Development and Validation of a Multiple Points of Attachment Index for eSport Consumers

Se Jin Kim, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Janet Fink (Advisor), University of Massachusetts Amherst

Marketing - Fan Identification (Professional Sport)  
Poster  
Session: Poster Session 1  
Abstract 2021-047  
Mode: Synchronous  
Thursday June 3, 2021, 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Understanding sport consumer behavior in different types of sport and contexts is vital for successful marketing, such as segmenting potential/existing spectators and retaining fans. It is especially vital in electronic sports (eSports) which differ from traditional sports in many aspects and which lack academic endeavors that explore differences in consumer behavior in eSports' fans. Thus, the purpose of this research is to 1) identify the points of attachment in eSports fans, and 2) develop and validate a multidimensional scale, the eSports Points of Attachment Index (ePAI) based on the Points of Attachment Index (PAI) previously developed by Robinson and Trail (2005), and 3) test the relationship between the ePAI and consumer behavior intentions. Our overall goal is to discover multidimensional characteristics of eSports spectators’ points of attachment, some of which may be unique to eSports.

Following Churchill’s (1979) recommendation for creating and validating a scale, the process of the proposed study will have four phases. First, an in-depth literature review was conducted for a conceptual understanding of the proposed dimensions of the ePAI. For the second phase, the identified dimensions and items will be examined for further validation and modification by a panel of experts (e.g., academicians, marketing practitioners, eSports fans) who have expertise in sport consumer behavior, scale development, and eSports. The experts will be asked to confirm the scale items’ representativeness of the construct/dimension (Zaichkowsky, 1985) and determine if there is a lack of association, content ambiguity, or redundancy of the dimensions (Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). Then, a pilot study using actual eSports fans will be conducted in which participants, recruited during a live eSports match, will be asked open-ended questions about the ePAI. The findings are expected to allow validation of the ePAI, and/or discover modifications/additions to the instrument, if necessary. The third phase will use a preliminary version of the ePAI generated in the first two phases and will be tested using a different sample of eSports fans to determine validity and reliability. In the final phase, with the revised measure and items, we will use the ePAI to determine how different points of attachment predict behavioral intentions with a different sample.

eSports is similar to a new sport due to lack of history and established traditions, and thus, becoming attached to eSports may be different from attachment to existing sports and teams (Lock et al., 2011). Thus, corresponding with scholars who have explored multiple points of attachment in the context of new sports (Shapiro et al., 2013), it is crucial to understand which points of attachment will be most influential in eSports consumer behavior. By creating the ePAI, we expect to contribute to the literature by developing a valid and reliable points of attachment scale for eSports predict consumer behavior based on the different points of attachment. Ultimately, we hope the ePAI will be able to predict other revenue sources in eSports (e.g., merchandise, sponsorships) (Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003) and be generalized in other demographic contexts.