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Social Media's Correlation to Fan Behavior

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Social Media’s Correlation to Fan Behavior

Abstract
Social media and fan behavior are two very interesting topics. More and more people are learning more about social media everyday and it is here to stay, it is not a fad, and people expect organization to be posting about games or events so that they can find out the information on social media. It is important for organizations to be on Twitter or Facebook because it is important to integrate into people's lives. Fan behavior research proves that environmental factors are one of the biggest deterrents for fans when it comes to trying to attend games and that record and atmosphere of the games is the biggest projector of fan support throughout the season. Using a survey distributed on Twitter there were questions asked to find out if there was a correlation between Social Media and Fan Behavior.
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Abstract

Social media and fan behavior are two very interesting topics. More and more people are learning more about social media everyday and it is here to stay, it is not a fad, and people expect organization to be posting about games or events so that they can find out the information on social media. It is important for organizations to be on Twitter or Facebook because it is important to integrate into people's lives. Fan behavior research proves that environmental factors are one of the biggest deterrents for fans when it comes to trying to attend games and that record and atmosphere of the games is the biggest projector of fan support throughout the season. Using a survey distributed on Twitter there were questions asked to find out if there was a correlation between Social Media and Fan Behavior.
Introduction

Social media is a free way to communicate with different types of people. People can interact with each other through the different types of social media. As more and more people are finding out they can get their message out fast and easy compared to many other channels of communication. The different types of social media range from Twitter where people post their thoughts or pictures called twitpics or Facebook where people post what they are doing throughout their day or even rekindle friendships with people from their past. Along with these two there are several other forms of social media, such as Instagram, Myspace, Linkedin, and Pinterest to name a few but for this paper those two are going to be the main focus for a couple of different reasons. They are the two more prominent within the world today and most sports organizations are using them already, they are the sites where people can get the most information out that they are trying to say as well as communicate with other the easiest. Coyle (2010). Social Media is free, many organizations are looking for ways to reach out and attract people without breaking the bank and with social media it is simple solution.

The specific question that I am trying to find the answer to be, “How does fan behavior relate to social media use?” In the ever-changing industry of sports people always seem to be looking for the edge, whether it be finding the cheapest way to promote, which is where social media comes into play or trying to find ways to increase the performance of the team. With social media being so new compared to the sport market many people have been intrigued trying to figure it out, to see if it is worth getting their organization involved to increase attendance or even revenue.
The question that I have posed will be a crucial segment for sport managers in the near future if it already hasn’t arrived in front of them now. As Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012) stated, social media is much more than just tweeting or posting, it is a gateway to attract fans and that in order to attract those fans a marketer need to replace their old marketing strategies with new ones that involve some form of social media. With this being known, in this study I am trying to figure out if social media really has a relationship with the behavior of fans and am trying to figure out whether it is worth it for teams to pursue such a path.

**Literature Review**

**Social Media**

Although social media has been around for about ten years users of social media really don’t know the full understanding or definition of social media.

“We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site” Boyd and Euliss (2007).

Over the past 10 years since the arrival of social media into the world it has been transforming and been integrating into our lives. More and more people are taking action and trying out the new sites. Clavio and Zimmerman (2012) stated that it is extremely important for online media such as social media to integrate into the lives of sports fans because of the knowledge that is available to them online. Another good reason why organizations should go on Twitter is because it is important to integrate into people’s
lives. Chen (2011) stated that people use Twitter because it satisfies them to use and to interact with other people in ways they would not normally do in person. The good thing about social media is that, like recently stated, some people like to interact with other people and organizations while some people do not, they like to just read but not interact. Lovejoy, Water and Saxton (2012) stated, that successful organizations that are using Twitter have found ways to get their message across in the 140-character limit, because not everybody on Twitter likes to interact. If you are tweeting only to attract fans and get them to respond the marketer is losing a crucial part of the segment.

One of the best reasons to be using social media is to go on the attack and attract fans; this is because of the fact that a large segment of the population uses social media. Hargittai (2007) found that no matter what gender, race, or age a person is it doesn’t affect the Twitter usage to the extreme one might think. People of different color, gender or age use Twitter just about the same amount. Hall and Cooper (1991) took it back further in time, but brings up the same results stating no matter a persons gender, they want to find to easiest way to retrieve information and the computer does that. It doesn’t matter whether it is a male or female they want to use the computer to get the information the same because of its ease.

Another important aspect to look into is the amount of information people put onto their social media page. Facebook has interests and a bio section to tell everybody about the person while Twitter they just post whatever is on their mind. According to Liu (2007) a person can find out a lot about a person by just looking around their social media page. Anybody can find out what they are interested in and be able to pinpoint their likes and dislikes. Stutzman (2006) found out that people on social media sites do more than just
post information about themselves they share their identity to complete strangers, people are a lot less worrisome to give out information when on social media sites compared to person-to-person interaction. Quatman and Chelladurai (2008) continued to back up this point, by talking about how accessible social media really is. Facebook and Twitter are both free, and by being free this leads them to both being highly used. Although there are privacy settings on either page many people tend to keep their sites open so that people can follow them or see more about them. This leads right back to how accessible the sites and how easy it is to access different peoples information on the social network site because of the fact that they are not as afraid to let people see, as they would be if they stated were face-to-face Quatman and Chelladurai (2008).

Sheffer and Schultz (2010) stated that there have been a lot of questions relating to the stability of social media, whether it will last or it’s just a fad. In their article they stated that as long as outlets use social media the right way it would not turn out to be just a fad. In Sheffer and Schultz’s (2010) survey they discovered that 88% of their participants surveyed liked getting their sport information off of a social media site rather than that of traditional source such as the television because of how easy it was to retrieve the information. Williams and Chinn (2010) also stated that social media is here to stay, its not a fad, people expect organization to be posting about games or events so that they can find out the information on social media. They make the point clear that if organizations are not on social media then they are falling behind the competition. Witkemper and Hoon (2012) have said the same thing about the research that Sheffer and Schultz’s (2010) and Williams and Chinn (2010) have found. Witkemper and Hoon talked about the motives and constraints of twitter users specifically. They talked about why people would use twitter
and like the above two authors found it because of how easy it is too use. Fans don’t want to wait for the 5 o’clock news to get their sport information if they can get it instantly through social media. Drury (2008) stated that social media is the avenue to go down when trying to get your story or news out efficiently and effectively because of the easiness of a couple button pushes. Papasolomou and Melanthiou (2012) also stated that the biggest positive is that it is inexpensive and fans get real time feedback. People know exactly what their fan/friends/strangers are thinking when they post or tweet something. This kind of information is priceless, nobody has to wait for reviews or anything within seconds the thoughts of person’s followers will be coming back to them.

O’Malley and Shea (2011) brought up an excellent point when talking about whether social media is an opportunity or obstacle. If a person uses social media properly it is most definitely and opportunity but if they don’t know how to use social media it is definitely an obstacle that is hard to overcome. If as an organization they try and figure it out or don’t realize they are failing they could be wasting a lot of valuable marketing time trying to get your social media approach right. Meadows-Klue (2008) also agreed that it is a great opportunity if an organization uses it right. He stated with “the emergence of social media the rules of marketing had to change, if you don’t adept you wont attract fans.” If an organization doesn’t have fans there is no way to succeed financially.

Choong, Chung and Pedersen (2012) talked about how people get their information. They stated that in this day and age people no longer get their information through word of mouth, its all through online media. People however are doing this using social media. They hear something and they write about it online, and then people who are looking online find out the information faster and easier. It’s the new norm and like Ballouli and Hutchinson
(2010) stated social media is important because now that’s where people are getting their information. As they stated, social media wasn’t meant to be a marketing channel but has turned into one and teams should take advantage because that’s where people are going to get their information and if they provide it on there they will create a stronger bond with their “customer” who technically is the reader of the information. Hambrick (2012) brought in an example that again backs up how people get their information, which is through social media. This study showed how two bike race organizers used Twitter to promote their race, they used their Twitter homepages to alert their followers of promotional messages and information about the races, after using Twitter their races saw 8,421 new followers after day four of promoting the event on Twitter. Another event that also helped bring up this point to the forefront was in an article by Schoenstedt and Reau (2010). This article stated that over the years a race in Cincinnati used traditional techniques to try and promote their race, but instead used social media for the last one, they state that “Twitter and Facebook have immediate transmissions of the news they are trying to sell while traditional media must wait until press time.” Schoenstedt and Reau (2010). That just shows that people want their information now, and social media provides that for them. Jones (2011) talked about the predictors of consumers and how they are reacting to the information put on the social media sites by almost assuming they will find all their information online. He makes it clear that information needs to be put on these sites because it’s where people are expecting it to be.
Fan Behavior

Attendance

When looking at the behavior of a fan many different issues come up. To better understand fan behavior a marketer needs to look into the different types of consumers within the sport industry. In order to find out what’s behind their behavior marketers need to find out what they are like. Stewart, Nicholson, & Smith (2003) they talked about how consumers move from different segments such as heavy users to light users. This is extremely important when looking at fan behavior because if they don’t know what is making their fans move from heavy users to light users they could potentially be in some serious trouble. They come up with the conclusion that record and atmosphere of the games is the biggest projector of fan support throughout the season. As the article stated MLB teams that aren’t performing well will not have the same attendance as teams performing well Stewart, Nicholson, & Smith (2003).

A lot of what fan behavior is comes down to factors for attendance and what constraints there are for people to attend or not attend games. Kyoum and Trail (2010) discovered that fans were motivated to attend games because they were identified themselves with a team. According to them that is the most likely way someone would attend a game. A constraint that limited or helped people to attend games was that of the teams winning success. Dos Santos (2012) stated if a team were underperforming many people would not want to attend games to watch a losing team. This would also be a key fact for Dos Santos (2012) research because even if teams use social media a lot if their team is performing poorly it will not affect the attendance.
Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) stated environmental factors are one of the biggest deterrents for fans when it comes to trying to attend games. Whether the games are outside or inside it still comes down to weather, weather can affect fans comfort at the game or their commute to the game. Fink, Trail and Anderson (2002) stated that snow out of any other environmental factor affects fans from attending games. They say that snow effects not only how comfortable they are at the game but also their commute. Fans would like to watch the game much more from their couch in their warm house. Laverie and Arnett (2000) also said that snow is in fact the biggest deterrent to attending games, but that will most likely only happen in northern games and that rain is the biggest deterrent in southern games. Lera-Lopez and Rapun-Garate (2007) stated that out of male and females, females are the more likely gender to let factors affect them attending games. Lera-Lopez and Rapun-Garate (2007) stated that men are more willing to sit out in the cold and watch a football game rather than females are. Trail, Robinson, Kim (2008) agreed with the above statement saying that weather is the biggest constraint for women, while it isn't for men. James and Ridinger (2002) also stated not only will males be more willing to sit in the cold and watch the game they are more willing to drive greater distances than their female counterparts to watch the game.

Another factor for attendance at sporting events is other sports in the community. This is a big issue when it comes to fan motivation because the fan needs to decide with team motivates him or her more to attend a game. Hansen and Gauthier (1989) stated that weather is not the only factor but other sporting events are another big factor that could affect the outcome of your organizations attendance. If more than one sporting event is taking place in a city certain fans might not be motivated to attend a certain game. James
and Ross (2004) stated that if a football game and a basketball game are going on at the same time, certain fans might be motivated to attend either game. Team performance is one of the main reasons a fan of both teams would jump to the other, and as Heere and James (2007) stated fans are going to want to watch a winner, so they are going to pick the game where their team will end up winning. This is hard for teams to try and compete with other teams in their cities if they are not performing as well as the other. Its simple people want to see the team that is going to win. Wann, Brewer and Royalty (1999) stated that while fans want and have emotional connections, when two teams are playing on the same day they are going to pick the team they are more emotional connected to, while if they were playing on consecutive days they might go to both games. Matsuoka, Chelladurai and Harada (2003) also stated that fans want to be satisfied and they are going to watch the game with the team they are more emotionally attached to.

With the emergence of the Internet people are able to watch sporting events online and at their house. Hur, Ko, and Valacich (2007) stated that it is easier and cheaper to watch a game either online at home or on the television rather than attend an actual game, but a lot of people are worried because they feel like watching a game online is risky because of how new it is and are worried about attacks on their privacy. Another reason why it seems like many people are moving to the online or stay at home version of watching a game is because it is much easier and faster to get your information online Seo and Green (2008). All fans have to do is sit at a computer and type in what they want to find. It doesn’t involve driving anywhere, just sitting and typing. Gantz (1981) stated it is much easier and comfortable to sit on a couch and watch a game on television, and that’s
what people are doing. They don’t need to change, just throw on their jersey and watch the
game in front of the television.

Media Consumption

End (2001) stated that people use to have to wait for the morning paper to find out
information about their favorite team, while instead today they just jump on the Internet
and search for their team and find that information. End (2001) said that the times are
changing and people can and will go onto the Internet to find information about their
favorite team or league. A big group of the population is college students, when trying to
figure out their behavior toward professional sports teams, its hard because a lot of them
are away from their favorite sport team while they are at school, in an article by Kang and
Lee (2010) they talked about how college students watch sports on television to escape
from the daily problems that they are facing. Watching sports is a comforting because for
the four or so hours that they are watching there is nothing else to worry about just what
the score of the game is. They even discovered that this is the same for college females.
That if they are watching sports they are most likely trying to escape from the problems
they are facing that day or week. Wan-Ling and Lin-Ru (2010) talked about the stress of
fans and how it motivates them to consume sports, there are a lot of stresses in life and not
much time to get away from them, sports on television is a way to escape those stresses.
Fans don’t have take up their whole day and go to the arena to watch a game. Fans can
watch it in the comfort of their house and then get back to the work you have to get done.
Kyoum and Trail (2010) stated that many constraints aren’t deterring fans from consuming
the game if it’s on television, many people can and will still watch it but they are unable to
attend the game in person for other reasons. They say that if fans are going to the game
they need to block out six to nine hours depending on the distance and type of event, but if fans are home they only need to block out two to four hours, which is a considerable amount less.

**Social Media and Fan Behavior**

Throughout the literature review social media and fan behavior were talked about in detail. Who exactly social media users are, and the reasons they log on to social media sites were discovered. Motivations and constraints for fans were also brought up, figuring out why fans attend games and what their biggest constraints when they don’t attend games. However there is a gap in the research and throughout my research I plan to find out if there is a correlation between sport organizations use of social media and their attendance at their games.

**Methods**

The participants that I am targeted a survey towards are twitter users 18-45 years old. They will be classified as self-deemed sports fans with a twitter account. Being a “self-deemed” sports fan could mean something different for everybody, so to operationally define a self-deemed sports fan they will need to follow at least one team account and one player account. For my study it does not matter if they are all in a specific region or state, I tried to collect as much data from each region as possible. I used Twitter and targeted this age range because I am considered a self-deemed sports fan and want to see if peoples fan behavior related to their social media use as much as mine does.

To collect my data I used the quantitative method, getting facts and simple yes or no answers. The data I used in this study was primary data. To collect my data I used a cross-sectional survey. I did a cross-sectional opposed to a longitudinal survey because I did not ask
people questions over a long period of time, just in the two weeks that this survey was
distributed. This survey was made using qualtrics and distributed to my Twitter followers. I used
snowball sampling because of the fact that this is a big part of what social media is. I asked
everybody to take my survey along with retweeting it on Twitter. I analyzed my survey using a
correlation method seeing if individual values correlated between fan behavior and social
media use.

Below is the survey I used to get my result

Project Title: Social Medias correlation to Fan Behavior
Reseacher: AJ Van Scott Email: ajv07498@sjfc.edu Adviosr: Dr. Katharine A. Burakowski Email: kburakowski@sjfc.edu Phone:(585) 385-7389

Purpose and Description. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of Fan Behavior in correlation to Social Media. As a participant of this research, you are being asked to complete a survey that will help better explain the correlation. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participating you may still decide to stop and withdraw at anytime. Responses to this survey will be kept confidential and results will be presented as a collection of responses. Names or contact information will not be included in the presentation of the results. If you have any further questions or if you would like the results of this study, please contact the researcher above at ajv07498@sjfc.edu.

If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, contact the researcher and he will lead you to the appropriate person or persons that can treat or help you through any distress you may experience.
I understand and I am willing to take the survey (1)
I am not willing to take the survey (2)

Q1 What is your favorite NHL team?
- Anaheim Ducks (1)
- Boston Bruins (2)
- Buffalo Sabres (3)
- Calgary Flames (4)
- Carolina Hurricanes (5)
- Chicago Blackhawks (6)
- Colorado Avalanche (7)
- Columbus Blue Jackets (8)
- Dallas Stars (9)
- Detroit Red Wings (10)
- Edmonton Oilers (11)
- Florida Panthers (12)
- Los Angeles Kings (13)
- Minnesota Wild (14)
- Montreal Canadiens (15)
- Nashville Predators (16)
- New Jersey Devils (17)
- New York Islanders (18)
- New York Rangers (19)
- Ottawa Senators (20)
- Philadelphia Flyers (21)
- Phoenix Coyotes (22)
- Pittsburgh Penguins (23)
- St. Louis Blues (24)
- San Jose Sharks (25)
- Tampa Bay Lightning (26)
- Toronto Maple Leafs (27)
- Vancouver Canucks (28)
- Washington Capitals (29)
- Winnipeg Jets (30)

Q2 Which NHL teams do you also follow?
- Anaheim Ducks (1)
- Boston Bruins (2)
- Buffalo Sabres (3)
- Calgary Flames (4)
- Carolina Hurricanes (5)
SOCIAL MEDIA’S CORRELATION TO FAN BEHAVIOR

- Chicago Blackhawks (6)
- Colorado Avalanche (7)
- Columbus Blue Jackets (8)
- Dallas Stars (9)
- Detroit Red Wings (10)
- Edmonton Oilers (11)
- Florida Panthers (12)
- Los Angeles Kings (13)
- Minnesota Wild (14)
- Montreal Canadiens (15)
- Nashville Predators (16)
- New Jersey Devils (17)
- New York Islanders (18)
- New York Rangers (19)
- Ottawa Senators (20)
- Philadelphia Flyers (21)
- Phoenix Coyotes (22)
- Pittsburgh Penguins (23)
- St. Louis Blues (24)
- San Jose Sharks (25)
- Tampa Bay Lightning (26)
- Toronto Maple Leafs (27)
- Vancouver Canucks (28)
- Washington Capitals (29)
- Winnipeg Jets (30)
- None (31)

Q3 To which NHL team do you live closest?
- Anaheim Ducks (1)
- Boston Bruins (2)
- Buffalo Sabres (3)
- Calgary Flames (4)
- Carolina Hurricanes (5)
- Chicago Blackhawks (6)
- Colorado Avalanche (7)
- Columbus Blue Jackets (8)
- Dallas Stars (9)
- Detroit Red Wings (10)
- Edmonton Oilers (11)
- Florida Panthers (12)
Los Angeles Kings (13)
Minnesota Wild (14)
Montreal Canadiens (15)
Nashville Predators (16)
New Jersey Devils (17)
New York Islanders (18)
New York Rangers (19)
Ottawa Senators (20)
Philadelphia Flyers (21)
Phoenix Coyotes (22)
Pittsburgh Penguins (23)
St. Louis Blues (24)
San Jose Sharks (25)
Tampa Bay Lightning (26)
Toronto Maple Leafs (27)
Vancouver Canucks (28)
Washington Capitals (29)
Winnipeg Jets (30)

Q4 How would you describe yourself as an NHL Fan?
- High motivation (1)
- Medium motivation (2)
- Low motivation (3)

Q5 What would you describe yourself as?
- Heavy Twitter user (1)
- Medium Twitter user (2)
- Light Twitter user (3)

Q6 How many cumulative hours do you spend on twitter a day?
- Less than 1 (1)
- 1-2 (2)
- Greater than 2-Less than 3 (3)
- Greater than 3-Less than 4 (4)
- Greater than 4 (5)

Q7 How many NHL teams do you follow on Twitter?
- Less than 5 (1)
- 6-10 (2)
- 11-15 (3)
- More than 15 (4)
Q8 How many NHL personnel/management (ie. Owner/General Manager/Head Coach) do you follow on Twitter?
   ☐ Less than 2 (1)
   ☐ 3-5 (2)
   ☐ 6-8 (3)
   ☐ More than 8 (4)

Q9 How many NHL players or prospects do you follow on Twitter
   ☐ Less than 5 (1)
   ☐ 6-10 (2)
   ☐ 11-15 (3)
   ☐ More than 15 (4)

Q10 Are you a season ticket holder?
   ☐ Yes (1)
   ☐ No (2)

Q11 In the 2011-2012 season how many games did you receive free tickets and attend?
   ☐ Less than 2 (1)
   ☐ 3-5 (2)
   ☐ 6-8 (3)
   ☐ Greater than 9 (4)

Q12 In the 2011-2012 season how many games did you buy ticket for and attend?
   ☐ Less than 2 (1)
   ☐ 3-5 (2)
   ☐ 6-8 (3)
   ☐ Greater than 9 (4)

Q13 On average, How often do you use team or league sponsored hash tags when you tweet about the NHL?
   ☐ Never (1)
   ☐ Occasionally (2)
   ☐ Always (3)

Q14 On average, How often do you use team or league sponsored hash tags to receive information about the NHL or NHL teams?
   ☐ Never (1)
   ☐ Occasionally (2)
   ☐ Always (3)

Q5 How often do you watch NHL games on TV?
   ☐ Never (1)
Less than Once a Month (2)
Once a Month (3)
2-3 Times a Month (4)
Once a Week (5)
2-3 Times a Week (6)
Daily (7)

Q16 Did you purchase NHL Center Ice or NHL Game Center for the 2011-2012 season?
Yes (1)
No (2)

I tweeted the survey to my followers along with tweeting the survey to specific people who I follow that have a lot of influence on Twitter. I encouraged them to take the survey and then tweet it themselves along with retweeting my tweet about the survey. This made my survey available to over a few hundred people right at the start. I then began to tweet the survey link along with hasttagging the game tags to let people who are watching the games and tweeting about them that there is a survey to take. I tweeted my survey with a game tag to at least 1 games of every NHL team. This took about one week to accomplish seeing as how many of the NHL teams played every other day. This way I reached the west coast as well as the east coast trying to get as many people to take the survey as possible. An example of this would be if the Buffalo Sabres are playing the Pittsburgh Penguins I will tweet my link to the survey along with #BUFPIT which is used by the twitter account run by the NHL. Everyone on twitter tweeting about this game will then have very easy access to my survey. I also took advantage of when the NHL played on NBC on Sundays, by using the hashtag #NHLonNBC. This also reached a network of people watching hockey on Sundays. Once my survey closed I collected my data and examined to see whether fan behavior relates to social media use.
The research tradition that I most see my study fitting into is really a mix between positivist and interpretivist because of a few reasons. There is really no existing theory about this research so that would lean me toward interpretivist and away from Positivism but I am collecting quantitative data, which is an attribute of Positivism. For my research question I am not interested in the emotions or feelings of people just the facts about why someone came to the event. I am also looking for more of an understanding of why they attend games rather than scientific reason. What I am looking fits into both of the traditions.

Results

The survey was distributed on a Tuesday and closed on a Friday. During that time period 143 participants took the survey answering all of the 17 questions. The first question was the consent form which everybody answered. The next question was the start of the questions about Fan Behavior and Social Media. “What is your favorite NHL team?” was the first question that the participants had to answer. While eight teams did not receive one response the two that were the favorite of most were the Pittsburgh Penguins (82 Votes 55%) and the Buffalo Sabres (21 votes 14%). While multiple answers could be selected for the next question “Which NHL teams do you also follow?” the trend altered just slightly. The Penguins still stayed on top (59 votes 40%) while the Chicago Blackhawks finished a close second. (41 votes 28%). “What NHL team do you live closest” was also a big jump from the previous two questions. The Buffalo Sabres were the most selected team, (40 votes, 27%) while the Penguins were the second most selected team (16 votes, 11%). The next two questions were some of the most important questions in the entire survey. “How would you describe yourself as an NHL Fan?” and “What would you describe yourself as?” 98 participants (66%) of the people described themselves as
highly motivated NHL fans while 115 participants (80%) described themselves as medium or light twitter users. This tells us that with so many people as high motivated NHL fans they are not getting the majority of their NHL consumption through Twitter. The next question about how many cumulative hours the participant spends on Twitter tells us what we already knew with how people describe themselves on Twitter with the overwhelming majority spending less than 2 hours on Twitter a day. We also found out that 122 participants (83%) and 96 participants (65%) follow less than 2 NHL teams or NHL personal on Twitter respectively, while 55 participants (37% the majority) follow NHL players or prospects on Twitter. When it came to viewing games at the arena the results were extremely surprising. Only 5 participants out of the 143 were season ticket holders and 105 participants (72%) attended less than two games during the entire 2011-2012 NHL season. Comparing this back to the “How would you describe yourself as an NHL Fan?” question these numbers are surprising considering the majority of the participants said that they were highly motivated NHL fans. A better understanding of this will come from the question “How often do you watch NHL games on TV?” 105 participants (73%) watch NHL on television at least 2-3 times a week. Moving on and talking more about Twitter now 91 participants (64%) said that they occasionally use team or league sponsored hashtags when they tweet about the NHL while 44 participants (31%) say they never use hashtags to tweet about the NHL. This changes however when the next question asked “How often do you use team or league sponsored hashtags to receive information about the NHL or NHL teams?” because the amount of people the previously selected occasionally dropped from 91 participants (64%) to 70 participants (49%). The number of participants that selected that they never use hashtags rose to tweet about the NHL rose from 44 participants (31%) to 62
participants (43%) when the next question asked if they use these hashtags to receive information about the league. The last question that was featured on the survey asked “Did you purchase NHL Center Ice or NHL Game Center for the 2011-2012 season?” 108 participants (76%) said that they did not purchase either of these packages that allow you to watch more NHL games than basic cable. When using the Person Chi-Squared test of significance for the two questions “How often do you watch NHL games on TV?” and “How would you describe yourself as an NHL Fan?” there was shown to be a weak association between the two as well as little significance, proving the previous point stated that although they consider themselves highly motivated fans they are not consuming as much NHL as they think or realize they are.

Discussion

During the course of this research and examining the results there were some limitations that appeared. The first limitation was that eight teams were not represented as a favorite team. This could potentially hurt the research because if certain fans that had the most responses for a favorite team didn’t use Twitter they could potentially skew the results. Another limitation was that most of the data was driven by Pittsburgh Penguins fans. Like previously stated this could skew the results if those specific fans were not avid Twitter users rather watch more games on television. The third and fourth limitation that was discovered throughout this research was the fact that the participants of the survey would have different interpretations of either being a Heavy, Medium, or Light Twitter users or a Highly motivated, Medium motivated, or light motivated fan. This is something that could have been fixed before the survey was launch but since it wasn’t caused some limitations. People could have interpreted each category different skewing the results slightly.
Some of the delimitations faced during this research were the fact that the NHL was in the middle of a lockout when the beginning out this started. In order to get results that would help this research the 2011-2012 NHL seasons needed to be used. This could cause a slight problem in the participants not clearly remembering exactly how they were acting throughout the previous season especially since the NHL started back up in the middle of this research. The participants taking this survey could have mixed up which years the questions were asking about because they were not reading carefully. Another delimitation that was discovered for this research was when the survey was put together the measurement for “Highly Motivated fan” “Medium Motivated Fan” or “Low Motivated Fan” was not interpreted. This let the participant decide how to distinguish that themselves, allowing for some who should really be Low Motivated fans to click High Motivated because they want to believe that they are bigger fans than they really are. The same goes for the question asking about whether the participant is a “Heavy Twitter user” “Medium Twitter user” or “Light Twitter user”. There was no determination on the survey stating what a “Heavy Twitter user” was leaving it up to the participant to decide for themselves leading to the possible of slight skewed results because of the fact people can determined those categories differently.

When performing a study similar to this in the future it would be worth looking into a few different things. The first thing that would be worth trying to do is to get a more of a representative sample of the fans favorite team. This would be encouraged because with the large amount of Pittsburgh Penguins fans that were taking this survey they could have possibly skewed the results slightly due to the fact that Penguins fans may not use twitter regularly like the rest of the league. Another area to consider more when doing research on this topic in the
future is to have more answers on a likert scale, this would be beneficial to the researcher because then they could do a correlation and that would lead to being able to get more results that were easier to see for the researcher.

**Conclusion**

Over the course of the study many things were learned, discovered, explored. There were a couple of interesting takeaways from the results of this study. Through this study it was learned that although the participants describe themselves as highly motivated fans and heavy twitter users they do not show this through the results of the survey. Also discovered was that through the results of the survey fans were getting the majority of their NHL consumption through the television rather than through twitter or attending an NHL game. This was interesting because when going into this study it was thought that the majority of fans would be getting their information through Twitter because of the Literature Review that was read about how Twitter is the source of most of the information.
References


