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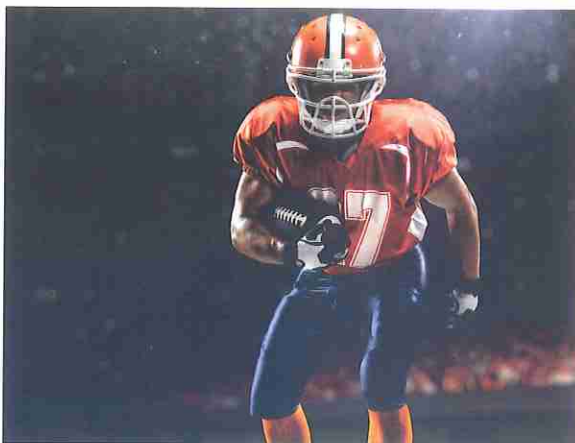
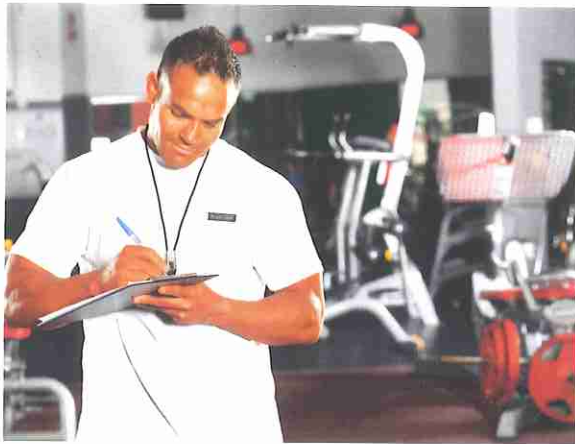
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Evaluation of Attitudes toward Women's Collegiate Athletics

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While previous research has established a clear connection between attitudes and consumption intention for men's spectator sports (Dwyer, 2013; Lim, Martin, & Kwak, 2010; Mahony & Howard, 1998; Mahony & Moorman, 1999; Mahony & Moorman, 2000), the attitude-consumption intention relationship has not been studied in the women's collegiate sports context. The purpose of the current study was to investigate consumer's attitudes towards women's collegiate basketball, examine the impact of the components of attitude on consumers' future consumption intentions, and assess the differences in attitude and consumption intention based on gender and past consumption behavior. Findings supported the Two-Component Model of attitude including cognitive and affective measures. Furthermore, both components of attitude predicted consumption intention. Findings also indicated significant differences between males and females as well as fans who attended at least one women's basketball game compared to those who attended zero games, on consumption intention and attitude towards women's sports.

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Nearly all women's collegiate sport programs operate at a financial loss (NCAA Revenues & Expenses Report, 2013) including the highly regarded University of Connecticut and University of Tennessee Women's Basketball programs. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Revenues and Expenses Report (2015), among all women's sports at the NCAA Division-I level, there is not a single women's sport program that generated revenues exceeding their expenses between 2004 and 2014. Although operating with a financial loss is also common among men's sport programs, there are men's athletic programs operating with a surplus as well. In 2014, 50-60% of football and men's basketball programs in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) turned a net profit. However, only 2% of football and 3% of men's basketball programs in Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), and 7% of men's basketball programs within D-I athletic departments without football programs generated net revenues exceeding their expenses in 2014 (NCAA Revenues and Expenses Report, 2015). The women's sport programs are often subsidized by the higher education institution they represent and in some cases by the men's football and/or basketball programs, if those programs are profitable (Eichelberger, 2011; NCAA Revenues & Expenses Report, 2015). The most commonly cited culprits for this unbalanced budget in women's collegiate athletics include low attendance numbers, low ticket prices, high coaches' salaries, and a society that places a much greater value on men's athletics compared to women's athletics (Eichelberger, 2011).

Among the 20 sports female athletes compete in at the collegiate level, women's basketball is the most popular and attracts the most attention from fans and media. Even then, attendance numbers are quite low when compared with their male counterparts. In 2013, the average attendance for women's collegiate basketball programs was 1,565 at NCAA D-I, 444 at D-II, and 219 at D-III (NCAA Women's Basketball Attendance Numbers, 2015). In order to generate greater revenues, women's collegiate athletic programs should work on drawing larger attendance and viewership numbers since a greater following not only increases revenues from ticket sales and game day sales at event venues, but also increases revenues from sponsorships, advertisement, and broadcasting contracts. Thus, understanding consumers' views of women's collegiate sport might be the key to increasing attendance and viewership numbers that could start the engine of revenue growth.

The evaluation of attitudes toward women's collegiate sports seems to be the logical first step to fully understand the factors which draw fans to women's collegiate sports as well as the disconnect between marketers and potential women's sports fans. In the spectator sports setting, fans' attitudes toward a sport entity reflect their cognitive and affective evaluation of that sport product (Mumcu & Marley, 2017). Cognitive evaluations of a sport product reveal fans' assessment of the product attributes, while affective evaluations are

measured by the individual's self-reported emotions toward the sport product. Understanding both cognitive and affective judgments allows marketers not only to discover consumers' feelings toward their product and services, but also how consumers evaluate their product and/or service with respect to its attributes. This information can be used in differentiating a product or service from its competitors and segmenting the market for the product and/or service (Solomon, 2004).

Moreover, in marketing, the basic assumption is that positively evaluated products will sell while negatively perceived products will be rejected (Mahony & Moorman, 1999). Research has found a positive relationship between attitudes and consumption intentions/behaviors in men's spectator sports context (Dwyer, 2013; Lim, Martin, & Kwak, 2010; Martinez Caro & Martinez Garcia, 2007). Therefore, sport products which can dispel misleading or incorrect negative perceptions about their product and feature the positively perceived attributes will be able to create a much more effective marketing strategy.

The attitudes consumers have toward women's sports have received limited investigation, especially from a marketing perspective. Dixon (2002) studied attitudes toward the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and McCabe (2007, 2008, 2011) investigated attitudes toward the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the effects of multiple gender factors on fans' attitudes. However, neither of these studies investigated the attitude-consumption relationship. Furthermore, these studies have not utilized any attitudinal theory and focused only on the affective component of attitude. Therefore, understanding attitudes toward women's collegiate sport, fans' and spectators' expectation from the sport product, and how it relates to their consumption behavior in terms of attending and viewing games may reveal important information for women's sport marketers, specifically at the collegiate level within the U.S.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate consumer's attitudes towards women's collegiate sport as well as further the understanding of how the components of attitude impact consumers' future consumption intentions. Furthermore, the current study assesses differences in attitude and consumption intention based on gender and past consumption behavior.

Review of Literature

Consumer Behavior Theory

Understanding consumers' decision-making process and factors influencing their behavior have been important to marketing scholars. According to the Overall Model of Consumer Behavior (OMCB; Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2007), motives and attitudes

are two internal factors that drive consumer behavior. Motivation is the reason for behavior, and consumers look for motive satisfaction with their consumption behavior (Hawkins et al., 2007).

In the sport marketing literature, sport fans' and spectators' motives have been studied in various contexts. For instance, fans' and spectators' motives have been examined for different sports (Billings & Ruihley, 2013; Byon, Cottingham, & Carroll, 2013; James & Ross, 2004; Lee, Seo, & Green, 2013; Ruihley & Billings, 2013; Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999). Results of these studies revealed achievement, aesthetic, physical skills of athletes, social interaction, and entertainment value of the sport as motivational factors that drove attendance for the sports under investigation. Studies investigating motivational factors in women's sports (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2003; Lough & Kim, 2004; Trail & Kim, 2011) reported interest in sport, interest in team, escape, excitement, role model, aesthetic, socialization, drama, vicarious achievement, supporting women's opportunities, and interest in players as the motives women's sports fans sought to fulfill with their support.

Although scholars have discovered many of the motives sport fans and spectators are looking to satisfy through sport consumption, during the consumption decision-making process, sport consumers are faced with choosing a product among many alternatives and their selection is based on the product's potential in fulfilling the consumers' needs and motives. According to OMCB (Hawkins et al., 2007), consumers evaluate alternative products by analyzing benefits of product attributes and determine which product provides the most value to them. Moving beyond motivation and studying consumers' attitudes would answer how products are evaluated, and reveal how this evaluation relates to consumption decisions.

Haddock and Maio (2004) defined attitude as "overall evaluations of an object" (p.1), and Bagozzi and Burnkrant's (1979) Two-Component Model of Attitude claimed that these evaluations included both cognitive and affective elements. Cognitive evaluations of a product are based on consumers' beliefs about product attributes (Breckler, 1984; Kothandapani, 1971; Ostrom, 1969), and affective evaluations are consumers' positive-negative emotional responses to the product (Breckler, 1984). Therefore, an individual's overall attitude toward a product is composed of a consumer's beliefs about the product and its attributes, as well as their feelings about the product. Consumer behavior theory also illustrated a relationship between consumers' attitudes and consumption behavior. According to the Two-Component Model of Attitude (Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979), cognitive and affective evaluations of a product led to behavioral intentions, and having favorable attitudes toward a product increased individuals' likelihood of consuming the product (Dwyer, 2013; Fazio, Powell, & Herr, 1983; Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989; Kraus, 1995; Martinez Caro, & Martinez Garcia, 2007).

A review of the attitude literature on spectator sport settings shows that attitude was often measured based on the affect component of attitude and cognitive aspects were excluded. Mahony and colleagues (1998; 1999; 2000) investigated the attitude-behavior relationship for National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) fans where fans' attitudes were measured based on liking-disliking teams. Their results showed that both strong positive and strong negative feelings of fans toward a team led to an increased viewership. Similarly, Lim et al. (2010) examined fans' attitudes towards Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) by focusing on affect and presented a positive influence of attitude towards MMA on fans' actual media consumption. These studies provided supporting evidence of the attitude-behavior relationship in the sport marketing field when attitude was measured with affect items.

When compared to men's sports, attitudes toward women's sports have received minimal attention from academics. Attitudes toward the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) were examined with three studies without any marketing focus (Dixon, 2002; McCabe 2008; 2011). Dixon examined the factors that influence the formation of attitudes toward LPGA and identified media as a more influential factor in attitude formation than having personal contact with LPGA athletes through volunteering opportunities. McCabe (2008) investigated the effects of multi-factorial gender identity (sex, gender identity and gender roles) on spectators' attitudes toward the WNBA. While there was no difference between men's and women's attitudes toward the WNBA, participants who possessed expressive traits and held egalitarian gender roles reported more positive attitudes towards the WNBA than those who did not hold those same traits. Finally, McCabe (2011) found that women's positive feelings (attitudes) toward the WNBA were fully mediated by their psychological involvement with women's basketball. Similar to men's spectator sports, attitudes in women's sports were measured via affect items and ignored the cognitive component of attitude. Exclusion of the cognitive component is more problematic for women's sports as they are niche sports and need to extend their fan base to be sustainable (see Miloch & Lambretch, 2006 and Rosner & Shropshire, 2004 for a further discussion of niche sport qualifications).

In sum, there have been limited empirical investigations of attitudes toward women's sport (cf., Dixon, 2002; McCabe 2008; 2011), and attitudes toward women's collegiate sport remain unknown. In addition, current studies investigating attitude in women's spectator sport setting didn't utilize an attitude framework, and often times measured attitudes based only on affect. Therefore, these studies did not provide any information on how women's sports as products are evaluated by fans in terms of their attributes. Moreover, the relationship between attitude and consumption behavior has not been studied in a women's colle-

giate sport setting. As a result, identifying salient product attributes of women's collegiate sport, specifically basketball, understanding positive-negative evaluations of these attributes and affect toward the product, and how both cognitive and affective aspects of attitude relate to spectators'/fans' consumption intentions could be useful to sport marketers within collegiate athletic departments. Discovered information within the current study could be used to better develop marketing strategies to create positive attitudes toward women's collegiate athletic programs and could potentially increase sport fans' consumption intentions of women's collegiate athletic events.

Hence, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the factor structure and model-fit of the consumer's attitudes towards women's collegiate sport as well as further the understanding of how the components of attitude impact consumers' consumption intentions. The current study also aims to assess differences in attitude and consumption intention based on gender and past consumption behavior. To assist in guiding the purpose of the current study, seven research questions have been developed.

RQ₁: Does the data support the eight-factor Attitude toward Women's Sports Scale?

RQ₂: Does the data fit the Two-Component Model (cognitive and affect) of Attitude?

RQ₃: Which components of attitude predict fans' consumption intentions?

RQ₄: Is there a statistically significant difference in Attitude toward Women's Sport between males and females?

RQ₅: Is there a statistically significant difference in Attitude toward Women's Sport between attendees and non-attendees?

RQ₆: Is there a statistically significant difference in consumption intention between males and females?

RQ₇: Is there a statistically significant difference in consumption intention between attendees and non-attendees?

Method

Participants

In an effort to attract respondents with varying interest in women's collegiate sport, individuals were invited to participate in this study via the athletic department's Twitter and Facebook accounts of a mid-Atlantic Division I major public university. A link to the online survey was posted on the athletic department's Facebook page and Twitter account with a message indicating respondents would be entered into a drawing to win a basketball jersey upon completion of the survey. Similar strategies in sport marketing research have been successfully implemented (e.g., Larkin, Fink, & Trail, 2015).

The sample in the current study contained a total of 438 respondents with 265 completing the survey fully ($n = 265$). Of the respondents, 54.3% were male, the vast majority of the sample was Caucasian (77.4%), followed by African American (7.9%), with the remainder of individuals reporting to be Asian/Pacific Islander (4.2%), Hispanic (3.8%), multiracial (2.6%), or other (0.8%). Household income within the sample had 22.6% of respondents earning greater than \$100,000, 31.3% earned between \$50,000 and \$99,999, 30.2% earned less than \$50,000 and 12.1% of respondents indicated they would rather not reveal their income. From an educational perspective, 0.4% of respondents had some high school education, 1.9% had a high school degree, 18.1% had some college experience, 4.5% had achieved an Associate's degree, 48.3% had a Bachelor's degree, 18.5% had a Master's degree, and 4.9% indicated they had earned a doctoral degree. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to 74 years old with an average of 35.5 years and a median age of 32.

Instrument

The preamble to the survey instructed participants that the study was aiming to investigate their opinions about the school's women's basketball program. The instrument consisted of four sections: the Attitude Toward Women's Sports (ATWS) Scale (Mumcu, Lough, & Barnes, 2016), a measure of attendance frequency, consumption intentions, and demographic items. The 34-item ATWS scale was developed based on Bagozzi and Brunkrant's (1979) Two-Component Model of Attitude and covered cognitive and affective aspects of attitudes toward women's sport products. Evaluations of product attributes of women's sports made up the cognitive component of attitudes while affect was measured by emotional responses to the women's sport program. Respondents were asked to provide their level of agreement with respect to the women's basketball program under investigation for each of the seven factors of the ATWS. All 34 items were measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. The affect factor was measured using a seven-point semantic differential anchored with each affective component and its antonym (see Table 1). Higher scores represented a higher positive attitude toward women's sports.

The consumption intention section contained six items gathered from Cunningham and Kwon (2003), Ko, Kim, Claussen, and Kim (2008), and Kwon, Trail, and James (2007). Three of the items assessed the respondents' intention to attend or watch games on television in the future while the remaining three items measured intentions to watch games in the future. Response options ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores represented a higher likelihood of consumption of women's basketball in terms of attendance and viewership. Respondents were also asked to report the number of women's basketball games they had attended during the 2013-2014 season. Finally, demographic information was also collected.

Analyses

The online survey was hosted by FormSite.com and analyzed via SPSS 22 and AMOS 18.0. A CFA was conducted using AMOS to assess the psychometric properties of the ATWS scale. Respondents with missing data were deleted from the analysis as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (1996). The CFA examined the relationship between 34 observed variables and eight latent attitudinal constructs. The error terms for all 34 observed variables were constrained not to correlate while the eight latent constructs were allowed to correlate freely. Goodness-of-fit indices were used to examine how well the data fit the measurement model.

Once the factor structure of ATWS scale was confirmed, a structural equation model for the Two-Component Model of Attitude was estimated jointly with the measurement model. The Two-Component Model of Attitude examined the relationship between cognition, a second order latent variable with four first order indicators (product appeal, athlete quality, opportunity for women, and drama), and affect, a first order latent variable, and their bivariate correlations with consumption intention.

The impact of attitude on consumption intention was assessed via multiple linear regression. Consumption intention was regressed on the five ATWS factors to determine which specific factors were significant predictors of future consumption. The impacts of gender and past attendance frequency on ATWS were assessed via two separate MANOVAs. Finally, two one-way ANOVAs were conducted to assess difference in Consumption Intention based on gender and past attendance frequency.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A first order confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to address research question one and evaluate the measurement model with 34 items explaining eight latent constructs (accessibility, aesthetic, excitement, athlete quality, opportunity for women, drama, entertainment value, and affect). The goodness of fit indices illustrated that the data supported the measurement model ($\chi^2/df = 2.264$, CFI = .916, RMSEA = .069, TLI = .906). However, Cronbach's alpha and average variance extracted (AVE) statistics reported reliability, as well as convergent and discriminant validity issues for four of the eight scales. Cronbach's alpha for the entertainment value scale was .69 which was below the acceptable level of .70 for social sciences (Cortina, 1993). In addition, AVE levels for accessibility (.439) and entertainment value (.472) scales were below the cut off value of .50 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) indicating convergent validity issues. Finally, the accessibility, athlete quality, and aesthetic constructs were found to have discriminant validity issues as the square

root of AVE was less than one of inter-construct correlations (Hair et al., 2010). As a result, entertainment value and accessibility scales were deleted, and athlete quality, excitement and aesthetic scales were further investigated for discriminant validity.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principle component extraction and promax rotation was performed to investigate discriminant validity of excitement, aesthetic, and athlete quality. The result of the initial EFA reported one factor accounting for 67.85 percent of the variance of the 14 items in athlete quality, excitement and aesthetic. When the principle component analysis was forced to extract three factors, the pattern matrix reported cross loadings for seven items ranging from .439 to .218. After removal of the items with cross loadings, the EFA reported a two factor model accounting for 79 percent of the variance, where athlete quality emerged as a distinct factor with three items, and aesthetic and excitement scales merged to become a single construct with 4 items which was labelled as product appeal. Prior to conducting another CFA, Cronbach's *alpha*, item-total correlations, and *alpha*-if-item-deleted statistics were reviewed for the remaining five factors (product appeal, athlete quality, opportunity for women, drama, and affect) with 20 items to investigate if factors produce reliable scores. One of the semantic differentials from the affect scale (negative-positive) was deleted due to low item-total correlations (.495). Cronbach's *alpha* statistics for the factors ranged from .861 (athlete quality) to .939 (affect), and *alpha* was equal to .958 for the overall ATWS Scale. All Cronbach's *alpha* statistics were above the minimum criterion of .70 (Cortina, 1993). Reliability analyses results are presented in Table 1.

A CFA was conducted to assess the final measurement model with 5 factors and 19 items. The measurement model attained a good fit. The χ^2 value divided by the degrees of freedom was 2.465, implying a close fit based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations. The RMSEA value of .074 reported a moderate fit, and both TLI and CFI reported good fit with .942 and .952, respectively (Brown, 2006). The parameter estimates and the accompanying *t*-test of significance for the relationship between each scale item and its respective construct were significant at $p < .001$ level (see Table 1 for parameter estimates, factor loadings, and *t*-values). The factor loadings ranged from a low $r = .681$ to a high $r = .911$. The average variance extracted by each factor ranged from .650 for drama to .799 for affect. The results of CFA confirmed the existence of five unique factors in attitudes toward collegiate women's basketball and the data were a fit for the measurement model. The ATWS scale was developed as a generic instrument to measure attitudes towards any women's sports at any level (Mumcu & Marley, 2017). Due to this being the first use of the scale in women's college basketball setting, validity and reliability of the scale were examined and a psychometrically sound ATWS scale emerged with 19 items and five factors. Therefore, in response to research question one, the data within the current study did not support the eight-factor ATWS scale.

Table 1

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results of Attitude Toward Women's Sports Scale: Individual Scale Items, Factor Loadings, Path Coefficients, t-value, AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha (n = 265)

Scale Factors and Items	Factor Loadings	Path Coefficients	t-value	AVE	Alpha
Product Appeal (PAPL)				.720	.910
There is a beauty inherent in VCU Women's Basketball games	.831	.936	17.91***		
VCU Women's Basketball games are pleasing to the eye.	.833	.916	17.99***		
VCU Women's Basketball games provide a fun atmosphere.	.845	.933	18.51***		
VCU Women's Basketball games are full of excitement.	.883	1.072	18.55***		
Athlete Quality (ATHQ)				.680	.861
VCU Women's Basketball players are experts at their sport.	.799	.985	15.88***		
VCU Women's Basketball players are the best at their sport.	.799	1.095	15.89***		
VCU Women's Basketball players have excellent skills.	.873	1.018	15.89***		
Opportunity for Women (OFW)				.703	.897
VCU Women's Basketball program increases opportunities for young women in life	.887	1.048	19.46***		
VCU Women's Basketball program creates areas that young women can take part in life.	.852	.926	14.16***		
VCU Women's Basketball program plays a leader role in gaining gender equality in life.	.733	.970	18.13***		

VCU Women's Basketball opens up opportunities for young women to excel in life.	.874	.954	19.46***		
Drama (DRA)				.650	.878
AT VCU Women's Basketball games are usually close matches.	.822	.894	11.79***		
At VCU Women's Basketball games, competitions are usually not one-sided.	.808	1.378	11.26***		
At VCU Women's Basketball games, competitions are usually tight matches.	.895	1.294	12.94***		
At VCU Women's Basketball games, competitions are not blow-outs.	.681	1.226	10.73***		
Affect (AFCT)				.799	.939
Dislike-Like	.900	.956	20.11***		
Unfavorable-Favorable	.911	.979	20.56***		
Worthless-Valuable	.908	.952	20.46***		
Unimportant-Important	.855	1.045	20.11***		

Note: *** = $p < .001$

Structural Equation Model

The Two-Component Model of Attitude (Bagozzi & Brunkrant, 1979) was chosen as the framework for the present study, and according to the framework, cognition and affect are components of attitude which lead to behavioral intentions together. A structural equation model was estimated to answer research question two and test model fit for the Two-Component Model of Attitude. Goodness of fit statistics for the structural equation model indicated that the Two-Component Model of Attitude achieved an acceptable fit for the data. The χ^2 value of 76.809 divided by 25 degrees of freedom was 3.072 indicating a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The RMSEA was .089 reporting an acceptable fit (Brown, 2006). The NNFI value was .964 and the CFI value was .975 which indicated a close-fitting model (Brown, 2006). Taken together, goodness of fit indices for the Two Component Model of Attitude signified that the model achieved an acceptable fit for the present data. In the proposed model, all paths were significant ($p < .001$). The path coefficients of affect to consumption intention (.441) and cognition to consumption intention (.988) were significant at

$p < .001$ level, which indicates both affect and cognition were significant predictors of consumption intentions. A one-unit increase in cognitive attitude would result in 98.8% increase in the likelihood of respondents' future consumption of women's college basketball, while a unit increase in affective attitude would result in 44.1% increase in consumption intention. Standardized results are presented in Figure 1. Results indicate the data supports the notion of a Two-Component Model of Attitude in women's college basketball setting.

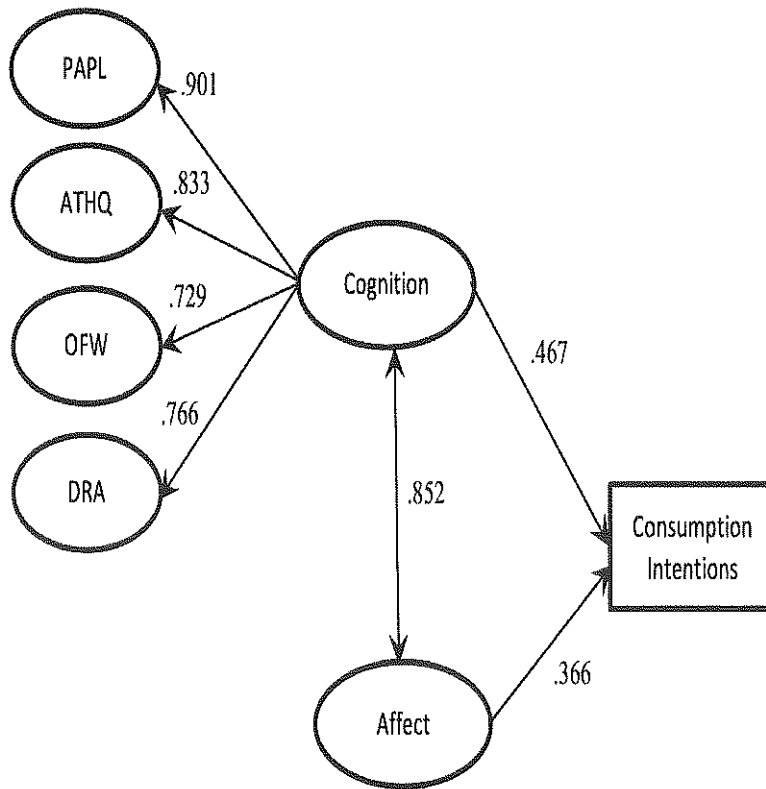


Figure 1: Two Component Model of Attitude ($n = 265$). Standardized regression weights presented.

PAPL = Product Appeal; ATHQ = Athlete Quality; OFW = Opportunity for Women; DRA = Drama; AFCT = Affect

Attitude's Impact on Consumption Intention

A multiple linear regression was used to assess the third research question on the impact of ATWS on respondents' consumption intentions. Each of the assumptions for multiple regression were assessed and the data were not in violation of any of the assumptions. The overall regression model predicting respondents' consumption intentions was statistically significant and the five factors associated with ATWS in the regression model explained approximately 65% of the variance within respondents' intention to consume women's basketball at the university within the current study. Examination of the regression coefficients revealed product appeal ($p < .001$, $\beta = .41$), drama ($p < .001$, $\beta = .20$), and affect ($p < .001$, $\beta = .43$) as statistically significant positive predictors of respondents' intention to consume this sport product in the future. Opportunity for women ($p = .077$, $\beta = -.09$) and athlete quality ($p = .201$, $\beta = -.08$) did not contribute to the prediction of respondents' consumption intentions.

Impact of Gender and Past Attendance on ATWS and Consumption Intention

Research question four was assessed via a MANOVA and results indicated there was a statistically significant impact of gender on ATWS, $V = 0.08$, $F(5, 250) = 4.14$, $p = .001$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed a statistically significant difference between genders on all five ATWS factors, and female respondents scored higher on each of the five factors compared to male respondents. A second MANOVA examined the impact of past attendance on ATWS to address research question five. Respondents who had not attended a women's basketball game during the 2013-2014 season for the team within the current study were placed in the first group ($n = 137$) and those who had attended between one and 13 games ($n = 119$) for the 2013-2014 season, were placed in the second group. Box's test of equality was significant indicating a violation of the homogeneity of covariance assumption. However, according to Ito and Schull (1964) MANOVA results are quite robust to this assumption violation so long as group sizes are equal and the sample size is large; the current study satisfies both of these conditions. Furthermore, Pillai's trace statistic was analyzed, as this is the most robust to the violation of assumptions so long as sample sizes are equal (Field, 2009). Using Pillai's trace, there was a statistically significant difference between attendees and non-attendees on the ATWS, $V = 0.26$, $F(5, 250) = 18.15$, $p < .001$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed those respondents who had attended at least one game reported a statistically significantly greater score for each of the five factors when compared to respondents who had never attended the women's basketball games. See Table 3 for the complete listing of univariate outcomes.

Table 2

Correlation Coefficients among Factors, Mean and Standard Deviations

	PAPPL	ATHQ	OFW	DRA	AFCT	Mean	Standard Deviation
PAPL	1					4.42	1.46
ATHQ	.739**	1				4.80	1.35
OFW	.639**	.658**	1			5.41	1.27
DRA	.684**	.665**	.552**	1		4.42	1.13
AFCT	.751**	.693**	.636**	.595**	1	5.14	1.53

Note: ** = $p < .01$

PAPL = Product Appeal; ATHQ = Athlete Quality; OFW = Opportunity for Women; DRA = Drama; AFCT = Affect.

Table 3

Univariate Results of MANOVA for Impact of Gender and Attendance on Attitude Toward Women's Sports (n = 265)

		Male (n = 144)	Female (n = 112)		Non-Attendees (n = 118)	Attendees (n = 138)
	F	M (SD)	M (SD)	F	M (SD)	M (SD)
PAPL	9.25**	4.17 (1.50)	4.73 (1.37)	45.36***	3.80 (1.35)	4.94(1.36)
ATHQ	20.19***	4.48 (1.41)	5.22 (1.17)	27.15***	4.35(1.35)	5.20(1.25)
OFW	10.58**	5.21 (1.37)	5.72 (1.08)	9.07**	5.17(1.37)	5.65(1.15)
DRA	7.34 **	4.27 (1.20)	4.65 (1.03)	50.85***	3.93(0.99)	4.87(1.09)
AFCT	11.01**	4.87 (1.60)	5.51 (1.39)	39.45***	4.54(1.61)	5.67(1.27)

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$

PAPL = Product Appeal; ATHQ = Athlete Quality; OFW = Opportunity for Women; DRA = Drama; AFCT = Affect.

Two one-way ANOVAs were conducted to assess research questions six and seven. ANOVA results revealed there was a statistically significant difference between males and females with respect to their consumption intention $F(1, 254) = 7.21, p = .008$, where females ($M = 4.25, SD = 1.75$) had a greater intention to consume compared to males ($M = 3.64, SD = 1.87$). A final ANOVA indicated there was also a statistically significant difference between respondents who attended zero games during the 2013-2014 women's basketball season ($M = 2.88, SD = 1.46$) and respondents who attended at least one game during that same season ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.50$) with respect to their consumption intention $F(1, 254) = 140.46, p < .001$. Respondents who attended previous games reported greater consumption intentions than respondents who did not attend games previously.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate consumer's attitudes towards women's collegiate sport as well as further the understanding of how the components of attitude impact consumers' future consumption intentions. Furthermore, the current study assessed differences in attitude and consumption intention based on gender and past consumption behavior. The study strategically aimed to continue to fill the attitude-based research gap within the sport marketing literature base. As opposed to the heavily studied dimension of motivation, attitude has been scantily researched especially in the women's sport context.

Theoretical Implications

Much of the previous research on attitude in sport marketing focused on the affective portion of attitude essentially ignoring the cognitive aspect of the Two-Component Model put forth by Bagozzi and Burnkrant (1979). The current study, as guided by research question two, found that attitudes toward the women's college basketball program as the center of this study clearly encompassed both the cognitive and affective components of attitude. Furthermore, both of these factors were significant predictors of respondent's consumption intention. These findings both support Bagozzi and Burnkrant's (1979) Two-Component Model of attitude and demonstrate that previous research focusing on only the affective component of attitude (e.g., Lim et al., 2010; Mahony & Moorman, 1999; McCabe, 2008) presented only a portion of the attitude dimension. Extending the support of utilizing the Two-Component Model in the future is due to the fact the findings of the current study also indicated that both factors (cognitive and affective) were significant predictors of respondents' consumption intention. The inclusion of cognitive factors along with affective factors provides sport marketers with a clearer picture of how consumers (and non-consumers) view

their product. Therefore the inclusion of both cognitive and affective measures of attitude appears to be paramount for future sport marketing research.

An in-depth investigation of the measurement model reported supporting evidence for the five-factor ATWS scale. As evidenced by the first research question the present study also aimed to validate the ATWS. Construct validity of the ATWS scale was established with a confirmatory factor analysis, which indicated a close fit for the data and its 19 items measuring five factors. Overall, the ATWS was confirmed to be a psychometrically sound measure of fans' attitude.

Practical Implications

From a more pragmatic perspective the current study revealed findings that could directly impact the actions of collegiate women's sport marketers. The current finding pertaining to the insignificant results of athlete quality in predicting future consumption supports the sentiments of Greenhalgh et al. (2011) that marketers of women's teams should refrain from focusing on player skill as an attribute aimed to attract fans. As suggested by Greenhalgh et al. (2011), many fans draw comparisons across a variety of sports and even though women's collegiate basketball players may be the best at their craft; when compared to players in the NBA or men's collegiate players, the women do not fare well. The current study supported this notion as athlete quality was not found to be a factor predicting consumption intention.

Interestingly, the notion that women's collegiate basketball provides opportunities for women proved to be heavily supported – having the greatest mean compared to the other four factors of the ATWS. However, opportunities for women was not found to be a significant predictor of consumption intention telling us that while fans feel this sport product does provide opportunities for women, this factor does not move the dial with respect to consumption intention. From a pragmatic perspective, sport marketers may need to rethink the reasons they would promote the fact that women's collegiate basketball provides opportunities for women. While there may be many positive impact from these tactics, according to the results of the current study, increasing attendance is not one of them.

Rather, the current study indicated that marketers would be best served focusing on the product appeal, drama, and emotional (Affective) aspects of their women's athletic events. While some of these factors may be out of the reach of the marketer (i.e., drama-the competitiveness of games), factors such as product appeal, and affective components should be keys to the marketing plans of women's collegiate sports. One example of a campaign outside of the collegiate realm was Proctor and Gamble's 'Thank You Mom' campaign during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games which garnered over 850,000 Facebook 'likes'. This campaign focused on all of the sacrifices that Olympic athletes and their parents make to support

and develop Olympians. This very effective campaign could be replicated in the women's collegiate sport realm enabling the marketer to highlight the excitement of their events while creating an emotional tie to the athletes and teams featured in their campaign. ESPN's human-interest piece following Brittney Griner to China could act as another example of how to create an emotional tie between fans and one point of attachment with a women's team.

The current study also found that females were more likely to consume women's college basketball in the future and females reported statistically significantly higher scores on all five factors of the ATWS scale. This is in contrast to the work of McCabe (2008) where she found no gender differences in attitude. According to the results from the current study, from a segmentation perspective, it would be wise for sport marketers to focus their efforts differently based on gender. Similar to the strategies employed by many WNBA teams, collegiate women's basketball programs may want to first focus on female consumers before moving to the more elusive male consumers. Additionally, as noted in the introduction, most women's basketball programs fail to turn a profit and are likely to have a very restrictive marketing budget. Hence, it would be wise for marketers of these types of sports to focus on their most easily convertible consumer: in this case female fans. Female fan appreciation night or 'girls night out' are two potential promotions collegiate marketers may wish to implement in an effort to attract female fans.

Similar to the gender differences, the current study found that those fans who attended between one and 13 games reported significantly greater attitudes, both cognitive and affective, and were more likely to consume women's collegiate basketball in the future compared to respondents who had not attended any games during the 2013-2014 season. These findings emphasize the importance of repeat patronage. According to the current study the most crucial job of women's collegiate marketers is to get fans in the doors for the very first time. Once fans are able to experience the sport product their attitudes are more positive and they are more receptive to the idea of consuming again in the future. Teams have faced this problem in the past. Spoelstra (1997) discussed adding value to the purchase of tickets by bringing in speakers prior to the game or creating a networking event around the game. Perhaps, collegiate athletic departments could pair tickets to the men's basketball games with tickets to the women's basketball games in an effort to boost first time women's attendees. These are options women's collegiate basketball marketers may try to implement in an effort to get new fans to their first game and convert them into more highly committed fans.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Participants of the study were social media followers of a D-I athletic department located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. As a result, generalizability of the results is limited. Future studies should investigate attitudes toward women's collegiate

athletics at other divisions and various conferences to compare if skill level, success, and prestige of the women's sport program and size of athletic department affect attitudes toward women's athletic programs. In the present study, results indicated differences among attitude factors driving future consumption intentions. Therefore, repeat attendees might have different attitudes and future studies should compare attitudes of heavy, medium, and light consumers of women's athletics to identify the differences between user segments' expectations. In addition, non-consumers' attitudes toward women's athletics should be investigated to understand their view of the sport product since it might provide insight to why they do not attend, and differences among detractors, neutrals and fanatics should be compared.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the sport marketing literature base by filling the attitude-based research gap in several ways. First, results presented supporting evidence for the psychometric properties of the Attitude toward Women's Sport scale. Yet, additional refining is required as the 34-item, eight-factor solution was not valid, but rather a 19-item, five-factor solution was provided. The ATWS scale is a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners in assessing spectators' and fans' evaluation of a women's sport, its attributes and individuals' emotional responses to the women's sport product. Second, Two-Component Model of Attitude (Bagozzi & Brunkrant, 1979) was chosen as the theoretical framework for the study and findings provided empirical evidence on the implication of the Two-Component Model of Attitude in women's collegiate basketball setting. The current literature in sport marketing field showed that attitude often has been measured in terms of affect, therefore the results only reported if fans and spectators liked a spectator sport or not. Our results indicated the importance of investigating both cognitive and affective aspects of attitude since both components of attitude were predictive of consumption intentions. Third, the current study revealed findings that could be implemented by marketers at athletic departments. Our findings suggested emphasizing product appeal and drama of games, and building emotional connections with marketing activities to increase likelihood of attendance and viewership. Therefore, different marketing strategies might be required to reach new fans and existing fans as well as female versus male fans/potential fans.

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