Spectator Support: Examining the Attributes That Differentiate Niche from Mainstream Sport

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The purposes of this study were to identify the attributes consumers use to distinguish between mainstream and niche sports and determine which of those attributes were related to support for niche sports. Niche sports were classified as those sports not attracting mainstream media attention or large scale live audiences (Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006). Participants (n = 197) were asked to rate their perception of seven attributes (i.e., accessibility, popularity, uniqueness, affordability, star power, player similarities, and player skill) with four niche sports and one mainstream sport. Results indicated that consumers differentiate niche sports from mainstream sports across several attributes. Specifically, fans associated affordability and player similarity with niche sports, and star power and popularity with the mainstream sport. These findings illustrate which aspects the respective sports should emphasize to reach consumers and suggest how niche sport marketers may position their sport property against mainstream sports.

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