

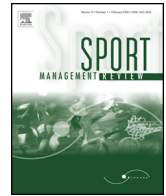


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Improving well-being through hedonic, eudaimonic, and social needs fulfillment in sport media consumption

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ABSTRACT

Understanding sport consumer well-being is essential for enhancing the psychological experience and benefits of sport consumers. While watching a sporting event on TV or Internet is a key means of sport consumption, not much is known about the activity's influence on well-being. Well-being improves when one's hedonic, eudaimonic, and social needs are fulfilled. Need fulfillment occurs when hedonic, eudaimonic, and social values are experienced and perceived as one's own. A pre-post survey and SEM-based research was conducted to examine individuals' psychological experiences in sport event viewing and its link to well-being. The influences of the sport fanship and media consumption setting on the links were also examined. The results indicate that hedonic, eudaimonic, and social values experienced by sport event viewers fully or partially (moderated by sport fanship and media consumption setting) led to well-being improvement, supporting the notion of hedonic, eudaimonic, and social needs fulfillment as the mechanism of improving well-being in this context.

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1. Introduction

Living a good and happy life (i.e., well-being) is becoming a key subject in business and in everyday life (e.g., Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013; Seligman, 2012; Sirgy, Lee, & Rahtz, 2007). The sport realm is no exception in terms of the growing interest in well-being. According to the North American Society of Sport Management, "promoting the general welfare of society" is one of the ethical creeds of sport managers (NASSM, 2004, Ethical Creed point S). In service marketing, promoting sport consumer well-being is recommended as a key strategy to advance the field of sport service (Tsiotsou, 2014), by building mutually beneficial relationships leading to long-term welfare for both sport consumers and organizations (Kim & Trail, 2011). In this sense, it is critical to understand the psychological experience of sport consumers in a sport consumption activity, and its influence on their psychological well-being. However, not much is known on these topics, particularly in relation to sport event consumption via TV or Internet.

Watching a sporting event on TV or Internet (i.e., sport event viewing) accounts for a large portion of the general public's leisure time and is a major segment in the sport industry as a substantial source of marketing revenue for sport entities

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(Vazquez, 2013). In the United States, 70% of adults follow sport, spending an average of 7.4 h per week on sport event viewing (Sporting News Media, 2014). Researchers (e.g., Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Wang & Wong, 2014) advocate sport event viewing as an activity that promotes well-being in the form of leisure and/or entertainment, and spending time apart from work-related stress. Nevertheless, sport event viewing has also been criticized for generating ‘couch potatoes’ and ‘angry fans,’ outcomes considered contrary to the promotion of well-being (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). Moreover, there is a paucity of research on the psychological process linking sport event viewing to well-being benefits (or risks). That is, there is only limited understanding of sport event viewer’s well-being, lacking deep knowledge on the mechanism of improving well-being and which factors cause distinctive valence of influence on well-being.

One construct that may provide insight on the topic is need fulfillment. A need is a “deficit state of the organism that recurs periodically that has a specific requirement for its satisfaction” (Gordon, 1975, p. 8). In psychology, fulfilling one’s need (e.g., pleasure, personal growth, belonging) is a key well-being determinant (i.e., need theory), which engenders positive influence on one’s well-being state when fulfilled and negative influence when unfulfilled (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Psychological needs are fulfilled when engaged in interesting or meaningful activities (Rodríguez, Latkova, & Sun, 2008). Through such activities, an individual may experience various types of senses (e.g., pleasure, achievement, belonging) about oneself or others, which may lead to need fulfillment and thus improved well-being when perceived as relevant to one’s own life. For sport fans, watching sport is an engaging activity where various types of senses can be experienced alone and/or through others (e.g., by enjoying a break from work, by watching one’s supported team/athlete compete, by interacting with others). Thus, sport event viewing can be considered an activity potentially leading to psychological needs fulfillment and well-being. Yet no study has investigated the need fulfillment and well-being benefits of sport event viewing; therefore, this calls for empirical examination. Additionally, identifying what factors (e.g., sport fandom, media consumption setting) affect the degree of need fulfillment and well-being benefits achieved through sport event viewing would provide more in-depth knowledge of the topic.

Therefore, an empirical study is conducted to understand (1) how psychological experiences (i.e., experiences of hedonic, eudaimonic, and social values) in sport event viewing leads to need fulfillment and well-being benefits, and (2) what factors (i.e., sport fandom and media consumption setting) affect the influence of psychological experiences on need fulfillment and well-being of sport event viewers.

2. Literature review

2.1. Types of need fulfillment and global well-being

According to need theory, psychological well-being improves when one’s fundamental needs are fulfilled (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). Identifying fundamental needs, the fulfillment of which leads to improved well-being, is the first consideration in the discussion of the well-being benefits of sport event viewing. In well-being studies, three streams of research focus on qualities that lead to improved well-being (Brekke, 1997); each focused on the fulfillment of (1) hedonic need (i.e., pleasure attainment and pain avoidance), (2) eudaimonic need (i.e., personal growth and self-actualization) and (3) social need (i.e., feeling connected with others). Each of the three types of needs is fulfilled when senses of pleasure, achievement, and belonging are experienced and perceived to be linked to one’s own life. This study focuses on the three types of needs and their fulfillment to understand the well-being benefits in sport event viewing.

In understanding one’s well-being state, the concept of ‘global well-being’ is adopted. The concept is operationalized as the overall perception of one’s happiness and satisfaction in life, which perception is subjectively made based on qualities encompassing hedonic, eudaimonic, and social values in one’s life. The focus of this study is on one’s global well-being state affected by an activity, which can be informative in understanding one’s overall well-being (as an aggregate of well-being states; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). While the effect of a single activity on one’s global well-being state is temporal (lasting from hours to days; e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Mochon, Norton, & Ariely, 2008; Wilson, Wheatley, Meyers, Gilbert, & Axsom, 2000), it is important to note that such temporal effects may accrue when an individual is repeatedly exposed to the activity on a regular basis, resulting in changes in overall well-being (e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Mochon et al., 2008).

2.2. Hedonic need fulfillment and global well-being

Feeling a sense of pleasure and avoiding pain is an innate psychological need that is termed hedonic needs. From the hedonic well-being perspective, a well-lived life is “to experience the maximum amount of pleasure, and happiness is the totality of one’s hedonic moments” (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.143). Thus, fulfilling one’s need for hedonic experiences is integral to improve well-being. One’s hedonic need is fulfilled when experiencing positive senses or emotions such as enjoyment, delight, and amusement, and avoiding negative senses or emotions such as hostility, frustration, and nervousness (Diener et al., 2002). Living with a preponderance of positive psychological experiences over negative psychological experiences is one of the key indicators of one’s psychological well-being, whereas a prevalence of negative psychological experiences is linked to conditions such as emotional depletion, aggression, angst, stress, and lower sleep quality (e.g., Diener et al., 2002; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

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