans and consumers. The four motivations these researchers

highlighted in sport spectatorship among males and females are the needs of mental well-being,

social, basic sport, and personal. In regards to these four motivations, they highlighted that

"while many activities outside sport can, and do, fulfill mental well-being, social, and personal

needs, sport is a unique and valuable outlet for needs which often go unfulfilled" (McDonald,

Milne, & Hong, p. 109). Thus, both males and females are motivated to obtain certain

fundamental human needs that can only be obtained through sport, which is the reason why both

choose to consume sport.

Furthermore, the research findings of Sargent, Zillmann, & Weaver (1998) found that the

type of sport enjoyed by male and female sports fans differ significantly, and as a result may

affect their motives for sport consumption. This was the also the focus of another study

conducted by Ko, Park, & Claussen (2008), which looked at the motivation to consume and

participate in action sports such as snowboarding, skateboarding, and BMX biking. It was found

that social facilitation was consistently found as a link between consumption and motivation,

however, contrary to previous studies, this link was found only in males. Thus, it appears that

socialization may be a more important motivational factor for males participating and consuming

action sports than it is for males participating and consuming other types of sports. One reason

for this may be because action sports such as snowboarding and skateboarding involve

individuals competing against one another rather than participation in team competition. As a

result, participants, competitors, and spectators may feel the need to socialize more than they

normally would. Other factors in this study found that males rated risk-taking, aesthetics,

affiliation, and competition as motivational factors significantly higher than females. The factor

of risk-taking is an important one to consider when looking at other forms of sports consumption,

such as betting or gambling.

Consuming sport takes a variety of forms, from participation to spectating. One aspect of

spectating in sport is that of sports betting or gambling, which can be as harmless as participating

in a work NCAA March Madness Tournament bracket to as harmful as betting one's life savings.

Studies such as that conducted by LaBrie, LaPlante, Nelson, Shaffer, Stanton & Wechsler (2007)

have indicated that male sports fans and male student-athletes are much more likely to bet on a

sporting event in comparison to female sports fans and female student-athletes. Based on the

South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), it appears that male student-athletes exhibit a higher

prevalence of gambling problems (12%) in comparison to female student-athletes (0%),

according to this same study. The SOGS is the measuring tool most used by researchers to gain

insight into the typical risky-behavior and gambling habits of an individual, and is the most

trusted resource available for statistics on gambling or risky-behavior. As for the gambling habits

of all college students, a study conducted by Derevensky, Gupta, Huang, Jacobs, Paskus (2007)

found that males tend to gamble more than females, as approximately 1 in 4 men gamble

compared to 1 in 20 women. Gambling or betting on sports can cause a variety of problems for

an individual, but a study conducted by Loubier & Weiss (2008) found that problematic and

pathological gambling among college students is more closely associated with males in

comparison to females. This is heavily based on the fact that males are more likely to exhibit

risk-seeking and risk-taking behavior such as alcohol abuse, illicit drug use, and risky sexual

behavior in comparison to females. Thus, risk-taking behavior and sports betting is another

motivational factor for individuals to consume sport, and is much more prevalent amongst the

male population of sports fans and student-athletes in comparison to the female population.

In addition to gender differences that exist in regards to the type of sport being consumed,

this is also true for how sport is consumed. While the most traditional form of consumption is

through the medium of television viewing, gender differences also exist in how sports fans are

motivated to play and consume video games. Video games are continuing to exert a significant

amount of influence on the lives of consumers and sports fans. According to the Huffington

Post's article on the top selling video games of 2012, three of the top ones were sports-related in

FIFA 2013, NBA 2K13, and NFL Madden 2013. A number of studies (Griffiths & Hunt, 1993;

Wood, Griffiths, Chappell, & Davies, 2004; Kim & Ross, 2006) point out that males prefer

sports video games in which the user is able to imitate or play the sport in real life. Females, on

the other hand, prefer to play video games that are cartoon-style or fantasy, which are non-sports

video games. More importantly, these studies also found that the consumption of sports video

gaming (or SVG) is similar to the general consumption of sports. Researchers also believe the

virtual environment offers a unique sports experience for consumers that will reflect similar

motives to participate in sports as well as become an active spectator of sports. Some researchers

believe that sports video gaming is more purposeful and active than the use of traditional media

(Kim & Ross, 2006). Thus, video games, and in particular sports video games, can significantly

impact the role of marketers in the sports industry.

In terms of actual consumption, studies have found that males spend significantly more time in comparison to females discussing sports, watching sports, and have an overall greater interest in sports in terms of acquiring new knowledge and information on sports (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, and Jacquemotte, 2000; Gantz & Wenner, 1991). It was also found in a study conducted by Gantz & Wenner (1991) that males watch a significantly higher amount of different sporting events as well as types of sporting events on television in comparison to females. In particular, a study done by Sargent, Zillman, & Weaver (1998) found that males tend to watch sports that are more masculine and combative such as football and boxing, while females prefer to watch more feminine or stylistic sports such as figure skating and gymnastics. Another study by McDonald, Milne, and Hong (2002) suggests that different sports offer different aspects that satisfy the needs for different fans, which marketers need to emphasize in their marketing messages and campaigns.

Attendance

Another important aspect of sport consumption is that of attendance, which is ultimately one of the biggest reasons why professional sports, organizations, teams, leagues, stadiums, and the like exist. As of 2005, Americans spent approximately $11 billion as a result of attending sporting events, thus highlighting the importance that is placed on fan attendance in terms of revenue generated and its financial impact on sports organizations. Despite the popular opinion and studies that have found males are bigger sports fans than females, a study conducted by Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End & Jacquemotte (2000) actually found that males and females spent an equal amount of time attending sporting events. This may be surprising for some since many of the marketing campaigns tend to be geared towards male sports fans and the male consumer. In

focusing specifically on the impact of promotional efforts, Hansen & Gauthier (1993) found that

female sports fans also purchase more merchandise than men. This finding is consistent with

more recent evidence from *Nielsen's 2012 report on Emerging Markets, Emerging*

Opportunities, which found that females make up 80% of the world's purchase decisions.

Nevertheless, there are studies that contradict both of these findings. A study on attendance at

sporting events in Australia by John Hall and Barry O'Mahony (2006) found that males attended

33.3% more sporting events every year in comparison to females. Furthermore, a study by Davis,

Heath, and Karg (2010) found a poor conversion rate of female fans that were also season ticket

holders. Their findings also showed significant differences between male and female season-

ticket holders in motives for purchasing season tickets, level of satisfaction, what drives

satisfaction, loyalty, and consumption.

Similarly to studies on reasons for consuming sport, research has been conducted on

specific motives of fans to attend a sporting event. A number of studies (Hansen & Gauthier,

1993; Davis, Heath, & Karg, 2010) found that females place a significantly higher importance on

customer service and club administration. In comparison, males place a higher emphasis on the

team's on-field performance and the team's facilities. These findings reaffirm the findings of

previous studies that female fans are strongly motivated by the social interaction in sport.

However, another study by John Hall and Barry O'Mahony (2006) found that the most important

motives to attend a sporting event were similar for both males and females. These factors are

entertainment, "back room issues" (such as parking, seating, and stadium accessibility), and

social considerations. Nevertheless, significant gender differences were found to exist in that

females preferred back room issues, "front room issues" (such as enjoyment and experiential

aspects), and social factors as being more important to the overall experience. On the other hand,

male fans found emotional arousal and being a "true fan" to be significantly more important

factors than females.

In addition to the overall consumption of sport, a study by Hall & O'Mahony (2006)

found that the type of sporting event is an important factor in determining attendance. Males will

prefer attending more masculine sporting events such as football, baseball, and hockey, while

females will prefer to attend more feminine sporting events such as ice skating, gymnastics, and

swimming. This particular finding coincides with other previous studies on motivating factors

for consuming sport and what type of sport male fans choose to consume in comparison to

female fans. Furthermore, a number of studies (Gantz & Wenner, 1995; Schurr, Ruble, & Ellen,

1985) also found that males are more likely to attend live sporting events in comparison to

females. All in all, it appears that regardless of the type of sport or how the sport is being

consumed, the factors motivating male sports fans in comparison to female sports fans are more

likely to differ than they are to be similar.

Identification with Sports

A second theme that is important for marketers to understand in looking at gender

differences that exist between male and females sports fans is that of identification with sport.

This may be identifying with a particular sport, team, player, coach, university, community, or

all of the above. An important definition to include is that of team identification, which is the

degree to which an individual feels psychologically linked to a team (Wann, 1997; Wann &

Brascome, 1993; Greenwood, 2001) and is used interchangeably to describe an individual's

connection with a player of that team (Wann, 1997; Greenwood, 2001). A number of studies

(Murrell & Dietz, 1992; Wann et al., 2001; Greenwood, 2001; Winegard & Deaner, 2010) have

found that males are much more likely to be interested and involved as sports fans in comparison to females. As a result, these researchers and studies have found that males have higher levels of identification to sport. It is also revealed in a study by Greenwood (2001) that males have significantly higher levels of team identification than females, and that a positive correlation exists between team identification and traditional fan behavior such as watching sports on television, being knowledgeable about sports, attendance rate, and purchasing behavior. This last correlation of purchasing behavior is an important aspect for marketers based on the fact that 80% of all global purchase decisions are made by females according to a 2012 Nielsen report on Emerging Markets, Emerging Opportunities; however, this appears to be different in the world of sports. As a result, these same researchers believe that males derive a stronger sense of their personal identity based on their ability to identify and support a particular team, while females do not believe that identifying with a team is a central component of their personal identity. Furthermore, these researchers have attributed this to the stereotypical notion that the sports realm continues to remain a masculine domain, which limits the amount of female interaction, participation, and consumption as fans. This further highlights that being a sports fan is an important aspect of the masculine identity, and explains why males might be motivated to exclude the female population from participating in sport as fans.

Studies have indicated a change over decades. One study conducted by Brascombe & Wann (1991) was unable to find any significant gender differences between males and females in regards to identifying with a team. However, recent studies (James & Ridinger, 2002; Robinson & Trail, 2005) have found that female fans have a higher level of attachment to a particular sport and to a particular player in comparison to male fans. The researchers believed this might be attributed to the fact that most females are fans of a specific team, while most males are fans of a

specific team as well as fans of sports in general. More specifically, the findings suggested that, "once females became fans, they exhibited strong support towards a specific team; however their level of motivation toward the general sport was not as strong as men's" (James & Ridinger, p. 273). Additionally, Hansen and Gauthier (1993) found that female sports fans are more likely to remain loyal under adverse conditions in comparison to men while another study by Winegard & Deaner (2010) found that males were significantly more loyal to their team than females.

In looking specifically at gender differences between sports fans and loyalty based on the type of sport, the study conducted by James & Ridinger (2005) focused on a men's and women's collegiate basketball fan base at the same university. The results in this study showed that a higher percentage of male fans were reported as having "Strongly Loyalty" to the men's basketball team while a significantly larger portion of the female fan base reported being a "Loyal fan" or "Not a fan at all." Similar findings were also found in results for the women's basketball team; however, more females reported having "Strong Loyalty" to the team. Results also showed a significantly higher percentage of males reporting with "Strong Loyalty" to sports in general while females had a higher percentage of being a "Loyal fan" or "Not a fan at all." The findings in this study are directly related to team identification and gender differences that exist amongst fans in identifying with sport.

Commitment to a particular team is also an important aspect of identification. One study by Ware & Kowalski (2012) focused on examining gender differences that exist amongst fans in regards to BIRGing (basking-in-reflected-glory) and CORFing (cut-of-reflected-failure), both of which are closely related to fan identification with a specific team. Furthermore, both of these are grounded in social identity theory "in that one's self esteem and evaluation can be enhanced by another person's success or reduced by another person's failure" (Ware & Kowalski, p. 224).

The results of this study showed that a fan's level of involvement and commitment was the

biggest indicator in both BIRGing and CORFing behavior. Thus, the more committed and

involved a fan is, the more likely they are to BIRG after their team wins and CORF after their

team loses. Significant gender differences were found in terms of CORFing, as females are less

likely to CORF after their team loses in comparison to males, which indicates that males are

much more committed and involved as fans regardless of the team's outcome.

This study also found that die-hard fans, those who are highly committed and involved,

are significantly more likely to BIRG *and* CORF in comparison to causal and low-involvement

fans. This is significant as more males reported being die-hard sports fans, more females reported

being casual sports fans, and there were nearly twice as many low-involvement female fans in

comparison to male fans. As a result, the researchers associated their findings that female sports

fans are more motivated by the social interaction in sport, and shows why more females are

casual fans in comparison to males. This conclusion is similar to previous findings on motivation

to consume sport and to attend sporting events. Nevertheless, females that were identified as

being die-hard fans reported BIRGing and CORFing just as much as die-hard male fans. Thus,

gender only has an impact on BIRGing and CORFing for causal or less involved and committed

sports fans. In the end, it appears that "sports fandom increasingly becomes an important social

and identifying dynamic, both males and females display the love-hate/BIRG-CORF

relationship" (Ware & Kowalski, p. 235). This can have direct implications on successfully

implementing campaigns that market memorabilia and merchandise to highly identified fans. As

a result, these findings further emphasize the importance of marketers catering to the different

needs of sports fans in their campaigns based on gender differences as well as differences in

identification.

In regards to impacting attendance, a number of researchers and studies (Pease & Zhang, 1996; Wakefield, 1995; Wann & Brascombe, 1993; Wann, Roberts, & Tindall, 1999) have discovered that sports fans with a high level of identification translate to a higher rate of attendance in comparison to those fans with a moderate or low identification level. This reaffirms previous findings about how a fan's identification level is positively correlated to a fan's purchasing behavior. Additionally, some studies (Wann & Brascombe, 1993; Greenwood, 2001) have found that fans with a high level of team identification spend more money and time to see their team compete. As a result, these fans are much more willing to pay a large sum of money to see their team compete in a meaningful game such as in a championship game or against a rival. This included purchasing behavior for things such as tickets, parking, merchandise, and travel expenses, however, no correlation was found between team identification and purchasing concessions.

Based on a more recent study by Caitlin Moyer (2012) that focused on the impact of social media for marketers, it was found that fans with a higher level of team identification connected to the team's Facebook page while those with a lower level of team identification did not connect. This study also confirmed the beliefs of previous researchers in that fans with higher levels of identification were more likely to attend games or purchase team merchandise. However, this study also expanded this area of research by noting that those who visited the team's Facebook page are 7% more likely to attended games and also 5% more likely to purchase team merchandise.

Another study conducted by Wann, Waddill, Paula, & Dunham (2004) but focused on the difference in sex and gender role orientation. It was stated that gender role orientation involves the extent to which individuals view themselves as masculine, feminine, or androgynous. There

is much more of a separation between sports fans that portray masculine qualities versus fans

that portray feminine qualities. Results showed that while biological sex accounted for a

significant portion of fan identification in which males expressed greater fandom than females,

gender sex orientation contributed significantly more than biological sex. Thus, an individual's

level of sport fandom directly coincides with their portrayal of masculinity in comparison to

femininity. This finding that masculinity is a better predictor of fandom than biological sex may

have important implications for marketers and advertisers as it emphasizes that both should

target masculine-oriented audiences regardless of their biological sex in addition to male-

dominated audiences. Nevertheless, work still needs to be done to see which marketing strategies

will be the most effective based on this knowledge. In regards to marketing, these studies and

researchers believe that strategies should target both genders of sports fans rather than just males,

but that a particular focus should be put on fans that portray masculine characteristics or

qualities.

Gender Differences of Social Media Users

The gender differences that exist between social media users expand across various

categories, but all of them can be considered under the overarching umbrella of usage patterns.

This contains information such as the amount of consumption or usage, site preference, and

which devices are being used to access social media. These address important consumption

questions such as: how much each gender is using social media, what sites users are spending

their time on, and what device users are spending their time on. Another important aspect of

social media that is particularly important for marketers is that of privacy concerns, which

involves what information users will choose to reveal or keep private. This is important since

many marketers and organizations base their decisions around demographic information that is

collected on a targeted segment of consumers. Additional studies or information obtained in

regards to social media and gender differences includes why a person chooses to create a social

media profile and interact with others via social media as well as certain personality differences

of users for certain social media sites. In the end, it is clear that existing research on gender

differences between social media users is still in its early stage of development. More research

will be needed in the future to gain a better understanding and a better insight into social media

users preferences, trends, and usage patterns.

Consumption of Social Media

The first important and overlying theme regarding gender differences that exist amongst

social media users is that of usage patterns, or consumption of social media. According to the

Social Media Habits and Privacy Concerns Survey (Seymour, 2012) 86% of males and females

between the ages of 18-24 visit social media sites daily, which was the most active consumer

segment. Nevertheless, there are a significant number of gender differences that exist in terms of

consumption for male and female users. In Nielsen's *2012 State of the Media: The Social Media*

Report, which specifically focuses on usage and consumption of social media over the course of

a given year, a number of gender differences were identified. Nielsen is a global information and

measurement company that is well-known for its ability to obtain and analyze consumer

information in relation to television as well as other forms of media such as online intelligence

and mobile.

Since July 2011, Nielsen indicated that females were continuing to use social media at a

higher rate than male users. On average, female users were accessing social media through the

use of their Personal Computer (or PC) on average for 8 hours and 37 minutes every week in

comparison to males who accessed it on average for 6 hours and 13 minutes on their PC every

week. Females also accessed social media significantly more than males through a mobile device

via an application or web browser, in which the weekly average for females is 9 hours and 43

minutes compared to 6 hours and 44 minutes for males. This report also pointed out that while

more females watch video content on social network sites and blogs, males are the heaviest users

in that they stream more videos and spend 9% more time watching videos via social networking

sites or social media sites.

A number of studies (Seymour, 2012; Carranza, 2012; Nesbit, 2011; Powell, 2012;

Lenhart, 2009; Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee, 2012; Ruleman, 2012) have researched why

females use social media more or spend more time on social media in comparison to males.

These studies have found that females use social media more for communication purposes in

comparison to male users, while males use social media for observations and expressing their

opinion. Similar results were found in the research by Powell (2012) which found that females

tend to use social networking sites for socializing and expressing personal aspects of their life

while males do not use social networking sites as a social hub, but rather for individual

expression. This may be one of the reasons for explaining why males are more likely to complain

directly to a brand or company through social media in comparison to female users. According to

a survey study on social media users and retail by Empathica (Levey, 2011), 4% of males

indicated that they use social media to register a complaint or seek a resolution to a problem in

comparison to 2% of females. According to Nielsen's *2012 Social Media Report,* 33% of all

social media users prefer using social media to contact a company and voice their opinion, ask

questions, or complain. This will be an important aspect of social media use in the future for

marketers and organizations as they look to satisfy consumers' needs and address any problems

quickly and efficiently online since that is what the consumer tends to prefer. In regards to

general use of the Internet, the Pew Internet and American Life Project (Lenhart, 2009) found

that females typically use the Internet for communication while males generally use the Internet

for entertainment, news, and games.

Furthermore, this report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project and Lenhart

(2009) conducted extensive research on social media use amongst the general population. This

report also further reaffirmed 30 years of research studies in that males are much more

comfortable with using technology in comparison to females. While some reports have indicated

that this gender gap between male and female technology users is decreasing, others have

indicated that this gap may be increasing in favor of the male users. This is somewhat surprising

based on the fact that more females use social media. A more recent report from the Pew Internet

and American Life Project (Brenner, 2013) indicated that as of December 2012, 71% of females

used social media or social networking sites (or SNS) in comparison to 62% of males. Overall,

this report (Brenner, 2013) found that 67% of adults online use some form of social media.

Gender differences were also found in regards to using social media in the workplace.

One study conducted by Nesbit (2011) found there is little difference between how frequent

males use social media in the workplace in comparison to females; however, females were found

to use it slightly more. To add to the research on social media in the workplace, Nielsen's *2012

State of the Media: The Social Media Report* found that 51% of users between 25-34 access

social media while in the office, which is significantly more than any other group. A bit more

unusual finding is that 32% of people between 18-24 accessed social media while in the

restroom. According to the study by Nesbit (2011), the most significant difference between

accessing social media in the workplace is that males use Wikis more than females. A Wiki is a

website that allows its users to add, modify, or delete content via a web browser, with the most

known or most common Wiki being that of Wikipedia.com. This data is also supported by

Nielsen's *2011 State of the Media: The Social Media Report*, which states that males use

LinkedIn and Wikia sites significantly more than females.

Researchers have also studied gender differences of one's personality in relation to social

media usage. A study conducted by Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi (2000) found that a

significant correlation existed between social use of the Internet and extraversion was only found

in females. These researchers Amichai-Hamburger and Ben-Artzi in a more recent report (2003)

also found that a high level of neuroticism in females was directly correlated to social usage of

the Internet. This same 2003 study also found a negative relationship between use of the Internet

for informational purposes and neuroticism, which would indicate a negative relationship

between social media usage by females for informational purposes. In relation to sports, this

finding is particularly interesting based on previous studies that have found significant gender

differences in motivational factors to consume sport, in which informational purposes was found

to be an important factor for male fans but not for female fans.

These findings are consistent with other research by Levey (2011), which found that

information was the primary goal of 36% of male users in comparison to 28% of female users

when interacting with a retail brand through social media. Nevertheless, no research study has

found a significant difference between male and female users in regards to becoming a social

media user, as both were just as likely to begin using this form of media for communication.

However, a study by Lenhart (2009) in using the Pew Internet and American Life Project did

find a significant difference in the number of online profiles each gender had in that 54% of

males were likely to have two or more online profiles in comparison to only 47% of females.

Site Preferences

Due to the large volume of social media sites or social networking sites that are created

each year, it is important to distinguish what social media sites cater to the needs, interests, and

preferences of male users in comparison to female users. It was found in a study conducted by

Hughes, Rowe, Batey, & Lee (2011) that Twitter and Facebook are used for different purposes

based on the personality of each gender. Specifically, this study found that males are more

directed to Twitter because of their personality while Facebook coincides better with the

personality of female users. The reason for this may be based on the consumption or usage

patterns of each site, in that males use social media for informative and observational reasons

why females use social media more for communicative purposes. This may further explain why

certain sites cater to the needs and interests of one gender segment while another site caters to

the needs and interests of the other gender.

According to research by Powell (2012), it was found that gender differences do indeed

exist based on how each sex uses Twitter. Powell found that males use Twitter more than

females, but that females have more conversations on Twitter such as replying to tweets while

males are more likely to discuss external issues. Females also posted more photos on Twitter,

and that the majority of the time these photos were of themselves their clothes, jewelry, pets, or

other items that are part of their daily life. Thus, females are much more personal on Twitter in

comparison to males, who generally posted photos that consisted of food, sports, or cars. In

general, the content posted by males was about things happening around them such as a sporting

event. Powell also mentioned differences in regards to Facebook usage. Females were found to

update their statuses much more frequently with approximately 17 status updates for all females

per hour per day, while males were less with 12 status updates for all males per hour per day.

Overall, similarities were found between how each gender generally uses Facebook in relation to

Twitter. Males generally directed their status update away from themselves and was likely an

observation or about another individual. In comparison, the status updates of female users were

much more personal. As a result, it appears that site preference for male users versus female

users depends on the digital needs of each gender and how well that particular social networking

site satisfies those needs.

In creating a social media site or social networking site, the creator typically tries to cater

to both male and female users. Nevertheless, some sites do emphasis one gender over the other.

The most recent example of this can be seen with Pinterest, which was initially created to be

geared towards males, however, about 97% of Pinterest users today in the United States are

females between the ages of 25-34. In comparison to another area of the globe, males consist of

56% of Pinterest users in the United Kingdom, but the reason for this gender difference in

comparison to American users is unknown. As for American Pinterest users, females

significantly outnumber males in every category regardless of the device being used. For

Personal Computer use, it consists of 70% of females in comparison to 30% males, while mobile

web applications consist of females at 84% (16% males) and mobile web browsers consist of

72% females (28% males). Overall, Pinterest had the largest year-over-year growth in 2012 of

any social networking site across Personal Computer, mobile web, and mobile apps. In terms of

the total number of users, Pinterest had +1,047% growth for PC, +1,698% for mobile apps, and +

4,225 for mobile web. Clearly, the biggest reason for this growth is the number of female users

that choose to regularly access this social networking site.

　　　　While Pinterest was the site that had the biggest overall growth in 2012 according to

Nielsen data, in 2011 it was Tumblr that had the most significant growth. Clearly, in the world of

social media, the popularity and growth of a site can change on an annual basis if not quicker

depending on the preferences, trends, and consumption patterns of users. At the time, Tumblr

tripled its audience in the United States from 2010 and females consisted of 53.5% of Tumblr

users while males were not that far behind at 46.5%. In the world of social media, it appears that

female users appear to be ahead of the curve with emerging social media sites in comparison to

male users, and at times even set the trend. These findings appear to contradict the previous

studies discussed in Lenhart (2009) that emphasized males are much more comfortable using

technology in comparison to females.

　　　　In referring back to the study by Lenhart (2009) and the Pew Internet and American Life

Project report, it was found that MySpace users were much more likely to be females while

Facebook and LinkedIn users were much more likely to be male. According to a more recent

study by Powell, the trend of Facebook usage has been reversed in that more females are using

Facebook in comparison to males. Another report on social media conducted by Nielsen (2011)

reaffirmed this belief in that female users outweigh males on Facebook 50% to 42%, but that

males continue to outnumber females on LinkedIn as well as on Wikia sites such as Wikipedia.

Privacy Concerns

　　　　A final theme regarding gender differences of social media users is that of privacy.

Privacy concerns is an important aspect of social media usage for marketers and organizations

because the majority of their campaigns and messages are based on information obtained on

consumers either from the consumers themselves or from a third party. Furthermore, a

fundamental purpose of social media is to reveal personal information and share it with others

via the Internet. It has been found in a number of studies (Carranza, 2012; Seymour, 2012) that

females are much more cautious in comparison to males about revealing certain personal

information such as their phone number, their current location, their personal mailing address,

and their e-mail address. According to the *Social Media Habits and Privacy Concerns Survey*

mentioned by Seymour (2012), only 20% of females were willing to share their location

compared to 35% for males. Additionally, 55% of males were willing to share their e-mail

address compared to just 41% for females. However, no gender differences exist when it comes

to sharing one's relationship status or religious affiliation as 75% of both males and females

surveyed were willing to share this type of information via social media. Males and females were

also found to be just as likely to reveal their personal brand preferences, information about their

job, and political ideologies. Conversely, a study conducted by Empathica (Levey, 2011) on

social media in regards to retail found that 35% of female users recommended a brand, product,

or service on social media in comparison to only 28% of male users.

In regards to not posting sensitive information, females cited privacy or personal security

concerns higher at 40% compared to 30% of males. The same study by Seymour (2012) noticed

that social media usage patterns are similar to those that exist in traditional gender roles, and that

both genders have conformed accordingly. Thus, it is suggested that males conform to traditional

views of masculinity when using social media and females have conformed to traditional views

of femininity. As a result, the observation of privacy concerns of social media users "offers

compelling insights into consumer behavior and attitudes, especially given the conventional

wisdom how we value – or don't value – privacy in the social media space" (Seymour, p. 8).

Privacy concerns on social media will continue to play an important role for marketers, but will

also remain a challenge in formulating a marketing campaign or strategy based on available

consumer information.

Impact on Marketers

Gender differences between sports fans have become incremental in how marketers,

mangers, and key decision makers for sports organizations communicate with their respective

consumer base and fan base. The majority of research on differences between sports fans has

focused on the areas of consuming sport, the motivation to consume sport, and identification

with sport. Furthermore, a significant gap has existed in the research on gender differences of

sports fans in relation to differences amongst social media users. Researchers have included

some important points of emphasis for marketers, advertisers, and the like in previously

discussed studies on gender differences that exist between sports fans and social media users.

The overlying theme is the importance of gaining as much information as possible about the

targeted consumer base or sports fans and social media users. According to the *2004 Sport

Spectator Analysis Report* discussed in the study by Wann, Waddill, & Dunham (2004),

demographics, psychographics, and information about the behavior of spectators will allow

marketers in the sports industry to gain a more comprehensive view of their targeted segment of

consumers. This is essential to the success of marketers and organizations. Ultimately, by

gaining a better understanding of how specific gender differences of sports fans relate to those of

social media users, marketers can more effectively reach their targeted segment of consumers

and successfully implement an integrated social media marketing strategy into their campaigns.

According to a report by Catalyst Public Relations that conducted a social media usage survey in 2011 on behalf of the *Sports Business Journal* (Broughton, 2012)*,* 40% of sports fans reported that they were bigger fans of their respective teams as a result of social media. Furthermore, a similar survey report and study conducted in 2010 by Catalyst Public Relations and the *Sports Business Journal* in 2010 (Broughton, 2010) found that 61% of MLB fans and 55% of NFL fans believe they are bigger fans of each respective sport league as a result of following their favorite teams on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This study also found that over 50% of MLB fans and 43% of NFL fans reported that they are now spending more time watching and following each of the respective sports leagues as a result of being engaged with their favorite team via social media (Broughton, 2010).

According to a research study by Ticketmaster's Live Analytics team (Fisher, 2012; Moyer, 2012), it was found that "social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have shown themselves to be as much as three times more effective in selling tickets than traditional marketing platforms" (Fisher, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore, results from this study indicated that people who purchased tickets through social media links not only purchased tickets earlier, but also spent significantly more money on their ticket. The average ticket price for those who purchased a ticket through a link they found on social media was $82 compared to $52 for all other buyers. However, these findings were for sporting events as well as other forms of entertainment, primarily being concerts. As for purchasing tickets directly related to sporting events, 14% said they were influenced as a result of a Facebook post while 49% also shared videos, shared photos, and discussed their overall experience via social media. According to a different Catalyst Public Relations report in the *Sports Business Journal* (Broughton, 2012)*,* 78% of a team's Facebook "likes" also "liked" a brand that was linked on that team's Facebook page

or home site. Thus, while this information is particularly beneficial for teams and marketers, sponsors also benefit as a result of being associated with a sports team, organization, and sporting event via social media.

More generally, a report by Wildfire (Knight, 2012) found "active social media fans – those who share and advocate their favorite brands - generate about 14 earn media impressions each." This means that for every social media fan, an additional fourteen consumers learn about a campaign, brand, product, or service as a result of that initial consumer's actions on social media. Furthermore, Wildife (Knight, 2012) has indicated that brand advocates introduce and bring in approximately 1.3 new people to a brand. Information such as this only further indicates the type of impact social media has on brands and organizations in the global world of business. Nevertheless, other studies and reports such as "The Media Comparisons Study" by TVB and Knowledge Networks indicate that more can be done. This report (Mora, 2012) found that while 61% of adults over the age of 18 access social media, that only 6.8% of these adults have made purchase decisions based on information obtained directly from social media. Thus, while social media users may be beneficial as brand advocates, there appears to still be area for growth in regards to the financial benefits that social media can produce.

While social media has a number of benefits for marketers, a study by Moyer (2012) focused specifically on the benefits of Facebook to marketers and organizations. This study found that fans connected with a team's Facebook page are much more identified with the team overall, and as a result should be treated differently by marketers. More specifically, Moyer stated that it is beneficial for marketers to continue discovering new ways to connect, interact, and engage with fans via social media, and in this particular case, Facebook. With the increasing number of social media sites or social networking sites being created on an annual basis, it may

also be important for marketers and organizations to expand the number of sites in which

marketing messages are displayed. Thus, sites such as Pinterest may be an interesting

opportunity for sports marketers to reach the untapped potential of the female fan consumer

segment based on this sites recent growth.

The study by Moyer (2012) also found similar results that coincide with those in previous

studies (Jefferes, Neuendorf, & Atkins, 2002), which is that a positive relationship exists

between the use of media, television viewing, and one's interest or willingness to participate as a

fan. It appears that the more people use and consume media, regardless of the type of media, the

more they will participate as spectators and fans. Clearly, all forms of media play an important

role for marketers in the sports industry, but social media creates a number of unique

opportunities based on its increasing trend of consumption by users, the preferences of users, and

the motivation for users to be connected through a mobile device at all times. Sports marketers

must understand the importance of how increasing team identification for consumers and fans

can financially benefit the organization simply by engaging and interacting with them on social

media. By increasing a fan's identification with a team, a player, and by connecting them with

fellow fans through social media, marketers are allowed to create a digital environment that is

specific to the needs of their consumer base and fan base. As a result, fans can interact with one

another as well as engage with the team or even potentially their favorite player. Ultimately, it is

clear that social networking sites provide natural opportunities for fans to associate themselves

with their favorite team, engaged with their favorite player, and interact with other fans, all of

which is controlled by marketers.

If there is any future indication of technology in relation to consumers, it is clear that

social media will continue to have a significant influence in shaping the perceptions and

purchase patterns of consumers. For both consumers and sports fans, it appears that mobile

devices such as smartphones and tablets may be the preferred method to access social media.

Based on Nielsen's *2012 Social Media Report*, connecting to the Internet via the mobile web or

through a mobile app both increased 82% and 85% respectively since 2011, while connecting to

the Internet through a Personal Computer device decreased 4% during that same time period.

Accessing social media through a mobile device is 30% of the time spent by mobile users in

comparison to only 20% for Personal Computer users. In particular, mobile applications will

continue to play an increasingly important role based on the fact that 33% of social networking

time is now dedicated to mobile application usage. Since 2011, consumers also increased their

social application usage time by 76%, thus spending seven times more minutes on mobile

applications than the mobile web (Nielsen, *2012 Social Media Report)*. Thus, marketers need to

find a way to target a specific segment of consumers and sports fans while they are on the go,

and a simple solution can be social media.

      Additionally, mobile technology and devices such as tablets and smartphones will

continue to play an important role in the consumption patterns of social media users. According

to Nielsen's *2012 State of the Media: The Social media Report,* 60% of consumers and sports

fans that own a tablet or smartphone accessed sports-related content at least once a day. Avid

sports fans are also 52% more likely to own a tablet than non-avid sports fans. This is important

for marketers and managers of stadiums or arenas since accessing this type of information is

clearly an essential for sports fans, and not having this ability will severely hurt an organization.

For example, there are NFL fans that choose not to attend a football game on Sunday to their

favorite team because they want to access their fantasy football team for updates. Another

general example is when fans refuse to attend one sporting event because another sporting event

is taking place that they would much rather follow. Organizations are able to eliminate reasons

such as these examples for staying at home and watching sports rather than attending a game, all

they have to do is give sports fans the ability to access needed and desirable information while

also being able to attend a sporting event. More importantly, doing so will significantly enhance

the overall fan experience when attending live sporting events.

Furthermore, it appears that consumers are choosing to connect to social media with a

mobile device while also engaging with other forms of media, most notably television. This is

important for marketers to consider when looking at the top 15 tweets per second (or TPS) since

it is very crucial to "striking while the iron is hot" in the world of sports and marketing.

According to Mashable.com (Hernandez & Stark, 2012), of the top 15 TPS all-time, seven of

them are sports-related with four of those seven being in the top five. These four are the 2012

Euro Finals between Spain and Italy (15,358 TPS), which ranked second; the end of Super Bowl

XLVI between the New York Giants and New England Patriots in 2012 (10,245 TPS), which

ranked third; Madonna's Super Bowl XLVI Halftime Show in 2012 (10,245 TPS), which ranked

fourth; and Tim Tebow's overtime touchdown pass in the 2011 National Football League (NFL)

playoffs versus the Pittsburgh Steelers (9,420 TPS), which ranked fifth. More importantly, 10 of

the top 15 recorded TPS centered on a televised event such as a sporting event or an awards

show. The other five recorded TPS were major events in which people more than likely turned to

their television set for breaking news in addition to social media such as their Twitter feed.

Clearly, Twitter and television, and in particular live sporting events that are telecasted

worldwide, create numerous opportunities for marketers.

Furthermore, according to the *2012 State of the Media: The Year in Sports* by Nielsen,

sport dominates the conversation on Twitter. While sports programming only accounted for 1.3%

of all television programming, sports programming accounted for 41% of all TV-related Tweets in 2012. In looking specifically at the 2012 London Olympics, Twitter represented 84% of the buzz surround the United States Women's Gymnastics Team while traditional media only represented 9% in comparison. As for the amount of sports programming in relation to Twitter usage, this is particularly important for marketers considering that in 2012 there were 60,000 hours of live programming of sporting events, which was a 45% increase. Additionally, $13.3 billion was spent on advertising within live programming of sporting events, which accounted for 23% of the total national television advertising money spent. Ultimately, as the trend of live programming of sporting events continues to arise in conjunction with the amount of advertising money being spent within live programming of sporting events, it is clear that Twitter offers a number of opportunities for sports marketers.

As for which social media site reigns supreme, it is clear that Twitter has risen above the rest in catering to the needs of sports fans. Twitter has become the digital "chat-at-the-watercooler" platform for anyone and everyone to discuss what is happening in the world of sports. This is just one of many reasons why in 2013 Nielsen and Twitter will be collaborating together to create the first ever "Nielsen Twitter TV Rating." As a result, this rating will provide media companies, advertisers, marketers, and the like a common benchmark for measuring the engagement of television programming. With new measuring tactic such as this, Nielsen will continue to be an important resource for sports marketers to utilize. In addition, Nielsen currently has a "FANALYTICS" platform in place that provides the sports industry with certain tools and insights, both of which are needed to stay on top of the continually evolving world of sports media. Furthermore, this platform allows sports marketers to gain a more in-depth understanding of fans such as how they watch sports content, how they consume sports content, and what kind

of sports content they purchase. More importantly, Nielsen has stated "it is committed to

meticulously tracking fan sentiment, engagement, purchases and media consumption, ensuring

that brands understand the value and impact of their investment in sports media and

sponsorships, and drive more effective decision-making" (Nielsen, 2012 Social Media Report).

Ultimately, Nielsen is a very valuable tool for sports marketers and organizations to utilize as

they continue to find ways of increasing consumer engagement of fans online with social media.

Furthermore, the *2012 Social Media Report* by Nielsen found some insightful

information in terms of advertising via social media. It was found that despite 33% of social

media users saying they were more annoyed with social media advertisements than other online

advertisements, 26% said they were more likely to pay attention to an advertisement that was

posted by one of their social network acquaintances. Furthermore, 26% said they are OK with

advertisements that are identified based on their profile information while 17% also said they felt

more connected to brands via social media. All in all, it is clear that "social likes" are the most

common action taking after seeing a social media advertisement, and is a very effective method

used by marketers to raise a brand's visibility in the clouded social marketplace. Overall, it

appears that "consumers frequently trust the recommendations of their peers, making social

media an ideal platform for influencers to spread their ideas and purchase power" (Nielsen, 2011

Social Media Report).

According to the *2011 and 2012 State of the Media: The Social Media Report* by Nielsen,

social media offers an ocean of information that is beneficial for marketers within the sports

industry. In the 2011 report, when comparing an active social media user to the average adult

Internet user, active social media users or networkers were 19% more likely to attend a

professional sporting event. As for watching sports events, it is clear that Twitter is the most

popular social media site for users when simultaneously watching television. From January 2012

to June 2012, it was found that users who tweeted about TV-related content (including sporting

events) increased from 27% to 33%. Additionally, the 2012 report found that 41% of tablet

owners and 38% of smartphone owners use their device daily while sitting in front of the

television set. The top reported activity when simultaneously using either of these devices and

watching television is social media.

Nevertheless, social media may cause trouble for sports fans (as well as other consumers) with

"spoiler alerts" since at least 25% of people between the ages of 18-34 report that they

simultaneously comment, like, and dislike a storyline. From firsthand experience, it is difficult to

avoid consuming information via social media without spoiling the outcome of a taped sporting

event, television show, or documentary.

In looking at the power and influence of social media on the world today from a broader

perspective, it may be important to consider the book entitled *The World is Flat: A Brief History*

of the Twenty-First Century written by Thomas L. Friedman. Friedman emphasizes the

importance of how the twenty-first century has essentially "flattened" the world, and as a result,

created a level playing field of business in which all competitors have equal opportunities. He

defines ten flatteners that have occurred, and that these are specific events and developments that

have allowed this phenomenon to occur. While social media was not listed as one of these

flatteners, events such as Netscape introducing the first mainstream web browser paved the way

for a great deal of what influences social media users today. Based on information presented in

this book, it is clear that social media is continuing to flatten the world or what some may refer to

as "shrinking the world." As a result, organizations of every size and type are able to compete

digitally through the world of social media, which only continues to cloud the marketplace for

consumers and complicates the role of marketers. In a presentation at the *Sports Business*

Journal's 2012 Covington and Burling Sports Media & Technology Conference (Ranadive,

2012) Vivek Ranadive, the CEO of Tibco and owner of the NBA's Golden State Warriors,

discussed a similar sentiment based on the emergence of social media and mobile technology. In

particular, Randaive mentioned that social media has created a platform that allows anyone to

reach global audiences, and as a result continues to shrink the world. Furthermore, Ranadive

mentioned that speed is key as the world continues to go mobile with technology, which could be

viewed as another contributing factor to shrinking the world and creating a level playing field for

businesses.

Regardless of any gender differences that do exist between sports fans, it is suggested

that marketers in the sports industry focus their efforts on marketing to both genders rather than

limiting their consumer base or fan base by marketing to solely one gender. Nevertheless,

marketing strategies should take into account motivational differences that exist between why

females become fans in comparison to males. One researcher (Greenwood, 2001) suggested that

the ideal scenario for marketing to sports fans is this: market geographical variables; market the

talent level and personalities of players/coaches; teach fans about the sport; and grant fans the

option of tailgating. Furthermore, it is important to market to parents, as they will help create the

next generation of fans for the team and organization. Last but not least, having a team that is

successful in its respective sport helps dramatically in building a large fan base. As a result of

these efforts, sports fans will develop a high level of team identification, will attend more games,

and most importantly, will spend more money. While there are certain things that marketers have

no control over, such as a team's win and loss record, there are certain a number of ways in

which marketers can control messages received by consumers and fans via social media. All in

all, social media is proving to be a an effective channel of communication for marketers and

proving to present a variety of opportunities for organizations operating within the sports

industry.

Methodology

The sampling method used is a combination of nonprobability purposive modal instance

and convenience. The study will be quantitative in nature in that each participant will answer one

online survey that combines a modified version of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (or

SSIS), a modified version of the Sport Fandom Questionnaire (or SFQ), and the researcher's own

set of questions regarding social media usage, consumption of sport, and attendance at Marquette

University men's college basketball games. Additionally, demographic information was asked

such as age, marital status, race or ethnicity, level of education, and others. These questions also

allow a better insight into the connection that exists between social media and sports fans in

regards to specific gender differences. This survey is the only instrument used in this study to

gain a better understanding of how social media impacts sports fans as well as how gender

differences among sports fans and social media users may influence marketers. Participants for

this research study are current season-ticket holders of Marquette University men's basketball

team. An IRB Protocol Summary form was completed since human research subjects were being

used in this study

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the literature review for gender differences that exist amongst sports fans and

social media users, it is clear that a gap has existed in previous research in how the two are

interrelated or connected. This study focuses on gender differences that exist amongst sports fans in relation to gender differences that exist amongst social media users. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze whether or not social media has changed how sports fans consume sport and identify with sport. Based on the literature review, there are a number of questions that were asked as well as six hypotheses projected for this study.

The research questions that were asked prior to the study were: 1) How has the advancement of social media impacted gender differences that exist amongst sports fans today? The second question is: 2) What is the relationship between gender differences that exist amongst sports fans in relation to social media usage, preferences, and trends, and how does this impact marketers?

H1: The first hypothesis projected before the start of this study is that a strong connection or correlation continues to exist between a sports fandom level and that of their team identification level, which means that the higher a person's fandom level then the higher their team identification level will be, and vice versa.

H2: The second hypothesis is that males are more likely to be fans that are "very loyal" and "highly identify" with their team in comparison to females.

H3: The third hypothesis is that females will continue to use social media more than males, but that males will use social media for sports related purposes or reasons more than females.

H4: Fourth, it was hypothesized that season ticket holders that are "very loyal" and that "highly identify" with their team will use Twitter for sports related purposes or reasons, while season ticket holders that are "loyal" or "not loyal" and only "moderately identify" or "do not identify" with their team will use other social media or social networking sites.

H5: The fifth hypothesis is that season ticket holders that are "very loyal" and "highly identify" with their team will access social media more through a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet, while season ticket holders that are "loyal" or are "not loyal" and only "moderately identify" or "do not identify" with their team will access social media with a non-mobile device.

H6: The final hypothesis was that female sports fans, season ticket holders, and social media users will be more aware of marketing messages, will have a better memory of marketing messages, and will have a larger response to marketing messages posted via social media.

Participants

The sample of participants consisted of 3,300 season-ticket holders of Marquette University men's basketball team, which was obtained with the help of Kimberly Mueller in the Marquette University Athletics Department Marketing department. One email was sent to each season ticket holder on February 12, 2013, with instructions and a link to the survey. Furthermore, each season ticket holder was encouraged to forward the message and survey to fans of the Marquette University men's basketball team. A link to the survey included a consent form indication that participation was entirely voluntary, and that they were agreeing to participate by completing and submitting the survey.

Instrumentation

A specific survey was created for this study using typical demographic questions, a modified version of the Sport Fandom Questionnaire, a modified version of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale, and questions created specifically for this survey that emphasize

consumption of sport, identification with sport, Marquette University men's basketball, and

usage of social media. The demographics portion of this survey appeared first, and included

information about the participant's age, gender, ethnicity or race, level of education, marital

status, and connection to Marquette University (see Appendix A).

A modified version of the Sport Fandom Questionnaire (or SFQ) developed by Wann,

2002, was used for the purpose of this study (see Appendix B). The SFQ is a five-item measure

in which participants rate the item in each question on a seven-point Likert-type scale, from 1

(Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). This measurement tool accesses the level of sport

fandom that each participant has with an indicated sport, which in this case is men's collegiate

basketball. For example, one of the question item examples on this measurement tool is "I

consider myself to be a college basketball fan." While it didn't indicate men's college basketball

or women's college basketball, it was indicated in the consent form at the beginning of the

survey that all questions would be directed towards Marquette University men's college

basketball. The higher rating for each question item and the higher overall total score for the five

question items asked indicates a higher level of sport fandom. A score between 1-2 equaled a

low level of fandom or indicated the person was "not loyal," a score between 3-5 equaled a

moderate level of fandom or indicated a person was "loyal" to their team, and a score between 6-

7 meant the person had a high level of fandom and was "very loyal" to their team. According to

Wann, 2002, the SFQ has an internal consistency of alpha = .96. Cronbach's alpha for the

present study was .85.

Furthermore, a modified version of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (or SSIS)

developed Wann & Brascombe, 1993, was used for the purpose of this study (see Appendix C).

The SSIS is a seven-item measure in which participants rate each question item on a seven-point

Likert-type scale, from 1 (low identification) to 7 (high identification). This measurement tool

accesses the level of identification that each participant has with an indicated team, which in this

case is Marquette University men's basketball team. For example, one of the question items on

this measurement instrument is, "How important to YOU is it that this team wins?" Similar to

the SFQ, the higher rating for each question item and the higher overall total score for the five

question items asked indicates a higher level of sport fandom. A score between 1-2 meant that

the person "does not identify" with their team, a score between 3-5 meant that person only

"moderately identifies with their team," and a score between 6-7 means they "highly identify"

with their team. The SSIS has an internal consistency of alpha = .91 (Wann & Brascombe, 1993).

Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .74.

Lastly, specific questions were created for this study that emphasized the consumption of

sport, consumption of Marquette University men's basketball, and usage of social media (see

Appendix D).

Procedure

Before being able to participate in this study, all participants were sent a link to the

survey in which the first page consisted of an informed consent document (see Appendix E). The

participants were informed about the purpose of the study, what types of questions would be

asked, how long it would take to complete the survey online, and that their participation was

entirely voluntary. After the participant had completed each portion of the survey, they were

thanked graciously for their voluntary participation.

Data Collection

Before the finalized version of the survey was sent out, the survey was tested by the

Primary Investigator and both co-Primary Investigators, all of whom are knowledgeable about

social media and sports. Additionally, 27 other people took the survey as a pre-test, all of whom

have vast experience using social media since each of them obtained the survey via Facebook.

Each of these respondents also has knowledge of sports and college basketball. This helped

improve the validity of the finalized version of the survey. After taking into consideration all of

the suggestions, a finalized copy of the survey was created and sent out to 3,300 Marquette

University men's basketball season ticket holders. This does not include the entire Marquette

University's student population, as they are not considered full paying season ticket holders.

Data was collected solely through digital means online. Each season ticket holder

received an email detailing the purpose of the survey as well as a link to the survey. If they liked

to participant, they were asked to click on the link that would direct them to a page further

explaining the purpose of the survey and the study in a consent form. The site used for the survey

was a version of Opinio.com that is associated with Marquette University. Completed survey

responses were obtained at the end of the three-week period granted by the Online Survey

Review Group from February 12, 2013, until March 5, 2013.

Results

There were 829 complete responses to the survey out of the 3,300 e-mails that were sent

out online to Marquette University men's basketball season ticket holders. This is a response rate

of 25.12%, which was much higher than anticipated. This current study used factor analysis to

evaluate the construct validity of the instrument and comparative analysis for analyzing the

collected data. All collected data was transferred from a Microsoft Excel document to SPSS, which stands for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. A high Cronbach alpha shows that the participant's answers are consistent based on the set of questions, while a low Cronbach alpha would show that their answers are inconsistent based on the question set. The Cronbach alpha for the modified version of SFQ was .85, while the Cronbach alpha for the modified version of the SSIS was .78. It was expected that the SSIS would have a lower Cronbach alpha than the SFQ based on the larger amount of items being asked in this section. Furthermore, the lower the P-value means the difference between the variables is significant, which was used when testing the stated hypotheses of this study. A one-way ANOVA t-test was used to test the hypotheses and analyze the collected set of data, which was appropriate for this study based on the larger sample size of participants.

The majority of participants in this survey were predominantly married (77.51%), White/Caucasian (96.28%), males (76.12%) who had at least obtained a Bachelor's degree (46.51%), and had at some point attended Marquette University as a student (76.35%). In comparison, females consisted of 23.88% of the participant population. As for the age of the participant population, no single age group stood out. The highest groups were over the age of 61 and between the ages of 51-60, both at 23.65% respectively. Additionally, 16.03% were between 41-50, 17.38% were between 31-40, and 17.04% were between 24-30. The smallest population was between the ages of 18-23 at 2.24%, which was expected since current college students were not included in this participant population sample. Nevertheless, males did significantly outnumber females for every age category listed other than between the ages of 18-23 in which there were 6 female participants in comparison to 14 male participants. The highest segments of participants in this survey were males over the age of 61, in which there were 176 participants,

and males between the ages of 51-60, in which there were 160 participants. The highest segment

of female participants in this survey were between the ages of 51-60, which consisted of 51

participants; however, the female population was relatively equally spread out across all age

segments.

As for race or ethnicity of the participant population, the second highest total was that of

Latino/Hispanic at 1.35%, which is significantly lower than the White/Caucasian segment at

96.28%. In regards to the highest level of education that the participants completed, 46.51%

received their Bachelor's degree, 28.83% received a Post Graduate degree, and 14.53% received

a Doctorate degree. The highest segment reported in terms of marital status was married at

71.51%, however, 21.85% did report being single. As for the 76.35% of the participants that

reported attending Marquette University at some point, 29.89% reported graduating between

2011-present, which was the highest reported segment. Others were between 1991-2000 at

18.04%, between 1981-1990 at 14.05%, and between 1971-1980 at 15.7%. The final question in

regards to demographic information reported by the participants focused on how long the

participants were season ticket holders, in which the highest reported response was 35.39% for

over 15 years. Additionally, 23.37% had purchased season tickets between 2-5 years, 24.61%

between 6-10 years, and 11.12% between 11-15 years. Not being a season ticket holder consisted

of 2.47% of the surveyed population, thus approximately 97.5% of the participants surveyed

were current season ticket holders. The summary statistics of demographic information collected

from participants in this study is located below in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Demographic Information

	Frequency	**Valid Percent**
Gender		
Males	679	76.1%
Females	213	23.9%
Age		
18-23	20	2.2%
24-30	152	17.0%
31-40	155	17.4%
41-50	143	16.0%
51-60	211	23.7%
61+	211	23.7%
Ethnicity/Race		
Black/African American	3	0.3%
Asian	6	0.7%
White/Caucasian	854	96.3%
Pacific Islander	2	0.2%
Latino/Hispanic	12	1.4%
Other	10	1.1%
Education Level		
High school graduate/ GED degree	17	1.9%
Some college	47	5.3%
Associates degree	19	2.1%
Bachelors degree	413	46.5%
Post graduate degree	256	28.8%
Doctorate degree	129	14.5%
Other	7	0.8%
Marital Status		
Single	194	21.9%
Married	635	71.5%
Divorced/Separated	31	3.5%
Widowed	19	2.1%
Other	9	1%
Attended Marquette University		
Yes	678	76.4%
No	210	23.7%
Year Graduated		
Before 1960	32	4.4%
Between 1961-1970	73	10.1%
Between 1971-1980	114	15.7%

Between 1981-1990	102	14.1%
Between 1991-2000	131	18.0%
Between 2001-present	217	29.9%
Current student	5	0.7%
Did not graduate	52	7.2%
Years being a season ticket holder to Marquette men's college basketball		
First year	27	3.0%
Between 2-5 years	208	23.4%
Between 6-10 years	219	24.6%
Between 11-15 years	99	11.1%
15+ years	315	35.4%
Not a season ticket holder	22	2.5%

Out of the total number of home games in which the participants attended, the variety of

them answered attending at least half of the 16 total home games that were hosted this year at the

BMO Harris Bradley Center. The highest level reported were from participants that attended

between 8-13 home games, which consisted of 48.03% of the participant population. The second

highest level reported was attending all of the games or every single one, which consisted of

37.38% of the population. Other reported figures are 11.11% for those that attended between 4-7

games, 2.78% for those that attended less than 3 games, and .69% for those that attended no

games. In comparison to attendance, 42.94% of the participants said they watch most of the

games on television or the Internet during a given season, which was by far the highest reported

response. Others responses to this question were all or every single one, which represented

21.18% of the total population; those who watched half of the games were 20.49%; and 14.47%

only watched a few of the games. It is also interesting to note that .93% of the population

reported watching none of the game(s) on television or the Internet, which means that a

significant majority of this population sample of participants keep in touch with how the team is

performing even if they are not attending a contest. A summary of these findings is located in

Table 2 below.

Table 2

Attendance at Games vs. Watching of Games

Amount of Games	Attended	Amount of Games	Watched
None	0.7%	None	.9%
Less than 3	2.8%	Few	14.5%
Between 4-7	11.1%	Half	20.5%
Between 8-13	48.0%	Most	42.9%
All/Every single one	37.4%	All/Every single one	21.2%

In regards to using social media, 47.75% of the population reported using it for more than

three years while 28.59% reported not using it at all. Other reported figures for social media use

are 11.81% for those using it more than two years but less than three, 8.8% for those using it for

more than one year but less than two, 2.55% for those using it more than six months but less than

a year, and .81% for those using it less than six months.

As for the how often participants use social media, Table 4 located below summarizes the

findings for how often participants use social media for general use in comparison to using social

media for sports related purposes. For general use, 44.55% reported using it 15+ times a week,

which was the highest rate of responses. The second highest response was between 1-5 times per

week, which consisted of 26.18% of the population. Other reported figures were 10.41% use it

between 11-15 times, 17.24% use it between 6-10 times, and 1.63% don't use social media. By

comparison, 37.17% of respondents reported using social media specifically for sports related

purposes or reasons between 1-5 times a week, which was the highest rated response for this

item. The second highest rated response was for those that use social media 15+ times a week,

which was reported by 18.75% of the participants surveyed. Other reported figures are 13.65%

for those that use social media between 6-10 times a week and 6.25% use it between 11-15 times

every week for sports related purposes. As for those that do not use social media for sports

related purposes or reasons, this number was much higher than for general usage of social media,

in which 24.18% of the participants reported not using social media in this regard. Table 3 below

summarizes the findings between general usage of social media by the participants surveyed and

usage of social media specifically for sports related purposes.

Table 3

Social Media Usage Amount – General vs. Sports

Amount of Usage	General Usage	Sports Usage
Never/Don't use	1.6%	24.2%
Between 1-5 times per week	26.2%	37.2%
Between 6-10 times per week	17.2%	13.7%
Between 11-15 times per week	10.4%	6.3%
15+ times per week	44.6%	18.8%

In breaking down this usage even further by gender, it appears that gender differences

exist between general use as well as use for sports related purposes. Factor analysis was used for

this breakdown in that a score of 1 meant the participate does not using social media, a score 2

means that they use it between 1-5 times per week, a score of 3 means they use it between 6-10

times per week, a score of 4 means they use it between 11-15 times per week, and a score of 5

means they use it 15+ times per week. Female participants reported a higher overall use of social

media, however, males reported using social media more for sports related purposes. Males also

reported using social media more when attending sporting events, but the findings were very

close in this area of social media use. Results are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Social Media Usage – Males vs. Females

Type of Usage	Males	Females
General Usage	2.62/5.00	2.93/5.00
Sports related purposes	1.66/5.00	1.37/5.00
Attending a sporting event	.95/5.00	.95/500

As for what types of social media the participants use for general purposes, Facebook

was the most popular in that 80.23% of the population uses this social networking site. LinkedIn

was the second most popular social networking site in that 49.42% reported using this site and

the third most popular Twitter, which was reported by 44.32% of the population. Other reported

figures were 11.53% of the population uses Instagram, 5.27% of the population uses FourSquare,

.33% used MySpace, 23.06% uses Google+, and 5.77% reported using another social networking

site. Of those that chose Other (specify) as their response, the most popular answer was by far

MU Scoop, which is a forum for Marquette University athletic fans for every sport associated

with the university. Other popular answers were Pinterest, blogs, and Yelp. By comparison in

site preference of users accessing social media for sports related purposes or reasons, Twitter

ranked the highest with 53.79% of the population with Facebook being a close second at 51.49%

of the population. Other reported sites were 14.71% of the population uses Google+, 3.45% uses

Instagram, 3.22% use FourSquare, and 2.07% use LinkedIn. It is also important to note that no

participant reported using MySpace for sports related purposes or reasons. Results are

summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Social Media Site Preference – General vs. Sports

Social Media Site	**General Usage**	**Sports Usage**
Facebook	80.2%	51.5%
Twitter	44.3%	53.8%
Instagram	11.5%	3.5%
FourSquare	5.3%	3.2%
MySpace	0.3%	N/A
LinkedIn	49.4%	2.1%
Google+	23.1%	14.7%
Other	5.8%	12.4%

Another important aspect of using social media in relation to sports is usage during a

sporting event. For the amount of usage, the majority of participants reported that they use social

media at least once during a sporting event, with 40.44% of the population reporting using it

between 1-3 times during an event. Furthermore, 10.99% report using it between 4-6 times

during an event, 3.52% of the population uses it between 7-9 times, and 5.49% use it over 10

times while at a sporting event. The second largest population represented for this item was those

who choose not to use social when attending a sporting event, which was 39.56% of the

participants surveyed.

It is also important to know which sites fans are accessing while attending an event. Of

the participants surveyed, 55.56% reported using Facebook with Twitter being a close second

with 54.58% of the population reporting using this social media site. The data for the other sites,

which were used significantly less, are Instagram reported being used by 8.17% of the

participants, FourSquare by 6.86%, Google+ by 5.23%, and LinkedIn by 1.31% of the

participants. For those using other social media sites when attending an event, which made up

12.75% of the participants surveyed, the majority of these were choosing to access MU Scoop, a

Golden Eagles blog, or ESPN. While Facebook was used the most, Twitter was reported by

47.2% of the participants as being the easiest to use when attending an event. Facebook was

second with 34.47% of the participants believing this was the easiest site to use, while Google+

was third being reported by 4.97% of the population. It is particularly important to note that

MySpace was not reported to be used when attending a game, and that LinkedIn was not selected

as being the easiest or most enjoyable to use when attending a game. In comparison to attending

a game, questions were asked regarding social media use when watching a sporting event on

television, listening on the radio, and following on the Internet. Twitter was reported being used

by 58.34% of the surveyed participants with Facebook not too far behind at 54.87%. The third

most reported answer was Other, which was selected by 15.93% of the participants, with the

majority mentioning that they use MU Scoop. Google+ was reported being used by 6.19% of the

population when not attending an event. As for which site was easiest to use when following

along with the game on television, the radio, or the Internet, Twitter was again the most popular

choice with 49.41% of the participants choosing this site as being the easiest. Facebook was the

easiest according to 28.82% of the participants; Other, which primarily consisted of MU Scoop

or blogs, was reported by 15%; and Google+ was reported by 6.47% of the population. It is

particularly important to note that MySpace was once again not reported to be used by

participants when not attending a game, and that Instagram and FourSquare were not selected.

Reported results from participants are summarized in Table 6 located below.

Table 6

Site Usage – Attending vs. Not Attending

Social Media Site	Use when attending	Easiest to use when attending	Use when not attending	Easiest to use when not attending
Facebook	55.6%	34.5%	54.9%	28.8%
Twitter	54.6%	47.2%	56.3%	49.4%
Instagram	8.2%	1.2%	1.8%	N/A
FourSquare	6.9%	1.6%	0.6%	N/A
MySpace	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
LinkedIn	1.3%	N/A	0.9%	0.3%
Google+	5.2%	5.0%	6.2%	6.5%
Other	12.8%	10.6%	15.9%	15%

Furthermore, it is important to look at reasons why social media users access social

media. This is also particularly important for sports fans accessing social media, and why they

choose to turn to social media during a sporting event. Two questions specifically focused on a

consumer or fan's primary reasons for accessing social media, with one emphasizing watching a

sporting event and the other when attending a sporting event. For those watching a sporting

event, the most popular responses chosen by all of the respondents were "to see what

others/experts are saying" at 35.03%, "to connect with friends" at 25.13%, and "for informative

purposes (stats, score, time left, etc.)" at 17.65%. In breaking this item down further, it was clear

that gender differences existed between sports fans and social media users. The primary reason

for using social media when watching a sporting event for chosen most by females was

"connecting with friends," which was chosen by 38% of the female participants. This is

significantly higher than the 21% of male participants that chose this response for their primary

reason for accessing social media when watching a sporting event. These findings reaffirm

previous studies that found females use social media primarily for communication purposes.

Furthermore, this current study reaffirmed research found on why males use social media, which

is for observations and to express their opinion. The majority of males in this study mentioned,

"to see what others/experts are saying" as the primary reason for accessing social media when

watching a sporting event, which was 42% of the male population surveyed. In comparison, 25%

of females mentioned this as their primary reason. Nevertheless, this study did find conflicting

results in that females 24% of females mentioned "for informative purposes (stats, score, time

left, etc.)" as their primary reason for using social media when watching a game in comparison to

16% of males. This contradicts previous findings by Empathica (Levey, 2011) in that males are

more likely to use social media primarily for informational purposes in comparison to females.

The fewest response chosen by both genders was "to see if anyone is attending the game."

        In comparison to these responses, a follow-up question was asked regarding the primary

reason for using social media when attending a sporting event. The highest reported response by

females was once again "to connect with friends" which was even higher at 48% of female

participants, which was still more than 34% of males. Based on these findings, it is clear that the

primary reason for using social media in connecting to friends increases when fans attend a game

in comparison to watching a game. Furthermore, "to see what others/experts are saying" was

once again the highest reported response for males at 38% of the population, which once again

reaffirms previous findings that males use social media for observational purposes. However,

unlike the results reported for watching a game, 18% of males reported "for informational

purposes (stats, score, time left, etc.)" as the primary reason to use social media when attending a

game, which is more than the 13% of females reported this as the primary reason. Thus, this

study is able to confirm previous findings from Empathica (Levey, 2011) that the primary reason

for using social media is greater for males in comparison to females is for informational

purposes. The results from participants are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Primary Reason for Using Social Media

	Watching a Sporting Event		Attending a Sporting Event	
	Males	**Females**	**Males**	**Females**
Connecting with friends	21%	38%	34%	48%
Engage in the discussion	21%	10%	8%	4%
See what others/experts are saying	42%	25%	38%	22%
See if anyone is attending the game	0%	4%	2%	12%
Informative purposes (stats, score, time left, etc.)	16%	24%	18%	13%

Furthermore, what device consumers and sports fans access social media is important for

marketers and organizations. Based on the reported results, 39.22% of sports respondents

reported accessing social media on their smart phone, which was the highest reported use. The

second and third highest reported device that is used is desktop computer at 21.26% and laptop at

22.84% while tablet was the device reported being used the least at 10.34%. Also, 6.32% of the

respondents chose Other for a response; however, the majority of the responses were that the

participant did not use social media. In breaking down this question by gender, it is easier to gain

an idea of what devices males prefer to use in accessing social media in comparison to females.

Almost half of the females surveyed reported accessing social media on a smartphone at 48%,

while 19% reported accessing it on a desktop computer, 25% on a laptop, and 8% on a tablet. By

comparison, males also reported accessing social media the most on a smartphone at 40%, while

24% reported accessing it via a desktop computer, 24% via a laptop, and 12% via a tablet. Thus,

there appears to be no gender differences in accessing social media on a laptop, but males do

tend to access social media more using a desktop computer and tablet in comparison to females

that tend to access social media more using a smartphone. Comparative analysis was not done

between gender and the type of device used when attending a sporting event since it was

believed the overwhelming majority would use a smartphone. Table 8 below summarizes these

findings.

Table 8

Device Used to Access Social Media

Device Used	Males	Females
On smartphone	40%	48%
On desktop computer	24%	19%
On laptop	24%	25%
On tablet	12%	8%

One important aspect of social media for users is posting or uploading a photo and "checking-in" to a place on a social media format. Previous research has indicated that females are more likely to perform both of these actions, which was reaffirmed in this current study. The questions were asked how often the participant chooses to check-in, post a photo, or upload a photo when attending a sporting event, watching a game with friends, or attending a party for a sporting event. Overall, 44.08% of the participants reported performing one of these actions on social media "once in awhile" while 39.44% reported never performing either action on social media. As shown in Table 9 below, when looking specifically at gender differences, females reported performing these actions much more than males in every option except for one. For posting a photo checking-in on social media, 1% of males reported doing them every time they attended a game or viewing party, while only 1% of females reported performing either of these actions every single time. One reason for this explanation may be based on the lack of females participating in this survey as male season ticket holders significantly outnumbered the female population. Nevertheless, females are more likely to post a photo or check-in on social media, and also report doing so more often. For once in awhile, females outweighed males 49% to 42%,

for half the time, females outweighed males 14% to 6%, and for most of the time, females

outweighed males 8% to 5%. As for never posting a photo or checking-in to a place on social

media, 44% of males reported never performing either of these actions compared to only 28% of

females that were surveyed. Table 9 below summarizes these findings.

Table 9

Uploading/Posting a photo or Checking-in on Social Media

Amount of Usage	Males	Females
Never	44%	28%
Once in awhile	42%	49%
Half of the time	6%	14%
Most of the time	5%	8%
Every single time	3%	1%

In looking at the opinions of consumers and sports fans that use social media, questions

were asked directly about their use in relation to Marquette University men's home basketball

games at the BMO Harris Bradley Center. When asked whether or not there was anything that

can be done to make it easier for fans to use social media, 50.8% of respondents said they were

not sure or did not know, 39.64% of respondents said yes, and 9.57% of respondents said no,

there was not anything that could be done. In regards to what action could be taken to make it

easier and more enjoyable to access social media when attending Marquette men's college

basketball games, 90.28% of the respondents reported making it easier for fans to connect to Wi-

Fi. As for the relationship or connection between season ticket holders and Marquette, 48.15%

reported that Marquette was "neutral" in its response to social media messages directed at them. Furthermore, 19.58% said that it was "very unlikely" that Marquette would respond and 14.55% said that it was "unlikely" for Marquette to respond. The lowest response reported by the participants was the answer of "very likely" which was reported by 2.38% of the participants while 15.34% reported that it was "likely" for Marquette to respond. The final question asked if the respondent believed that Marquette University is doing "all that it can to reach you, the consumer and college basketball fan, specifically through social media," in which 47.47% of the respondents said yes, 11.81% said no, and 40.72% said they were not sure or did not know.

As for questions more directly related to marketing and gender differences, it was found that males are actually much more aware of marketing messages created by sports organizations using social media. In using factor analysis, males reported an average of 3.25 in comparison to females that reported a 3.08, both of which are above the 3.0 level of neutral. When analyzed without including gender, 43.13% of the participants reported that they are "somewhat" aware of marketing messages, which was the highest response reported. Furthermore, 24.34% of the participant population surveyed reported that they were "not really" aware of marketing messages created on social media, which was the second highest reported response. This was the only marketing related question in which males scored higher than females. In regards to remember marketing messages, females scored a 2.44 in comparison to males that scored a 2.38, both of which are below the 3.0 level of neutral. In looking at the results of this data without including gender, 34.47% of the population surveyed reported being "neutral," 27.57% reported being "unlikely" to remember, and 23.79% reported being "very unlikely" to remember. Clearly, while sports fans are aware of marketing messages, they tend not to remember these messages. Lastly, females also scored higher in regards to the type of response that marketing messages

evoke from them, in which females scored a 2.64 and males scored a 2.55, both of which is

below the 3.0 level of "little response." Without including gender in the analysis, 28.68% of the

participants surveyed reported that the messages evoked "no response" from them as a consumer.

One reason for this may be that the majority of the participants were already season ticket

holders, and did not need to respond to messages that promoted purchasing tickets to an

upcoming game. Additionally, 41.15% of the participants reported that the messages evoked

"little response" from them, which was the highest reported response, and 18.95% reported that

it evoked a "subtle and indirect response." Only 2.74% of the participants reported that it evoked

"an immediate and direct response."

     A summary of the reported findings separated by gender is located in Table 10 below.

The scales were adjusted based on the available responses, in which that 1 represents a "no,

never" response in terms of message awareness, "very unlikely" in terms of remembering a

message, and "no response" in terms of a participant's response to a message. The number 3

represents "neutral" or "little response" for these same questions and items, while the number 5

represents "yes, very much" in terms of message awareness, "very likely" in regards to

remembering the message, and "immediate and direct response" in regards to the type of

response the message evoked from the consumer.

Table 10

Marketing Related Question Responses

	Males	**Females**
Awareness of Message	3.25	3.08
Remembering the Message	2.38	2.44
Response from Message	2.55	2.64

In looking specifically at the level of fandom and team identification reported by the participants, a number of things are shown. The level of fandom was rated on a seven-point Likert scale, in which fans 1 means the person has a low level of fandom and is "not loyal" their team while a score of 7 means the person has a high level of fandom and is "very loyal" to their team. Similarly for the level of identification, a 1 indicates that the person "does not identify" with their team while a score of 7 indicates that they "highly identify" with their team. Looking specifically at gender, it appears that male participants rated both their level of fandom and identification higher than females. Males reported having a level of fandom at 5.8, which means that they "highly identify" with their team, while females reported a 5.5, which means that they also "highly identify" with their team, but less in comparison to the male participants. Males also reported having a slightly higher level of team identification with a score of 5.3 in comparison to females that reported having a score of 5.2. The findings are summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11

Gender Differences – Sport Fandom vs. Team Identification

	Males	**Females**
Sport Fandom	5.8/7.00	5.5/7.00
Team Identification	5.3/7.00	5.2/7.00

It is also important to break the level of fandom and team identification by site, which are summarized in Table 12 below. The table shows the level of fandom and team identification for participants that use a specific social media as well as for those participants that do not use that particular site. The results are bolded for those sites in which a greater level of fandom or team identification was found in participants that do not use that particular site in comparison to those that do use that site. The only two instances in which this occurred was for the sport fandom level of Facebook and LinkedIn users, which would indicate that fans with a high level of fandom or are "very loyal" do not use these sites. Nevertheless, the score for both were very comparable to those of users that do use that particular social networking site.

Table 12

Site Preference – Sport Fandom vs. Team Identification

Social Media Site (use vs. do not use)	**Sport Fandom**	**Team Identification**
Facebook	**5.7 vs. 5.8**	5.3 vs. 5.2
Twitter	5.9 vs. 5.7	5.5 vs. 5.1
Instagram	5.8 vs. 5.7	5.7 vs. 5.2
FourSquare	6.1 vs. 5.7	5.5 vs. 5.3

MySpace	6.0 vs. 5.7	5.4 vs. 5.3
LinkedIn	**5.6 vs. 5.7**	5.3 vs. 5.2
Google+	5.8 vs. 5.7	5.5 vs. 5.2
Other	6.0 vs. 5.7	5.4 vs. 5.3

Furthermore, results showed differences in levels of sport fandom and team identification depending on the type of device the participant used to access social media. The results of these findings are summarized in Table 13 below. Respondents that chose other were not included since their answers indicated using one of these devices or indicated they did not use social media. Results showed very little differences in terms of a participant's level of fandom or team identification based on the devices being used to access social media. Nevertheless, results did show that participants with a higher level of team identification did use the mobile devices of a smartphone or tablet to access social media in comparison to those that used the less mobile devices of a desktop computer and a laptop. This shows that fans that identify more with their team use mobile devices.

Table 13

Device Used – Sport Fandom vs. Team Identification

Type of Device Used	**Sport Fandom**	**Team Identification**
Smartphone	5.7	5.4
Desktop computer	5.7	5.2
Laptop	5.7	5.3
Tablet	5.8	5.4

Findings

Based on the results of this current study, it is important to see how impactful social media usage patterns, preferences, and trends are in relation to sports fans consumption patterns and identification levels. This is crucial for marketers in the sports industry. In regards to the first hypothesis, which states, "There is a strong connection and correlation between a person's sports fandom and their level of team identification." Based on the comparative analysis, it appears that the two are indeed positively correlated, but that the correlation is only moderately strong at +.434. The mean for participants on the level of fandom is 5.73 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.02. The mean for participants on the level of team identification is 5.27 with a Standard Deviation of +/- .89. The significance level of this 2-tailed hypothesis is .000, which means that the low P-value is indeed significant. Thus, this hypothesis was proven to be correct in that a connection and correlation does exist between a person's level of fandom and the level of identification they have with a particular team, which reaffirms the results found in previous studies on the topic.

The second hypothesis, which states, "That male fans are more likely to be fans with 'strong loyalty' and 'highly identify' with their team in comparison to female fans" was found to be partially correct. The average level of fandom and team identification were both higher for males; however, the correlation level was stronger for female fans. The average fandom level for males is higher at 5.81 with a standard deviation of +/- .98 in comparison to the average of female fans at 5.47 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.12. As for the average team identification level, the average for male fans was also higher at 5.29 with a standard deviation of +/- .89 in comparison to the average of female fans at 5.21 with a standard deviation of +/- .88 in comparison to male fans. The correlation between fandom and team identification level was

positive, but not strong at for both genders. For males it was +. 428, while for females it was +. 449. Thus, there are no significant gender differences between how male and female fans identify with their team as fans, which disproves the hypothesis for this current study as well as results from previous studies. One possible explanation for why there is a slightly higher correlation for female fans this is that they tend to identify less with their team than males in addition to having a lower level of sports fandom in comparison to males. This finding reaffirms previous findings (James & Ridinger, 2002; Robinson & Trail, 2005) in that females tend to be fans of a particular team while males are fans of sport in general.

Hypothesis three, which states, "That females use social media more than males, but that males will use social media for sports related purposes or reasons more than females" was found to be correct. For the general use of social media, the average for females was 2.93 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.19, which would make the average for females between 1.74 and 4.12. Using factor analysis, this means that females tend to use social media between 11-15 times per week with a standard deviation that would be between 6 times per week and 15 plus times per week. In comparison, the average for males was 2.62 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.35, which would make the average for males between 1.27 and 2.97. This means that males tend to use social media between 6-10 times per week with a standard deviation between 1 time per week and 15 times per week. Thus, males use social media for general purposes less than females. However, in regards to using social media for sports related purposes, males were found to use social media at 1.66 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.48, which would mean the average use between .18 and 3.14. This means that using factor analysis, males use social media for sports related purposes between 1-5 times per week with a standard deviation between 1 time per week and 15 times per week. In comparison, the average use of social media for sports related

purposes or reasons at 1.37 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.18, which would mean the average

use is between .19 and 2.55. This means that females use social media for sports related purposes

between 1-5 times per week with a standard deviation between 1 time per week and at max 10

times per week. Furthermore, in regards to using social media when attending a sporting event,

no gender differences were found in that the average use for males was .95 with a standard

deviation of +/- 1.15 while the average use for females was .94 with a standard deviation of +/-

.81. The results for both questions regarding general social media use were significant in that the

P-value for both was below .05, which means that both were reliable. Nevertheless, the question

regarding general social media did appear to be more reliable than the question regarding social

media for sports related purposes.

    The fourth hypothesis, which states "That sports fans and season ticket holders with a

high level of fandom and team identification will use Twitter, and that sports fans and season

ticket holders with a low level of fandom and team identification will use other social media sites

or social networking sites (SNS)," was also proven to be correct. For participants that used

Twitter, their average level of fandom was 5.85 with a standard deviation of +/- .91 in

comparison to those that do not use Twitter, in which their level of fandom was 5.67 with a

standard deviation of +/- 1.07. By comparison, the average level of identification for those that

use Twitter was 5.54 with a standard deviation of +/- .85 while the average level of identification

for those that do not use Twitter was 5.15 with a standard deviation of +/- .88. The results for

both of these were found to be significant at under a P-value of .05. Furthermore, a number of

other social media sites were found positively correlated between sports fandom and team

identification. There were no instances reported in which a fan's team identification level was

greater having not used that particular social media site. The only two instances in which a sports

fandom was found to be greater amongst users not using a particular social media site was for Facebook and LinkedIn, which contradicts previous findings on the topic.

The fifth hypothesis, which states, "That sports fans and season tickets holders with the highest level of fandom and team identification will use mobile devices such as a smartphone or tablet, while sports fans and season ticket holders with a lower level of fandom and team identification will not use a mobile device such as a desktop computer," was proven to be correct. Out of all the devices in which participants reported using social media, the level of fandom and level of identification was lowest amongst those that used a desktop computer is access social media. The desktop computer is the least mobile (and could also be considered completely immobile) device in which a participant can access social media, and the level of fandom for these participants was 5.69 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.03 while the level of identification was 5.19 with a standard deviation of +/- .87. By comparison, the second least mobile device is the laptop, which the level of fandom was 5.71 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.04 and the level of identification was 5.29 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.05. The level of fandom for the smartphone was less lower than that of the laptop at 5.59 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.04, and is only slightly higher than that of the desktop computer. However, the level of identification for the smartphone was 5.44 with a standard deviation of +/- .84, which is significantly higher than the laptop and the desktop computer, and was also the highest identification level reported for any of the devices. Furthermore, the level of fandom for the tablet was higher than the laptop and desktop computer at 5.84 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.01, which was the highest fandom level reported for any of the devices. The tablet also had a higher level of identification than the laptop and desktop computer at 5.39 with a standard deviation of +/- .95. The level of fandom for this hypothesis was not significant in that the P-

value was .544, however, the level of identification was significant in that the P-value was .04, which is below the .05 P-value significance level requirement criteria. This is important since it is believed that the level of identification amongst sports fans has a more positive financial impact for marketers and organizations in that a higher identification with sport and a team increases a person's purchasing behavior. On the other hand, a higher level of fandom does not yield similar results based on previous research studies.

The final hypothesis, which states, "That female sports fans, season ticket holders, and social media users are much more aware of marketing messages posted online via social media, have a much better memory of marketing messages posted online via social media, and have a larger response to marketing messages posted online via social media," which was partially proven to be correct. In regards to being aware of marketing messages, this part of the hypotheses was disproven as males reported having a better awareness. The average score for males was 3.25 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.16 while the average score for females was 3.08 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.14. Nevertheless, the other two parts of this hypothesis was proven correct in that females have a better memory of marketing messages and have a larger response to marketing messages posted online via social media. In terms of remembering marketing messages, the average score for females was 2.44 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.00 in comparison to males whose average score was 2.38 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.03. As for responding to marketing messages, the average score of males was lower at 2.55 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.20 in comparison to females whose average score was 2.64 with a standard deviation of +/- 1.14. Unfortunately, a large number of responses were discarded for these three survey questions due to a lack of response, and none of these correlations were deemed to be significant in terms of having a P-value below .05.

Discussion

The results of this study provide support for previous findings on the topic of sport consumption, sport identification, and social media usage. Additionally, the results of this study provided insight into the relationship that exists between sports fans and social media users. A positive correlation was found between a person's level of fandom and a person's level of identification with a particular sports team. This means that the more a person identifies with a team, the bigger fan they will become and the more loyal they will be to that team. The same is also true for consumers that do not identify with a team or only moderately identify with a team, in which case the findings from this study indicate they will be less loyal fans of that team. Additionally, the current findings identified that males have higher levels of fandom and team identification since female participants scored lower in this category.

In regards to social media usage, findings from this study reaffirmed previous research on the topic as well as expanded previous research that was conducted on the topic. Significant gender differences were found in that females use social media more for general purposes based on the ratings reported, while significant gender differences were also found in that males use social media more for sports related purposes or reasons. To add to social media use in the realm of sports, significant gender differences were also found in that males use social media more when attending sporting events in comparison to females, however, this difference was not significant. As for which site sports fans prefer to use, Twitter ranked the highest among all sites that were deemed to have significant differences. Twitter also ranked among the highest for participants that reported having a high level of fandom as well as for fans that had a high level of team identification. Nevertheless, a number of other sites also indicated having participants with a high level of fandom and team identification. Furthermore, it appears that using a social

media site will increase a person's level of fandom (or loyalty) as well as their team identification. This finding is particularly beneficial for marketers and organizations within the sports industry as the consumers will become more loyal fans and will identify more with the team, which in turn generates more revenue for the organization. For Major League Baseball (or MLB) teams and organizations, this is particularly important since there is no salary cap and owners can spend as much money as they want on players. This money often comes from extra money that is generated through such things as merchandise and ticket sales.

The current study evaluated gender differences that exist amongst sports fans in relation to social media, and aimed to eliminate the gap in previous research on both topics. Based on information obtained from previous studies on gender differences that exist amongst sports fans and social media users in addition to data analyzed in this current study, it is clear that marketing and social media will continue to play an important role in the sports industry. In order to maximize the reach of their marketing campaigns, marketers in the sports industry must consider gender differences that exist amongst sports fans as well as gender differences that exist amongst social media users. While it is always easier and more effective to have a marketing campaign that addresses all elements of gender differences, it is also necessary to plan, create, and possibly implement a multitude of campaigns based on what the target demographic segment is for the organization and what segment has the most potential for growth.

More importantly, it is becoming increasingly clear that sports marketers must adjust to changes in usage, trends, and preferences of social media users, which seem to be changing almost on a weekly basis. New social media sites or social networking sites will continue to be created and grasp the attention of users in every realm, in every industry, and in every organization. Thus, it is essential that sports marketers continue to be up-to-date on the latest

trends in what is being used, how it is being used, and where it is being used. As in every

industry, but maybe even more so in sports, it is important for marketers and organizations to be

a leader in terms of addressing consumers' needs via social media. Ultimately, this will have the

biggest influence in remaining connected to their targeted consumer and fan base as well as

encouraging them to be engaged with the organization via social media.

Conclusion

Research Limitations

There are a number of research limitations to this study. The biggest limitation of this

current study is that there was a lack of diversity amongst the participant population in terms of

demographics. Males significantly outnumbered females 679 to 213 and consisted of 70.88% of

the population, however, this may reflect the Marquette population studied. This was also

anticipated based on previous studies that found are more likely to purchase season tickets to

their favorite sport or favorite team in comparison to females. Furthermore, there was a lack of

diversity in regards to the race or ethnicity of the sample population as White/Caucasian

participants made up of 89.14% of the sample population. In order to gain a more realistic

perspective, it would be wise for researchers and marketers to conduct a survey with a much

more diverse participant population sample. As a result of both these limitations, it is difficult to

generalize the findings from this study across a wider population of sports fans and social media

users.

The next limitation of this study is that nearly all of the participants surveyed were season

ticket holders, and may not represent the general fan base. The results of this study could be

skewed due to the overrepresentation of this one particular group. Furthermore, season ticket

holders may also engage in herding behavior in that they all engage in similar behavior without any planned direction. This is often common with large groups as seen throughout history with mobs and riots, but is often evident with large groups of fans at sporting events. This study was also limited in that data was only collected from one consumer segment and fan base for a collegiate men's basketball team, and was not compared to another consumer segment or fan base. There was no comparison data obtained from another source such as the fan base of a collegiate women's basketball team of the same university, a professional team's fan base, or the fan base of another university's men's basketball team.

Another possible limitation to this study is that a significant portion of the participants did not answer a number of questions. For example, when asking what the participant's primary reason for using social media when watching a sporting event, approximately 61% of the participants failed to answer this question or chose not to answer it. In comparing this to a question asking about their primary reason for using social media when attending a sporting event, approximately 64% of the participants failed or chose not to answer this particular question. An additional limitation to this study is that participants may not have understood the definition of social media, or may have had a different definition or ideas of social media than the study intended. Participants may have also had a different definition or understanding of what usage means in the questions "how many times do you use social media." Both of these misunderstandings could have altered the participant's answers to a number of questions regarding social media use.

Future Research

According to Wann & Hamlet's 1995 study, less than 5% of all sport psychology and sport sociology research focused on sports fans. While that number has certainly increased over the course of the last two decades, it still points out that research on sports fans is still in its early stages. Thus, future research and studies must be conducted. Based on this current study on gender differences that exist between social media users and sports fans, there are a number of areas in both fields that will need future research and attention.

Two particular areas will be that of racial or ethnic differences and age differences that exist amongst sports fans as well as social media users. Nielsen's *2012 Social Media Report* found that white consumers are the least likely to take an action after seeing an advertisement posted on a social networking site. This current study consisted primarily of white or Caucasian season ticket holders at 89.14% of the sampled population. Thus, studying a population that is much more diverse may reveal different results and findings for researchers and marketers to incorporate into their social media marketing campaigns. Furthermore, this same Nielsen report found significant differences between social media user and consumers across various regions of the globe, which shows that it may be important to conduct a study that focuses on differences that may or may not exist between different regions of the United States. For example, future studies could look at how sport fans and social media users located in the Midwest differ in their usage, preferences, and habits of those located in other parts of the United States. As for differences among age groups, social media has been shown to have a more immediate impact and influence on the younger generation of users. As a result, it is important to study differences between generations. Nevertheless, certain studies do indicate that the largest growth of social media is in the older consumer and generation segments (Nielsen's *2012 Social Media Report;*

Nielsen's *2011 Social Media Report;* Ruleman, 2012; Nesbit, 2011; Lenhart, 2009). Thus, there

are current opportunities for marketers to reach this consumer segment of sports fans and social

media users.

Additionally, with the various forms of entertainment being offered to consumers in the

world of sports, it will be important for future researchers and marketers to recognize the

difference in benefits that each sport offers to the consumer. As a result, future research will be

needed on multiple teams for comparative analysis. For example, a similar study could be

conducted comparing two similar private universities, one private university and one state

university, or a professional team and a university. Furthermore, a similar study could be

conducted in the future comparing a men's collegiate basketball fan base to that of the women's

collegiate basketball team fan base. A similar study could also be done on the professional level

between a fan base of an NBA team and a WNBA team located within the same local market,

such as the Chicago Bulls and the Chicago Sky or the Minnesota Timberwolves and the

Minnesota Lynx. Studies could also be done across different sports, such as the fan base of a

collegiate basketball team versus the fan base of collegiate soccer team, or the fan base of two

professional teams in the same market such as an NBA team versus an NHL team. Included in

this future research should be studies conducted on individual sports vs. team sports, and how

participants in each of these sports differ from one another in terms of their motivation,

consumption, and identification. Due to the increasingly number of females becoming sports fans

and consuming sport, it is clear that future studies must also be conducted on sports fans of

women's leagues such as the Women's National Basketball Association (or WNBA), the Ladies

Professional Golf Association (or LPGA), and the Women's Tennis Association (or WTA). The

majority of previous research and studies on the topic of sports fans has solely focused around

male-dominated sports in which the only athletes competing are male such as the NFL and NBA.

While researchers and marketers in the sports industry have developed a certain number

of instruments to measure a fan's motivations for consuming sports and identifying with sport or

a favorite team, they have also experienced a great deal of trouble in replicating and validating

their findings across different sports and in different settings. There are a number of tools not

used in this study that would be beneficial for marketers and researchers. A list of some of these

instruments or tools used in previous studies that should be used in future replicated studies are:

the Motivational Scale for Sport Consumption (or MSSC); the Orientation Toward a Sporting

Event (or OSE); and the Team Identification Social Psychological Health Model. Future studies

could also incorporate the Uses and Gratifications Theory into their research since it helps

explain why consumers choose what sporting event to watch as well as what form of media

consumers choose to follow along with a particular sporting event. This will be helpful as sports

marketers continue to compete against other sports marketers as well as other forms of

entertainment across multiple media channels. This could also be used in conjunction with a

revised or modified Television Viewing Motives Scale (or TVMS) that places a particular

emphasis on the use of social media and how it impacts the television viewing of sports fans.

Nevertheless, watching live televised sporting events is an important aspect of being a sports fan,

and as a result, future research needs to study how social media has impacted television-viewing

habits. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to examine the applicability of some of the

identification and consumption patterns of sports fans and social media users in non-sports

contexts and other forms of entertainment. This may lead to some new and interesting insights

for marketers in the sports industry in which they can capitalize on certain areas other forms of entertainment and leisure are lacking.

As for the financial impact of social media marketing, it remains clear that the majority of advertisers remain unconvinced about the effectiveness of paid social media advertising (Nielsen's *2013 Paid Social Media Marketing Report;* Dahill, 2012*).* The growth of this area will continue to be negatively affected by the lack of relevant metrics that can be universally employed by advertisers, researchers, and organizations to measure the effectiveness of social media. Currently, metrics being used to measure Return on Investment (or ROI) are pins, likes, and click-throughs, but the preference is to link paid social media advertising to generated sales and brand lift. Thus, it will be important and essential for advertisers, marketers, and researchers to find a way to appropriately measure the amount of money that is invested in paid social media marketing, which in turn will require future research studies to be conducted.

More research is also needed on interpreting and analyzing information related to the sports virtual experience of video gaming, and how that relates or translates to the overall consumption behavior of sport. This may or may not increase one's purchasing power for sports products, tickets to attend a game, or paying extra for the sports cable package. Nevertheless, the consumption patterns of sports fans for video gaming have important implications for marketers, and are bound to change in the future. Furthermore, future research needs to be conducted to see how effective sports video gaming is as a marketing tool when focused on driving outcomes such as increasing one's brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intention. While future research on social media also needs to conducted to address these questions, it may be interesting to combine both virtual experiences of sports fans and see the results.

Other areas of future research may include what type of specific influence the family composition as well as the social interaction has in regards to what type of sport preferences fans and consumers choose when they are with their friends versus their family.   Future research should also study gender differences between male and female sports fans in what motivates them to watch different types of sports on television, and whether or not this impacts the types of sports each gender consumes via social media. Future studies should continue to research sports fandom motives in the types of relationships that fans have with athletes, how social media has impacted these relationships, and whether or not these relationships impact a fan's motives for consuming sport such as watching on television. If gender role orientation does play an important role in gender differences, then it would be important for future research studies to focus on how important viewing oneself as masculine, feminine or androgynous is to a fan's level of fandom.

In the end, the most important aspect of understanding gender differences that exist between sports fans and social media users is this: marketers and researchers need to continue studying what makes males sports fans and social media users operate in comparison to female sports fans and social media users. The preferences, trends, consumption and usage patterns continue to evolve for both sports fans and social media users, and at times change drastically on a yearly basis. For example, the most emerging social networking site in 2011 was Tumblr, but in 2012 it was Pinterest. In the world of social media, trends and preferences of users will continue to evolve and change, and it is essential that marketers keep up with the trends and adjust accordingly.

Furthermore, the need for information about a specific consumer segment or target base of sports fans is continuing to intensify for marketers in every industry, but especially for sports

marketers. In any city and for any team, sports fans are crucial to the continued success of a sports franchise and organization. As one researcher put it, "By continuing to research sports fans, we will gain valuable insight that will both enhance the experience for fans and draw new and more diverse customers for sports franchises" (Greenwood, 2001, p. 28). Thus, it is of the utmost importance that new studies be conducted and that previous studies be replicated so that marketers, researchers, and decision makers within the sports industry can better understand how social media can positively impact their marketing campaigns. In addition to the continued rise in attendance at sporting events, the amount of television programming that will be dedicated to live coverage of sporting events will continue to rise to unprecedented heights. Ultimately, the more knowledge that is shared on this topic and the more aware marketers are of the benefits, risks, and challenges associated with integrating social media into their marketing campaigns, the more beneficial social media can be for brands, team, and organizations in the wide world of sports.

All in all, as future research studies are conducted and new instruments are developed, marketers will continue to gain a better understanding of how social media impacts the consumption of sports for fans as well as how fans identify with their favorite sport, team, players, and athletic apparel brand. In its *2012 State of the Media: The Year in Sports*, Nielsen showed how "2012 continued to prove that sports content, across all media platforms, is among the most popular and engaging genres and well positioned to thrive in an increasingly fragmented media marketplace and rapidly evolving multi-screen world" (Nielsen, 2012, p. ii). What will 2013 prove?

Concluding Remarks

The world of sports and social media continues to dominate our society as well as exert both social and economic influence within every region of the globe. If there is any certainty in the sports industry, it is that females will continue to play an important role as fans, and that marketers, managers, and decision makers must be aware of the opportunity and revenue potential of this consumer segment. Furthermore, the continued advancement, evolution, and growth of social media will continue to play an important role in how marketers within the sports industry, and any industry for that matter, connect with their targeted market of consumers. Based on the current trends of social media usage, it is apparent that mobile technology will be key for how organizations and marketers integrate social media into their marketing campaigns. Consumers prefer to use new devices whether it is the latest smartphone or trendiest tablet, but also want to be able to connect to their favorite social media site, profile, and the like quicker and easier than ever before. This opens the door for marketers as opportunities continue to arise based on the preferences, consumption patterns, and trends of social media and its users. Nevertheless, the opportunities are also limited by the advancement of technology.

Regardless of the sport, brand, or team, consumers and sports fans will always remain a fundamental and critical element of the marketing strategy for marketers and organizations. Based on previous research, it appears that the consumption of sport, identification with sport, and social media use will be incremental for marketers in developing an integrated social media marketing campaign that meets the needs, grasps the attention, and engages sports fans online. Marketers and organizations that recognize the benefits, risks, and challenges associated with using social media will be able to stay ahead of their competitors in building a relationship with consumers online. Ultimately, gender differences will continue to impact marketers in how they

connect with sports fans and social media users. As the female segment of consumers and sports

fans continue to increase their presence, and as social media continues to create a clouded and

convoluted world online, marketers and organizations need to cater to the needs of both males

and females in order to be successful in today's competitive and global world of business.

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Appendix A: 2013 Social Media Marketing Survey –

Demographic Questions

Demographic Questions:
1) What is your age?
   a. 18 – 23
   b. 24 – 30
   c. 31 – 40
   d. 41 – 50
   e. 51 – 60
   f. 61+

2) What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female

3) What is your ethnicity?
   a. Black/African American
   b. Asian
   c. White/Caucasian
   d. Pacific Islander
   e. Latino/Hispanic
   f. Other (specify): _____

4) What is your highest level of education completed?
   a. Less than a high school degree
   b. High school graduate/GED degree
   c. Some college
   d. Associates degree
   e. Bachelor's degree
   f. Post graduate degree
   g. Doctorate degree
   h. Other (specify): _____

5) What is your marital status?
   a. Single
   b. Married
   c. Divorced/Separated
   d. Widowed
   e. Other (specify): _____

6) Did you attend Marquette University at anytime as a student?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7) If so, what year did you graduate?
   a. Before 1960
   b. Between 1961 – 1970
   c. Between 1971 – 1980
   d. Between 1981 – 1990
   e. Between 1991 – 2000
   f. Between 2001 – present
   g. Current student
   h. Did not graduate

8) How many years have you had season tickets to Marquette University men's basketball games?
   a. First year
   b. Between 2-5 years
   c. Between 6-10 years
   d. Between 11-15 years
   e. 15+ years
   f. Not a season-ticket holder

Appendix B: 2013 Social Media Marketing Survey –

Sport Fandom Questionnaire

Sport Fandom Questionnaire (SFQ):
Please answer each of the following five questions. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers –
we simply want you to indicate the most accurate response by writing the appropriate answer in
the space next to each item.

STRGONLY DISAGREE   STRONGLY AGREE
1   2   3   4   5   6   7

_____1. I consider myself to be a college basketball fan.
_____2. My friends see me as a college basketball fan.
_____3. I believe that following college basketball is the most enjoyable form of entertainment.
_____4. My life would be less enjoyable if I were not able to follow college basketball.
_____5. Being a college basketball fan is very important to me.

Appendix C: 2013 Social Media Marketing Survey –

Sport Spectator Identification Scale

Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS):
Answer the following questions based on how you feel about the Marquette Golden Eagles basketball team. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers, simply be honest in your responses. Please circle your response.

1. How important to YOU is it that this team wins?

Not that important   Very important
1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. How strongly do YOU see YOURSELF as a fan of this team?

Not at all a fan   Very much of a fan
1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. What would be your preference for following along with the game via:
    a. In person
    b. On television
    c. On the radio
    d. Television news or the newspaper
    e. On the internet
    f. On social media

Not Watch   View the whole game
1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Appendix D: 2013 Social Media Marketing Survey – Consumption of Sport,

Marquette University men's basketball, and Usage of Social Media

Directions: Please select the best choice for each answer, unless the question specifically states to answer more than one choice. If you so choose, please select more than one choice for these identified questions.

Survey Questions:

1) How many collegiate or professional sporting events have you attended in the past year?
   a. None
   b. Between 1 and 5
   c. Between 6 and 10
   d. Between 11 and 15
   e. 15 or more

2) How many Golden Eagles men's basketball games do you attend in a given year/season?
   a. None
   b. Less than 3
   c. Between 4 and 7
   d. Between 8 and 13
   e. All/Every single one

3) How many Golden Eagles men's basketball games do you watch on television or on the internet during a given year/season?
   a. None
   b. Few
   c. Half
   d. Most
   e. All/Every single one

4) How long have you been using social media?
   a. Less than 6 months
   b. Between 6 months and 1 year
   c. Between 1 year and 2 years
   d. Between 2 years and 3 years
   e. More than 3 years
   f. Don't use social media

5) Where do you typically access social media the most?
   a. On smart phone
   b. On desktop computer
   c. On laptop
   d. On computer tablet
   e. Other (specify): _____

6) How many times do you use social media in any given week?
   a. Never/Don't Use
   b. Between 1 and 5 times
   c. Between 6 and 10 times
   d. Between 11 and 15 times
   e. 10+ times

7) What types of social media do you typically use? (select all that apply)
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. FourSquare
   e. MySpace
   f. LinkedIn
   g. Google+
   h. Other (specify): _____

   7a) How many times do you use (insert responses from Q7) in a given week?
   a. Never/Don't use
   b. Between 1 and 5 times
   c. Between 6 and 10 times
   d. Between 11 and 15 times
   e. 15+ times

8) How many times do you use social media on any given week for SPORTS related reasons or purpose?
   a. Never/Don't use
   b. Between 1 and 5 times
   c. Between 6 and 10 times
   d. Between 11 and 15 times
   e. 15+ times

9) What types of social media do you typically use for SPORTS related purposes? (select all that may apply)
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. FourSquare
   e. MySpace
   f. LinkedIn
   g. Google+
   h. Other (specify): _____

10) How many times do you use (insert responses from Q9) in a given week for SPORTS related reasons or purpose?

       a. Never/Don't use
       b. Between 1 and 5 times
       c. Between 6 and 10 times
       d. Between 11 and 15 times
       e. 15+ times

11) How many times do you typically use social media when attending a sporting event?
       a. None/Don't use
       b. Between 1 and 3 times
       c. Between 4 and 6 times
       d. Between 7 and 9 times
       e. 10+ times

12) What are the types of social media you use when attending a sporting event?
   (select all that apply)
       a. Facebook
       b. Twitter
       c. Instagram
       d. FourSquare
       e. MySpace
       f. LinkedIn
       g. Google+
       h. Other (specify): _____

13) Which social media site do you feel is the easiest/most enjoyable to use when attending a
   sporting event?
       a. Facebook
       b. Twitter
       c. Instagram
       d. FourSquare
       e. MySpace
       f. LinkedIn
       g. Google+
       h. Other (specify): _____

14) What types of social media do you use when watching a sporting event on television,
   listening on the radio, or following along on the Internet? (select all that apply)
       a. Facebook
       b. Twitter
       c. Instagram
       d. FourSquare
       e. MySpace
       f. LinkedIn
       g. Google+
       h. Other (specify)

15) Which social media site do you feel is the easiest/most enjoyable to use when following the game on television, on the radio, on the Internet, etc.?
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. FourSquare
   e. MySpace
   f. LinkedIn
   g. Google+
   h. Other (specify):_____

16) How often do you post/upload a picture or check-in to a place via social media when attending a sporting event, watch the game with friends, attend a viewing party, etc.?
   a. Never
   b. Once in awhile
   c. Half the time
   d. Most of the time
   e. Every single time

17) What is your primary reason for using social media when watching a sporting event?
   a. Connect with friends
   b. Engage in the discussion
   c. See what others/experts are saying
   d. See if anyone is attending the game
   e. Informative purposes
   f. Other (specify): _____

18) What is your primary reason for using social media when attending a sporting event?
   a. Connect with friends
   b. Engage in the discussion
   c. See what others/experts are saying
   d. See if anyone is attending the game
   e. Informative purposes (stats, score, time left, etc.)
   f. Other (specify):_____

19) Can the Golden Eagles, Marquette University Athletics, and the BMO Harris Bradley Center make it easier for fans such as yourself to use social media when attending a sporting event?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure/Don't know

20) What action do you think the Golden Eagles, Marquette University Athletics, or the BMO Harris Bradley Center should take to make it easier and more enjoyable to use social media when attending men's basketball games? (select all that may apply)

      a. Make it easier for fans to connect to Wi-Fi
      b. Kiosks posted around the arena for fans to use social media
      c. Give/Rent fans tablets to use during the event
      d. Set up a social media station/table for fans to use
      e. Other (specify):_____
      f. Nothing, they are doing everything they can

21) Who do you typically engage in conversations with when using social media? (select all that may apply)
      a. Friends
      b. Journalists/Media
      c. Strangers
      d. Organizations (such as Marquette University Athletics)
      e. Other (specify): _____

22) How likely is Marquette to respond to social media messages sent by you or friends when watching, listening, or attending one of their sporting events?
      a. Very unlikely
      b. Not Likely
      c. Neutral
      d. Likely
      e. Very likely

23) Are you aware of marketing messages created by sports organizations when using social media?
      a. No, never
      b. No, not really
      c. Neutral
      d. Yes, somewhat
      e. Yes, very much

24) How likely are you to remember these marketing messages when making a decision regarding attending a sporting event?
      a. Very unlikely
      b. Not Likely
      c. Neutral
      d. Likely
      e. Very likely

25) What type of response do these marketing messages evoke from you as the consumer?
      a. Immediate and direct response
      b. Subtle and indirect response
      c. Little response
      d. Delayed response
      e. No response
      f. Other (specify):_____

26) How do you typically find out about ticket promotions for attending a Golden Eagles men's basketball game? (select all that may apply)
   a. Newspaper
   b. Television
   c. Radio
   d. Internet
   e. Social Media
   f. Word of Mouth
   g. Email
   h. Other (specify):_____

27) What social media sites do you typically notice ticket promotions to attend a Golden Eagles men's basketball game? (select all that may apply)
   a. Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. FourSquare
   e. MySpace
   f. LinkedIn
   g. Google+
   h. Other (specify): _____

28) How did you learn about social media accounts associated with Marquette University men's basketball? (select all that may apply)
   a. Word of Mouth
   b. Television
   c. University's website
   d. Radio
   e. Internet
   f. Other (specify): _____

29) Do you feel that Marquette University is doing all that it can to reach you, the consumer and college basketball fan, specifically through social media?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Not sure/Don't know

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

Marquette University
Consent to Participate in Online Research

Study Title: Social Media Marketing: How Social Media Has Impacted the Gender Differences that Exist Amongst Sports Fan, and Its Effect on Marketers

Person(s) Responsible for Research: Timothy French is the Primary Investigator (PI), Dr. Paul McInerny is the Co-Primary Investigator (Co-PI), and Kim Mueller is the Secondary Primary Investigator (Secondary PI).

Study Description: The purpose of this research study is to add to the established research on gender differences that exist between male and female sports fans in regards to consuming sport, identifying with sport, and the like. Furthermore, this research study will identify the role that the advancement of social media has had on these gender differences, and how this has impacted the responsibilities and duties of marketers in the sports industry. Approximately 150-300 subjects will participate in this study. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The questions will ask about your familiarity and usage of social media, your involvement in athletics as a fan, and your connection to the Marquette University men's basketball team.

Confidentiality/Participation: Your responses to this survey are completely anonymous and no individual participant will ever be identified with his/her answers. Furthermore, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision will not change any present or future relationship with Marquette University or its athletics department.

Who do I contact for questions about this study: For more information about the study or study procedures, please contact Tim French by either his e-mail, timothy.french@marquette.edu, or by phone, (262) – 617 – 6433.

Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject? Contact the Marquette University's Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at (414) – 288 – 7470.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
By completing and submitting the survey, you are voluntary agreeing to take part in this study. Completing the survey indicates that you have read this consent form and have had all of your questions answered, and that you are 18 years of age or older.

Thank you!

Appendix F: Human Subjects Review Board Approval

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
Be The Difference.

Office of Research Compliance

Schroeder Complex, 102
P.O. Box 1881
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881

P 414.288.7570
F 414.288.6281
W marquette.edu/researchcompliance

January 4, 2013

Mr. Timothy French
Professional Studies

Dear Mr. French:

Thank you for submitting your protocol number HR-2531 titled, "*Social Media Marketing: How Social Media Has Impacted the Gender Differences that Exist Amongst Sports Fans, and Its Effect on Marketers.*" On December 21, 2012, the Marquette University Institutional Review Board granted exempt status for this protocol under Exemption Category #2: Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations.

You may proceed with your research. Your protocol has been granted exempt status as submitted. Any changes to your protocol affecting participant risk must be requested in writing by submitting an IRB Protocol Amendment Form which can be found here: http://www.marquette.edu/researchcompliance/research/irbforms.shtml. These changes must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before being initiated, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the human subjects. If there are any adverse events, please notify the Marquette University IRB immediately.

Please submit an IRB Final Report Form once this research project is complete. Submitting this form allows the Office of Research Compliance to close your file.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Amanda J. Ahrndt, RN, MS, MSN, CIM, CIP
IRB Manager

cc: Dr. Christopher Okunseri, IRB Chair
        Dr. Paul McInerny
        Ms. Sherri Lex, Graduate School

AA/rr