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AN EXPLORATION OF THE "OVER-THE-TOP" SPORTS STREAMING CONSUMER

by

TYLER A. WILLIAMS

Under the Direction of Beth Cianfrone

ABSTRACT

Historically, many sports entities have generated revenue through media rights, which has now become a billion-dollar business with its convergence with technology. As technology advances, cord-cutters have criticized cable television providers based on the high costs of content and the lack of consumer choices. Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have since converted conventional television viewers to OTT platforms serving as a viable force that has altered the existing market. This disruption has created new opportunities for sports properties to exclude traditional media powerhouses and provide their own live and on-demand services to consumers, an opportunity that organizations across all levels of sport are exploring as a means of expanding their revenues and strengthening their reach. As online sports consumption is relevant to OTT, current research does not address the reasons why fans consume sports via digital platforms and their gratification with the product. Despite trends reflecting changes in consumption patterns and the expansion of the profits accumulated from digital sport media rights, there has been limited research exploring the OTT consumer, which would be practical in developing effective marketing strategies. The overarching purpose of this study was to determine the composition of an OTT sports consumer and examine what effect their motives have on their gratification and constant utilization of the platform. An online survey was administered to OTT users ($N = 151$). Descriptive statistics, cluster analyses, t-test, and MANOVAs revealed characteristics about the users.

INDEX WORDS: Uses and gratifications model, online sports consumption, disruptive technologies, over-the-top, cable services, digital platforms, streaming services

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by

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the sports industry, televised and digital media rights is a billion-dollar business. As sports continue to dominate the marketplace despite the shift in the media landscape, broadcasting companies are developing an appetite for sports media rights in light of the current segmented market, which calls for a need to explore sports fan's perspective on over-the-top platforms. Netflix's strategy to deliver content to consumers quickly that included personalization, user-friendly designs, and availability across multiple platforms sparked an industry-shaking merger between television and digital video. OTT stands for "over-the-top," which describes the method of distribution for film and television content via the Internet, not requiring users to enter a contract with traditional cable or satellite pay-TV service like a Comcast or DirectTV. While some predict the death of cable, in order for users to access the Internet, they need a broadband connection, which is serviced through cable providers. Although sports continue to drive cable subscriptions, as sports fans switch to OTT streaming platforms, the North American sports industry is estimated to invest \$6.8 billion in OTT technology by 2021 (Deltatre, 2019). Since the beginning of television, major sports media rights were owned by select buyers, specifically national and regional sports networks. Today, the landscape is changing as the digital transformation is enticing new competitors into the playing field.

The National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) both have experienced growth due to the popularity of television. In 1939, NBC was the first network to televise a professional football game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Brooklyn Dodgers, which reached roughly 1,000 TV sets in New York City (NFL, n.d.). Today, the NFL benefits from lucrative television deals as their television rights deal with Fox, NBC and

CBS pay nearly \$28 billion in fees over nine years, which averages to approximately \$3.1 billion a year through 2022. Recently, Disney's ESPN boosted the cable sports network's average annual rights fee to \$1.9 billion that runs through 2021 (Flint, 2011). Alternatively, as the NBA rose to prominence, a former national network, DuMont, carried 13 NBA games during the 1953-54 season at the cost of \$39,000 (InsideHoops.com). Today, the NBA has expanded its deals with longtime partners ESPN and Turner Sports in a \$24 billion-dollar deal through the 2024-25 season (Conway, 2014). This dramatic rise of television sports rights fees emphasizes the value of understanding the sports fan's uses of media within a fragmented landscape.

Since televisions' advent in the 1940s, American television has been controlled by three main broadcast television networks, which are ABC, CBS, and NBC. As pictures and audio traveled through airwaves, viewers' signals became weaker as they traveled away from the towers, which, in turn, affected their access to the broadcast. The invention of cable television using fixed cables helped to combat this issue. As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) loosened its regulations, cable networks began to grow, which sparked the launch of popular specialized channels such as Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), Cable News Network (CNN), and Music Television (MTV). As the new millennium dawned, cable providers faced competition from satellite services, telephone companies, and Internet service providers that offered flexible rates and content ("The Rise of Cable Television," n.d.).

Today, the average sports fan's method of consumption is through smartphones: the most common device for watching videos (Grabyo, 2019). One growth factor that is becoming increasingly popular is OTT streaming platforms. According to Halton (2019), OTT refers to media content provided via a high-speed Internet connection that develops original content and distributes licensed content. As professional sports have reaped the benefits of growing their

brand through television, collegiate athletic departments are beginning to follow the trend by producing content in-house and creating a fan following worth millions. Each NCAA "Power Five" conference has contracts in place that payout at least \$100 million per year for football content (Cassillo, 2018). Simply put, outside of their contracts with the NFL, NBA, and MLB, ESPN's college sports inventory takes up the largest portion of their payouts.

When studying the evolving media landscape, streaming services are not as disruptive as might be predicted because they do not replace linear programming, but exist alongside traditional methods (Kackman, 2011). Singer (2017) explained that sports marketers are often tasked with developing new products for digital behaviors that cut across generations. In the current segmented media market with a growing appetite for sport media rights, there is a need to explore sports fans' perspectives on OTT, more specifically, to examine what specific content and quality expectations affect their use of the product. Scholars have studied sports fans and their media consumption through mobile apps (Ha, Kang, & Kim, 2017; Kang, Ha, & Hambrick, 2015), online (Seo & Green, 2008; Ko, Cho & Roberts, 2005; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), television, (Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2006; Ferguson & Perse, 2000), online subscriptions (Hutchins, Li, Rowe, & Boyle, 2019), and social media (Clavio & Walsh, 2014), however, there are several limits and unanswered questions. As sport fan media consumption is relevant to OTT, current research does not address the reasons why fans consume sports via digital platforms and their gratification with the product.

Despite the growing funds invested in sports media rights, little scholarship has been devoted to understanding the sports fans who use OTT platforms. With limited literature addressing the fundamental question of fan motivation in the use of OTT sports platforms, the significance of the current study is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide

insights to aid decision-makers when selecting marketing strategies deployed in the sports industry.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

As OTT platforms increase in prominence within the sports industry, sports organization's staff and media right holders must gain insight into the consumers using these platforms to meet their needs to market and gain new consumers. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine OTT users and their motives.

THE RATIONALE

By seeking the opinions of sports fans who use OTT, I aim to provide evidence supporting and clarifying the use of OTT platforms. Although research has shown that current trends present a long-term challenge for traditional sports, younger generations' declining attention spans will not be met by re-platforming TV video for PCs and mobile devices. Instead, sports marketers must expand into developing new digital products—such as live-streamed events, highlights, fan commentary, news, and analysis—that reach both young and old generations alike (Singer, 2017). The relationship between the drivers of the shifting trend, precisely price, delivery method, and technology, has not yet been clarified, so it is not apparent which one is dominant. Perhaps, the creation of original content around a sporting event is one of the promising techniques to overcome trending problems that plague linear cable television.

Further insight into OTT platforms and sport consumer's purchase and viewership intention will be provided by examining if there are any significant differences in the use of sport-specific OTT platforms. This study will be collecting quantifiable data through the use of online surveys. Exploring the extent to which sports consumers utilize OTT platforms can add knowledge to the field of Sports Administration by providing insights to aid decision-makers

when selecting marketing strategies deployed in the sports industry. Additionally, this study will help contribute to existing literature and clarify issues on OTT platforms by providing evidence on sport consumer's motives to utilize the platform's features and content.

DEFINITIONS

Over-the-top Platform	Defined by <i>Investopedia</i> to be film and television content delivered via an Internet connection (Halton, 2019). The researcher will operationalize OTT to be defined as a platform that streams and can archive video that appears on any screen (TV, mobile, desktop) in addition to developing content and other licensed material available over the Internet. The platform utilizes curation algorithms and customization features to provide access to content across a range of devices and locations
Linear television	Television services that broadcast scheduled programs over the air or through satellite to a general population. The researcher will operationalize linear television to be scheduled cable television (Muvi, n.d.)
Sports Media Rights	Defined by <i>Business Insider</i> to be "fees paid to air sporting events on TV, the internet, and mobile devices" (Tran, 2017).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Media Rights in Sports

There is a symbiotic relationship between media and sports organizations. Sports is one of the most valuable pieces of content for most media organizations. Media organizations provide revenue either directly through the purchase of broadcasting rights for distribution or indirectly through the exposure to sponsors (Evens, Iosifidis, & Smith, 2013). For most sports organizations, the sale of media rights allows broadcasters to air the owners' brand in exchange for royalties generated from the production. In one of the first streaming rights deals during the early 2000s, RealNetworks Inc. acquired rights to regular-season MLB content for three years at \$20 million. As spending on media rights continues to grow at a rapid pace, the purchase of broadcast and media rights has proven to be a lucrative revenue stream in the evolving media landscape. For example, ESPN has invested heavily in media rights as the *Sports Business Journal* (2017) reported that for collegiate sports properties, specifically within the Power 5 conferences, ESPN values those rights at \$14.6 billion cumulatively with contracts extending as far as 2036. Furthermore, the report discloses that among some of the largest professional sports leagues, ESPN pays out about \$33.7 billion total with contracts to 2025 (Ourand, 2017).

Within the professional sports space, various organizations have begun to embrace OTT platforms. For example, the National Basketball Association moved to expand its product with the creation of NBA TV, becoming the first linear sports league network to launch a direct-to-consumer subscription service (NBA Digital, 2019). Prior to this agreement, ESPN and Turner Sports renewed their TV deal with the NBA for \$24 billion in October 2014 and will last through the 2024-25 season which "represents a 180 percent increase in the amount of money flowing

into the league's coffers" (Draper, 2014). This launch compares to the successful launch of the WWE Network in 2014 due to the popularity of its WWE app (Graser, 2014). Since its launch, the network has seen an 2% increase in average paid subscribers (1.58 million) and digital video consumption increase of 23% (300 million hours) generating \$135.4 million in revenue primarily due to the escalation of content rights fees (Altman, 2019). However, as a response to a survey conducted by the WWE, Davis (2019) announced the network will launch a free tier version in 2020.

For most intercollegiate sports organizations, the sale of broadcasting and media rights is now the biggest source of revenue, therefore, understanding the consumer is an important task. Thorn, Greenwell, Hums, and Mahony (2019) reported that intercollegiate sports such as baseball, men's ice hockey, women's basketball, and volleyball are examples of sports used as revenue generators, but are often unable to generate enough revenue to cover the cost of the individual sports, nor any other non-revenue-generating sport programs. While ESPN has tried to buy up as many media rights as possible, competitors such as Fox Sports, TNT, and NBC Sports have grabbed rights where they could. As sport organizations continue to develop sophisticated brands, evidence shows that professional and college sport teams have become competitors to historical media brands (Farhi, 2011). Created in 2014, the SEC Network, owned by ESPN, features at least 450 events that will be televised on the SEC Network each year. Of the 450 events, there will be more than 100 men's basketball games, 60 women's basketball games, 75 baseball, 50 softball and 120 Olympic sports on the SEC Network (ESPN Press Room, n.d.). The Pac-12 Networks is the only conference network owned and controlled by its member institutions, providing an unique platform that showcases all of Pac-12 sports nationally across

linear, digital and social platforms (Pac-12 Conference, 2019), but produces modest returns in comparison to the SEC's and Big Ten's networks (Associated Press, 2019).

Within the OTT landscape, the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA), a mid-major Division I conference, signed a deal with FloSports in 2019 making them the first college conference to select a streaming OTT, direct-to-consumer company, as their primary media partner. Miller (2019) reported that this seven-figure deal will allow the conference to buy more games on CBS Sports Network using the revenue generated from FloSports while maintaining contracts with regional and local media partners. With the acquisition of the CAA, FloSports currently has six collegiate sport properties including Big Ten, Big 12, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Mountain West Conference, and the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

As media rights sales of popular sports such as football and men's basketball become the primary source of revenue for college athletics departments ahead of ticket sales, these rights assist in funding other revenue streams which adds value to other featured sports (Vazquez, 2013). In a 2018 report by *USA Today*, the University of Texas at Austin led all Division I NCAA member institutions with a total revenue of \$219,402,579. This report found that forty percent of their revenue is generated through rights and licensing while ticket sales make up thirty percent (*USA Today*, 2018). Although the NCAA Division I athletic departments have a unique set of constraints and incentives, it is understandable that media rights and licensing within Division I athletic departments influence total expenditures. The reason research is needed is because although athletic department revenues have soared in part due to lucrative new television contracts, perhaps a better understanding and connection with consumers is more likely to increase the flow of money across the entire college athletics department.

Linear Programming

According to Hutchins et al. (2019), commercial broadcast television has been organized around a linear 24-hour programming schedule with specific channels and the ability to connect audiences to advertisers and sponsors. Historically, broadcast television networks and sports rights owners had a reciprocal relationship. As the owners provided content rights, the broadcast networks provided distribution and monetization options given the value of the product. Despite the limited channels and shelf space to broadcast live games, sports rights owners needed the broadcasters for exposure (Siino, Miller, & Scibetti, 2018) to enhance the value of their brand. Today, sport entities have taken their branding and exposure efforts internally to help better connect with their fans. Traditional cable television was one of the most common forms of revenue and exposure options for sports rights owners because it reached a broad audience. As current research implies that diverse factors influence a buyer's motive for using the traditional model, some advantages of this model include convenient billing, coupled with a familiar layout, an option for cheaper and skinnier plans, higher capability of cable boxes. However, some disadvantages include higher costs and availability of choice providers within the area (Willcox, 2019) which limits access. Traditional cable television is limited in terms of expansion and growth of the game due to time, availability, and space constraints. Conventional cable packages allow sports rights holders to sell subscriptions to assist in offsetting the cost of producing sport content by allowing advertisers to pay ad rates that are associated with viewer ratings of a particular event. Those who own the broadcasting rights (sports teams and the leagues) have long-term contracts—and relationships with networks—that have been active for years (Willson, 2016). College sports is “must-see TV” for millions of people. The higher the viewership, the higher the cost is of viewing that contest (Weaver, 2013). In 2018, the NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Championship tournament, broadcasted on TBS and streamed on March Madness

Live, generated \$1.32 billion in national TV ad revenue whose revenue is redistributed back to their respective conferences. Furthermore, the annual collegiate tournament has consistently ranked second behind the SuperBowl which generates about \$1.68 billion (Kantar Media, 2019).

Magna Global conducted a study exclusively for the *SportsBusiness Journal* that showed the sport viewers median age, with the exception of WTA, NBA and MLS fans, are aging faster than the overall U.S. population. These trends show the challenges facing traditional cable television as they try to attract a younger audience and ensure long-term viability. Moreover, they reflect the changes in consumption patterns as young people prefer digital platforms over linear (Lombardo & Broughton, 2017). OTT provides subscribers with a seamlessly connected platform accessible from any device, driving a new wave of technological consumers which has sparked competitors to take an interest in budding alternatives, specifically OTT services. How content owners understand and provide for their audiences' needs will go a long way in determining which OTT apps break through the clutter.

Over-the-top "OTT" as Sport Portals

As users continue to demand interactive content, live streaming has become a popular platform and speaks to the wider concern of 'platformization' of television (Evens & Donders, 2018). Evens and Donders (2018) define platformization to be a profitable, structured model that uses the Internet as a channel for audio and visual content. Portals use curation algorithms and customization features to provide access to content across a range of devices and locations. As sports media portals continue to evolve with the evolution of technology, Hutchins et al. (2019) reported six characteristics that define media sports portals: liveness, mix of mass and niche services, media rights, multi-screen viewing ability, analytics on viewing and consumption habits, and technical infrastructures and problems.

Since live media sports is a 'perishable' phenomenon, companies are at a crossroads with which television platform has the most effective viewing practices with the intent of trying to preserve the game's live quality and meet the needs of the consumers. A mixture of business models is displayed across media sport portals as the consumer market continues to fragment and different portals service different audiences. For example, big technology brands such as Google (YouTube) and Verizon attract a mass audience because of their content variety differ from Women's Tennis Association (WTA) who partnered with a video streaming technology provider Perform to provide live and on-demand coverage to their niche audience of tennis fans. As media technology provides opportunities for globalization, sport media rights have now entered an international market to broaden the company's reach.

Multi-screen viewing ability is another characteristic that distinguishes sport media portals. Lotz (2014) explains multi-screen viewing ability to be a "dual strategy where the broadcast 'large "event" audience' is offered access to an expanded range of content sourced from the same event" (p. 82). This can come in the form of either split screen on one device, or across two or more devices and screens. This cross platformization provides the flexibility for industries to use less rating systems and more data analytics. The evolving audience information systems produce comprehensive statistics about how sport is accessed beyond broadcast media. This reputed system helps companies quantitatively justify decisions made about rights acquisition through understanding their audiences' tendencies (Napoli, 2011). Although new technology provides consumers with the promise of fast and efficiency, failure of computing and mobile technologies is common and are often displayed in public complaints. Alexander (2017) report these technology failures as buffering, service interruptions, bandwidth limitations, program crashes, server overload, video compression problems and drained batteries and are

inevitable when consuming high-quality video content. These characteristics could serve as either a motive or deterrent in subscribers returning to the platform.

Over-the-top “OTT” Programming

Cable television has been criticized by the millennial sport fan for the cost of content and the lack of consumer choices. Hence, the entrance of dedicated OTT brands that would convert established television viewers to OTT platforms was a viable force that disrupted market competition. Hutchins et al. (2019) found that the introduction of digital and mobile media did not cause traditional television viewing to decrease, but instead created an expanded and diversified platform that challenges the current Pay-TV model. “Until more exclusive rights are freed up from linear TV contracts, streamers are focusing on a mixture of live events and niche sports content, as well as other types of sports commentary and on-demand programming” (Fischer & Baker, 2019, para. 3). Specifically, “pure-play” virtual multichannel video programming distributors that offer digital-only content such as user videos and original programming is growing rapidly provides a dynamic environment in which viewers can experience this content on their own terms (Engleson, 2018). This compares to the business models of DAZN, Stadium, and FloSports which is contributing to the rapidly shifting sports-media landscape.

Today, OTT services has created a new opportunity for sports properties to go direct-to-consumer with their own live and on-demand services; an opportunity that an increasing number of organizations of all sizes are exploring as a means of growing their revenues and expanding their reach (Walmsley et al., 2018). Within the sports context, there were many OTT platforms that held the rights to both collegiate and professional media rights. For example, ESPN+ purchased media rights to MLB, NHL, MLS, PGA Tour golf, Grand Slam tennis, cricket, rugby,

and the Canadian Football League. However, Bleacher Report Live purchased media rights to UEFA Champions League, NBA League Pass games, 65 NCAA championship events, PGA championship, National Lacrosse League, and Red Bull Global Rallycross. NBC Sports Gold is a dedicated OTT platform that features Premier League, PGA TOUR LIVE, rugby, cycling, track and field, pro motocross, and figure skating. Fubo TV features NBC Sports Network, NFL Network, NBA TV, Pac-12 Network, and Sports Illustrated TV whereas DAZN carries the Premier League, FIBA basketball, Bellator MMA, Matchroom boxing among others. Stadium purchased media rights to ACC Digital Network, Big 12 Digital Network, Conference USA Network, Mountain West Network, Patriot League Network while FloSports features some collegiate properties mentioned previously alongside Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), EuroLeague, International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation, and the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA). Majority of these OTT platforms appeal to global and U.S. markets because consumers feel understood and are provided with the option to access their services through Apple and Android products in addition to game consoles and smart televisions.

For sports rights holders, the proliferation of OTT streaming opportunities is important as the athletic landscape continues to diversify with over 20,000 international student-athletes enrolled and competing at NCAA schools. Today, embracing diversity is not optional for companies as media consumption is steadily and increasingly made up of audiences in search of quality video content. In 2019, Nielsen reported that smartphone usage increased by 10 minutes among every race/ethnicity (Nielsen, 2019). As innovation continuously influences the development of OTT platforms, companies must develop revolutionary ways to connect with their audiences by creating personalized experiences to turn customers into fans. For example, in 2006, the years prior to the introduction of the online subscription model, two brothers, Mark and

Martin Floreani created a model anchored in direct-to-consumer, subscription service and was dedicated to “appealing to the underserved” which included the cord-cutters, small communities of local sports fans. They chose this approach because rights holders in niche sports were constantly battling with fleeting TV coverage and inconvenient time slots. They refused to allow public profile and lucrative sponsorship contracts to result in diminished visibility of niche-market sports (Long, 2019). As cord-cutting continues, particularly among the younger demographic, FloSports’ robust social channels reported a combined 307.1M video views on Instagram (Jan-June, 2018) according to CrowdTangle, which is more than the combined accounts during the same time period of all FOX Sports accounts (227.83M), all major college conferences (13.07M), all major U.S. national governing bodies (55.6M), all NHL teams (151.17M), all NFL teams and the NFL Network (235.89M), and all MLB teams and the MLB Network (239.31M) (FloSports, 2018). FloSports has seen tremendous growth through their intentional focus on niche sports in a digital economy showcasing sports like wrestling, track, and gymnastics that does not increase the bottom-line revenue immediately but builds a loyal subscriber base by providing their audiences with one-of-a-kind content (Costa, 2018).

OTT Mobile Viewing Capabilities

In a self-focused society, Gardner and Davis (2013) found that today’s youth, termed as the App Generation, develop self-identity through “apps arrayed on a person’s smartphone or tablet that represent a fingerprint of sorts—only instead of a unique pattern of ridges, it’s the combination of interests, habits, and social connections that identify that person” (p. 60). Moreover, configurations of streaming applications provide a sense of significance for users as they enable them to express their sense of self in their choice of valuing an economically alternative application over a convenient viewing application or vice versa. In a study of college

students, Oyedele and Simpson (2018) examined the role of self-identity in mediating perceived value and behavior. They found that consumer perceptions on the social and emotional value within streaming apps affect one's self-perception and, in turn, their usage and recommendation activities. Moreover, findings reveal that streaming services that are able to assist subscribers in building self-identity by becoming part of their daily lives through engaging content tend to be more successful than their counterparts. A recent example comes from The Football Association (FA) and ITV's, a British television channel, use of virtual advertising technology to deliver new augmented regional ads on feeds going to America, Asia, Australia, and Europe during the England vs. Costa Rica warm-up game to make the ads more relevant to viewer audiences (McCarthy, 2018).

In today's digital landscape, streaming services and on-demand content have made appointment television obsolete – with one exception, sports. Sports fans are fervently loyal to their teams. In fact, their passion for their teams often translates into a ferocious appetite for content tailored specifically to their interests (Clinton, 2018). DAZN has about eight million paid subscribers, according to Mullin (2020). In contrast, Disney-owned ESPN+ had 7.6 million as of February 2020, Disney Executive Chairman Bob Iger said on the company's earnings call. With the growing popularity of streaming services, Grabyo's Sports Video Trends Report published in 2019 examined the viewing preferences of consumers in seven countries and found that "65% of die-hard sports fans use a smartphone most often to watch video, 53% use laptops/desktops to watch most often, and only 40% watch sport most frequently on TV" (Grabyo, 2019). The figures from Grabyo suggest that although sport is still a major driver of cable subscriptions, the ongoing shift indicates 52% of sports fans will switch to streaming providers within five years.

Mobile viewing has been a fundamental topic in consumer behavior research, as worldwide, smartphones are the most common device for watching video (Grabbyo, 2019). Historically, the media has focused on reaching the broad segment of the population through advertisements, but as digital devices and platforms evolve, audiences become more fragmented giving power to the consumers' voices and choices. For example, in sports, the Atlanta Falcons' "Rise Up" mantra went from an in-stadium rally cry to a hashtag #RISEUP, allowing fans to amplify their passion for their home team. As the evolution of technology disrupts historically clearly defined channels and more players enter the market, broadcasters will not be able to control access as consumer's perceptions will be shaped through interactions with the brand through different media outlets.

Uses and Gratifications Approach

In a market where consumers have choices, it is important for sport organization staff and media right holders to gain insight to the consumers in an effort to meet their needs and gain new consumers. The uses and gratifications theory (U&G) has been used to illuminate how specific media channels influence customer satisfaction and can also be used to describe online sport viewing motives. Coined in the 1940s, Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) presumes the audience to be an active group, meaning that members engage with specific media and content to meet their needs. One of the assumptions of U&G research is the concept of alternatives to media, meaning, the user actively makes a choice to add, enhance, or replace one form of media with another. These specific needs can include social interactions, relaxation, information seeking, and entertainment (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). The purpose of this approach is to clarify why individuals choose a specific medium over others and to determine an individuals' needs from a particular vehicle. As new media depends on the curation of

personalized content, fans will be more involved, forge personal alliances, and create alleged power, “thereby becoming the center of his or her interaction universe” (Sundar, Oh, Kang, & Sreenivasan, 2012, p. 392), in contrast from the television-dominated late 20th century.

Therefore, today’s media allows users to have increased collaboration to develop a social presence both in face-to-face and Internet-based communication (Flaherty, Pearce & Rubin, 1998).

Sellitto and Hawking (2015) found that sport consumers do not behave like the typical business customer and very few studies have provided insight into the content expectation and buying behavior of the modern consumer utilizing OTT platforms. Previous research has explored sport fans consumption of media, including mobile apps (Ha et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2015), online (Seo & Green, 2008; Ko et al., 2005; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000), television, (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2006), online subscriptions (Hutchins et al., 2019), and social media (Clavio & Walsh, 2014). Since each of these mediums contain a function of an OTT service, the motives found will be used to develop a scale for this study.

As smartphones are becoming the most important medium to increase sport fan engagement, Ha et al. (2017) found that sport involvement, sport commitment, usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, social influence, personal attachment, media multitasking, and shared interest were all factors that influence the use of smartphones in the sport consumption context. For this study, sport involvement and commitment would relate to the fanship motive. Fans seeking personal development gratifications help reinforce fan identities and positions within fan cultures (Whiteman, 2009). Within this gratification, fans achieve a sense of satisfaction through literacy of franchise knowledge and skills as fans. This is displayed in sports through the development and expansion of fan communities to support the fan’s social identity (Coppa, 2014), which

aligns with a fans' need to connect with other existing or potential fans. An example of this is fans gathering in the heart of a city to celebrate a local team's championship win. Despite a fan's desire for content, fans are often motivated by personal connection. This gratification is distinct in that those sought suggest self-affirmation (Velez, 2018) rather than external validation. Furthermore, ease of use is related to the convenience motive. Social influenced would be described as team support while shared interest would be characterized as fan expression.

As OTT platforms use the Internet to distribute content to its subscribers, it is important for research to measure the effectiveness of online marketing and the needs of Web users. Seo and Green (2008) were among the first to develop a systematic list and scale for sport online consumption. They proposed analyzing sport Internet users' motives with the U&G Approach (Katz et al., 1974). A two-part study was implemented. In Study 1, potential motives were identified and evaluated using an eight-person expert panel followed by a test study of 175 respondents who reported their experience with at least one NFL team's Web site that called for further analysis. In Study 2, the Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption (MSSOC) was developed and a confirmation factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on 319 respondents to confirm the relationships among the items. The final scale consisted of 10 dimensions of motivation: fanship, interpersonal communication, sport knowledge, fan expression, entertainment, economic, pass time, information, escape, and support. This motive for seeking convenience was characterized in Internet (Ko et al., 2005; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000) research. Researchers found that individuals use the Internet to socialize with others, seek new information, pass time, be entertained, and use online services. Simple access and pertinent game-related information are related to the convenience motive (Kim, Sohn & Choi, 2011). Seven of these dimensions relate directly to OTT and will be utilized in this study.

Motives influence fans to return to the platform based on how they profit from using it (Bondad-Brown, Rice & Pearce, 2012). Several studies have explored the motives for watching sports on television and discovered a few conventional motives for sports television viewing (Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2006) such as information-seeking, entertainment/excitement-seeking, and social motives. The entertainment motivation would offer some form of pleasure which would result in impulsive or unpredictable media selection (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004). This enjoyment has been displayed in sports fandoms as basking in the failure of a favorite team, requiring some connection to the team beforehand (Havard & Eddy, 2013). First, television sports viewers want to feel connected with players, teams, and games by watching the sports on television (Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2006). Researchers have classified enjoyment as one of the most important motives for using television (Ferguson & Perse, 2000). Gantz (1981) states that this excitement factor is the most important motive for televised sports viewing.

A wide and evolving range of business and revenue models are being displayed within the OTT industry. Among these are subscription-supported models which combines sports' liveness and identity characteristics signaling a shift in the way consumers view content. Sjöblom and Hamari (2016) found that fans that feel connected encourages them to pay for a subscription. In one of the few studies on OTT sport, Hutchins et al. (2019) suggested that "television viewing is not being weakened but is expanding and diversifying" (p. 989) and demands justification on why viewers to pay to watch television content. According to Hardin, Koo, Rühley, Dittmore, and McGreevey (2012) diversion, information, team support, and value were all motivating factors behind subscription based online media. With a subscription to an OTT service comes the expectation of an expanded experience which references the anticipation for experiencing a formally bigger and better media product. Often times, this gratification is

associated with theatre-viewing experience which could be interpreted as escapist or diversionary gratifications known to film (Rubin, 1983) and games (Yee, 2006). Some may argue that these are unique gratifications in that they emphasize the features of the game rather than the experience. Therefore, this gratification inherently requires some acquaintance with the franchise (i.e. familiarity with the medium being expanded).

As OTT continues to grow, platforms are using social media aggressively to market their products and drive viewer engagement. Clavio and Walsh (2014) determined that information, interactivity, content creation, and functionality were reasons why college sport fans engage in sport-focused social media. These usage characteristics help sport entities begin to understand why audiences choose to engage in sport-focused social media usage.

Factors Influencing OTT Consumption

Acquisition of Knowledge. Trail and James (2001) defined the acquisition of knowledge to be how much media consumption empowers one to obtain information about a game. A fan's motivation to consume the sport, defined by their frequency of watching sports via OTT platform and their interaction on social media, is important in the acquisition of team knowledge and in the process of being a fan. According to Chan-Olmsted and Xiao (2019), a user's motivation to acquire additional knowledge about a team is mediated by how much the user identifies as a fan. For instance, the motivations to get additional information about the performance of a team (i.e., acquisition of knowledge) or watching the replay of a dunk (i.e., admiration of an athlete's physical skills) are likely to be regulated by the degree of an individual's fandom.

Advertising Preference. Sports fans are the most passionate people and valuable customers as they often support teams beyond winning games. "In fact, most marketing communications are one-way communications that originate with the sender (i.e., the sport

organization itself)” (Seo & Green, 2008, p.105). Teams have the ability to leverage their platform to direct sponsored messaging to their fans. With the assistance of technology, companies can produce a low-cost, high impact message through the use of video to grab users’ attention instantly. As the size and popularity of sports increase, as does the interest in advertising messages during major sporting events with millions of fans. For example, in 2019, the average cost of a 30-second ad during Super Bowl was \$5.25 million to market to an estimated 98.2 million people according to *Business Insider* (Su, 2020). Understanding the needs of the audience and providing them with content that relates to them will help create a lasting impact on the consumer and, in turn, create a sense of trust with the product.

Content Expectations. OTT content is frequently described as being “a la carte,” where subscribers pay for the shows they watch as opposed to a bundle of channels set by the cable company. To remain competitive within the industry, numerous OTT platforms have begun offering selective, unique content due to consumers’ on-the-go viewing patterns. These patterns call for cross-device engagement which requires a central foundation which allows for more precise content personalization. Furthermore, a sport entities’ ability to generate short form, exclusive content that users can share across multiple social platforms will result in more markets and more viewers which an OTT player can monetize. Therefore, “motives could be utilized as a segmentation variable to better target fans” (Trail et al., 2003, p. 16).

Convenience. The convenience motivating factor can be described as a consumer’s reason for using OTT platforms to seek further information faster and proficiently. OTT sports viewing is gaining popularity among sports fans because of the ease of obtaining information quickly and skillfully. Previous research found that consumer’s motivated convenience serves as good predictors of consumer commitment to a brand or an organization (Nee, 2013). Although

previous research has suggested that excitement motives are the most important needs for sports television viewing, however, Hwang and Lim (2015) found that convenience motives drive consumer engagement.

Cost. Within media and entertainment, users have shifted from being locked into contracts with traditional linear cable companies to subscribing to various platforms, either on a monthly basis or for a short time frame, like a sport season. Today's consumers have new expectations and preferences on how they want to purchase and take advantage of media products and services. One-time and recurring (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.) charges are the most adopted pricing strategies within the OTT landscape. Building a flexible pricing framework combined with the ability to test new pricing strategies, gives subscribers more approaches to connect, and normally is displayed by competitive advantage.

Entertainment. The ability for a user to enjoy sports and interact with their favorite teams through a website demarcates the entertainment motive. Karat et al. (2002) suggested that users have a "strong desire for storytelling experiences, similar to short documentaries commonly broadcast on TV" (p. 370). This entertainment motive for many users differentiates watching television from watching OTT. People watch sports on OTT platforms to express themselves but have lower motivation to interact with other fans through the platform as suggested by Seo and Green (2008).

Escape. Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) defines 'escape' to mean "overcoming loneliness (companionship)" (p. 56). For sports fans, this intentional detachment can grant a reprieve from their circumstances allowing them to return with a clear mindset.

Fanship. "Identification is an important concept within consumer behavior, especially sport consumption" (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003, p. 10). Prior research helps us to understand

that identification with a sport or team orchestrates a fans' thoughts and feelings toward the organization (James & Ridinger, 2002). Fanship was once displayed in attendance at games, however, as technology continues to advance, it has been shown that the primary motives for using mobile devices in sport consumption is fanship (Ha et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2015).

Information. According to Korgaonkar et al., (1999), platforms that provide ease of access for users with relevant information instead of relying primarily on information retrieval attract a large number of users. As information becomes more readily available, the digital landscape will continue to evolve. The Internet can not only provide today's consumer with information with only a click of a button but can foster associations between people with similar interests. According to Clavio and Walsh (2014), sports fans place an emphasis on information gathering rather than other consumption goals in comparison to regular consumers.

Pass Time. Previous research has suggested that passing time is another motive for online sport viewing (Rubin, 1981). Fans are motivated to watch sports online to escape and occupy their time.

Sports Knowledge. The methodical knowledge gained from watching sports on television can be applied to online consumption. Some viewers are motivated by their interest in knowing more about the sport and how it coincides with the concept of identity for males (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000). Online sports streaming provides fans with game statistics and historical context of their favorite players to create an underlying goal to strive for within their personal and active life. TV networks like ESPN and Fox Sports air segments that dissect the game play-by-play.

Team Support. Another ongoing motivational factor is support. As the Internet continues to evolve into a mass social medium, the social support between users becomes an

important dynamic. Shumaker and Brownell (1984) define social support as an exchange between individuals with the intent to enhance the recipient. Within sports fandom groups, social support plays a major role in the cohesion between members. Gill and Williams (2008) developed a model that includes three broad types of social support: tangible support, informational support, or emotional support. An example of how fans have shown their emotional support is an outpour of messages and posts toward the Bryant family after the untimely death of Kobe Bryant in addition to various memorials constructed nationwide.

Technical Quality. Cable TV transmit their programs to local cable companies via satellite. However, OTT services allow users to instantly stream videos on both mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) using the Internet. Since Netflix's inception, online video consumers expect content swiftly, personal recommendations, user-friendly designs, and seamless support across multiple platforms. Unfortunately, the IP technologies that the internet is built on, are not easy to scale as OTT becomes more popular which can have an immediate impact on viewing and directly affect the consumer's satisfaction. Thus, it is important to determine if technical quality of OTT is a factor influencing consumers.

Summary

As sports continue to evolve and enter a globalized market, televised and digital media rights will continue to grow as a revenue driver for broadcasting companies and rights holders alike. In one of the first streaming rights deals during the early 2000s, RealNetworks Inc. acquired rights to regular-season MLB content for three years at \$20 million. Historically, broadcast television has been viewed on a 24-hour programming schedule. However, technological advancement has allowed companies to develop on-demand platforms that are not constrained by subscription contracts or limited programming, which has transformed the

market. In 2018, Major League Baseball (MLB) had extended its multiplatform rights contract with Fox Sports in a tie-up worth a reported \$5 billion and had added a streaming \$300 million deal with DAZN while not featuring rights to any live games, will include live cut-ins (Friend, 2018).

As television viewing habits are evolving, developing a platform that integrates multi-screen viewing and customization opportunity is more vital than ever. A noteworthy feature of OTT platforms is its ability to utilize the Internet to display curated audio-visual content around live events worldwide. In a market where consumers have choices, OTT sports consumer motives are critical in driving consumer engagement (Hwang & Lim., 2015) and consumption. Because OTT is an emerging topic and can be accessed through various platforms, motives to watch OTT stem from online sport consumption motives, smartphone sports consumption motives, and televised sport consumption motives. Additionally, the role of the fan identification may influence consumption. Previous literature found that mediated sports spectatorship allows fans to develop their fan identity because it acts as a socialization agent for a group of like-minded individuals. Fan identification has been used to characterize sports fans' uniqueness. However, with the wide variety of media now available, it should be reasonable to expect that the more highly identified a fan is, the more he or she will use the media to increase his or her enjoyment (Phua, 2010). The remains to be empirically examined.

OTT platforms are expanding the sports media landscape by transforming the price tag of media rights, how information is delivered to consumers, and how information data about the consumer are used to drive revenue decisions in the marketplace. Despite trends reflecting the changes in consumption patterns and the money being circulated within the industry, there has

been limited research exploring the OTT consumer, which would be practical in developing effective marketing strategies.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the profile of an OTT sports consumer according to demographics consumption levels, and the thirteen motives of using OTT sports platforms?

RQ2: What factors (U&G) influence users' sports consumers to subscribe to OTT?

RQ3: How do OTT sports consumer motives and fan identification relate to their consumption levels?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Procedure and Participants

After IRB approval, the data was collected in an online survey from OTT users who were recruited via social media (e.g., snowball sampling from social media posts from the researchers' accounts and an athletic conference account). This study focused on OTT users' motives because they are more likely to engage with the platform and undergo experiences that shape their viewing behavior. The inclusion criteria for participants were: (1) 18 years of age or over, (2) lived in North America, and (3) subscribed to at least one sports OTT services via any platform in the last 12 months.

Respondents. The survey ran for two weeks (14 days). A total of 280 people attempted the survey. After data cleaning, 151 final usable surveys were ascertained and included in the analyses, as 129 were incomplete attempts.

Survey Instrument

Motives. Based on the literature review, 13 potential motives were identified as potential factors influencing usage of OTT sports platforms: acquisition of knowledge, advertising preference, content expectations, convenience, cost, entertainment, escape, fanship, information, pass time, sports knowledge, team support, and technical quality. The majority of these motives were derived from MSSOC developed by Seo and Green (2008), as well as additional literature review (e.g., from Chan-Olmsted & Xiao, 2019; Hwang & Lim, 2015). There was a focus group constructed of 5 OTT sports consumers, who evaluated and provided insight into the survey. The questionnaire was then vetted by three sports management experts and one OTT expert. The survey attempted to replicate and adapt previous scale items to the OTT platforms and add additional items to measure these motives. Six factors were adopted from the MSSOC scale, including fanship, pass time, information, escape, support, and technical knowledge. One set of factor items adapted from Seo and Green – technical knowledge – was adjusted to sports knowledge based on feedback from the focus group. Additional factors were measured, including convenience, adapted from Hwang and Lim (2015), that contained four items. The acquisition of knowledge motive was measured using three scale items adapted from Chan-Olmsted and Xiao (2019). Original items developed by the researcher include the cost factor (3 items; e.g., "I spend less money on OTT platforms than I do/did with cable television packages") that sought to explain the benefits of OTT costs. Another factor was content expectation (3 items; e.g., "I use the OTT platform because I can easily share content to other platforms") meant to justify personalization needs. The researcher also developed the technical quality factor (4 items; e.g., "I use the OTT platform because I do not experience as many service interruptions as cable"), which rationalizes a user's need for reliable service and easy use of the platform. Finally, the researcher developed the advertising preference factor (3 items, e.g., "I like that when I watch

sports via OTT platforms, the advertisements are personalized to my interests”), which clarifies users' motives to control what they see based on their interests. Each of these motives was measured using three to four scale items, and 7-point scales ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Consumption Levels. In addition, ten items that will ask respondents to rate their consumption levels of OTT platforms were included. Respondents will have a chance to answer 'yes' or 'no' to whether they use an over the air television receiver (e.g., HDTV digital antenna to watch HD channels like ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox) or whether they subscribe to cable or satellite or fiber television (e.g., Comcast, Xfinity, DirectTV, Google Fiber, AT&T). They will also be able to indicate which platforms they have used and subscribed to in the past year on their specific devices. Respondents will denote how much money and time (days and hours) they have spent on OTT services and Cable/Satellite/Fiber services.

Fan Identification and Demographics. The survey also will include four fan identification items related to the user's affinity toward sports (Trail et al., 2003) on a 1-7 Likert scale. For example, if their friends would classify them as a sports fan. Finally, multiple demographic questions were included for descriptive purposes, including geographic location, gender, age, ethnicity, household income, education, and employment.

Data Analysis

Using SPSS, I tested the reliability of the motives using Cronbach's alpha. I calculated descriptive statistics for demographics, motives, and consumption items. Next, a profile was created of OTT users (RQ1), and the researcher determined which motives were highest (RQ2). A K-Means cluster analysis was performed to determine different consumer profiles based on the 13 motives. From these clusters, the group's consumption levels, fan identification, use of over-

the-air television receivers versus cable, satellite, or fiber subscriptions, money spent on OTT versus cable, weekly viewing of OTT versus cable, age, income, and education were used to further explain the clusters. Further, a MANOVA was used to evaluate if the motives differed among consumption level (defined as number of days per week watching OTT sports). Finally, a t-test was conducted to determine if highly identified fans differed from low identified fans in terms of their OTT consumption levels (days per week; $p < .05$ significance level).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Survey Reliability. I performed a reliability analysis to test the consistency of each dimension. The reliability of each dimension was examined via Cronbach's alpha. All dimensions were internally consistent. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .91 for technical quality to .93 for cost (Table 1). The 67-item, 13-dimension scale is a reliable measure of motivation for using OTT platforms.

RQ1: Consumption Profile. Participants ($N = 151$) averaged 30.6 years of age ($SD = 10.5$) and were residents of the United States (97.35%). Gender was nearly evenly distributed (51.68% males), and participants were mostly African American (75.5%, compared to 17.22% White, 3.31% Hispanic or Latino, and 2.65% reporting Asian heritage). Regarding education, 50% held a bachelor's degree, 26.35% had a master's degree, and 9.46% had some college experience. The yearly income of 63.76% of these OTT users was lower than \$60,000. Most respondents were employed for wages (59.64%, compared to 25.3% of respondents who identified as students). The findings are reported in Table 3.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to analyze OTT users viewing patterns (Table 4). The vast majority of participants subscribed to Netflix (17.18%), while 34.02% of subscribers chose ESPN+ and Amazon Prime for sports content. However, 13.75% of respondents did not subscribe to OTT sports content. When watching sports OTT content, 15.78% of respondents utilized YouTube, and 14.65% of respondents chose ESPN+. Other subscription platforms included B/R Live, DAZN, FloSports, and NBA TV. The frequency of watching sports content on OTT was also analyzed, and 54.43% of respondents watch sports content via OTT platforms 1-3 days a week, while 51.35% of respondents indicated they watch for 1-4 hours per week. Alternatively, over half of users (58.39%) specified that they subscribe to cable, satellite, or fiber television. However, 28.38% of respondents did not watch sports via cable, satellite, or fiber throughout the week (compared to 17.57% who watched daily throughout the week). Over half of users (63.08%) watch OTT sports content via their television and their smartphone (Table 4).

RQ2: Motives. For the motivation scale, the highest mean score was content expectation ($M = 5.44$, $SD = 0.98$), while information, convenience, pass time, fanship, team support, advertising preference, cost, and entertainment also received scores above five on the seven-point scale. Alternatively, sports knowledge (otherwise known as technical knowledge as denoted by Seo & Green, 2008) received the lowest score ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.50$). Finally, respondents spent an average of \$64 on cable, satellite, and fiber subscriptions in comparison to the \$32 they spent on OTT subscriptions (Table 5).

Cluster Analysis. Subsequently, I used a K-Means Cluster Analysis in SPSS with the motivational factors and OTT users' consumption levels as determining variables (Table 6). After starting with five clusters and eight iterations, the groups appeared disproportionate with its largest group containing 89 users. From there, increasing both cluster size and iterations resulted

in another disproportionate set of groups with its largest group containing 42 and its smallest containing just one individual. I chose the 9-cluster membership with ten iterations because the proportions were more evenly distributed across cases, and I felt these sections gave the best possibility for differentiation. I had to eliminate 3 of the 9 clusters, however, which only had a combined four cases. Consequently, I ended with six distinct segments that existed within the sample (Figure 1).

I named the first cluster Bandwagoners because this segment had a high fan identification and spent the most money on cable and watched sports more often per week when compared to the other groups. However, they also spent less money on OTT but had the highest weekly OTT viewing pattern. I labeled the second cluster On-the-Goers because of their attachment to convenience and information. Although they identified as somewhat of a sports fan, this segment watched more OTT per week than cable. The third cluster, General Adult, was labeled as such because they generally support the team and spends about the same amount of time and money on OTT services as they do cable services. Cluster four was named Loyal Sports Fans because of their attachment to being a fan of the sport and their team by spending the most time watching sports on either platform (OTT or television). I labeled cluster five the Cost-Conscious Fan because they rated cost high on their list of motives, was the only group that did not have over-the-air television receiver, and spent significantly less on OTT versus cable. Finally, the last segment was named Low OTT Adopter because they are not motivated to watch sports on OTT other than to pass the time and had no desire to learn about the sport. They also spent the least money on cable and OTT.

RQ3: OTT Motives, Fan Identification, and Consumption Levels. OTT users were divided into seven groups based on how often (days/per week) they consumed sports content via

OTT platforms. A MANOVA was conducted to analyze motive variation versus the amount of time (days/week) users watched sports content via OTT platforms. MANOVA results indicated significant differences among OTT consumption on the dependent variables (acquisition of knowledge, advertising preference, content expectations, convenience, cost, entertainment, escape, fanship, information, pass time, sports knowledge, team support, and technical quality), $Wilks' \lambda = .384, F(78, 739) = p < 0.000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .148, \text{ and power } 1.000$ (Table 8). Significant differences between consumption levels were found in all motives except the cost. A multiple comparisons test using Tukey HSD post-hoc showed that consumers with a consumption level of one day a week had significantly lower motive levels than other levels of consumption in all motives except cost. Technical Quality was the only motive where all consumption levels were significantly greater than one day a week.

The findings also showed that users who watch sports via OTT platforms identified as a general sports fan with a mean of 5.8 on each fan identification item. When separating fandom by those who identify as a sports fan (> 5.0) and those who do not (< 5.0), significant differences were found ($t(150) = 3.62; p = .05$) between their level of fan identity and their online sports consumption.

Table 1. Motive Scales for OTT Consumers' Uses and Gratifications

Motive Scales	α	M	SD
<i>Entertainment - Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	5.36	1.05
I would describe OTT as an exciting experience.		5.24	1.33
OTT is a cool platform.		5.73	1.25
I watch sports on OTT because it is amusing.		4.92	1.57
<i>Escape – Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	4.51	1.51
I use the OTT platform because I can escape from reality.		4.29	1.82
I use the OTT platform because it allows me to enter a non-thinking, relaxing period.		5.00	1.69
I use the OTT platform because I can forget about work.		4.19	1.79
<i>Fanship – Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	5.41	1.34
One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I consider myself a fan of various sports.		5.36	1.56
One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I am a huge fan of sports in general.		5.39	1.56
One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I consider myself to be a big fan of my favorite sports team.		5.29	1.66
<i>Information – Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	5.22	1.24
I use the OTT platform because it helps me to obtain more knowledge about sports.		4.90	1.46
I use the OTT platform because I am able to obtain a wide range of information from various sports.		5.28	1.46
I use the OTT platform because I can learn about things happening in the sports world.		5.30	1.51
<i>Pass Time – Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	5.28	1.24
I use the OTT platform because it gives me something to do to occupy my time.		5.30	1.51
I use the OTT platform because it passes the time away, particularly when I’m bored.		4.78	1.81
I use the OTT platform during my free time.		5.59	1.31
<i>Sport Knowledge - Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	4.30	1.50
OTT platforms help me to understand the rules of the sport.		4.02	1.74
OTT platforms help me to better understand sport strategy.		4.57	1.60
OTT platforms helps me to understand the technical aspects of a sport.		4.25	1.73
<i>Team Support – Seo & Green (2008)</i>	0.92	5.02	1.30
One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is because of a particular team I am interested in following.		5.12	1.68
I use the OTT platform because I believe it is important to my favorite team.		4.54	1.82
Using the OTT platform demonstrates my support for sports in general.		5.29	1.49
<i>Acquisition of Knowledge – Chan-Olmsted & Xiao (2019)</i>	0.92	4.72	1.51
I use the OTT platform because I enjoy tracking the individual statistics of the players.		4.57	1.73
I use the OTT platform because I can check the teams win/loss record.		4.91	1.76
I use the OTT platform because I enjoy reading sports statistics.		4.60	1.84
<i>Convenience – Hwang & Lim (2015)</i>	0.92	5.23	1.06
The OTT platform allows me to find what I want with less effort.		5.53	1.35
Using OTT platforms is the most effective way to receive answers for game-related questions.		4.68	1.62
It is easy to receive game-related information through OTT platforms.		5.27	1.44

Transmitting and sharing game-related information is fast and expedient with OTT platforms.		5.34	1.28
Advertising Preference - new construct	0.92	5.12	1.23
I prefer watching sports content on OTT platforms because there are limited commercials.		5.33	1.59
I like that when I watch sports via OTT platforms the advertisements are personalized to my interests.		4.49	1.66
I like that sports programs on OTT platforms are shorter in length than cable/broadcast programs because of less ads.		5.36	1.45
Content Expectation - new construct	0.92	5.44	0.98
I use the OTT platform because it provides centralized content that is consistent across all my devices.		5.67	1.25
I use the OTT platform because I can easily share content to other platforms.		4.95	1.59
I use OTT platforms because it shows content that is related to me.		5.44	1.28
I use the OTT platform because I can access content that I wouldn't get anywhere else.		5.50	1.46
Cost - new construct	0.93	5.34	1.36
OTT is more cost efficient than cable.		5.38	1.62
I spend less money on OTT platforms than I do/did with cable television packages.		5.50	1.58
Bundling multiple OTT subscriptions is more cost effective than cable television packages.		5.01	1.65
Technical Quality - new construct	0.91	4.96	1.21
I use the OTT platform because it is the most reliable platform to watch sports.		4.84	1.59
I use the OTT platform because it has better quality video (HD vs. standard definition).		4.74	1.61
I use the OTT platform because I can watch it on multiple screens.		5.17	1.68
I use the OTT platform because I do not experience as many service interruptions as cable.		4.90	1.71

Table 2. Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Information	1.000												
Convenience	0.623*	1.000											
Escape	0.404*	0.490*	1.000										
Pass Time	0.480*	0.477*	0.709*	1.000									
Fanship	0.551*	0.555*	0.337*	0.344*	1.000								
Team Support	0.550*	0.536*	0.409*	0.275*	0.714*	1.000							
Advertising Preference	0.505*	0.539*	0.435*	0.394*	0.435*	0.406*	1.000						
Acquisition of Knowledge	0.688*	0.635*	0.454*	0.446*	0.549*	0.598*	0.482*	1.000					
Sport Knowledge	0.676*	0.580*	0.431*	0.390*	0.456*	0.586*	0.536*	0.607*	1.000				
Cost	0.426*	0.402*	0.245*	0.247*	0.267*	0.252*	0.533*	0.314*	0.362*	1.000			
Content Expectation	0.586*	0.617*	0.366*	0.388*	0.637*	0.589*	0.515*	0.512*	0.490*	0.321*	1.000		
Technical Quality	0.640*	0.690*	0.455*	0.493*	0.550*	0.535*	0.673*	0.642*	0.608*	0.567*	0.624*	1.000	
Entertainment	0.599*	0.684*	0.429*	0.489*	0.539*	0.430*	0.536*	0.514*	0.519*	0.362*	0.603*	0.618	1.000

Note(s): *Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Legend: A – Information; B – Convenience; C – Escape; D – Pass Time; E – Fanship; F – Team Support; G – Advertising Preference; H – Acquisition of Knowledge; I – Sport Knowledge; J – Cost; K – Content Expectation; L – Technical Quality; M – Entertainment

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for demographic variables ($N = 151$).

Variable	Category	<i>N</i>	%
Location	United States	147	97.35%
	Canada	1	0.66%
	I live outside the US and Canada	3	1.99%
Gender	Male	77	51.68%
	Female	70	46.98%
	List identity	2	1.34%
	Prefer not to disclose	0	0.00%
Age	18-22	20	13.9%
	23-30	79	54.9%
	31-40	16	11.1%
	41-55	24	16.7%
	56-65	5	3.5%
	66 or older	0	0.0%
Ethnicity	White	26	17.22%
	Hispanic or Latino	5	3.31%
	Black or African American	114	75.50%
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
	Asian	4	2.65%
	Other	1	0.66%
	Prefer not to disclose	1	0.66%
	Household Income	Less than \$20,000	27
\$20,000 to \$29,999		17	11.41%
\$30,000 to \$39,999		18	12.08%
\$40,000 to \$49,999		17	11.41%
\$50,000 to \$59,999		16	10.74%
\$60,000 to \$69,999		9	6.04%
\$70,000 to \$79,999		7	4.70%
\$80,000 to \$89,999		10	6.71%
\$90,000 to \$99,999		2	1.34%
\$100,000 to \$149,999		17	11.41%
\$150,000 or more		9	6.04%
Education		Some high school	0
	High school graduate	3	2.03%
	Some college	14	9.46%
	Trade/Technical/Vocational	1	0.68%
	Associate's Degree	7	4.73%
	Bachelor's Degree	74	50.00%

	Master's Degree	39	26.35%
	Professional Degree	3	2.03%
	Doctorate Degree	7	4.73%
Employment	Self-employed	13	7.83%
	Student	42	25.30%
	Military	4	2.41%
	Retired	2	1.20%
	Employed for wages	99	59.64%
	Out of work	6	3.61%

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for consumption variables ($N = 151$).

Variable	Category	<i>N</i>	%
Watch OTT Sport Content	I did not use any OTT platforms listed in that time	0	0.00%
	Amazon Prime	61	9.82%
	BR Live	12	1.93%
	CBS All-Access	32	5.15%
	DAZN	3	0.48%
	ESPN+	91	14.65%
	Facebook Watch	27	4.35%
	FITE TV	1	0.16%
	FloSports	13	2.09%
	Fox Soccer Match Pass	2	0.32%
	HBO Now	27	4.35%
	MLB.TV	10	1.61%
	NBA TV	47	7.57%
	NBC Sports Gold	9	1.45%
	Netflix	68	10.95%
	NHL.TV	1	0.16%
	Red Bull TV	1	0.16%
	PGA Tour Live	4	0.64%
	Showtime Streaming	9	1.45%
	Tennis Channel Plus	3	0.48%
	Tennis TV	3	0.48%
	Twitch	10	1.61%
	Twitter	55	8.86%
	UCF Fight Pass	2	0.32%
	Univision Now	0	0.00%
	WWE Network	3	0.48%
	Yahoo mobile app	8	1.29%
YouTube	98	15.78%	
Sport Specific OTT	13	2.09%	
Other	8	1.29%	
Subscribed to OTT Sport Content	I did not subscribe to any OTT platforms listed in that time	40	13.8%
	Amazon Prime	52	17.87%
	BR Live	2	0.69%
	CBS All-Access	14	4.81%
	DAZN	1	0.34%

	ESPN+	47	16.15%
	Facebook Watch	5	1.72%
	FITE TV	1	0.34%
	FloSports	6	2.06%
	Fox Soccer Match Pass	1	0.34%
	HBO Now	12	4.12%
	MLB.TV	4	1.37%
	NBA TV	10	3.44%
	NBC Sports Gold	1	0.34%
	Netflix	50	17.18%
	NHL.TV	1	0.34%
	Red Bull TV	0	0.00%
	PGA Tour Live	0	0.00%
	Showtime Streaming	3	1.03%
	Tennis Channel Plus	1	0.34%
	Tennis TV	2	0.69%
	Twitch	1	0.34%
	Twitter	5	1.72%
	UCF Fight Pass	1	0.34%
	Univision Now	0	0.00%
	WWE Network	4	1.37%
	Yahoo mobile app	1	0.34%
	YouTube	18	6.19%
	Sport Specific OTT	4	1.37%
	Other	4	1.37%
Over the air television receiver	Yes	58	39.19%
	No	75	50.68%
	Not sure	15	10.14%
Subscribe to cable, satellite, or fiber television	Yes	87	58.39%
	No	60	40.27%
	Not sure	2	1.34%
Sport Watch Pattern via OTT (days)	1 day a week	29	19.73%
	2 days a week	25	17.01%
	3 days a week	26	17.69%
	4 days a week	23	15.65%
	5 days a week	18	12.24%
	6 days a week	2	1.36%
	7 days a week/daily	24	16.33%

Sport Watch Pattern via Cable/Satellite/Fiber (days)	1 day a week	16	10.81%
	2 days a week	12	8.11%
	3 days a week	17	11.49%
	4 days a week	20	13.51%
	5 days a week	10	6.76%
	6 days a week	5	3.38%
	7 days a week/daily	26	17.57%
	none	42	28.38%
Sport Watch Pattern via OTT (hours per week)	1-2 hours per week	29	19.59%
	3-4 hours per week	47	31.76%
	5-6 hours per week	24	16.22%
	7-8 hours per week	17	11.49%
	9-10 hours per week	5	3.38%
	10+ hours per week	17	11.49%
	none	9	6.08%
Device(s) Used for OTT	Television	99	30.46%
	Laptop	85	26.15%
	Tablet	28	8.62%
	Smartphone	106	32.62%
	Other	7	2.15%

Table 5. Average Spending of OTT Consumers on OTT versus Cable/Satellite/Fiber

	M	SD
Approximately, how much money do you spend on OTT platforms per month to watch sports/sport content? (\$USD)	\$ 32.18	40.05
Approximately, how much money do you spend on Cable/Satellite/Fiber television per month? (\$USD)	\$ 64.04	80.66

Table 6. Cluster Analysis

	Bandwagoners	On-the-Goers	General Adult	Loyal Sports Fan	Cost Conscious Fan	Low OTT Adopter
Highest Category	Fanship (all categories above five)	Cost, Pass Time	Fanship, Content Expectation	Fanship	Cost, Content Expectations	Pass Time
Lowest Category	Escape	Sport Knowledge	Escape	Sport Knowledge	Escape, Acquisition of Knowledge	Sport Knowledge
Watching Frequency of OTT vs. Cable	Equal amount of time watching sports on OTT and Cable (Avg. 4 days/week)	Watches more OTT per week than cable (3 days vs. 2 days per week)	Watches more OTT per week than cable (3 days vs. 2 days per week)	Spends most time watching sports on either platform (OTT – 4 days, or television – 5 days)	Watched about the same on OTT and cable. No over-the-air television receiver.	Watches more cable (4 days/week) than OTT (2 days/week)
Fan Identification (Ranged from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree)	High fan ID (6.62 out of 7)	Identified as somewhat of a fan (5.45 out of 7)	Considers themselves a fan (5.57) and supports the team, but not a priority	Highest fan identification (6.67)	Identified as a fan (5.21 out of 7)	Identified as a fan (5.44 out of 7)
Avg. Money Spent on OTT vs. Cable	Spends the most money on cable compared to the other groups (Avg. \$76 for cable and \$33 on OTT)	Invested only half of cable costs on OTT (\$69 for cable vs. \$32 for OTT)	Spends about the same on OTT and cable (most of all groups) [\$70 for cable, \$51 for OTT)	Spent a little more on cable (\$57) than on OTT (\$37)	Spent significantly less on OTT (\$22) versus cable (\$70)	Spent the least money on cable (\$28) and OTT (\$9)

Table 7. Segment Demographic Characteristics.

	Bandwagoners	On-the-Goers	General Adult	Loyal Sports Fan	Cost Conscious Fan	Low OTT Adopter
Fan Identification	6.62	5.45	5.57	6.67	5.21	5.44
Over-the-air Television Receiver (1 = Yes; 2 = No)	1.48	1.79	1.72	1.73	2.00	1.61
Cable, Satellite, or Fiber television Subscription (1 = Yes)	1.31	1.45	1.39	1.45	1.36	1.50
Money Spent on OTT	\$33.42	\$32.96	\$51.67	\$37.10	\$21.92	\$9.20
Money Spent on Cable, Satellite, or Fiber	\$76.62	\$69.82	\$70.35	\$57.50	\$69.62	\$28.20
Weekly OTT Viewing (4 = 4 days/week)	4.72	3.2	3.39	4.00	3.43	2.69
Weekly Cable Viewing (4 = 4 days/week)	4.07	2.92	2.50	5.14	3.29	4.22
Hourly OTT Viewing (3 = 5-6 hours per week)	3.28	2.98	2.28	3.18	3.86	4.00
Age	25.79	29.95	36.39	29.05	37.83	30.35
Income (5 = \$50,000 to \$59,999)	5.56	4.67	4.61	3.75	4.62	5.63
Education (5 = Associate's Degree; 6 = Bachelor's Degree)	5.28	6.39	6.28	5.86	5.86	6.41

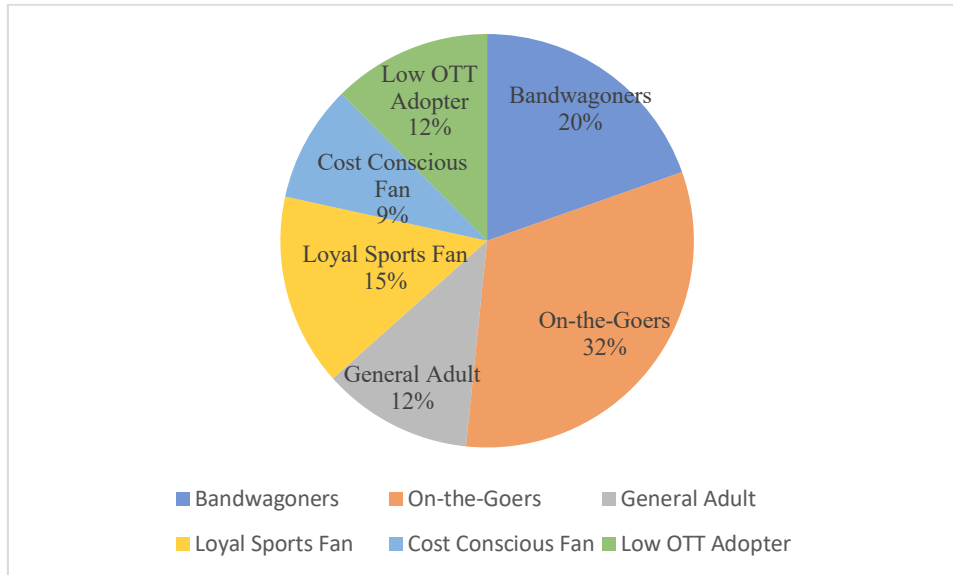
Table 8. OTT Motivation Factors by Watching Frequency for OTT Sport Consumers

Factor	Total Mean (SD)	1 days a week (SD)	2 days a week (SD)	3 days a week (SD)	4 days a week (SD)	5 days a week (SD)	6 days a week (SD)	7 days a week/daily (SD)	F Statistic	P Statistic	Partial Eta Squared
Information	5.26 (1.19)	4.26 (1.31)	5.06 (1.01)	5.44 (1.04)	5.73 (0.68)	5.66 (1.00)	5.83 (1.65)	5.63 (1.26)	6.097	0.000*	0.201
Convenience	5.26 (1.05)	4.56 (1.11)	4.98 (0.90)	5.71 (0.76)	5.15 (0.92)	5.78 (0.93)	5.63 (1.94)	5.64 (1.03)	5.454	0.000*	0.184
Escape	4.52 (1.50)	3.80 (1.40)	4.67 (1.41)	4.64 (1.72)	4.51 (1.24)	4.47 (1.83)	6.67 (0.47)	4.94 (1.29)	2.316	0.036*	0.087
Pass Time	5.28 (1.25)	4.71 (1.58)	5.23 (1.15)	5.23 (1.04)	5.24 (1.09)	5.57 (1.43)	6.33 (0.94)	5.73 (0.96)	2.090	0.058	0.080
Fanship	5.43 (1.32)	3.93 (1.62)	5.43 (1.07)	5.91 (0.82)	5.72 (0.85)	5.78 (1.01)	6.50 (0.71)	6.04 (0.93)	12.026	0.000*	0.332
Team Support	5.04 (1.28)	4.05 (1.30)	5.05 (1.23)	5.46 (0.97)	5.39 (1.06)	4.84 (1.43)	6.50 (0.71)	5.42 (1.14)	5.350	0.000*	0.181
Advertising Preference	5.13 (1.23)	4.30 (1.16)	5.30 (0.81)	5.41 (1.13)	5.57 (0.89)	5.20 (1.28)	6.00 (1.41)	5.06 (1.60)	3.568	0.003*	0.129
Acquisition of Knowledge	4.74 (1.50)	3.49 (1.38)	4.70 (1.17)	5.13 (1.25)	4.83 (1.34)	5.24 (1.58)	6.17 (1.18)	5.27 (1.55)	5.739	0.000*	0.192
Sport Knowledge	4.32 (1.48)	3.29 (1.41)	4.37 (1.34)	4.69 (1.30)	4.56 (1.18)	4.41 (1.54)	5.83 (1.65)	4.67 (1.65)	3.684	0.002*	0.132
Cost	5.36 (1.34)	4.90 (1.50)	5.44 (1.09)	5.83 (1.16)	5.21 (1.21)	5.78 (1.36)	6.50 (0.71)	5.12 (1.55)	1.877	0.089	0.072
Content Expectation	5.46 (0.96)	4.64 (1.07)	5.41 (0.54)	5.65 (0.89)	5.65 (0.74)	5.56 (1.03)	5.88 (1.59)	5.95 (0.86)	6.203	0.000*	0.204
Technical Quality	4.97 (1.20)	3.92 (1.15)	4.93 (1.04)	5.40 (1.04)	5.22 (0.93)	5.25 (1.12)	6.50 (0.71)	5.24 (1.25)	6.449	0.000*	0.211
Entertainment	5.36 (1.04)	4.62 (1.25)	5.14 (0.83)	5.63 (0.86)	5.57 (0.74)	5.76 (0.89)	5.83 (1.64)	5.66 (1.09)	4.499	0.000*	0.157

* = significant at $p < .05$

Figure 1. OTT User Segments based on Cluster Analysis

Bandwagoners, 20%; On-the-Goers, 32%; General Adult, 12%; Loyal Sports Fan, 15%; Cost-Conscious Fan, 9%; Low OTT Adopter, 12%



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

People consume sports for various reasons. Because OTT platforms are available across the digital landscape, it is important to understand what studies suggest motivates online sports consumption. Cable television providers have relied on their consumers to pay to watch their favorite teams and sporting events through selling packages and renting equipment. Therefore, the theoretical perspectives of past online sports consumption research may not apply to OTT. However, once the digital revolution continued, OTT platforms revolutionized the sports media industry by transforming the revenue gain from media rights to sponsorship and advertising. Despite trends reflecting the changes in consumption patterns and the money being circulated within the industry, there has been limited research exploring the OTT consumer, which would be practical in developing effective marketing strategies. The overarching purpose of the present research is to examine the potential effects of OTT platforms on sport industry consumers' motives to utilize the services. The results will contribute to the body of knowledge and provide insights to aid decision-makers when selecting marketing strategies deployed in the sports industry.

Previous research has explored online sports consumption of media, including mobile apps (Ha et al., 2017; Kang et al., 2015), online (Ko et al., 2005; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Seo et al., 2008), television, (Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2006), online subscriptions (Hutchins et al., 2019), and social media (Clavio & Walsh, 2014). Following the MSSOC (Seo & Green, 2008), I derived and tested a scale which included entertainment, escape, fanship, information, pass time, sports knowledge, and team support, and expanded it with the inclusion of two motives from other literature: acquisition of knowledge (from Chan-Olmsted &

Xiao, 2019) and convenience (Hwang & Lim, 2015), alongside four new constructs not discussed in previous academic online consumption research: 1) advertising preference (i.e., users' inclination to use the platform given limited and personalized advertisements), 2) cost (users' intention to use the platform based on cost efficiency), 3) content expectation (users' anticipation of centrally located personal content), and 4) technical quality (users' preference to watch sports on reliable and quality platforms), exploring their effects on consumption of OTT platforms.

OTT Consumer Profile

The overall demographic of the OTT users in this study were between ages 18 to 65, with a mean age of 31. This information provides evidence that a wide variety of people uses OTT platforms. The study found that almost 80% of OTT users are millennials (23-38) and Generation Z (7-22), which suggests that sport managers should utilize social tools to market their product to users. Findings indicate that half of OTT users (53.0%) make about \$50,000 per year and hold at least a bachelor's degree (50%) while being employed for wages (59.64%). Due to its diverse cultural backgrounds and values, it comes as no surprise that understanding social context is essential in personal engagement (Scott, Hughes, Hodgkinson & Kraus, 2019). Similarly, different ethnic sport consumers would show different behaviors, such as the African American middle-aged population that consumes OTT. Particularly, considering the tremendous economic influence (\$3.9 trillion in 2018, accounting for 26% of the total U.S. buying power; Humphreys, 2019) of these ethnic minority groups in the U.S., sports marketers and researchers need to emphasize the importance of these groups as potential sport consumers. It is important to understand that OTT platforms are growing media platforms that may enhance the digital experience for sports fans. Although 51.68% of respondents were males, it is important to note

that 46.98% were females, which could suggest that men and women have similar interests in sports and OTT.

The surveyed OTT users engaged in traditional and new forms of media as 50.68% of participants does not use an over-the-air television receiver, but 58.39% of participants revealed that they subscribed to cable, satellite, or fiber television. Over half of OTT users watched sports via their OTT platform at least three times a week, if not more; whereas, only 30% of users watched sports at least three times a week via cable, satellite, or fiber television. Findings also indicate that 16.33% of users watch sports seven days a week/daily. This data suggests that OTT might be a viable alternative to traditional cable television.

I examined OTT users' use of other sport media platforms usage. With all survey participants required to be an OTT platform user, other OTT platforms were examined. Most OTT users watched sports via YouTube (15.78%), which showcases some Turner channels, including NBA TV and NBA League Pass; MLB Network and MLB.tv; and regional sports networks and ESPN+ (14.65%) which features additive live sports content, like tennis and cricket. This data suggests that many OTT users prefer a combination of both live and on-demand video content. This is important because streaming service providers that have the capability of providing on-demand video and live broadcasts will push the price of sports broadcasting rights further due to their financial flexibility. However, most OTT users subscribe to Amazon Prime (17.87%) and ESPN+ (16.15%). Amazon, specifically, offers consumers NFL football, Major League Baseball games (New York Yankees), and UEFA Champions League soccer matches in Germany. Notably, Amazon's major sports investments have been outside the U.S., which might indicate that the future of sports streaming may lie in cooperation, not competition, with traditional TV companies.

Consumer Segmentation

Six segments of OTT users were identified. Users that value certain motives can be segmented to help better target fans (Trail et al., 2003). When distinct segments are ascertained, organizations can create selective marketing strategies to be deployed in the sports industry to address each segment more effectively and efficiently instead of ravaging resources directing communications to a broad, uninterested audience.

The two largest segments were On-the-Goers and Bandwagoners, so OTT managers should focus on marketing to these types of individuals first. For the On-the-Goers, convenience and information were highly rated motives for using OTT services. Understanding the rules of the sport, alternatively, did not sway to this segment as they identified as somewhat of a sports fan. Because they watch more OTT per week than cable at half the cost, and were moderate sports fans, marketing to this group would include a more general strategy emphasizing its ease of use across multiple platforms. For Bandwagoners, one of the main reasons they use the OTT platform is because they identify as a sports fan, so targeting ads about the sports content directly would be important. This segment of respondents indicated that they did use over-the-air television receiver in addition to their subscription to cable, satellite, or fiber television, so they are likely television consumers and want media access. They spent a little under half of their money on OTT in comparison to their cable subscription service but watched sports content on both platforms equally, which differed from the On-the-Goers

For General Adult Fans, the personalized and sharable content of their favorite teams drives their use of OTT platforms, whereas a need to escape does not appease them. This segment considers themselves sports fans but has no fondness for using OTT or their cable subscription as they pay about the same for both. Sports managers that are interested in

marketing to this group should allow users to customize their platform with their favorite teams. Loyal Sports Fans differ from General Sports Fans in their consumption of the OTT platform and how much they are willing to pay for it. Although both segments identify that fandom is important, Loyal Fans have an increased fan identification and are indifferent about advertisement or costs because they consume sports more often every week regardless of the platform. These sports fans are best catered to by showcasing various content about their favorite team.

The Low OTT Adopters indicated that they are not motivated to watch sports on OTT other than to pass the time and not watch commercials but enjoyed personalized entertaining content. This portion of respondents does not have a desire to understand the rules of the sport, which indicates that they use OTT platforms primarily for entertainment and spend most of their time utilizing their cable subscription. Marketing to this segment would be best done by providing advertising around entertaining portions of the game.

Finally, the smallest segment, making up about 9% of respondents, were Cost-Conscious Fans motivated by the price and personalization of the content on OTT platforms, but are not as motivated by identifying as a sports fan. This segment of respondents spent significantly less on OTT versus cable and was the only group that did not use an over-the-air television receiver. Sports marketers will have to develop an efficient subscription plan to attract these users to increase their use of OTT platforms.

Effect on Consumption

When combining OTT user's motivation and comparing them to their consumption levels, significant ($p < .05$) differences were found between the motives in their online sports consumption level. The key significant differences were found between one day per week

consumers and all other consumption levels. The cost was the only consistent motive regardless of how much the consumer watched OTT. Multiple comparisons test using Tukey HSD posthoc revealed that fanship was the only motive that all consumption levels greater than two days a week were significantly higher than the consumers that watched sports on OTT one day per week. Users that consumed sports only one day a week viewed watching sports as more of a pastime ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.58$), whereas while consumption increases, the user's expectation also increased. In a market where consumers have choices, OTT sports consumer motives are important in driving consumer engagement (Hwang & Lim, 2015) and consumption.

Users that identify as sports fans consume sports differently than those that do not. Fan identification impacted the participants' consumption of OTT. Users who identified as a sports fan consumed sports via OTT platforms about four days per week ($M = 3.84$) in comparison to users that identified less as a sports fan who consumed sports two days per week via OTT platforms ($M = 2.33$). The frequency of online sports consumption is consistent with past research on online sports consumption (Seo et al., 2008) and fan identification (Phua, 2010). OTT producers should continue to target sports fans for their content and marketing messaging.

Theoretical Implications

A major contribution of this study to existing sport online consumption literature was to provide a fundamental base for understanding OTT sports fans and their intentions. This study has several practical implications. As young people prefer digital platforms over linear (Lombardo & Broughton, 2017), OTT platforms have become increasingly prevalent. I examined OTT platforms using the MSSOC due to its popularity in online sports consumption research and evaluated OTT users and their motives to use the platform. Examining OTT users' experience under the concept of U&G and the MSSOC, I developed a scale that included the motives that

related specifically to OTT platforms from Seo and Green (2008) MSSOC. Also, Chan-Olmsted and Xiao (2019) acquisition of knowledge factor and Hwang and Lim (2015) convenience factors were also included. Subsequently, I extended the constructs to include advertising preference, content expectation, cost, and technical quality, exploring the effects of their intention to use. This study provides an exploratory examination of OTT users and their psychological factors of their intent to watch sports using these platforms, which can be built upon in future research.

Rubin (1983) identified entertainment, pass time, and information seeking as gratifications sought using television. The empirical evidence indicates that the majority of OTT users are a part of the Millennial and GenZ era and that they are likely to use social tools to watch sports. Studies have suggested that information, interactivity, content creation, and functionality were reasons why college sports fans engage in sport-focused social media (Clavio & Walsh, 2014). My findings extend knowledge on the role of cost on consumers' intention to use the platform. Scholars have identified that user-generated content (i.e., tweets, videos, blogs) has disrupted traditional media companies by generating relevant content at a low cost and quick pace (Hirsch & Gruber, 2014; Shifman, 2012). The fans in this research indicated that OTT platforms are more efficient and cost-effective than cable television packages. Also, it is worth noting that the yearly income of over half of these OTT users was lower than \$60,000. With regard to the findings, it is speculated that technical quality is not a necessary condition to highly influence sport consumers' intention to watch sport via OTT platforms.

Additionally, this study could also be applicable to online fan apps, such as daily fantasy sports apps, which are used by an array of sports fans to wager on betting markets in all major

sports. Consumers might prompt similar concerns as with watching sports online, such as cost efficiency and effectiveness of the platform.

Limitations

There were shortcomings in this study that should be considered when interpreting the data, which included sample size, sample bias, and collection time concerns. First, as this was an exploratory study, factors were acquired from various studies to help shape the framework of this research. Second, OTTs can be further divided into specific forms of distributors. Given the saturation within the television industry, the exact meaning of "TV" may not always be a harmonious concept across a variety of users.

Although the present study aimed to use a sample that was reflective of all OTT users, a larger cohort of participants might have provided sufficient statistical power to detect a correlation between OTT users and their motives. The number of questions may have also hindered possible participants. The researcher also utilized the snowball sampling method to get responses relying on the researcher's personal and professional social media accounts. Although every intention was made to allow for a diverse sampling of respondents (race, income, and education), the OTT users may have similar attributes of the researcher; however, some of this may have been mitigated through reposting by organizations and individuals that identify as OTT and industry leaders.

I could have improved the measurement of hourly viewing consumption. Rather than just asking participants about their hourly consumption of OTT, it would have been beneficial to also inquire about the hourly consumption of their cable services to be able to further expound on weekly and daily consumption habits.

The survey took place during a two-week period in March and April of 2020, which was during the pandemic outbreak of COVID-19 that forced sports to shut down completely. OTT fans may not have been using social media during this time because people were making the transition to their work-from-home environment. As a result of time limitations, the evaluation was just disseminated for fourteen days. If the collection time was extended, there could have been more participants.

Future Research

The current study examined OTT users and the factors (U&G) that influence sports consumers to subscribe to OTT. By reducing survey items in this study, it is probable that new gratifications may have been missed. With the identification of cost and convenience as significant factors influence OTT users' consumption behaviors, exploring the effects of cost given the quality and variety of the content on each platform may be merited. Each OTT platform has various focuses ranging from live video content to short-form videos and documentaries. Future research may explore the motivators to use specific devices to watch sports. Also, consumers may subscribe to particular platforms for specific reasons, so platform specific work may need to be conducted, as well as qualitative research on learning more about what constrains people from using OTT platforms.

Researchers could examine sports organization use of OTT platforms across the different levels of sports (e.g., youth, high school, collegiate, professional, and overseas) and how their motivations adjust given the level and why. Observed differences between these sport achievement levels will allow a better understanding of the talent at each level and take measures to expand recruitment opportunities worldwide. The results of this study might not be relevant in classifying general media utilization practices. Specifically, the findings may be used to better

understand minority attitudes and behaviors and could be expanded to increase the generalizability of findings in future research. Lastly, with the COVID-19 global pandemic causing intermittent sports seasons, future researchers are encouraged to study the long- and short-term effects from a cost-benefit standpoint.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Introduction. OTT stands for “over-the-top,” which is used to describe the distribution of film and television content via the Internet, not requiring users to enter a contract with traditional cable or satellite pay-TV service like a Comcast or DirectTV. Examples of this include ESPN+, DAZN, FloSports, Amazon Prime Video, NBA TV, etc. This study evaluates OTT subscribers to gain insight on the consumers subscribing these platforms to meet their needs and market and gain new consumers.

AN EXPLORATION OF THE “OVER-THE TOP” SPORTS STREAMING CONSUMER
<p><i>Participant Criterion</i></p> <p>Are you at least 18 years of age or over?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>Where do you live?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States • Canada • I live outside of the US/Canada <p>What OTT platforms have you used <i>TO ACCESS/WATCH SPORTS CONTENT</i> in the last 12 months? (check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did not use any OTT platforms listed in that time • Amazon Prime • BR Live • CBS All-Access • DAZN • ESPN+ • Facebook Watch • FITE TV • FloSports • Fox Soccer Match Pass • HBO Now • MLB.TV • NBA TV • NBC Sports Gold • Netflix • NHL.TV • Red Bull TV • PGA Tour Live • Showtime Streaming • Tennis Channel Plus • Tennis TV • Twitch • Twitter • UCF Fight Pass • Univision Now • WWE Network • Yahoo mobile app • YouTube • Sport Specific OTT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other <p>What OTT platforms did you pay for <i>TO ACCESS/WATCH SPORTS CONTENT</i> at any point in the last 12 months? (check all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did not pay for any OTT platforms listed in that time • Amazon Prime • BR Live • CBS All-Access • DAZN • ESPN+ • Facebook Watch • FITE TV • FloSports • Fox Soccer Match Pass • HBO Now • MLB.TV • NBA TV • NBC Sports Gold • Netflix • NHL.TV • Red Bull TV • PGA Tour Live • Showtime Streaming • Tennis Channel Plus • Tennis TV • Twitch • Twitter • UCF Fight Pass • Univision Now • WWE Network • Yahoo mobile app • YouTube • Sport Specific OTT • Other
<p>Motive Scales</p>
<p>Information – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because it helps me to obtain more knowledge about sports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I am able to obtain a wide range of information from various sports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can learn about things happening in the sport world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Convenience – <i>Hwang & Lim (2015)</i></p> <p>The OTT platform allows me to find what I want with less effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>Using OTT platforms is the most effective way to receive answers for game-related questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>It is easy to receive game-related information through OTT platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>Transmitting and sharing game-relation information is fast and expedient with OTT platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Escape – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because I can escape from reality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*

<p>I use the OTT platform because it allows me to enter a non-thinking, relaxing period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can forget about work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Pass Time – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because it gives me something to do to occupy my time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because it passes the time away, particularly when I’m bored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform during my free time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Entertainment – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>I would describe OTT as an exciting experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>OTT is a cool platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I watch sports on OTT because it is amusing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Fanship – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I consider myself a fan of various sports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I am a huge fan of sports in general.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is that I consider myself to be a big fan of my favorite sport team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Team Support – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>One of the main reasons I use the OTT platform is because of a particular team I am interested in following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I believe it is important to my favorite team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>Using the OTT platform demonstrates my support for sports in general.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Advertising Preference – <i>New Construct</i></p> <p>I prefer watching sports content on OTT platforms because there are limited commercials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I like that when I watch sports via OTT platforms the advertisements are personalized to my interests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I like that sports programs on OTT platforms are shorter in length than cable/broadcast programs because of less ads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Acquisition of Knowledge – <i>Chan-Olmsted & Xiao (2019)</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because I enjoy tracking the individual statistics of the players.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can check the teams win/loss record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I enjoy reading team statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Sport Knowledge – <i>Seo & Green (2008)</i></p> <p>OTT platforms help me to understand the rules of the sport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>OTT platforms help me to better understand sport strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>OTT platforms help me to understand the technical aspects of a sport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p>Cost – <i>New Construct</i></p>

<p>OTT is more cost efficient than cable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I spend less money on OTT platforms than I do/did with cable television packages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>Bundling multiple OTT subscriptions is more cost effective than cable television packages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p><i>Content Expectation – New Construct</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because it provides centralized content that is consistent across all my devices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can easily share content to other platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because it shows content that is related to me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can access content that I wouldn't get anywhere else.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p><i>Technical Quality – New Construct</i></p> <p>I use the OTT platform because it is the most reliable platform to watch sports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because it has better quality video (HD vs. standard definition).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I can watch it on multiple screens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I use the OTT platform because I do not experience as many service interruptions as cable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p><i>Fan Identification – Trail, Fink, & Anderson (2003)</i></p> <p>I consider myself to be a sport fan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I am seen as a sports fan among my peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of sports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree* <p>Being a fan of sports is very important to me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – Strongly Disagree; 7 – Strongly Agree*
<p><i>Consumption Levels</i></p> <p>Do you use an over the air television receiver (e.g., HDTV digital antenna to watch HD channels like ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Not sure <p>Do you subscribe to cable or satellite or fiber television (e.g., Comcast, Xfinity, DirectTV, Google Fiber, AT&T, etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Not sure <p>Approximately, how much money did you spend on OTT in the past 12 months?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Ended <p>Approximately, how much money did you spend on Cable/Satellite/Fiber in the past 12 months?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Ended <p>On average, how many days per week do you watch OTT sports content?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day per week • 2 days per week • 3 days per week • 4 days per week • 5 days per week • 6 days per week

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 days per week/daily <p>On average, how many days per week do you watch sports content via Cable/Satellite/Fiber?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day per week • 2 days per week • 3 days per week • 4 days per week • 5 days per week • 6 days per week • 7 days per week/daily • none <p>In an average week, how many hours would you spend watching OTT sports content?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Ended <p>Which device(s) do you watch OTT sports content? Services (select all that apply)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television • Laptop/Desktop • Tablet • Smartphone • Other
<p><i>Respondent Information</i></p>
<p>Demographics</p> <p>What is your gender?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male • Female • Other • Prefer not to disclose <p>What is your ethnicity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White • Hispanic or Latino • Black or African American • Native American or American Indian • Asian/Pacific Islander • Other • Prefer not to disclose <p>What is your age?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Ended <p>Household Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than \$20,000 • \$20,000 to \$29,000 • \$30,000 to \$39,000 • \$40,000 to \$49,999 • \$50,000 to \$59,999 • \$60,000 to \$69,999 • \$70,000 to \$79,999 • \$80,000 to \$89,999 • \$90,000 to \$99,999 • \$100,000 to \$149,999 • \$150,000 or more <p>What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some high school • High school graduate • Some college • Trade/Technical/vocational training • Associate degree

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

Which status best describes you?

- Self-employed
- Student
- Military
- Retired
- Employed for wages
- Out of work

*Range:

1-Strongly disagree

2-Disagree

3-Somewhat disagree

4-Neither agree nor disagree

5-Somewhat agree

6-Agree

7-Strongly agree