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Influence of Fantasy Sport on Consumption Behavior

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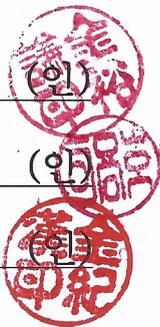
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ABSTRACT

Influence of Fantasy Sport on Consumption Behavior

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There are many previous studies that indicate that participating in fantasy sport has positive influence on the player's mediated sport consumption. However there seems to be lack of studies indicating general influence on consumption behavior. Therefore the purpose of this research is to examine the influence of fantasy sport on consumption behavior in three broad aspects: mediated sport consumption, event attendance, and merchandise purchase.

To examine the influence of fantasy sport, a survey method was conducted among two subject group of MLB viewers. One group contained MLB viewers that play fantasy sport while other group with just traditional MLB viewers that do not play fantasy sport. By comparing the two groups, this study was able to find the significance of participating in fantasy sport on various consumptions.

The result of the study showed that when fan identification was controlled, participating in fantasy sport had positive influence on mediated sport consumption of the league and of favorite team, merchandise purchase, while not influencing event

attendance. When people who do not play fantasy sport were excluded and remaining subjects divided into high and low fan identification group, results were compared side by side. People with high identification had only positive influence on the league media consumption while people with low identification had significant influence on all four aspects.

**Keywords: Fantasy Sport, Mediated Sport Consumption, Event Attendance,
Merchandise Purchase**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Background

The industry of fantasy sport has shown a tremendous growth in the recent past. North America alone has seen 60% growth of participants from 19.4 million players in 2007 to now over 35 million players and thus it has become a multi-billion dollar industry (ftsa.org). Although main demographics still only resides in North America, the industry of fantasy sport is rapidly spreading overseas.

Sport fan culture has dramatically changed with the introduction of digital media programs such as fantasy sports. Traditional sport fans would originally just follow few selective hometown or favorite teams. Traditional fans who would consider themselves as an avid sport fan would display their knowledge through the level of support for their team. That is no longer the case as participants of fantasy sport demonstrates today, an avid sport fan would display their worth through the knowledge of the overall league, not focused on a single team. Thus modern day sport fans can be labeled as hyper-attentive spectators who are assumed to be more attractive to digital sport fans as they are considered to be deeply engaged consumers (Tussey, 2013). Fantasy sports caters to such fans by providing live statistics into a ownership program that increases traditional fan's involvement with the relevant professional league.

Every major sport channels and most sport franchises now run their own fantasy sport programs on their official websites. This phenomenon is due to the fact that media sport fans are much more attractive and by creating some sort of fantasy program, they draw more traffic to their websites. In addition, Pritchard and Funk (2006) have found that media sport fans are much more likely to spend money on advertised products than live attendees.

Republic of Korea is a newcomer to fantasy sport industry with only well known program to be Cass Point operated by MBC network. When considered the notion of positive influence of fantasy sport programs, Korea needs to follow the leads of North American consumption culture. Fantasy sport culture in Korea which is still in its infant stage and needs to be further developed.

2. Research Objective

The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of fantasy sport on consumption behavior. Consumption behavior will be generalized into three broad aspects: media, event attendance, and licensed merchandise purchase. Fan identification level will be identified in order to examine the further details of the influence.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Fantasy Sports

Fantasy sport is a game where participants act as owners to form a team to compete against other owners in a specially formed league. The game is based on formation of a team and its statistics generated by actual professional athletes. Every team is formed by individual fantasy players acting as the owner/manager. A fantasy sports is a program where players get to act as manager of a fictitious team formed by actual professional athletes. Once a team is formed through various ways of drafting system, athletes are given points based on their actual performance. These points are used in determining whether who wins and loses (Comeau, 2007).

The recent growth of fantasy sport is unprecedented especially in the age of the internet. Earliest form of fantasy sport came in the form of board games. These games, popularized during 1950s and 60s and were played as a board game and player cards. Unlike today, where every sport has a fantasy program of its own, the origin of the game started with only baseball game. In 1961 Hal Richman developed the Strat-O-Matic baseball game that is still around today. In a Strat-O-Matic game, each major baseball players are provided a card with former statistics of each players. The players then roll a dice to determine the batter's or pitcher's result of each play (Manly, 2006).

The modern fantasy sport as we all know it is known to have developed from three Oakland residents in mid 1950s. First, the game was played by creating a league with close friends in which each individual acted as a manager and drafted athletes.

Then the drafted athletes were compared by their statistics throughout the season. This simple game was later introduced to a broader audience through a local news writer (Esser, 1994).

The true form of modern day fantasy sport peaked through IT revolution. Previously, person to person board game was digitalized. The role of commissioner further ensued by creating a responsibility for an individual to keep up with every statistics of previous week. Then, websites started updated their own tallied statistics, making it easier for people to follow the results of their fantasy team each week. Internet also enhanced the simulation play by providing vital information for draft, trade, and free agency (Lomax, 2006).

2. Characteristics of Fantasy Sport Participants

Levy (2005) outlined five stages that a lot of fantasy leagues share. They are as follows: (1) Preparations: team owners (fantasy players) prepare for their league's owners follow various media platform to gain competitive edge by acquiring critical information such as news on rising rookies, injuries, and various other aspects that determines whether or not to pick the athlete for their team. (2) Player selection: is played out by various forms of drafting system specific to a league. (3) Daily roster management: this process where team owners select their starting management. Throughout the season, constantly change their starting line-up by trade or using the free agency pool. (4) Negotiations: Fantasy team owners engage in negotiations with

other owners in their league for trades, trash talk, and other tactics to acquire valued athletes to claim. (5) Lastly, winning and losing.

1) Sport Fan Motivation

Prior to investigating the motivations of fantasy sport players, there needs to be introduction of traditional sport fan motives and how they differ in order to clarify the unique qualities that fantasy sport players carry. Raney (2006) identified various factors that motivates people to consume mediated sports. People who watch sports report having three categories of motivation to watch sports, they were: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral or social needs. Within emotional category there are four subareas: entertainment, eustress, self-esteem, and escape. Lastly, behavioral and social motivation's subarea includes release, companionship, group affiliation, family, and economics. These eleven subcategories combined gives the prototypical sport fan as well as the ability to examine ties to how fantasy sport can influence sporting experience (Wann, 2013).

Sports fans are unique from other media fans a way that sport fans participate in far more pre-event planning and post event analysis (Wann, 1995). Sports fan's distinctions in their motivations are explained through Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) developed by Wann in 1995. Wann's scale is formed on psychometrically-sound sport fan motivation constructed by instrument of eight categories of sport fandom which are: eustress, self-esteem or personal enhancement, escape or diversion, entertainment, economic factors (gambling), aesthetic value, group affiliation, and

family affiliation. Trail and James (2001) then developed the Motivational Scale for Sport Consumption which includes nine motives for following sports: vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, excitement, escape, family, physical attractiveness of the players, and the skill exhibited by the players.

As mentioned sports fans have differing motivations to watch consume mediated sports. In addition, people differ in duration of the consumption. For example Wann (1995) found that amount of time spent watching a game differed depending six different forms which are games involving a favorite team, games involving a rival of a his/her favorite team, games involving neither of the mentioned teams, sports news shows (i.e. Sports Center), and sport documentaries.

Another predictor of mediated sport consumption was indicated to be sport fandom. Sport fandom is the degree to which a person considers themselves as a fan and identifies with the sport fan's role (Wann et al. 2013). Sport fandom, unlike team identification, is only concerned with the fan's interest of the overall sport, not relevant to a specific team.

2) Fantasy Sport Motivation

Roy and Gross (2007) developed a frame work of motivations to play fantasy sports. Their frame work displays that consumption of fantasy sports is both interplay of "psychological characteristics internal to consumers as well as social interactions". The psychological influences mentioned are the factors that influence fantasy sport

consumption which are control, escape, and achievement in Roy and Gross' (2007) research. Similarly, by implementing uses and gratification theory, Comeau (2007) found that fantasy sport users had differing gratification received when it comes to mediated sport consumption. In his research, fantasy football users had higher levels of eustress and self-esteem, knowledge and group affiliation compared to traditional fans, just as Roy and Gross' prediction of psychological influences and social interactions factors that affect media consumption.

Some fantasy participants have been known to play such program for the feeling of control, “ownership”, allowing players to vicariously participate (para-social relationship) in professional sport. In fact Spinda and Haridaki (2008) discovered that the notion of “ownership” as key motive for participation, desire to have some control of the outcome is foundational to fantasy sport experience. Shipman (2001) also supplemented to this idea by further stating that sports marketers have used the notion of control to draw in more fantasy sport consumers. To understand the motivations for fantasy sport participation in detail, uses and gratification model has been applied by previous researches to internet use and virtual interaction (Comeau, 2007). Billings and Rühley (2013) indicated that the internet use and virtual interactions are the soul of fantasy sports participation. These two factors combined give interactivity, demassification, and asynchronicity. Interactivity refers to players requirement to be highly involved managing the details of their team. Demassification refers to the individualistic platform of fantasy sports, which persuade the fantasy players to develop personally fitted strategies for competition. Demassification, simply put, can be described in similar terms of sense of ownership and control as mentioned above.

Asynchronicity is the factor of flexibility of playing when convenient. Internet and smart phones have allowed fantasy sports users to constantly check the latest news and manage their team on the convenience of the users.

Similarly, by implementing Wann's (1995) model and using uses and gratification theory, Farquhar and Meeds (2007) identified a set of motivations among fantasy sport participants. They found that fantasy participation is created based on factors of surveillance, arousal, entertainment, escape, and social interaction. Also the scholars divided the participants into categories depending on the level of their involvement with fantasy sports. When divided, they found that fantasy sport participants were either highly involved or less involved. Those participants highly involved were more concentrated on statistics to gain the enjoyment that they outsmarted those who lost, while less involved participants have been found to play fantasy sport for the suspense of winning and ensuing bragging rights. The highly involved fans were primarily motivated by surveillance. Those who were motivated by surveillance saw fantasy sport as game of skill. The participants with lower fantasy involvement were mainly motivated by arousal and saw fantasy sport as game of chance.

3. Behavioral Influence of Consuming Fantasy Sports

Participating in fantasy sport has been proven to influence the consumer's consuming behavior. Purpose of this study is to examine three broad aspects of such consumption influence, which are mediated sport, impact on the event attendance, and the impact on licensed merchandised product purchase.

1) Impact on Mediated Sport Consumption

This section will focus on the impact of fantasy sport on mediated sport consumption. In the above section of motivation for sports fans to consume mediated sports, Raney (2006) defined three factors emotional, cognitive, and behavioral or social. These factors have been proven to be heightened in fantasy sport users, thus further explaining to why they have increased mediated sport consumption. Comeau (2007) proved that people who participate in fantasy sport program reported greater cognitive, behavioral, and affective involvement in content of mediated sport.

(1) Influence on Emotional Motivation

Influence of fantasy sport on emotional motivation to consume mediated sport varies. People who watch sport for emotional factor are due to the expectations of positive emotional gain from their viewing (Raney, 2006). There are four subcategories of emotional motivation according to Raney (2006) which are entertainment, eustress (positive stress), self-esteem, and escape.

Entertainment. As a subcategory of emotional motivation, team allegiance has proven to be the center of entertainment motivation where fans gain positive emotional gain from cheering on their favorite team. For many avid sport fans, allegiance towards their favorite team is a significant aspect of being a fan for they take pride on the notion of their allegiance. This positive emotional gain could be described by a fan's allegiance to a team. While people who participate in fantasy sport have shown to have increased

allegiance towards their favorite team, they also have shown to be more accepting of other teams that their fantasy athletes belong to. Thus fantasy players have increased possibilities for positive emotional gain by building further fondness of other teams.

What fantasy sports provide in the entertainment (allegiance) factor is that it increases the media exposure, allowing parasocial relationships to build. Drayer et al. (2010) found in their study that all participants in their research who previously had existing affinity (affiliation/allegiance) towards their favorite team maintained their connection with their favorite team. Meaning in their study, participant's affinity towards their favorite team was not diminished due to their participation of fantasy sport. But rather, fantasy sports added a new spectrum to their consumption of the league. For example, one of the study's participants admitted that their time commitment to sports increased in addition to traditional commitment spent on their favorite team. This is because fantasy team is made up of a group of players from various teams therefore making fantasy sport participants to follow various teams that their fantasy players play on, instead of just watching their favorite team. This research has proved that fantasy sport exposes audience to increased media exposure of games or specific athletes, causing parasocial relationships to build. This newly developed relationship indicates the fan's increased allegiance to various teams or athletes. Such notion of parasocial relationship will be discussed later.

Self-esteem. There are two types of self-esteem motivation for which audience decides to consume mediated sport (Lee, 2011). One of which derives from people thinking that watching sports will help them feel better about themselves. For example, people may gain positive emotions from the notion of being right by picking the

winning team in which it could be seen as an achievement. In this respect, self-esteem factor is heavily fueled by fantasy sports participation due to the notion of control.

Fantasy sport's influence on self-esteem motivation for consuming mediated sport derives from giving the sense of control to the consumers which gives them greater possibilities of being right, thereby creating greater opportunities for them to gain positive emotions through sense of achievement. Previous researchers have found that significant number of fantasy sport participants stated sense of control to be a motive for their participation (Spinda & Haridaki, 2008). Acting as a team manager, fantasy players have the ability to control their starting line-up, who to start or bench. A player on a team may have been a key player but has not been having a productive season, in which the manager have the choice to continue to believe in his player or to take a risk on a different player. To be successful, fantasy sport users have to make the right decisions week by week. Thus self-esteem motivations carries onto the fantasy platform, where people may gain positive emotions from the notion of being right as their team out performs the competition. Therefore, giving the consumers' sense of ability of control of the outcome of an event inevitably increases the possibilities of being right thus leading to self-esteem.

Secondly, self-esteem motivation may derive by vicarious experience of their favorite team or player's performance. In this factor, fans vicariously participate in the actual event and gain positive emotions through their favorite team or player's performance. This sort of self-esteem motivation can be also explained as positive emotional gain through associated success. These vicarious associations have known to be influential on a fan's perspective of a player or a team. Participating in fantasy sports

increases this notion of self-esteem by heavily involving the participants to be familiar with other teams or players that may not have associated with prior to their participation in fantasy sports (Drayer, 2010). In various cases, fantasy sports participants have admitted that after drafting an athlete, whom they previously did not have any knowledge of or just simply did not like for whatever reason, became fond of that athlete throughout the season. This means that through fantasy sports, fans become more attached to more athletes thus increasing the possibilities of associated success. In fact, Drayer et al. (2010) have found that some of the participants of their study indicated to continue to follow an athlete they have previously owned in the past season as they became a fan over the duration of their ownership of that athlete.

The increased personal attachment or allegiance to players or teams as seen in entertainment and self-esteem motivations can be explained through parasocial interaction theory. Parasocial interaction explains to why audience becomes attached to a distant or fictional character on media. Likewise, sports fan's feeling of intimacy or believing in a special bond with a specific athlete can be explained through such relationship. Parasocial interaction is one directional interpersonal relationship that media viewers establish with the media character (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The indication of existence of parasocial interaction paves a path to understanding the intimate relations created through media consumption. Early studies of parasocial relationship, Horton and Wohl (1956) suggested that viewers can establish parasocial relationship by merely watching television program. Furthermore, Gregg (1971) has found that people form a personal bond with television personnel and have known to become loyal to the program. With current cable networks, consumers have vast amount

of channels to pick and chose, yet most people have a certain channels they have decided to be their go to. This notion of loyalty is vital for all people in entertainment business for their customer's retention. Often, retention derives from loyalty in which parasocial relationship has been effective in explaining such existence. Levy (1979) has indicated that people may choose to watch a certain news network specifically to watch their television personnel. Lastly, Berger and Calabrese (1975) found that parasocial relationship increases with the amount of media exposure to the audience.

In sports, fans build a parasocial relationship as they become more aware of other teams and athletes through their participation of fantasy sports whom otherwise would not have gotten their attention. Thus this indicates that fantasy sports participants are more prone to increased exposure of mediated sports in general. Fantasy team owners can see their owned athletes as a persona referred by Horton and Wohl (1956). According to the theory presented by Horton and Wohl, when the media character's (here, athlete) appearance is regular, the viewer (team owner) becomes depended on the athletes due to integrated nature of the athlete into the viewer's life. Hence, the athlete's private life, life outside of the stadium, becomes a personal issue for the owner. The continued ownership of an athlete will build a history between the owner and the athletes which will accumulate to shared past experiences, giving additional meaning to present performance. When such relationship is established, the owner believes to have intimate relations with the athlete, more profound than others. It is such bond that is created between an athlete and the owner that becomes owner's loyalty shown towards the athlete.

Eustress. Eustress motivation derives when fans watch sports for the increased level of excitement or arousal during their view. Eustress is a positive stress that derives from uncertainty of outcome. Simply put, these people are motivated by the dramatic suspense brought by watching sports. Being a sport fan comes with the enjoyment received from the chance of winning or losing which becomes one of the core reasons to why people watch sports. One of the unique aspects of sport is that outcome of the core product is uncontrollable. This notion of unpredictability provides further feeling of suspense for people. The feeling of suspense is further enhanced when a game is closely contested, meaning a soccer match that is contested till the last minute creates more excitement/suspense than a blowout match. Besides monetary gain, eustress perhaps best explains to why many people often gamble on sports, which is to add a second dimension of competition thus increasing suspense. Here again, people who play fantasy sports have greater outlet for dramatic suspense due to the fact that they watch and follow more games compared to the traditional sport fans.

Previous researches seen above have indicated that fantasy sports participants consume more mediated sports across the board (television, internet usage, etc.). This is due to the fact that not only the outcome of their favorite team is important, but also the outcome of their individual players on their team roster thus inevitably viewing more games on average. Corrigan (2007) has found that fantasy players have stated to have watched on average, two more games throughout a regular season than those research participants that did not play fantasy sports. Their findings further support the claim that fantasy players watch more games in comparison to those who do not play fantasy sport. In addition, their study found that participants who play fantasy sports were more likely

to subscribe to watch multiple games at a time while also reported to subscribe to more sports related contents. This notion of added competition has been significant factor for people to spend countless hours per week on fantasy sports. This type of positive stress perhaps best explains to why fantasy sport users constantly check online for latest scores and news simultaneously while watching a live game.

Escape. Lastly, people consume sports for escape reasons are those who like to get away from daily stress of life through sports. These people are often associated with low fan identification due to their nature of consumption (Lee, 2011). Escape motivation thus have not been found to be an influential factor for fantasy sport participants. Billing and Ruihley (2013), and Comeau (2007) found that people who participated in fantasy sports were not associated to escape factor of participation.

(2) Influence on Cognitive Motivation

Participating in fantasy sports can influence fans who were originally cognitively motivated to consume mediated sport, to be further engaged and involved to display increased consumption (Comeau, 2007). Cognitive motivations for consuming mediated sports are to be knowledgeable about the sport and to learn about players and teams. Fans often watch games to constantly be updated with facts and the latest news about players and stats. The need to know is stated to be a basic human trait, thus people strive to gain information about their teams or players. People who are motivated through cognitive (knowledge) factor do not watch the game closely but rather more

interested in the final outcome and sports related news and highlights (Wenner & Gantz, 1998).

Randle and Nyland (2008) found that there is a positive relationship between the amount of time consumed on participating in fantasy sports leagues to amount of time consumed on watching sports or highlights. Specifically, the increase of the amount of time people spent checking their fantasy sports scores was positively related to the amount of time spent watching sports highlights. They have also found that the more hours a day an individual spends playing fantasy sports, the more time that individual spends following the relevant sports.

Participating in fantasy sports influences fans to become better fans not only cognitively motivated but also become attached. To these people, fan identification is not of significance but rather more interested in information acquisition, which Comeau (2007) suggests that playing fantasy sports will alter to do both. Meaning people who were simply cognitively motivated to consume mediated sports also increase their level of fan identification through participating in fantasy sports. Fantasy sport players not only follow their players but also strive for information of their owned athletes. This is due to the simple fact that more knowledge of the players equals success of the fantasy team. Fantasy sport users constantly have to check for the latest updates on various players and the league in general, but what separates them is the fact to be competitive, you have to know more about the league in general than your opponents.

Perhaps to best explain this phenomenon is by examining various theories. People have known to be influenced learning effect which is the notion of learning (Halverson & Halverson, 2008). Competitive fandom which participating in fantasy

sport transforms consumers, provides an environment for people to become more engaged in sports. For someone who was first motivated to consume sports through knowledge, participating in fantasy sports provides a contextualized setting for them to engage in competitive fandom with rule-based system which is provided with convenient content knowledge dedicated to specific goals.

Furthermore, Crawford (2004) found that participating in digital form of gaming can cause an individual to increase their knowledge of the sports and its players. Simply put, someone that participates in baseball or soccer game will increase their knowledge of relevant league through their participation of the game. Precisely, according to Crawford (2004), this initial interest in digit version can lead to influence the participant's consumption behavior such as attending sports events, or consuming more of the mediated sport in general.

(3) Influence on Social Motivation

People may be motivated to consume mediated sport through behavioral or social reasons. Behavioral or social motivations for watching sport derive from fans connecting with like minded people to share the enjoyment. Fans often consume sport as a part of a social group which means that they use sports to satisfy their human needs of social interaction Fantasy sport programs cannot be played alone, but often with friends, relatives, co-workers, or even random people. Fantasy sport programs allow users to come together to share their knowledge or thoughts and also to compete with one another; hence it is inevitably a social platform in itself. Thus participating in

fantasy sport program allows fans to become more socially active as a fan, heightening their behavior/social motivation to consume sports. Dwyer (2011) found that heavy fantasy sport consumers more often go to social environment such as a bar or restaurants to watch NFL games and spent greater amount of time communicating with league members. Further, Ruihley and Hardin (2011) have found that people who participate in fantasy sport are more likely to participate in online forums and message boards pertaining to the sport. This indicates that participating in fantasy sport is inevitably requires one to be socially active.

(4) Influence on Favorite Team and Non-Favorite Team Media Consumption

As mentioned above, previous studies have indicated that participating in fantasy sports increases the general media consumption of the league. Fantasy sport participation alters way of the participant's consuming behavior. This changed in consumption behavior is affected on to which the participant views their favorite team. Most fantasy sport users have proven to manage multiple teams at a time, while these teams consists of players from all over the league (Corrigan, 2007). Therefore, this section will focus on the influence fantasy sport on favorite team versus non-favorite team media consumption. Thus, one's media consumption can have psychological paradox for individuals heavily vested in their favorite team (Dwyer & Drayer 2010). The purpose of this section is to show that greater involvement in fantasy sport transforms viewing behavior of the consumers.

Previous studies indicated that depending on the level of involvement with fantasy sports, the amount of mediated sport consumption of favorite team will be affected. It is a common knowledge that a person has a certain amount of time and money allotted to spend on their leisure activity. Therefore people have to make a decision on whether to watch their favorite team play or their fantasy team. Dwyer and Drayer (2010) investigated the relationship between favorite team-specific and fantasy team specific media consumption in order to analyze the influence of fantasy sport on specific media content consumption. In their study they categorized mediated sport consumers into four: light or heavy consumers and fantasy team or favorite team oriented viewers. Their study indicated that people who continually participated in fantasy sport over time became categorized as heavy consumers and fantasy team dominated consumers. The significance of their finding may suggest that greater involvement with fantasy sport transforms favorite team dominant viewers into fantasy team dominant viewers. However it is important to note that while these viewing behaviors may transform, their loyalty is not hindered. In fact, one of the key outcomes of their study was that heavy users often maintained their commitment to their favorite team as opposed to the players on their fantasy team. This unaffected level of loyalty is checked through measurement of attitudinal distinctions in which highly involved fantasy football participants reveals lower levels of behavioral loyalty toward their favorite team (as seen in transition of fantasy team dominant viewing), yet indicates higher levels of attitudinal component of loyalty (Dwyer, 2011).

From the study just formerly mentioned, one can indicate that level of involvement in fantasy sport can influence which teams (favorite team vs. fantasy team)

the consumers watch. Drayer et. al (2010) found that participants with higher the level of fantasy involvement meant higher consumption of fantasy team oriented consumption. While lower level of involvement will mean that the consumer will continually support their traditional means of consumption of their favorite team media. However since previous studies indicate that over time, most consumer's involvement in fantasy sport generally increases, it is highly likely that most consumers will focus on fantasy team over favorite team.

To conclude the previous studies, involvement in fantasy sport generally increases mediated sport consumption. This increase in consumption influences fantasy sport participant's behavioral loyalty in a sense that over time, even those who were originally favorite team oriented viewers, become fantasy team oriented viewers. However, highly developed attitudinal loyalty is not affected. It is important to note here that these viewing habits can be transcribed as participating in fantasy sports transforms users into enhancing interest in a group of athletes as opposed to singular (favorite) team.

2) Impact on Licensed Merchandised Product Purchase

Sports fan in modern era buy range of goods of the team they support. Main reason for fan to act accordingly is to extend their identity by purchasing licensed merchandise which often has logos representing professional team or a league. Professional teams promote these logos to for the fans to display their allegiance so they can be part of a larger group of fans (Bishop, 2001). Purchasing these licensed

merchandises is relevant to satisfaction of spectators as consumers of sports. Previous studies show that success of a team is positively related to purchasing licensed merchandise (Trail et al., 2007). Furthermore, studies show that there is a link between high fan identification and licensed merchandise consumption (Wann, 2003). While success of a team cannot be influenced by participating in fantasy sports, as mentioned above, previous studies do indicate that participating in fantasy sport increases level of fan identification. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to examine the influence of fantasy sport participation on licensed merchandise product purchase.

Participating in fantasy sports increases team identification level thus positively influencing licensed merchandise purchase. As mentioned above, licensed merchandise purchase is positively influenced by self-esteem and team identification level. By these standards linking fantasy sport participation to increased team identification level should suffice as evidence on its influence on merchandise purchase.

Previous studies indicate that fans with higher fan identification level are more likely to consume more of licensed merchandise compared to fans with low fan identification level (Trail et al., 2007). In congruence, participating in fantasy sport increases team identification level and general fandom of the league. Thus indicating that participating in fantasy sport raises licensed merchandise consumption. The conceptualizations of an individual's fan identification can depict the amount of licensed merchandise consumption. Therefore it is important for this research to determine the level of one's fan identification (fandom/fanship) and relate to one's participation in fantasy sport.

In all relevance to the BIRGing effect, one of the main contributors to self-esteem factor seems to derive from the notion of team identification. Some fans have high team identification while some do not. Fans with high team identification are often labeled as die-hard fans, while fans with low team identification are called fair weathered fans (Branscombe and Wann, 1990). The two group's categorization relates to the reactions of fans such as aggression, arousal, and fluctuating associations with a team (Wann and Dolan, 1994). These reactions which is derived from fans watching sports, is related to the notion of self-esteem.

In a study identifying characteristics of fantasy players, fantasy sport players scored higher on all tested consumption measures relating to both attitudes (point of attachment, team identification, loyalty), and behavior (game attendance, television, viewing, secondary spend) (Comeau, 2007). Furthermore, fantasy sports players have been found to fall into the category of "high identification" with their favorite team more than those who do not play. Such finding indicates fantasy player's loyalty towards their favorite team does not diminish due to fantasy sports. This indicates that contrary to popular belief, fantasy players do not have fractured team allegiances (Drayer et. al 2008). Lee (2007) found that higher involvement in fantasy sport resulted in higher team identification scores. Just as Dwyer's (2010) study has proved that greater involvement in fantasy sport influenced behavioral loyalty to consumer more of other team's product, fan's attitudinal loyalty towards their favorite team was not effect in Lee's study as well. Here, influence on behavioral loyalty relates to fan's increased consumption of products that are relevant to their favorite team, i.e. other teams or players. Further Lee's (2007) study found that higher level of participation in fantasy

sport lead to greater overall fandom of the league. This indicates that participating in fantasy sport leads to increased fan identification level thus indicating increased licensed merchandise product purchase.

Taking a closer look, the positive influence of fantasy sport on licensed merchandise consumption can be described in both psychological and social factors. Greater involvement with sport derives from increased positive gains such as self-esteem and morale. Previous studies indicate the existence of a link between a success of a team to positively influence team licensed merchandise product purchase due to increased morale and self-esteem of spectators (Berument and Yucel, 2005). This highlights the link between increased self-esteem of spectators and merchandise purchase. In fact, these types of social behavior have been proven through Basking in Reflected Glory (hereafter BIRGing) effect.

The BIRGing effect is derived from positive emotion gained affiliation of success of supported team. BIRGing is in effect when an individual feels that they belong to a group and identify with the group and share that group's accomplishments (Branscombe and Wann, 1991). The previous studies of BIRGing effect indicates that success of a university team lead to more public display of students to associate themselves with the team. Here, more public display means visual apparels such as t-shirts or hats and other licensed merchandise. Although not all of the items publicly displayed may not be authentic, meaning non-licensed merchandise, it can be assumed that large portion of is authentic. One way to explain this phenomenon is through social identity theory. Social identity theory states that spectators seek to share the success of a group by identifying themselves with such team. When spectators identify with a

specific team, they increase their commitment and emotional involvement while they feel that they are part of that social group (Branscombe and Wann, 1991). In conclusion, success of a team can transform regular spectators into fans with greater commitment and emotional involvement towards such team. Thus it can be generalized that success of a team leads to fan's increase in licensed merchandise consumption.

While success of a specific team cannot be influenced by participating in fantasy sports, success of individual's fantasy team can be controlled to have positive influence on the consumer's self-esteem and morale. Berument and Yucel (2005) noted that consumer's desire to identify with their supported player or team is due to success of a team derived from increased self-esteem and morale. This means that it is not the mere success of a team but the elevated self-esteem and moral of fan that is crucial.

Thus, participating in fantasy sport positively influences consumer's licensed merchandise product purchase by increasing factors such as self-esteem and morale. Self-esteem factor, as noted in the media section, positively influences consumer's consuming behavior. Participating in fantasy sport has been noted to increase one's self esteem by increasing vicarious experience of a consumer. Vicarious participation is one of the crucial factors for fantasy sport user's motivation to participate in which they gain positive emotions through their favorite team or player's performance (Comeau, 2007).

As previously noted, participating in fantasy sports increases the notion of self-esteem by heavily involving the participants to be familiar with other teams or players that may not have associated with prior to their participation in fantasy sports. Fantasy sport participants draft players from all over the league, which has impacted the participants to build a relationship with their owned athlete that previously did not exist.

Often these newly developed relationship converts into a fandom where participants become more attached to more number of athletes. This newly formed fandom thus indicates creation of multiple associated successes. In fact, J.Drayer et al. (2010) have found that some of the participants of their study indicated to continue to follow an athlete they have previously owned in the past season as they became a fan over the duration of their ownership of that athlete.

Parasocial interaction as explained in the media section can be also applied in this case of self-esteem. Self-esteem factor, as it did with influence of media serves the same function. As mentioned above, participating in fantasy sport caters to build parasocial relationship which further explains to why fantasy sport influences licensed merchandise purchase through the factor of self-esteem. Furthermore, these factors of consumption can tie into parasocial relationship. In detail, intimate relationship built through increased exposure to various athletes. Thus in conclusion, fantasy sport participation increases media exposure that ultimately leads to parasocial interaction.

In sports, fans build a parasocial relationship as they become more aware of other teams and athletes through their participation of fantasy sports whom otherwise would not have gotten their attention. Thus this indicates that fantasy sports participants are more prone to increased exposure of mediated sports in general, which can also be applied to merchandise purchase. As previous mentioned, fantasy team owners can see their owned athletes as a persona referred by Horton and Wohl. The athlete's appearance is regular, the team owner becomes depended on the athletes due to integrated nature of the athlete into the owner's life. Even when ownership is discontinued in future seasons, owners have reported to have increased attachment due

to prior ownership. When intimate relationship is built between the fans and their drafted athletes will be more willing to purchase related merchandise.

3) Impact on Event Attendance

Marketing researches suggests that in order to attain and retain event attendees, managers need to understand consumer motives in addition to demographics, media preference and purchase behavior. Game attendance has always been a significant factor in a team's economic profit. While modern teams heavily rely on media for revenue, gate revenue is still a major part of operating a successful team. Purpose of this section is to examine the influence of participating in fantasy sport on fan's game attendance. Pritchard and Funk (2006) investigated the symbiotic and substitution relationship between media use and event attendance. Meaning that heavy media consumers are more likely to purchase licensed merchandise and attend more games.

Previous studies indicate differing results of influence of fantasy sport on game attendance. Nesbit and King (2010) displayed that fantasy sport has positive influence on game attendance of National Football League. While Drayer et al. (2010) suggest that participating in fantasy sport may have negative impact on game attendance. Drayer's argument derives from the fact that fantasy sports users heavily concentrate on statistical implications rather than the actual result of the game, therefore more likely to watch a game on television or internet. Based on the differing qualitative and quantitative research methods used on two studies, this research will further examine influence of fantasy sport on game attendance.

Nesbit and King (2010) focusing on NFL found that participating in fantasy sport positively influences game attendance. Specifically, comparing avid fans, they found that fantasy football participant attends between 0.22 and 0.57 more NFL games per year than an individual who does not participate in fantasy football. Such distinction is equivalent to 57.1% increase in the average number of games attended by fantasy football participants compared to non-participants.

Previous studies indicate that there are varieties of factors that influence game attendance behavior. On general bases, these factors characteristics of the good, ticket price, team performance, demographics (Nesbit and King, 2010). Similarly, winning percentage of a team, previous legacy of championship, player performance can all have impact on game attendance. In addition, Spenner, Fenn, and Crooker (2004) found that future game attendances are significant factors that affect present attendance supporting the notion that game attendance is addictive, hence fan's retention. However, this research will focus on the five factors used by Funk et al. (2009) in order to examine the characteristics of fan's consumption behavior to attend games.

In order to understand consumer motives, scholars have identified five factors that influence consumption behavior of sport fans. The five factors are socialization, performance, excitement, esteem, and diversion. Five factors commonly referred to as SPEED explains why individuals seek out spectator sport experiences because the consumption experience provides opportunities to acquire needs and benefits (Funk D et. al, 2009). These factors are very comparable to the factors mentioned in previous sections of influence on media and licensed merchandise consumption. By drawing

comparison of fantasy sport participation on these motivations, one could conclude its influence on game attendance.

First of all, socialization factor for attending game is highly relevant to participating in fantasy sport due to the social nature of the game. Game attendance is rarely done solo in sports world. People often attend games with close friends or relatives whom they share a common passion for the sport or the team. Fantasy sport takes place on a social setting, which we have already determined in previous section that participating in fantasy sport is heavily motivated by social reasons. As such, fantasy sport participants use the program to socialize with co-workers, friends, and family. Dwyer (2010) found that heavy fantasy sport consumers more often go to social environment such as a bar or restaurants to watch NFL games and spent greater amount of time communicating with league members. Further, Rauhley and Hardin (2011) have found that people who participate in fantasy sport are more likely to participate in online forums and message boards pertaining to the sport. Using previous studies, Raney (2006) described that when the attention of the audience is redirected into believing that they are part of the product as seen in fantasy sport, the audience starts to believe that participating in fantasy sport provides sociability, easy affability, friendship, and close contact all associated with free access to and easy participation among a social group. This indicates that participating in fantasy sport is inevitably requires one to be socially active.

Secondly, performance factor derives from fan's aesthetic perspective of the athletic performance. These fans are individuals who desire to experience excellence and beauty may consume sport as an art form (Wann, 1995). People who are driven to

attend games for performance factor seek the abnormal human abilities such as strength and speed of NFL players, high vertical jump of NBA players, and impossible curve balls of MLB players can justify their attendance. Unfortunately, performance factor is not very relevant in the case of fantasy sport as it does not seem to be influenced.

Excitement factor for game attendance is driven by suspenseful/eustress of the sport event. One of the uniqueness of sport as a product is that the core product outcome is uncontrollable and unpredictable. This distinctive quality of sport is what drives people to edge of their seats. Participating in fantasy sports has been proven to positively influence the level of excitement for fans when compared to traditional fans.

4) Moderating Effect of Fan Identification

(1) Influence on Person With Low Fan Identification

A person with a low level of fan identification will have a heavier effect by their participation of fantasy sport. Fantasy sport participation is likely to increase one's involvement in relevant sport. This means that through fantasy sport, people tend to consume more of mediated sport, attend more games, and purchase more licensed merchandise product. However, the degree to such impact may depend on the level of individual's level of fandom. The lower the individual's fandom, the greater the impact of fantasy sport on fan's consumption behavior.

Lee (2011) found the relations to amount of fantasy sport participation and mediated sport consumption. Specifically Lee (2011) people with higher level of

involvement with fantasy football spent more time watching the games each week. In detail, research participants who were categorized as high level of fantasy participation watched 7 to 9 hours of games each week. While those categorized as low level of fantasy participation watched 4 to 6 hours a game each week. Indicating people with low identification will have lower consumption on game attendance when compared. Likewise, since media consumption levels are part of an overall behavioral consumption, this influence could be generalized to include game attendance and licensed merchandise purchase.

The television viewing for example, as part of mediated sport, the literature review Nesbit & King (2010) showed through fantasy sports, an individual who is categorized as non-avid fan is 12.68% more likely to watch televised sport if he or she participated in fantasy sport. Similarly As a result of fantasy sport participation, in Drayer et al. (2010) found that fans who were generally not highly involved with NFL became an avid fan after their participation.

The results of previous studies may be explained by the example of an interview done by Halverson and Halverson (2008) in which the scholar interviewed a participant who is categorized to have low fan culture but highly competitive. Low fan culture meant that this particular participant did not know much about Major League Baseball nor baseball in general. However, she was a competitive gamer which the participant used fantasy sport program to advantage. Through the participation, the player was thought to learn about Major League Baseball by adopting to the rules of fantasy sports itself. Prior to the start of the season, participant could not explain the

basic signs of the game. After successfully adopting to fantasy sport program, the participant was able to identify the rules of the game and took interest of the league.

(2) Influence on People with High Fan Identification

As mentioned above, the common belief of consequences of fantasy sport participation is "skewed loyalty" towards the participant's favorite team. However, the literature review has proven this notion to be false, claiming that fantasy sport participants were just as loyal to their favorite team in addition to creating a new found loyalty to other teams. This section of the study will focus on such extended loyalty by examining the influence of fantasy sport on mediated sport consumption on people with high levels of fan identification.

Lomax (2006) indicated that participating in fantasy sport is an extension of the traditional fandom thus fantasy participants crave more from their sporting experience. Previous research indicates that people who participate in fantasy sport have a great point of attachment than those who do not participate due to increased parasocial interaction and interactivity. Fantasy players showed higher levels of attachment in respect to players, coaches, as well as the sport itself when compared to non-fantasy players. These results can be explained by the factors of interactivity and parasocial interaction mentioned earlier. To people with high fan identification, although people categorized as high fan identification already consume heavy dose of media, fantasy sport participation further increases consumption. When Corrigan (2007) examined if participating in fantasy reduces loyalty towards favorite team, result indicated that

fantasy players carry the same level of team identification as before, but their interest and involvement increased. These meant that fantasy sport takes the players to another level of fandom. Fantasy players have higher levels of attachment with towards their favorite teams, players, coaches, and sport than non-players, duplicating the result of Lee (2011) research with similar results.

4. Hypothesis

The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of fantasy sport on three broad aspects of consumption which are media, event attendance, and license merchandise purchase. This research segmented media consumption into two, first is the amount of mediated sport consumption of the league. Second question is the amount of mediated sport consumption of favorite team. Event attendance is to measure the fantasy sport participation on physical game attendance. Lastly, the influence of fantasy sport participation on licensed merchandise purchase of the league. Furthermore, this research will measure the level of fanship in order to detect the difference of the influence of fantasy sport on consumption behavior by comparing the low and high fanship groups. The significance of the difference of influence on two distinct groups will highlight the level of influence.

The research question is on the basis that fantasy sport influences fan's consumption behavior. Consumption behavior is widely categorized into media, merchandise, and event attendance. Comeau (2007) examined the influence of fantasy football participation on media use. His study indicated that NFL fans with similar sport

fan identification level who participate in fantasy football leagues consume more mediated sport than those fans who do not participate in fantasy football. The results showed that when accounting for the effects of sport fandom identification, fantasy participation was still a significant factor/predictor of hours per week spent on the various media outlets for NFL information or entertainment. After acknowledging the influence of fantasy sports on mediated sport consumption, Pritchard and Funk (2006) found that people who heavily consume mediated sport are more likely attend events and consume more of licensed merchandise.

Moderating role of fanship in on the influence of fantasy sport on consumption behavior will be discussed next. The level of influence of fantasy sport on consumption behavior varies depending on the level of fanship of the participant. Lee (2010) found the relations to amount of fantasy sport participation and mediated sport consumption. Specifically Lee found that the higher a person's level of involvement in fantasy football, the more time spent watching NFL games each week. Likewise, since media consumption levels are part of an overall behavioral consumption, this influence could be generalized to include game attendance and licensed merchandise purchase. Therefore this research will focus on the level of fanship dividing two distinct groups of low and high fanship. Then, by comparing the two groups, the result should indicate the varying influence on the two groups.

- H1(a): Participating in fantasy sport will increase the amount of mediated sport of the league
- H1(b): Participating in fantasy sport will increase the amount of mediated sport of your favorite team
- H1(c): Participating in fantasy sport will increase the willingness to attend event
- H1(d): Participating in fantasy sport will increase the willingness to buy licensed merchandise product of the league
- H2(a): Influence of participating in fantasy sport on amount mediated sport of the league will be greater for people with low fan identification level compared to high
- H2(b): Influence of participating in fantasy sport on amount of mediated sport of your favorite team will be greater for people with low fan identification level compared to high
- H2(c): Influence of participating in fantasy sport on willing to attend event will be greater for people with low fan identification level compared to high
- H2(d): Influence of participating in fantasy sport on willing to buy licensed merchandise will be greater for people with low fan identification level compared to high

III. METHOD

1. Sample and Procedure

Two groups of MLB viewers were the subjects of this research. One group of MLB viewers that play fantasy sport and another group that does not. The two group sample allowed for comparisons between those who do and do not play fantasy sport. The data was collected in period of three weeks from March 1st to 15th.

The survey was delivered through online Google instrument that allowed for fast and easy access for respondent's convenience. Total of 237 completed surveys were collected. The subjects of the survey consist of both MLB viewers who participate in fantasy sport and those who do not in order to accurately measure the comparison. The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of fantasy sport participation on consumption behavior. Therefore the subjects of this research were Major League Baseball viewers. First of all, Major League Baseball was chosen over other sport or league due to its availability and wide range of audience. In order to examine the pure influence, there has to be a large group of fans whom do not participate in fantasy sport. There are still plenty of people who enjoy watching MLB games while not participating in fantasy sport, while there is lack of National Football League fans who do not participate in fantasy sport. Meaning NFL fantasy sport has been more widely adopted into most fans of the league. All subjects of the research will be asked whether they

have watched a MLB game during a regular season. There will not be a requirement for whether they have ever purchased or attended an event.

2. Measures

The survey items were developed based on previous studies on fantasy sport and general marketing for conceptual and methodological support. The contents of the questionnaire were then reviewed by sports management experts for sound assurance.

1) Demographic Variables

Demographic variables mirrored Comeau (2007) research on fantasy sport influence on media consumption due to similarities of the research. Items included age, gender, education, and family's annual income. Just as in former research, family's income was calculated starting from \$0-10,000 and ending with \$70,001+ due to previous research indicating that most fantasy player's income is higher than \$70,000 (Beason, 2004).

The average of the participants was 27.38 (median=26) the youngest was 18 and oldest was 72. Further, participants were male dominant 186 (78.5%) out of total 237. As mentioned above, most of the participants were highly educated with 194 (81%) of them having a college degree or higher and there were 131 (63.7%) of people with over \$70,000 family income (see Table1.). This result in particular was higher than previous studies

[Insert Table 1. about here]

2) Control Variables

Sport fandom identification is defined as one's self perceptions as a sport fan (Wann, 2002). To account for this, Wann's (2002) sport fandom questionnaire was used (see Table 2.). The sport fandom questionnaire is a five item measurement. Additionally, four items regarding social involvement were included. These four items were previously used in Ulrich; Smith, (2008) research measured influence of social involvement of parents on children, which was modified to this specific research. The modified version for this research measured fantasy sport participant's social environment's involvement in their participation of sport and baseball.

[Insert Table 2. about here]

3) Independent Variables

Independent variable for this research measured participation level of fantasy sport. First of all, prior to assessing the subject's amount of fantasy sport usage, the question of whether they have ever participated was asked in simple yes/no. Total of six questionnaires were asked to the participants. Second through fourth questionnaires, previously used by Lee (2007), were asked to properly asses the amount of fantasy sport usage of the respondents. Lastly, a questionnaire of personal opinion regarding self-perception of amount of fantasy baseball usage compared to others was added (see Table 3.).

[Insert Table 3. bout here]

4) Dependent Variables

There was total of eight questionnaires regarding the amount mediated sport consumption of the league. First six questions were self-reported average time spent on various media outlet including: radio, television, newspaper, magazine, and mobile phone, which were borrowed from Comeau (2007) measuring amount of NFL media consumption. Here, NFL was simply converted into MLB. In addition, two questionnaires were asked of personal opinion regarding self-perception of amount of media usage compared to other fantasy baseball players and non-players (see Table 4.) To measure the amount of mediated sport consumption of his/her favorite team, same questions were asked as above with the addition of favorite team context (see Table 5.).

[Insert Table 4. about here]

[Insert Table 5. about here]

There were five items regarding event attendance, previously used in McDonald (2007), items measured number of regular season attendance, favorite team event attendance, and future intentions (see Table 6.). Lastly, licensed merchandise items, previously used by Trail and James (2007), measured the amount of money spent on MLB products and future intentions of purchase.

[Insert Table 6. about here]

IV. RESULTS

In order to compare the two groups of MLB viewers (those who do and do not play fantasy sport), regression analysis was conducted. For the first hypothesis stating that MLB viewer's that play fantasy sport will have increased consumption on all spectrum, amount of fantasy sport usage and various consumptions were analyzed.

1. Influence of Fantasy Sport on Consumption Behavior

H1(a) which states that people who participate in fantasy sport will have greater amount of mediated sport consumption of the league was proven by t value of 5.098 ($p = .001$). Both personal and social involvement did not seem to have influenced the amount of mediated sport consumption of the league, nor did any of the demographic factors. One other variable that was significant was the controlled fan identification variable, which showed t value of 2.682 ($p = .008$). This means that amount of fantasy sport participation does in fact have a positive influence on the amount of mediated sport consumption (see Table 7.).

[Insert Table 7. about here]

H1(b) stated that fantasy sport participation will further lead to increased consumption of mediated sport of his/her favorite team. Here, amount of fantasy sport participation had t value of 4.106 ($p = .001$). Similarly as H1(a), only level of fan

identification seem to have influenced the result with t value of 4.028 ($p = .001$) (see Table 8.). This result further strengthens the notion that fantasy sport serves as a complementary of traditional sport consumption. Meaning, unlike the popular belief that fantasy sport hinders traditional fans to be less loyal towards their favorite team, they actually enhance it. In fact, this result signifies previous study that Dwyer and Drayer (2010) investigated the relationship between favorite team-specific and fantasy team specific media consumption in order to analyze the influence of fantasy sport on specific media content consumption. Their study found that fantasy sport consumers are not affected on attitudinal loyalty whereas behavioral loyalty is influenced. This means that as the result shown above, fantasy fans do pay attention to other teams besides their favorite. Therefore behaviorally, loyalty that was devoted to only focusing on favorite team was hindered by participants watching more of other teams. However, since they have shown to also watch more of their favorite team, attitudinal loyalty is not hindered.

[Insert Table 8. about here]

H1(c) states that fantasy sport participation will enhance the number of events attended by the participants. As the result shows, t value $-.665$ ($p = .507$) was not significant. Meaning amount of fantasy sport participation did not influence the number of games watched during regular season. Social involvement and controlled fanship level did show significant t value of 5.170 ($p = .001$) and 6.933 ($p = .001$) (see Table 9.). In order to attend live games, there are more complex factors such as the team's record, family income, star players, and cost of admission which this research did not consider.

[Insert Table 9. about here]

H1(d) showed significance with t value -2.393 ($p = .017$). Meaning amount of fantasy sport participation did influence the amount of merchandise purchase. Here, age t value -2.64 ($p = .009$), social involvement 3.625 ($p = .001$), and fan level 10.469 ($p = .001$) was also significant (see Table 10.). With such result as above, one could state that the more one participates in fantasy sport, the more likely they will purchase merchandise of related league. First of all, since the second research question was of relating to degree of influence depending on the level of fanship, fans who do not participate in fantasy sport were excluded from the calculation. Among those who do participate, using Wan's (2002) sport fan identification, subjects were divided into two groups of high and low fanship.

[Insert Table 10. about here]

2. Moderating Role of Fan Identification

Using regression analysis, two groups of fans were compared side by side to examine the influence of fantasy sport on mediated sport consumption of the league H2(a) depending on the level of fanship of the participant. On both (high and low) groups of fanship level indicted significance of the amount of fantasy sport participation with t value of 2.224 ($p = .029$) and 7.378 ($p = .001$) respectively (see Table 11.)

[Insert Table 11. about here]

For H2(b), as shown in the figure above, people with high fanship level showed insignificant level of influence of favorite team mediated sport consumption with t value 1.78 ($p = .052$). Whereas people with low fanship level did show a significant

level of influence from amount of fantasy sport participation with t value 7.149 ($p = .001$) (see Table 12.). The significance of this result shows that only people with low fanship level are more prone to consuming more of their favorite team through fantasy sport. This result was predicted as people with high fanship already heavily consume their favorite team media.

[Insert Table 12. about here]

For H2(c) influence on event attendance, subjects were measured on their intentions and number of events (game) attended. Those identified with low fanship were influenced by fantasy sport participation with t value of 3.989 ($p = .001$) while those with high fanship were not with t value of -1.008 ($p = 3.17$) (see Table 13.). Social involvement was the only variable had influence to have on both low and high fanship group. This result may be self-explanatory due to the fact that going to a ball game is a definition of social environment. As mentioned above on H1(c) section, event attendance has other more complex variables that this study did not take into account. However, the significance of this result shows that fantasy sport does provide a platform for those with low fan identification to increase their identification to attend more games.

[Insert Table 13. about here]

H2(d), influence on licensed merchandise purchase was only influenced on those with low fan identification level. Amount of fantasy sport participation showed t value of -1.282 ($p = .204$) for high and 4.271 ($p = .001$) for low (see Table 14.). Once again, merchandise purchase variable was only influenced for those with low fan identification level. Once again, merchandise purchase, as stated in the section above, is

a way of expressing self identity, therefore social involvement was influenced on both high and low groups with t value 3.334 ($p = .001$) and 2.364 ($p = .019$) respectively. In addition, personal involvement was also influenced with t value of 2.015 ($p = .048$), and 3.776 ($p = .001$) for high and low respectively.

[Insert Table 14. about here]

V. DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the implications of the results, limitations of the study, and consider future research. First of all, the study needs to address the lack of fantasy sport environment in Republic of Korea. Furthermore, this section will address the necessity of such program, and its implications.

1. Summary of Findings

The result of the hypothesis 1(a) showed that, with fan identification level controlled, participating in fantasy sport had positive influence on the amount of mediated sport consumption of the overall league. Similarly, result of the hypothesis 1(b) showed, with fan identification level controlled, that participating in fantasy sport also had positive influence on the amount of mediated sport consumption of his/her favorite team. The result of the hypothesis 1(c), with fan identification level controlled, did not show a significant influence of fantasy sport on the consumer's willingness to attend events. Lastly, result of the hypothesis 1(d), with fan identification level controlled, participating in fantasy sport did show a significant positive influence on consumer's willingness to purchase merchandise. In conclusion, with fan identification level controlled, participating in fantasy sport had positive influence on aspects of sports consumption except for event attendance.

The result of the hypothesis 2(a) showed that when fan identification was not controlled, but rather subjects were divided into categories of high and low fanship, participating in fantasy sport had positive influence on mediated sport consumption of the league for both groups. However, result of the hypothesis 2(b) showed that participating in fantasy sport only had positive influence on people with low fan identification level. The result of the hypothesis 2(c) showed that participating in fantasy sport did only had positive influence on people with low fan identification level. Lastly the result of the hypothesis 2(d) had similar results as participating in fantasy sport only had positive influence on those with low fan identification.

2. Implications

Due to the rapid growth and popularity of fantasy sport, there has been previous study heavily regarding influence on media. Most of the academic research indicates positive relationship between fantasy sport participation and mediated sport consumption. In particular, previous studies have dealt with the actual behavior of the fantasy sport participants during their view. For example there have been extensive research on how fantasy sport participants constantly view multiple games at a time, and have reported to be more active on relative league forums (Beason, 2004; Ruihley, Hardin, 2011). However, there still lacks a comprehensive academic research on overall consumption behavior, not limited to mediated sport.

This study focused on three broad aspects of consumption, mediated sport, event attendance, and merchandise purchase. Furthermore, mediated sport was divided

into level of fan identification to examine the fantasy sport influence in detail. To conduct this research, subjects were asked extensive questions on their fantasy sport participation, fan identification level, and their amount of consumption on all spectrums.

Series of regression analysis was conducted for the result of this research. Sport fan identification was included as a significant predictor of most of the dependent variables. First research hypothesis stated that MLB viewers who participate in fantasy sport will have higher consumption of mediated sport of the league and favorite team, event attendance, and merchandise purchase. As seen in the result section of the research, this hypothesis came out to be true for all except event attendance.

As seen on the table above, with fan identification controlled, all aspects of consumption showed significant result, except event attendance. The previous studies have displayed differing views on fantasy sport's influence on event attendance. For example, some scholars believe that since fantasy sport program is played on statistical platform, people who heavily involve themselves in the program will be less inclined to physically attend events (Drayer et al.,2010). These scholars argue that instead of attending games, people will be concentrated on observing live statistics. However, alternate study has suggested that participating in fantasy sport will have positive relationship to event attendance, thus indicated as such for this research. As seen, for this research, for the first hypothesis (fan level controlled) event attendance was not influenced. However, this result does not necessarily mean the alternate as further study suggests event attendance have more complex factors that were not considered for this study. Those complex factors include star athlete, ticket price, team record (Nesbit & King 2010). However, event attendance variable was influenced in second analysis

which will be discussed later.

The implications of the first result of regression analysis are that people who participate in fantasy sport do in fact become heavier consumers on all aspects. The level of fantasy sport participation has been proven to have positive influence on fan level, thus by examining the degree of influence, this study shows the importance of such program to be implemented in all sport industry. Meaning sport teams and industry in general have the incentive to push for further growth of fantasy sport. Through their fan's participation of fantasy sport, fans themselves will consume more of their media, not only by consuming the overall league but also growing further attachments to their favorite team.

For implications regarding the second set of hypothesis, only subjects who do participate in fantasy sport were included. Further, the subjects were divided into two groups of high and low fanship level through sport fandom identification scale. The results are shown on the table below, comparing the two groups side by side.

As seen above, fantasy sport participation had significant influence on all dependent variables to those with low fanship, while only mediated sport consumption of the league was influenced for those with high fanship. This result specifically supports that fantasy sport participation will increase fan level of the participants' thereby increasing their consumption for those with low fan identification level. In conclusion, though obvious it may be, by proving the heavy impact of fantasy sport on people with low fan level, this study shows the significance to the degree of fantasy sport influence on various consumptions.

These results should highlight the fact that fantasy sport programs are a

necessity for local sports to import or adapt. Local sports leagues for soccer, basketball, and baseball need to jump on this trend by creating their own program, or contracting already popular programs by ESPN or Yahoo and incorporate it to fit their own leagues. By such action, local leagues will captivate new fans and further increase the existing fans involvement to the league. There is a similar local program called CASS Point, dealing with baseball league. However, CASS Point program is limited to one specific broadcasting channel, and have not been popularized. Other channels should follow this recent development and further local leagues should push for the growth of such industry to be adopted by local fans.

3. Limitations

There are couple limitations to this research; first, the fact of the small sample subjects is a limitation. Although there were large sums of subjects who have completed the survey through online forums, as a thesis research, the surveys were heavily completed by my personal peers, limiting the scope of the sample. Therefore, the result of this study should not be interpreted as definite, rather a building platform for future, more extensive researches.

In detail, the demographics of this research were heavily skewed to highly educated, financially stable communities with heavy interest in sport. For example, although previous studies have indicated that fantasy sport participants are generally highly educated with high end family income, demographic statistics for this research proved to be even heavily concentrated to be high in those categories. Furthermore,

ethnicity was not included for the demographics of this research due to prior knowledge of its insignificance. However, since demographics did not play a significant role on many of the results, these limitations should not deter future researches on the basis of this research. Since most fans already participate in fantasy sport, there were more subjects who participate in fantasy sport than those fans that do not. Additionally, only MLB viewers were sampled as subjects for this research, meaning other leagues might have different indications as fans of various sports tend to vary in characteristics. As mentioned above, the characteristics of sports consumers were solely based on North American consumers. Thus there may be differing motivations for local sports consumers.

In addition to demographics and size sample of the subjects, further limitations for this research derive from fantasy sport's influence on event attendance. As seen in the result section, with fan identification level controlled, fantasy sport did not have significant influence on the consumer's amount of event attendance. However, when consumers were divided into high and low groups of fanship, fantasy sport did have a significant influence. These results could support first, Drayer et al. (2010) claim that fantasy sport participants are more statistically oriented, thus heavily concentrating on statistics rather than the event itself. However, since event attendance did show significance for people with low fan identification, Nesbit and King (2010) result on influence on NFL game attendance should be considered.

Characteristics of sport consumer's event attendance were neglected for this research which deemed vital in determining the influence of fantasy sports. Previous studies indicated that there are several differing factors of event attendance such as

ticket price, team performance, demographics, winning percentage of a team, previous legacy of championship, and player performance can all have impact on game attendance (Nesbit and King, 2010).

4. Future Research Directions

Uniqueness of local fantasy sport environment is that it is still in its infant stage and its future is yet to be determined. For such an evolutionary program, local fans have not adopted despite growing popularity of sports. Thus many future research predictions could be based on local instances.

First of all future research predictions can be directed to be centered on local demographics. Since local demographics may have differing motives to consume, on the basis of the findings in this study, future research on the basis of this research should focus on local demographics and local league using CASS Point, in order to emphasize local implications. Motives to consume various aspects and fantasy sport may be different for local fans. Thus extensive research on local fans and their motives should be implicated in future research so that results could have local implications.

Second direction of future research could perhaps focus on fantasy sport's influence on brand image. For example, since local program CASS Point is sponsored by a specific alcoholic brand, unlike North American counterparts which are mainly operated through the league or network, fantasy sport's influence on the corporate or brand image could be a possible direction towards future research.

Third, only one network has been affiliated with the local program, thus fantasy

sport's influence on that network's media consumption could be a unique study direction. Currently, only one local network MBC is carrying the fantasy sport content while other two major networks are not. This situation creates a unique environment to study the comparison of carrying fantasy sport content on mediated sport consumption.

Lastly, the future research direction could expand on the knowledge of fan identification difference of fantasy sports on various aspects of consumption. Since amount increased of various aspects of sports consumption differed depending on the level of fanship, differing motivations for the two groups to remain loyal to their favorite team could be examined.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Demographic Statistics

Variable	Group	N	%
Gender	Male	51	21.5
	Female	186	78.5
Age	15-25	89	36.7
	26-35	136	57.4
	36+	12	5.1
Education	high school graduate	3	1.3
	some college	40	16.9
	college graduate	132	55.7
	some post graduate	29	12.2
	graduate degree	33	13.9
Family Income	\$10,001-\$20,000	14	5.9
	\$20,001-\$30,000	5	2.1
	\$30,001-\$40,000	10	4.2
	\$40,001-\$50,000	19	8.0
	\$50,001-\$60,000	20	8.4
	\$60,001-\$70,000	18	7.6
	\$70,001+	151	63.7

Table 2. List of Control Variables

Variable	Survey Questions	Scale
Fan Identification Level	I consider myself to be a MLB fan	1~5
	My friends see me as a MLB fan	
	My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow MLB	
	My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow MLB	
	Being a MLB fan is very important to me	
Social Involvement	How involved are your social group in sport?	1~5
	How involved are your social group in baseball?	
	How involved are your social group on your participation in sport?	
	How involved are your social group on your participation in baseball	

Table 3. List of Independent Variables

Variable	Survey Question	Scale
Amount of Fantasy Sport Usage	Last year, on average how many hours a day did you spend on your fantasy baseball team?	0~10
	Last year, how many fantasy baseball teams did you manage?	0~10
	How many years have you played fantasy baseball?	0~10
	In your opinion, compared to average fantasy baseball users, how much do you consume fantasy baseball?	1~5

Table 4. List of Dependent Variables (league media)

Variable	Survey Questions	Scale
Amount of Mediated MLB Consumption	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend reading a daily newspaper for information or entertainment on MLB?	0~10
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend reading a magazine for information or entertainment on MLB?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend using a wireless service such as a web phone for information or entertainment on MLB?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend on internet web sites for information or entertainment on MLB?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend watching television for information or entertainment on the MLB, please include time spent viewing MLB games?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend listening to the radio for information or entertainment on the MLB, please include time spent listening to MLB games?	
	In your opinion, compared to average fantasy baseball users, how much do you consume MLB on mass media?	
	In your opinion, compared to those who do not participate in fantasy baseball, how much do you consume MLB on mass media?	1~5

Table 5. List of Dependent Variables (favorite team media)

Variable	Survey Questions	Scale
Amount of Mediated Sport Consumption of Favorite Team	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend on internet web sites for information or entertainment to check on your favorite MLB team	0~10
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend reading a magazine for information or entertainment on your favorite MLB team?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend reading a daily newspaper for information or entertainment on your favorite MLB team?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend using a wireless service such as a web phone for information or entertainment to check on your favorite MLB team?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend watching television for information or entertainment on your favorite team, please include time spent viewing your favorite MLB team games?	
	On an average week during the MLB season, how many hours do you spend listening to the radio for information or entertainment on your favorite team, please include time spent listening on your favorite MLB team games?	
	In your opinion, compared to average fantasy baseball users, how much more likely are you to consume mass media of your favorite MLB team?	1~5
	In your opinion, compared to those who do not participate in fantasy baseball, how many more hours do you spend consuming mass media of your favorite MLB team?	

Table 6. List of Dependent Variables (Event Attendance/Merchandise Purchase)

Variable	Survey Question	Scale
Amount of MLB Game Attendance	How likely are you to attend an MLB game this season?	1~5
	How many MLB games did you attend last year?	0~10
	Of the games you attended last year, how many were of your favorite team?	
	In your opinion, do you believe you attend more games compared to average non fantasy baseball users,?	1~5
	In your opinion, do you believe you attend more games compared to average fantasy baseball users,?	
Amount of MLB Merchandise Purchase	I have bought MLB merchandise in the past	Y/N
	I am willing to purchase the MLB licensed merchandise	1~5
	The probability that I would consider purchasing MLB licensed merchandise is high	
	In the future, purchasing team licensed merchandise is something I plan to do	
	How much money did you spend over the last year on MLB licensed merchandise (e.g., sweat shirts, jackets, hats, T-shirts)?	Open

Table 7. H1(a). Influence of Fantasy Sport on League Media Consumption

Variable	β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		-1.164	.246	.596
Age	-.028	-.633	.527	
Social Involvement	-.056	-.893	.373	
Family Income	-.045	-1.055	.293	
Gender	.006	.150	.881	
Education	-.055	-1.288	.199	
Amount of F.S. Usage	.335	5.098	.000	
Fanship	.218	2.682	.008	

F.S. = fantasy sport

Table 8. H1(b). Influence of Fantasy Sport on Favorite Team Media Consumption

Variable	β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		3.805	.000	.558
Age	-.073	-1.575	.117	
Social Involvement	.092	1.403	.162	
Family Income	-.047	-1.039	.300	
Gender	-.007	-.164	.870	
Education	-.018	-.399	.690	
Amount of F.S. Usage	.283	4.106	.000	
Fanship	.342	4.028	.000	

F.S.= fantasy sport

Table 9. H1(c). Influence of Fantasy Sport on Event Attendance

Variable	β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		-1.584	.115	.589
Age	.058	1.299	.195	
Social Involvement	.326	5.170	.000	
Family Income	.012	.272	.786	
Gender	-.066	-1.523	.129	
Education	.023	.521	.603	
Amount of F.S. Usage	-.044	-.665	.507	
Fanship	.566	6.933	.000	

F.S.= fantasy sport

Table 10. H1(d). Influence of Fantasy Sport on Merchandise Purchase

Variable	β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		3.303	.001	.696
Age	-.102	-2.640	.009	
Social Involvement	.196	3.625	.000	
Family Income	-.027	-.723	.470	
Gender	-.082	-2.182	.030	
Education	.048	1.295	.197	
Amount of F.S. Usage	-.137	-2.398	.017	
Fanship	.736	10.469	.000	

F.S.= fantasy sport

Table 11. H2(a). Comparing the Influence of Fantasy Sport of Fan's with High/Low Identification Level for Mediated Sport (league)

Variable	High				Low			
	β	t	p	R ²	β	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		.175	.862	.307		-.323	.747	.422
Age	.142	1.367	.176		-.154	-2.349	.020	
S.I.	-.184	-1.358	.179		.041	.495	.621	
F.I.	-.142	-1.310	.194		-.082	-1.281	.202	
Gender	-.052	-.493	.623		-.015	-.237	.813	
Education	-.133	-1.351	.181		-.041	-.638	.524	
F.S. Usage	.243	2.224	.029		.478	7.378	.000	

S.I. = social involvement

F.I. = family income

F.S. = fantasy sport

Table 12. H2(b). Comparing the Influence of Fantasy Sport of Fan's with High/Low Identification Level for Mediated Sport (favorite team)

Variable	High				Low			
	β	t	p	R^2	β	t	p	R^2
(Constant)		2.934	.004	.319		2.235	.027	.385
Age	.062	.603	.548		-.120	-1.780	.077	
S.I.	.086	.640	.524		.148	1.725	.087	
F.I.	-.180	-1.684	.097		-.050	-.755	.452	
Gender	.027	.258	.797		-.025	-.386	.700	
Education	-.148	-1.514	.134		-.003	-.051	.960	
F.S. Usage	.214	1.978	.052		.479	7.149	.000	

S.I.= social involvement

F.I.= family income

F.S.= fantasy sport

Table 13. H2(c). Comparing the Influence of Fantasy Sport of Fan's with High/Low Identification Level for Event Attendance

Variable	High				Low			
	β	t	p	R ²	β	t	P	R ²
(Constant)		.457	.649	.413		.472	.638	.256
Age	.186	1.936	.057		-.010	-.128	.898	
S.I.	.604	4.829	.000		.213	2.259	.025	
F.I.	-.062	-.620	.537		.002	.024	.981	
Gender	-.084	-.871	.387		-.111	-1.539	.126	
Education	.073	.808	.422		-.030	-.409	.683	
F.S. Usage	-.101	-1.008	.317		.287	3.898	.000	

S.I. = social involvement

F.I. = family income

F.S. = fantasy sport

Table 14. H2(d). Comparing the Influence of Fantasy Sport of Fan's with High/Low Identification Level for Merchandise Purchase

Variable	High				Low			
	β	t	p	R ²	B	t	p	R ²
(Constant)		3.868	.000	.415		1.711	.089	.387
Age	.006	.066	.947		-.127	-1.883	.062	
S.I.	.416	3.334	.001		.202	2.364	.019	
F.I.	-.209	-2.101	.039		-.014	-.218	.827	
Gender	-.093	-.968	.336		-.100	-1.532	.128	
Education	.122	1.348	.182		-.029	-.443	.658	
F.S. Usage	-.129	-1.282	.204		.285	4.271	.000	

S.I.= social involvement

F.I.= family income

F.S.= fantasy sport

국 문 초 록

판타지 스포츠가 스포츠 소비 행동에 미치는 영향

권 회 찬
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2000년대 이후 판타지 스포츠에 대한 사람들의 관심이 크게 증가하고 인기가 많아짐에 따라 해당 분야에 대한 연구가 활발하게 이루어져 왔다. 이러한 연구 중 대부분은 판타지 스포츠 참여와 스포츠 미디어 소비 간의 긍정적인 영향관계를 규명해내는 것에 대부분 초점을 맞춰온 이유로 조금 더 광범위한 시각에서 판타지 스포츠 참여의 스포츠 소비 영향력을 검증한 연구는 부족하였다. 즉, 판타지 스포츠 참여가 스포츠 소비 행동에 어떠한 영향을 미치는지에 대한 연구가 부족한 것이다. 따라서 본 연구는 판타지 스포츠가 소비 행동에 미치는 영향을 스포츠 미디어 소비, 스포츠 관람, 그리고 머천다이징 소비의 세 가지 관점에서 다각도로 규명해 내고자 하였다.

판타지 스포츠의 영향력을 검증하기 위하여 본 연구는 MLB 시청자들을 두 그룹으로 나누어 설문조사를 실시하였으며, 이는 판타지 스포츠에 참여하는 시청자 그룹과 판타지 스포츠에 참여하지 않는 시청자 군으로 구성하였다. 본 연구는 두 그룹간의 결과 비교를 통해 판타지 스포츠에의 참여가 다양한 스포츠 소비 행동에 중요한 역할을 한다는 사실을 검증해 낼 수 있었다.

본 연구의 결과는 다음과 같다. 첫째, 연구 참여자들의 팀 정체성이 통제된 상황에서 판타지 스포츠 참여는 스포츠 리그와 선호 팀, 머천다이징 상품 구매에 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타난 반면, 스포츠 관람에는 영향을 미치지 않는 것으로 나타났다. 둘째, 판타지 스포츠에 참여하지 않는 실험군은

팬 정체성의 고저에 따라 상반되는 결과로 나타났는데, 판타지 스포츠에 참여하지 않으나 팬 정체성이 높은 집단의 경우 리그 미디어 소비에만 긍정적인 영향을 나타내는 반면, 팬 정체성이 낮은 집단의 경우 네 가지 경우에 모두 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다.

주요어: 판타지 스포츠, 스포츠 미디어 소비, 스포츠 관람, 스포츠 머천다이징 소비

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