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Analysing the motivations of Japanese international sports-fan tourists

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ABSTRACT

Research question: The number of sports fans travelling internationally to attend sporting events as spectators is increasing every year. Understanding their behaviour is important for sports marketers, including sports organisations, travel companies and government tourist organisations. Numerous studies have examined motivations either from the perspective of sports fans or from that of tourists, but there has so far been little research on sports tourism. The aim of the current study is to develop two scales, one for sports fans and another for tourists, with initial motivation factors derived from previously published scales for both groups. The study also considers the activity and motivations of Japanese sports tourists as an increasingly important sub-segment of the international sports tourism market.

Research methods: Data were collected from Japanese general tourists ($N = 3773$). Of those surveyed, 9% ($N = 338$) had watched sports in foreign countries. Motivation scales were developed using factor analysis and independent t -tests.

Results and findings: A Tourist Motivation Scale (Escape, Nature, Shopping and Gourmet Dining) and a Sports Fan Motivation Scale (Socialisation, Achievement, Relaxation in Sports and Enjoy High Level of Games) were developed. Then, the mean scores were compared by gender, active sports participation, and for two major spectator sports: professional soccer in Europe (England Premier League, Spanish Liga BBVA, Italian Seria A, and so on) and Major League Baseball in USA.

Implications: The research presents practical implications for stakeholders in the market for international sports tourists. In particular, marketers should consider different strategies when targeting male and female sports tourists, and consider segmentation of sports tourists between purely spectators and those that participate in sports. The latter are motivated by greater detail in information about the sports they watch.

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Sports tourism; sports fan motivation; tourist motivation; international sports-fan tourist

Introduction

People travel overseas as tourists for many different reasons, but one specific purpose is to be a sports spectator, whether as a primary or a secondary objective of a particular trip. As

a result, the motivations of sports fans travelling internationally to attend sports events should be an important field of academic study. Furthermore, Japanese sports tourists are of growing significance for many professional leagues, notably European soccer leagues (ESL) or the Major League Baseball (MLB) in the USA. Based on common social psychological roots, research into tourist motivation has led to separate models and motivation scales to describe tourist motivations (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Pearce, 2005). Concurrently, the motivations of sports fans have been analysed through a separate stream of research (Funk, 2008; Funk & James, 2001; Wann, 1995), but only a handful of studies have examined the motivation of sports fans as tourists (Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009; Kim & Chalip, 2004), and these have largely concentrated on sports participants (e.g. marathon runners) rather than spectators (i.e. 'fans') and travel over short distances (e.g. Americans participating in events in Canada or even travelling within the USA alone). In addition, to date, no specific study has examined the motivation of Japanese international sports tourists either as fans or participants. This study aims to construct inter-related tourist motivation and Sports Fan Motivation Scales based on past research in these two areas, looking specifically at international tourists attending spectator sports events.

The main aim of this study is to develop scales for the motivation of sports fans as sports tourists outside their domestic markets. The study's sub questions are:

- What is the Tourist Motivation Scale and Sports Fan Motivation Scale most common to Japanese sports tourists?
- How do these factors differ according to gender, sports, and sports participation experience?

Japanese international sports-fan tourists are international tourists and sports fans combined. Japanese international sports-fan tourists have both tourist and sports fan motivations, but it is unclear from past studies how motivations as international sports-fan tourists may differ from general international tourists. This paper first reviews the behaviour of Japanese as sports fans and outbound tourists. The literature relating to Tourism Motivation Scales and Sports Motivation Scales is then introduced and the key motivation elements from past studies are identified. Based on analysis of survey data, the paper proposes scales combining both facets. Factor analysis is used to test the validity of the proposed motivation factors for sports tourists. We conclude with managerial recommendations.

Japanese interest in international sports is clear. The Sasakawa Sports Foundation publishes an annual sports survey in which it analyses sports spectatorship in Japan (Sasakawa Sports Foundation, 2014). Japanese sports fans watch international sports broadcasts on television (TV). Of these, 51.5% watched the Japanese national soccer team, 24.8% watched MLB, 19.0% watched international tennis, 14.3% ESL and 5.8% watched the National Basketball League. Each of the most popular TV sports broadcasts feature international sports events.

In addition to such industry level data, there are several studies relating to Japanese domestic sports fan motivations. Nogawa, Yamaguchi, and Hagi (1996) examined the behaviour of two participation sports events and found that well-being, health/fitness, challenge, status, addiction and social were key motivations for participants. For spectator sports, Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, and Gladden (2002) analysed the J-League

(Japanese professional soccer) and derived seven motivational factors: drama, vicarious achievement, aesthetics, team attachment, player attachment, sport attachment and community pride. Similarly, Hong, McDonald, Yoon, and Fujimoto (2005) classified the three main motives for fans of Japanese MLB as: having an overall interest in baseball, an interest in the players, and the quality of games. Similar sports fan motivations have also been examined in studies outside Japan. Snelgrove and Wood (2010) examined four leisure motivation factors: learning about destinations, learning about athletics, social and escape; along with three fan motivation factors: entertainment experience, aesthetics and vicarious achievement. There are a small number of Japanese studies into sports fan motivations, but these analyse only domestic spectators, not international tourists (Maeda, Tomiyama, & Yoshikura, 2013; Ninomiya, 2010).

The current study expands on this previous research in several ways. We develop a Tourist Motivation Scale and Sports Fan Motivation Scale that can be applied to professional sports globally rather than in a single country. As noted above, research into Japanese sports tourist motivations is of current significance. There is evidence based on TV ratings that the increasing incidence of top Japanese players playing overseas in MLB, and ESL heavily influences Japanese fans' behaviour and attitudes (Chiba, 2004), so further expanding the market and adding relevance to the study of this phenomenon. In addition, Japanese are active international tourists. In 2014, 16.9 million people travelled overseas as tourists from Japan (Ministry of Justice, 2014). Given Japan's relatively high average GDP per capita, Japanese have the opportunity to travel as international sports-fans.

Research on Tourist Motivation Scales

Since the 1980s, global international tourism has increased rapidly, and related research has expanded accordingly. Many models of tourist motivations have been developed and some factors are common across multiple models. Crompton (1979) introduced the two concepts of the *push* factor and the *pull* factor (otherwise known as the push-pull concept), comparing internal and psychological (push) factors in tourist motivation, with external factors (pull factors) relating to the destination's attributes. Beard and Ragheb (1983) developed the Leisure Motivation Scale to cover intellectual, social, competence-mastery and stimulus-avoidance motives, and Dale (1994) developed a multidimensional scaling model covering the consumer motivation aspects of knowledge function, utilitarian function, social-adjustment function, value-expressed function and reward maximisation. Lee and Crompton (1992) developed the Tourist Novelty Scale to measure the novelty level in the context of tourism, including thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation and surprise. In each of these cases, there are clear potential applications to sports tourism. For example, push factors may include the novelty and the chance to escape from the 'norms' of everyday life, as well as experiencing the pull of attending exciting sports events not available at home.

Other studies have shown that self-development is also a key motivation for tourists (Pearce, 1988, 2005), including the concept of a Travel Career Ladder based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and a so-called Travel Career Pattern, focusing on career levels and emphasising changes in motivation patterns. This concept again fits well with that of a sports fan following a favoured team. Other psychological factors demonstrated in the literature are presented in Table 1. These include Stimulation: relating to

thrills, risk or excitement and exploring the unknown or unfamiliar (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Pearce, 2005; Regan, Carlson, & Rosenberger, 2012); Relaxation: taking the time to pursue activities of interest, representing mental and physical enjoyment (Crompton, 1979; Hsu, Cai, & Mimi Li, 2010; Pearce, 2005); Socialisation: the interaction with other tourists or local people (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Hsu et al., 2010; Regan et al., 2012); Learning: acquisition of knowledge related to the travel experience (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Hsu et al., 2010; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Pearce, 2005; Regan et al., 2012); and Escape: getting away from daily stresses and pressures (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; Crompton, 1979; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Pearce, 2005; Regan et al., 2012).

Other studies look at pull factors such as the activities tourists look for in choosing destinations. These include Kinship: strengthened relationships with friends or family members (Crompton, 1979; Pearce, 2005); Nature: external oriented motives related to the natural environment (Pearce, 2005); and Shopping: relating to novelty and aesthetics, shopping is a major activity for many tourists (Hsu et al., 2010; Kim & Littrell, 2001; Timothy, 2005).

In addition, research shows that for Asian tourists 'gastronomic' or 'gourmet' experiences are also a key motivation factor (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Timothy, 2005), and in particular for Japanese tourists travelling overseas (Japan Travel Bureau Foundation [JTBF], 2014), so Gastronomy was included as a ninth factor. These nine tourist motivation factors derived from the literature were included in the study.

Research on Sports Fan Motivation Scales

Since the 1990s, there has been a steady increase in the number of studies into the motivation of sports fans. Past research covers a wide range of sports, including both spectator and participating sports events, across a wide range of countries, although there is a larger body of work relating to Western markets than elsewhere. The eight sports fan motivations derived from this literature for inclusion in this study are summarised in Table 1. These are Entertainment: the enjoyment value of sports games as a relatively affordable form of entertainment, with consumers seeking entertainment value in relation to the price paid (Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004; Wann, 1995); Achievement: relating to the performance of the teams that fans support, with achievement being higher when supported teams perform well (Funk et al., 2004; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001); Self-esteem: the sense of self-fulfilment as a result of attending a sports event, which relates closely to achievement (Funk et al., 2009; Kahle et al., 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Wann, 1995); Aesthetics: the artistic beauty of athletic performance on the assumption that sports can be seen as a form of art (Funk & James, 2001; Funk et al., 2009; Kahle et al., 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995); Drama: relating to the excitement created by the uncertainty of a game's outcome (Funk & James, 2001; Kahle et al., 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001); Knowledge and skill: relating to cerebral enjoyment of the rules or the strategy of game (Funk et al., 2004; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001); Escape and relaxation: getting away from the normal routine (Funk et al., 2009; Funk et al., 2004; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995); Socialisation: interaction with other fans, family and friends when attending

Table 1. Factors of major tourist motivation models and major sports fan motivation models.

Author (year)	Stimulation	Relaxation	Socialisation	Learning	Escape	Kinship	Nature	Shopping	Gourmet
<i>Tourism Motivation Factor Items</i>									
Crompton (1979)	Exploration and evaluation of self	Relaxation	Facilitation of social interaction	Education competence-mastery	Escape from mundane environment	Enhancement of kinship relationship			
Beard and Ragheb (1983)	Stimulus motives		Social	Intellectual	Avoidance motives				
Lee and Crompton (1992)	thrill				change from routine boredom alleviation				
Dale (1994)	Surprise	Utilitarian	Social adjustment	Knowledge					
Pearce (2005)	Self-actualisation self-development	Relaxation Relaxation		host-site involvement	Isolation	Enhancing relationships	Nature		
Hsu et al. (2010)				Knowledge				Shopping	
Regan et al. (2012)	Excitement		Socialisation	culture & curiosity	Escapism				
Author (year)	Entertainment & game	Achievement	Self-esteem	Aesthetics	Drama	Knowledge & skill	Escape & relaxation	Socialisation	
<i>Sports Motivation Factor Items</i>									
Wann (1995)	Entertainment				Aesthetics		Relief of stress escape	Group affiliation	
Kahle et al. (1996)		Identification with winning achievement	Self-expressive experience Self-defining experience Self-esteem Self-actualisation	Aesthetics		Competition Skill mastery		Affiliation Social facilitation	
Milne and McDonald (1999)		Achievement		Aesthetics		Skill mastery	Stress reduction	Affiliation	
Trail and James (2001)		Achievement		Aesthetics	Drama	Acquisition of knowledge physical skills of players an interest in the sport	Escape	Social facilitation Social interaction	
Funk et al. (2001)		Vicarious achievement		Aesthetics	Drama			Social opportunity Socialisation Community pride	
Funk et al. (2004)	Entertainment value				Drama	Style of play Knowledge Interest in sport Interest in players	Escape		
Funk et al. (2009)			Esteem				Diversion	Socialisation	

sports games (Funk et al., 2009; Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Funk et al., 2004; Kahle et al., 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995).

These two sets of motivation factors, nine for tourist motivations and eight for sports fan motivations, were included in the current research to investigate the motivation of sports tourists.

Method

Research instrument

Based on the previous literature, a survey was developed that included questions to measure motivations of both tourists and sports tourists using the 17 factors listed above. Twenty-four items from the nine factors above were used to examine the motivation of tourists, along with 21 items from the eight sports fan motivation factors. These were used in conjunction with a seven-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 7 = strongly agree.

Data collection

Data were collected from the JTBF database, which itself is compiled from annual surveys of a sample of around 4000 members of the general public using e-mail questionnaires. The JTBF database is suitable for a broad investigation of Japanese sports tourists as it is a general, large scale survey. The JTBF cooperated by including the scale elements listed above in its regular survey in January 2011. The total number of respondents was 3773 (94.3% response rate), of which 338 (9.0%) were sports tourists, having travelled overseas to watch sports events. Besides the motivation items discussed above, the survey asked respondents which countries they had visited and the sports that they have watched. If respondents had been to watch more than one sport, the most recent was used. Past experience with sport both as spectators and as participants was also recorded, along with basic demographics.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was first conducted to identify factors for the two scales of Tourist Motivation and Sports Tourist Motivation. Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test each scale. In this study, Goodness of Fit (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are used as fit indices. If the test was rejected, the item with the smallest factor loading was removed and tests continued until three indices (GFI > .900, CFI > .900, RMSEA < .090) fitted (Hair, 2005; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). Based on each motivation scale extracted from the factor analysis, the factors associated with each motivation were analysed. Independent *t-test* was employed to compare the factor scores on demographic differences. We focus on gender, participation experience in sport, and sports and destination differences.

Results of demographic data

Description of Japanese sports tourists

The total sample (3773 respondents) was evenly split between males (49.1%) and females (50.9%). The age distribution of the sample (under 20 years 6.5%, 20–29 years 14.2%, 30–

39 years 17.0%, 40–49 years 15.2%, 50–59 years 16.7% and 60 years and over 30.6%) reflected the age distribution of Japan's population overall. For Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourists alone (338 respondents), more were male (56.8%) than female (43.2%), and the largest age group was people over 61 years old (24.3%).

Spectator sports and destination

Results showed a diverse range of destinations visited by Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourists. Twenty-three specific destinations were named (see Table 2). The most common destination was the USA (51.5%), followed by the UK (5.9%), China (4.7%), Germany (3.8%) and Australia (3.3%).

In terms of the variety of professional spectator sports events, the USA offered the widest range including baseball, basketball, golf and ice hockey. A third of Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourists attended a professional baseball game in the USA, while professional soccer league games were the most common in Europe and also in some Asian countries. Along with basketball in the USA, these three sports of baseball, soccer and basketball accounted for 52.9% of the total events attended. Australia and New Zealand were both popular for rugby and Wimbledon (UK) for tennis, suggesting that Japanese sports tourists travel specifically to see the major sports related to specific countries. MLB and ESL were the two most popular sports (45.5% of total), and this result is consistent with the most popular sports watched on Japanese TV, with MLB first, car racing (including Formula One), and overseas soccer the three most commonly watched. (It is worth noting that both baseball and soccer are also major professional sports in Japan that run throughout the year, and that Japan is on the Formula One circuit, but with far fewer possible events to attend.) MLB runs from April to October and ESL from August to May, and both provide a larger number of matches than other sports. For those wishing to travel to see live games, it is, therefore, easier to get tickets as matches are more numerous at any particular time of the year. These three factors of TV viewing popularity, opportunity to obtain tickets and travel throughout the year all combine to make baseball and soccer the primary choices for Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourists. From a tourist perspective, Japan Tourism Marketing (2012) shows that the USA (including Hawaii) is the most popular outbound destination across all Japanese tourists, followed by four destinations in Asia: South Korea, China,

Table 2. Market diversification of international sports-fan tourists.

Sport or sports league (area)	Country	N	%
Baseball (US)	USA, Canada	113	33.4
Soccer (Europe)	UK, Germany, Spain, France, Italy	41	12.1
Basketball (US)	USA, Canada	25	7.4
Golf (US)	USA, Canada	15	4.4
Soccer (Asia)	South Korea, China, Malaysia	12	3.6
Rugby (Oceania)	Australia, New Zealand	7	2.1
Athletics (Asia / Oceania)	China, Canada	7	2.1
Athletics (US)	USA, Canada	6	1.8
F1 (Asia)	Macau, Singapore	5	1.5
National Hockey League (US)	USA, Canada	5	1.5
Others		102	30.2
Total		338	100

Taiwan, and Thailand. Similarly, for sports tourists, North America was the most common destination, but Asia was less popular than Europe, as would be expected given higher development of professional sports in the latter. The exceptions are less frequent sporting events such as Formula One racing or occasional events such as the Olympic Games, which attract Japanese sports tourists when held in Asia.

Analysis of results

Tourist Motivation Scale

As with motivation studies in the past, an EFA was employed on the Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourist sample ($N = 338$) using principal axis factoring analysis with promax rotation. To assess whether the data were suitable for factor analysis, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used. Bartlett's test assesses whether the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, to determine the appropriateness of the factor model. In this study, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (3353.807, $df = 45$, $p < .001$) indicated significant relationships between the variables. KMO compares the value of the partial correlation coefficients against the total correlation coefficients, with a value nearing to 1 indicating that principal component factor analysis would be effective. In this case KMO (.819) indicated a significant correlation among items.

At the first rotation, four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted (chi-square (164, $N = 338$) = 1670.118, $p < .001$; GFI = .697 ($< .900$); RMSEA = .165 ($> .090$); CFI = .766 ($< .900$); AIC = 1762.118). Three criteria did not fit, so the process of EFA was repeated and was retested using CFA. As a result of repeated rotation in order to fit three criteria, ten items were dropped from the original pool and four factors with ten items were retained. The evaluation of fit indices shows an acceptable fit of the four-factor tourism motivation model (chi-square (29, $N = 338$) = 107.179, $p < .001$; GFI = .938 ($> .900$); RMSEA = .089 ($< .090$); CFI = .977 ($> .900$); AIC = 159.179).

The components of the four tourism motivation factors for the Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourist sample were *Escape* (ESC): escape from ordinary life is the core factor of some leisure motivations; *Nature* (NAT): enjoyment of the physical environment; *Shopping* (SHP): a major motive for overseas travel and especially for Japanese tourists; and *Gastronomy* (GUR): an important motivation for Japanese outbound tourists.

The Cronbach's α of the overall scale is .949, and the alphas for each of the four factors were above .70 (Table 3).

Sports Fan Motivation Scale

Similarly, EFA was employed to analyse sports motivations, using principal axis factoring analysis with promax rotation, and this was again tested through the use of CFA. A KMO result of .845 indicated that the correlation matrix was compact enough to warrant an analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity suggested significant correlations among the items (2507.040, $df = 45$, $p < .001$).

At the first rotation, five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted (chi-square (179, $N = 338$) = 1102.890, $p < .001$; GFI = .756 ($< .900$); RMSEA = .124 ($> .090$);

Table 3. Factor analysis of Tourism Motivation Items and Sports Fan Motivation Items.

Factor and items	Tourism Motivation Items					Factor and items	Sports Fan Motivation Items				
	EFA		CFA				EFA		CFA		
	Loading	α	SFL	CR	AVE		Loading	α	SFL	CR	AVE
1. Escape (ESC)		.93		.93	.77	1. Socialization (SOC)		.91		.91	.77
Relax mentally	.98		.92			Meet other spectators	.93		.89		
To be relieved from daily life	.90		.90			Enjoy social relationship	.85		.90		
Relax physically	.85		.84			Share satisfaction with others	.81		.84		
Stimulation to my life	.74		.85			2. Achievement (ACH)		.91		.92	.80
2. Nature (NAT)		.97		.97	.94	Feel achievement of my favourite team	.95		.93		
Commute with nature	.99		.96			Feel proud of my favourite team	.91		.87		
enjoy nature	.93		.98			Feel achievement of my favourite player	.77		.88		
3. Shopping (SHP)		.84		.92	.85	3. Relaxation in sports (RXS)		.79		.89	.81
Purchase souvenirs	.92		.91			Relax physically	.89		.92		
Enjoy shopping	.91		.93			Relax mentally	.87		.88		
4. Gourmet dining (GUR)		.95		.95	.90	4. Enjoy high level of games (GAM)		.83		.83	.72
Enjoy food	.96		.94			Enjoy high level of skill	.84		.88		
Have a fun with people	.91		.96			Watch high level games	.83		.81		

Notes: α = Cronbach's α ; EFA = exploratory factor analysis; CFA = confirmatory factor analysis; SFL = standard factor loadings; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

CFI = .831 (< .900); AIC = 1206.890). Three criteria did not fit, so the process of EFA was repeated using CFA. Repeated rotation in order to fit three criteria (GFI > .900, CFI > .900, and RMSEA < .090), resulted in 11 items being dropped and four factors with 10 items were retained. The evaluation of fit indices indicated that the fit of the four-factor sports motivation model was acceptable (chi-square (29, $N = 338$) = 89.483, $p < .001$; GFI = .948 (> .900); RMSEA = .079 (< .090); CFI = .976 (> .900); AIC = 141.483).

Four sports motivation factors were identified including *Socialisation* (SOC): fans enjoyed meeting other fans and sharing their activities with others; *Achievement* (ACH): this factor included the achievements of both the fans' favourite team and favourite player; *Relaxation* (RXS): sports tourists want to relax, both mentally and physically; and *Game* (GAM): sports tourists want to watch games at a high, professional level.

The Cronbach's α of the total scale is .901, and the alphas for each of the four factors were above .70.

Gender differences of Japanese international sports-fan tourists

Although *Overall Sports Motivation* did not show a significant difference between genders, the difference for *Overall Tourism Motivation* ($t(336) = -2.94$, $p < .01$) was significant (Table 4). As sub-scales, *Escape* ($t(336) = -3.03$, $p < .01$), *Shopping* ($t(336) = -2.56$, $p < .05$) and *Gastronomy* ($t(336) = -2.41$, $p < .05$) showed significant differences between genders. For all three factors the scores for females were higher than for males, demonstrating that female sports tourists have a stronger motivation with regard to tourist

activities rather than sports per se. However, there is no significant difference in terms of sports motivation.

Sports experience of Japanese international sports-fan tourists

People who themselves participated in sport were labelled 'experienced', while those who did not were labelled non-experienced. As expected, there was a significant difference in *Overall Sports Motivation* between experienced sports fans and non-experienced sports fans ($t(336) = 2.00, p < .05$). At the same time, *Overall Tourist Motivation* did not differ significantly between the two groups ($t(336) = -.130, p > .05$). In terms of the sub-scales, Achievement ($t(336) = 2.09, p < .05$) and Game ($t(336) = 2.00, p < .05$) showed significant differences between the two groups, with the scores of the experienced sports tourists higher than those of the non-experienced ones for both sub-scales. In terms of *Overall Tourist Motivation*, little difference was found between them.

Sports and destination differences of Japanese international sports-fan tourists

MLB versus ESL

We compared the two most popular sports, MLB ($N = 113$) and ESL ($N = 41$), using independent t -tests. The results indicate a significant difference in terms of *Overall Sports Motivation* ($t(152) = -2.71, p < .05$) between MLB ($M_{\text{USBaseball}} = 4.42, SD = .93$) and ESL ($M_{\text{EuropeSoccer}} = 4.77, SD = .71$). For specific factors, Achievement ($t(152) = -2.17, p < .05$) and Game ($t(152) = -2.42, p < .05$) also showed significant differences for European soccer compared to US baseball. For *Overall Tourist Motivation*, the results provided no significant differences.

Discussion

A scale for Japanese international sports-fan tourists

By a strictly statistical process, the study resulted in a four-factor Tourist Motivation Scale (10 question items) starting from nine factors (24 question items), and a four-factor Sports Fan Motivation Scale (10 question items) starting from eight factors (21 question items). In terms of the validity of these scales, the CFA results supported the factorial structure. The four factor Sports Fan Motivation Scale (Socialisation, Achievement, Relaxation, and Watching the Game) and the four factor Tourist Motivation Scale (Escape, Nature, Shopping, and Gastronomy) provided a good fit for the data. The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVEs) for all constructs that exceeded the minimum threshold demonstrated adequate convergent validity (Netemeyer et al., 2003). Moreover, a high Cronbach's α indicated that the internal consistency was high. Consequently, these scales all fulfilled the validity of condition (Hair, 2005; Netemeyer et al., 2003).

Previous studies have approached sports motivation scales and Tourist Motivation Scales separately, while this paper includes both, as applied to Japanese sports tourists travelling to watch major international sports events around the world. Of the four sports tourist motivation factors confirmed by the analysis, watching the Game was the highest, with a preference for high level, professional events (as supported by Funk,

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation, and significant differences in mean score relative to gender, sports experience and US MLB versus European soccer.

	Male <i>N</i> = 192 Mean (SD)	Female <i>N</i> = 146 Mean (SD)	Experience <i>N</i> = 140 Mean (SD)	No experience <i>N</i> = 198 Mean (SD)	US baseball <i>N</i> = 113 Mean (SD)	Europe soccer <i>N</i> = 41 Mean (SD)
Overall sports fan Motivation (OSM)	4.45 (1.11)	4.41 (1.03)	4.57 (1.19)*	4.34 (.99)*	4.42 (.93)	4.77 (.71)
Socialisation (SOC)	4.03 (1.42)	4.28 (1.25)	4.21 (1.42)	4.09 (1.31)	4.17 (1.26)	4.39 (1.06)
Achievement (ACH)	4.26 (1.52)	4.18 (1.33)	4.42 (1.44)*	4.09 (1.43)*	4.13 (1.29)*	4.64 (1.31)*
Relaxation (RXS)	4.29 (1.42)	4.22 (1.41)	4.37 (1.50)	4.18 (1.35)	4.27 (1.26)	4.43 (1.10)
Games (GAM)	5.23 (1.41)	4.97 (1.29)	5.29 (1.36)*	4.99 (1.36)*	5.11 (1.12)*	5.62 (1.25)*
Overall tourism Motivation (OTM)	4.88 (1.06)**	5.21 (.96)**	5.02 (1.04)	5.03 (1.03)	5.11 (.82)	5.20 (.83)
Escape (ESC)	4.85 (1.24)**	5.26 (1.19)**	5.04 (1.27)	5.02 (1.21)	5.07 (1.07)	5.23 (.88)
Nature (NAT)	5.02 (1.41)	5.22 (1.25)	5.03 (1.42)	5.16 (1.29)	5.26 (1.20)	5.23 (.88)
Shopping (SHP)	4.52 (1.45)*	4.90 (1.29)*	4.73 (1.35)	4.65 (1.40)	4.81 (1.21)	4.77 (1.33)
Gourmet dining (GUR)	5.15 (1.33)*	5.48 (1.18)*	5.27 (1.23)	5.31 (1.31)	5.33 (1.05)	5.59 (1.01)

Note: SD = Standard deviation.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Ridinger, & Moorman, 2003; Neale & Funk, 2006). This finding implies that sports-fan tourists are motivated by the expectation of enjoying a higher level of sports event.

Secondly, Socialisation was a key motivation factor for sports tourists. A spectator is motivated to experience sports events because of the opportunities to enhance human relationships with other spectators, friends, and others (Shank, 2005; Wann, 1995). The stadiums used by professional teams, such as Neu Camp in Barcelona or Yankee Stadium in New York, often have unique atmospheres and are home to specific fan cultures. These can only be experienced by actually visiting, rather than, say, watching on TV, and will be different from experiences of stadiums in a home country or elsewhere. The potential for fan interaction is more diverse and differentiated when sports tourists travel overseas and interact with local fans.

Thirdly, the Achievement factor is associated with the devoted fan and the fanatical fan (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999). A sports fan perceives attending sports events as providing an opportunity for various achievements (Funk et al., 2009). By travelling internationally, sports tourists can feel a level of achievement beyond that available through attending domestic professional sports matches.

For tourist motivation, Escape (Crompton, 1979; Pearce, 2005) and Nature (Pearce, 2005) were confirmed from previous Tourist Motivation Scales. Two other factors, Shopping and Gastronomy, were confirmed as additional motivation factors for sports tourists, as based on previous research (JTBF, 2014; Timothy, 2005). The results indicate that the Gastronomy, Nature and Escape motivation factors are stronger motivators than the Shopping factor. For sports tourists, Shopping is less important, but, overall Tourist Motivation factors are stronger than Sports Fan Motivation factors. The results suggest that sports tourists consider Watching the Game as just one of a number of tourist activities.

Gender differences

With regard to sports fans, motivation differences have been observed between genders in some studies (Funk & Bruun, 2007; Ridinger & Funk, 2006; Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader,

& Wilson, 1999), but no differences were found for sports fan motivation in this study, although significant differences were observed in certain tourist motivating factors, namely Escape, Gastronomy, and Shopping. This is a similar result to that found by Funk and Bruun (2007), although their sample was marathon participants, in other words experienced, active sports tourists.

Sports experience & destination differences

The Achievement and Watching the Game factors showed significant differences between those who participate in a sport (experienced) and those who do not (non-experienced). These results are consistent with the idea that fans who participate have a stronger game-related motivation due to their higher involvement (Tokuyama & Greenwell, 2011). The tourist motivations are partly dependent on the destination. Achievement and Watching the Game are the predominant motivating factors for sports tourists attending ESL matches, and all the statistical results for sports tourist motivating factors for ESL are higher than those for MLB. This suggests that sports tourists attending ESL matches have a higher motivation score than those attending MLB matches. This result indicates that sports tourists attending ESL matches are more motivated by the sport and event and less by the actual destination than is the case for MLB-fan tourists.

Practical implications

For marketers, the results have the following practical implications. Japanese International Sports-Fan Tourists are motivated both by sports events and by tourist activities. There are differences by gender, with female sports tourists more motivated by general tourist activities than their male counterparts. Marketers should consider targeting female sports tourists by promoting additional non-sports tourist activities such as Escape, Gastronomy and Shopping activities specifically for female visitors. Secondly, people who have strong game-oriented motivations, such as Watching the Game or celebrating Achievements, may have a stronger need for information and other directly sports related services. Provision of information to these people becomes important, for example through websites, brochures, and printed souvenir programmes. Information might include multi-lingual information on teams, clubs and venues online, additional services such as stadium tours, and access to club merchandise. It could also involve joint promotions through ticketing and tourist agencies or through sports retailers. On the other hand, for those who have lower Game and Achievement motivations, alternative tourist activities are likely to be attractive. ESL tourists have particularly high Game and Achievement motivations.

Conclusion and further research

This study examined the motivations of sports tourists and specifically those from Japan. Due to the expansion of professional sports, international sports fans now travel globally. Many studies have examined the motivation and constraints of either sports fans or tourists, but few studies have considered the motivations of international sports-fan tourists (Davies & Williment, 2008; Kim & Chalip, 2004). This study attempts to bring these

two areas together as people travelling internationally to attend sports events provide a marketing opportunity both as sports fans and as tourists.

The study has several limitations. The sampling method may limit our ability to generalise the results. People from many countries travel to professional sports leagues or major sports events overseas, but hypothetically the motivations of Japanese sports tourists are likely to differ to other contexts. Japanese sports tourists are relatively affluent, and there are professional Japanese players today in multiple sports, including MLB, ESL, tennis, Formula One, and surfing. Moreover, some respondents were frequent spectators at sports events overseas (attending twice or more), while the study only considered the most recent occurrence. Further studies are needed to determine whether or not the findings can be generalised to other nationalities and to look at 'heavy' versus 'light' consumers of international sport tourism. For example, while research into motivations of European sport tourists travelling within the continent would be worthwhile, motivations may be different to those shown in this study because of the shorter distances travelled, similarities in culture, language familiarity, and the variety of sports viewed. While Shopping and other tourist motivations are important for many Asian sports tourists (JTBF, 2014), this may not be the case generally, and cultural limits on vacation time mean that international trips by Japanese sports tourists are often short. Comparative analysis of different nationalities in terms of different social and cultural backgrounds will provide more detailed marketing implications for both travel companies and sports organisations.

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