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Factors Contributing to Consumer's Buying Habits in the Online Ticketing Industry

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Abstract

Ticket scalping is a growing epidemic that has become more specialized in the online market. The online secondary ticket market thrives on consumer demand. It has been discovered that this demand in the online market is driven by factors such as trust, risk, time (availability), and popularity of the website. A cross sectional survey, using St. John Fisher students, faculty, and staff, uncovered what online secondary ticketing platform consumers use most, and why. Being able to understand what causes consumers to buy online is coveted by businesses' and marketers. The results showed that consumers had more trust and less presumed risk in the primary ticketing websites, however, Stubhub was the most used platform among respondents.

Factors Contributing to Consumer's Buying Habits in the Online Ticketing Industry

Ticket scalping has become extremely prevalent in the sporting realm. Ticket scalpers “personify America’s love for [sport] with its love for profit” (Yang, 2004-2005, p. 111). In other words, tickets scalpers use an individual’s love for sports for their own personal monetary gain, without even thinking twice. A sort of circular relationship is created from this sort of exploitation of America’s passion for sports by ticket scalpers (Yang, 2004-2005). Ticket scalping, also called secondary ticketing, is defined as “a market where sport and event tickets are resold to the public after being originally purchased by the public from the primary seller” (Suh, Ahn, Lee, & Pedersen, 2015, p. 131). The practice of ticket scalping is coupled with other nuisances of sports that have a negative impact on the sport.

In sports today, there are both on the field and off the field issues. The on the field problems can be related to the use of performance enhancing drugs, cheating or manipulating of rules, or anything of that nature; these factors directly impact the outcome of the event. Similarly, there are off the field problems which can be related to the event but not have an impact on the outcome. Atkinson (2000) contends that ticket scalping is more closely associated with off the field problems. To better understand this concept, an example of an off the field problem would be fans’ illegal gambling practices are also defined under this category. Meaning, ticket scalping is an illegal activity directly related to the sport or event, however, it does not impact the outcome (Atkinson, 2000). Due to the negative stigma ticket scalping creates in the sports industry it is an important topic to research.

This topic is incredibly important to those in the sport industry because it has a significant impact on a large amount of people. First, ticket scalping affects venues, employees within the venue, consumers, and even sports teams. The way this can affect venues is, simply, the experience or atmosphere can be altered by the presence of a ticket scalper (Klein, 2010). They are known to nag and annoy people and that could start the event off on the wrong foot, or worse, affect the consumer’s decision to ever come back to that stadium. For example, if a venue is a Ticketmaster operated venue,

then box offices are unable to help a customer if they are having issues with a ticket from any other website (Ticketmaster, 2015). Many consumers pay a lot of money for tickets and when they're told they cannot be helped because they bought a scalped ticket, it is not often a good situation for anyone to be in. That also touches on how the consumer can be affected. Also, consumers are often paying double or, depending on the sporting event, triple the face value of the ticket (Drayer & Shapiro, 2009). Sadly, some consumers are so oblivious that they may not even know they are purchasing an overpriced scalped ticket. In addition, the teams are losing out on extra ticketing revenue. Some teams and/or leagues are beginning to endorse ticket scalping, before doing so, they should consider the public's opinion of ticket scalping (Drayer & Martin, 2010). The crux of this paper will be to address what factors, being trust, risk, time, or popularity of the website, play a role in a consumer's decision to buy a scalped ticket online. All of these aspects of sport are affected, in some capacity, by ticket scalping.

Literature Review

Scalpers and the Online Ticket Market

Often, people think that ticket scalping requires some extra knowledge base, or that scalpers somehow get the tickets in a different way from the average ticket buyer; however, "scalpers get tickets the same way [average people] do, only they're better at it" (Razzo & McGrath, 2011, p.110). Scalpers have learned how to be effective and efficient in their craft. Some of them go as far as purchasing equipment to help them attain the best tickets before anyone else can. They will purchase something known as a "ticket bot". This is a type of computer hack that refreshes the best available seats on Ticketmaster, clicks the quantity you want and clicks buy. It completes this process once every second for as long as you want, or until it can grab the seats you want. This can then lead to scalpers' photo copying the same ticket X a number of times and reselling it. This results in only the first person being allowed in, after that the ticket scanners will read that the ticket already entered. Also, scalpers often buy tickets in bulk, this lowers the general supply of tickets available to the public. This is a problem that

will reflect on the box office of the particular venue: “Since facility and box office managers are in the business of providing a service to their patrons this lack of tickets becomes a very real concern” (Ammon & Mulrooney, 1997, p.181). Ticket scalpers develop a personal specialization in obtaining and selling tickets to sport events in cities where sport events are frequent and teams are prevalent (Atkinson, 2000). The more experienced scalpers will travel to different areas across a state where sports are more frequent. Scalpers want to be the first thing the consumer sees and they establish themselves in high traffic areas (parking lots, street corners, where the subway lets out, right outside of stadiums) (Atkinson, 2000). The practice of scalping has been considered to be just part of the environment but to others, it is an unethical practice (Yang, 2004-2005).

Despite what some may think, scalping is in fact illegal, however, it is a law that is extremely unenforced by the police (Atkinson, 2000). Many scalpers often befriend law enforcement and get on their “good side” while scalping tickets just to avoid getting into trouble (Atkinson, 2000). It sometimes almost appears that police officers don’t care that scalping is happening. However, society is transitioning into an era where scalping is behind the scenes and no police officers outside of venues are involved. As time goes on, the scalpers are transitioning from hand-to-hand transactions to finger-to-mouse; thus, the emergence of the online secondary ticket market.

The evolution of technology is responsible for the online version of ticket scalping becoming so prevalent in the industry. As a result, many ticketing platforms have been created such as StubHub, Vividseats, and Ticket Galaxy. Buying a scalped ticket now only takes around three clicks of a mouse. Platforms, like the aforementioned examples, are being used by consumers and scalpers on a daily basis. In online ticket buying, scalpers “act like any other middleman,” offering a product they received from the primary source (Kemper & Breuer, 2015). Prior to online scalping, scalpers were often considered nuisances, however, when the transactions are done online “the nuisance argument is displaced”

(Kirkman, 2008, p. 739). Although these online transactions make trips to the venue less annoying, there is still a negative stigma around ticket scalping.

Many argue that the ticket retail companies are “engaging in predatory practices that adversely affect consumers” (Klein, 2010, p. 186). A specific example of a predatory practice used by the online ticket retailers is that there are an unknown number of tickets available for public sale. Meaning, for example, if an arena seats 17,000, it is highly possible that there may have been nowhere near 17,000 seats for sale. These other tickets are claimed by corporate sponsors, the artist/players, owners, and office personnel. Other examples of predatory practices include the obvious, markup of ticket prices, releasing tickets before they are primarily released and selling “phantom tickets,” which are duplicated tickets (Razzi & McGrath, 2001). Not only are ticket scalpers preying on the consumers market, they are also having an effect on teams in the industry.

The secondary ticket market leaves teams and organizations frustrated with the limited to no control they have over that market. These organizations argue that online ticket scalping is an issue because the Internet is international, not regional and too many issues can arise on such a large scale (Drayer, Stotlar, & Irwin, 2008, p.236). Examples of these issues are the predatory practices mentioned before. Teams and organizations also ethically interfere, or have different moral standards or goals, in regards to their relationships with consumers. Unlike the teams and organizations themselves, scalpers “can exploit the short-term revenue potential without worrying about their reputation” (Kemper & Breuer, 2015, p.150). Several researchers argue that sports organizations are intentionally underpricing their tickets to keep consumers happy and leave a positive image in consumers’ minds towards the specific team (Dwyer, Drayer, & Shaprio, 2013). Despite all of the issues that occur due to buying tickets from the Internet, Kirkman argues that the number of annual sales from secondary ticket websites is only expected to rise (2008). But it is unclear which platform will rise the most, and that will likely be predicated on understanding how individuals approach the available retail markets.

Scalping and Teams

Currently, the sports industry has transitioned from talking about how to eradicate secondary ticket selling to how to regulate the market. Society has recognized that ticket scalping has become so widely practiced that there is no getting rid of it, so the focus should be on containing it (Moore, 2010). Consequently, teams and even leagues are adopting a ‘if you can’t beat them, join them’ strategy. Teams are incorporating or endorsing these ticket platforms, despite the issues that may arise. “Instead of merely preventing third parties from capitalizing on the resale of tickets,” organizations have sought ways to benefit from ticket resales (Moore, 2010, p. 304). This relationship allows for teams to regain revenue they feel they are entitled to (Drayer, Rascher, & McEvoy, 2012). For example, the National Football League (NFL) has created their own secondary market, The NFL Ticket Exchange. This site allows fans to resell their purchased tickets above face value while fully guaranteeing the legitimacy of tickets. Other sport sectors and teams like the National Hockey League and the National Basketball Association “have developed partnerships with secondary ticket distributors” (Drayer & Martin, 2010, p. 40).

Ultimately, “[the secondary ticket market] presents challenges as well as new opportunities for team, event, and league management alike” (Drayer, Stotlar, & Irwin, 2008). However, not only are teams and organizations helping the secondary ticket market, consumers are the driving force behind its continual success. The team gains extremely valuable information about the demand for their tickets because this is directly reflected in the secondary ticket market (Drayer et al., 2012).

Consumer Behavior Online

In order to understand how the secondary online ticketing markets became so successful, it is important to look at consumers online buying habits. For any online shopping source, “profiling consumer decision-making styles is very important” (Kin Meng & Chatwin, 2015, p.100). Online shopping is becoming more and more popular for people of all ages. There are many factors that will determine if an individual will buy a product online. One of the most influential factors is the idea of privacy and

security when shopping online. For a consumer to input their credit card information online, they must feel the website is legitimate and their private information is secure. Ultimately, “consumers are willing to pay a little more to make transactions with online retailers that are more likely to protect their private information” (Kin Meng & Chatwin, 2015, p. 101). Another factor that has been found to influence consumer buying is the ease of use of the website. Consumers who find the website to be easy to use are more likely to spend their money on it. In a study conducted by Panda and Swar (2013), the ‘ease of use’ factor ranked as the second most influential factor for online shopping. Falling under the ‘ease of use’ umbrella is user friendliness, how easy the checkout process is, and whether it was easy to compare products (Panda & Swar, 2013).

Word of mouth also plays a large role in online buying. Recommendations from friends or other shoppers go a long way in the decision making process of what website to buy from. What better advice to abide by than from another shopper that has used that site before (Tanrikulu & Celilbatur, 2013)? For marketers it is not only important to understand why people shop online, but what type of people shop online. A person that has the Internet at his/her disposal is the first kind of person most likely to shop online. Four out of five Internet users shop online (Panda & Swar, 2013). Coupled with having Internet at home, an individual’s boredom can lead to online shopping. A consumer with the Internet at their disposal, who is bored, is more likely to buy online (Bellman, 1999). While these factors are prevalent in online shopping in general, it is found that other determinants influence buying a ticket to a sporting event. The online sports ticketing industry can be a mysterious place, and people who have never bought a ticket online may be wary to do so. There are some reasons unique to sport events that will turn consumers to the secondary ticket market to buy their tickets.

The first and most prevalent reason consumers turn to the secondary ticket market for sporting events is because the event is sold out. This leaves the consumer no choice but to buy a ticket that has already been bought. Another reason that consumers use the secondary ticket market is because it

provides consumers with many options (Knopper, 2010). There are a variety of different sources of online ticket retailers. Another reason consumers resort to secondary ticket websites is due to the number of days before the game. The procrastinating nature of many fans leaves them little selection at the box office. The seats that are available might not be up to their satisfaction because they waited too long to buy (Kemper & Breuer, 2015). The supply and demand of tickets to sporting events is another major contributor to consumers buying from the online ticket market.

Supply/Demand Economics

The economics of online ticket sale and resale helps to understand how ticket scalpers are able to thrive. Due to teams regularly pricing their game tickets too low, this allows the secondary market to continue to profit. Most teams are known to price their tickets low to fill the stadium. In the NFL, if a team is unable to sellout, the game will be blacked out (Courty, 2003). This means it will no longer be aired on television. This results in the supply of tickets being low, leaving the demand at a very high level. In addition to low supply, consumer surplus play a large role in the success of scalpers. The theory behind consumer surplus is “the value placed on the ticket by consumers’ can be much higher” than what the primary market suggests (Drayer, 2012, p. 450). Sports fans are undeniably some of the most loyal and passionate people when it pertains to their favorite sports team because of this devotion fans are willing to pay more than double the face value of a ticket in some cases. Specifically, when a team enters the playoffs or a big name comes to the area, consumer are generally willing to spend more on a ticket than they usually would. In a study conducted by Drayer and Shapiro during the NFL playoffs, they found a “107% increase in ticket price from the primary to secondary markets” (2009, p. 9). This indicates two things: fans are willing to pay high amounts of money to see their teams play and scalpers can more than double their money. This study also stressed the importance of the realization that the face value of ticket does not necessarily equal the ticket value for a fan. In other words, the ticket value is indicative of the seat, the experience and the atmosphere that the fan will be surrounded by.

There are some people who see ticket scalping in another light. Some argue that the resale of tickets increases the efficiency, “because it channels tickets to those consumers who value them the most” (Courty, 2003, p.85). Ultimately, consumers are the fuel to the fire regarding the secondary ticket market: “as long as the demand for tickets outpaces supply, and operators fail to equate a ticket’s face value with its market value, the secondary ticket market and ticket brokers will continue to exist” (Moore, 2010, p. 304). Two of the main factors that affect the demand for tickets are the consumers’ trust and risk levels.

Trust and Risk

Consumer trust is something all ticket platforms desire. Consumers are spending huge sums of money on tickets they are not sure are legitimate. Their trust can be defined as, “...consumers’ positive expectations that [online ticket buying] processes are safe” (Suh, 2015, p. 138). With trust comes perceived risk. Consumers’ perceived risk is the potential negative outcomes for buying a ticket from a secondary source (Suh, 2015). In that market, it is extremely possible that you are buying a fake or duplicated ticket. That is a risk that consumers face when buying an already purchased ticket. Knopper compared buying a ticket for a sporting event to going on a vacation. He explained that “purchasing a ticket or reserving a room in advance have similar uncertainties related [to limited information] that is accessible” (Knopper, 2010, p. 170). Ultimately, when buying anything online, a consumer is not always guaranteed that what they are paying for is what they are getting. You can book a hotel room and get to the hotel and they may tell you that the hotel was overbooked; similarly, you may buy a ticket from StubHub for example, and you are not able to enter the venue because your ticket was sold to numerous other parties.

If there is a lack of trust towards the specific ticket platform or too great of a perceived risk, then the consumer will most likely not buy that ticket (Suh, 2015). Trust and risk play a huge role in consumers’ decision to buy tickets online. These variables also determine which platform a consumer

will choose to buy from. Essentially, if the consumer does not trust the ticketing outlet, the outlet will struggle to exist. Ticket platforms attempt to gain the trust of potential customers and eliminate potential risks through guarantees.

Guarantees

Consumers questioning the legitimacy of their tickets is a huge obstacle secondary ticketing markets must overcome. From a first-hand account, it is tough to tell a consumer, whom may have spent over three or four times the actual worth of a ticket, that they bought a ticket that someone else also has and they are not allowed to enter the event. This occurs when scalpers photocopy one ticket in order to make duplicates, allowing them to sell the same ticket multiple times and make more money. This results in only one copy (the first one to be scanned) gaining admittance into the event. It is not hard to fathom how mad someone that has spent that amount of money will be hearing they aren't allowed to enter the stadium. Secondary ticket companies are aware of this trust issue and, over recent years, have learned and comprised different policies to ensure this doesn't happen.

StubHub, whom is arguably the leader in the online scalping industry, has become aware of the lack of trust consumers have in their industry and have instituted two separate policies that pertain to buyers and sellers. The first policy they have created is called FanProtect for buyers. Under this policy, StubHub guarantees three different important pieces for buyers. First, and most importantly, they guarantee your tickets will be valid for entry. With that being said, that doesn't not prevent a scalper from doing what was mentioned above. StubHub gets around this by stating that if their guarantee doesn't occur, they will take on the responsibility of finding you a different seat, fully refunding your money, and/or buying you tickets to a future event (StubHub, 2015). For some consumers, however, this will not cut it. They want the seats that they bought and nothing else will do. Look at a ticket as a contract. That contract will allow you to sit in that seat, on that day, for that event. Ticketmaster will have nothing to do with a scalped ticket. If you do not gain admittance, Ticketmaster takes a firm stance

in not helping you. In fact, they will not help you in gaining a refund if you didn't purchase your ticket from them directly (Ticketmaster, 2015). This is why companies like StubHub have had to create policies that take care of their customers in case of a scam. Stubhub's second policy they guarantee to their buyers, is that the tickets they ordered will be the same ones they receive. Again, if this is not the case StubHub's course of action is the same in regard to refunding and/or giving tickets to a future event. Lastly, they ensure you will receive the tickets you bought before the event (StubHub, 2015). Ultimately, companies making guarantees may sway a consumer to buy a ticket from their website if other factors are favorable for the customer as well.

This research will be focused on consumers buying habits in the online secondary ticketing market. The purpose of this research is to determine what factor(s), trust, risk, time, or popularity of the website are most prevalent in the mind of the consumer when purchasing a ticket online. From the data collected, the goal is to determine if one of the aforementioned factors plays a more significant role in the consumer's decision than others.

Method

Participants

This study will attempt to use a sample that will be indicative of the entire population. A sample must be taken because the size of the population is simply too large to gather (Gratton & Jones, 2015). With that being said, the sample will be students, faculty, and staff from St. John Fisher College. Students are a great subject because they are often the ones resorting to the secondary ticket market for entry to sporting events. The faculty are important because most of them have kids they are buying tickets for, as well as personal purchases. In addition faculty members have a longer experience with ticket scalping and secondary markets. Both of these subjects are easily reachable and there are a high amount of them.

Upon reviewing the literature, the average sample size for survey response is around 250. In the study conducted by Suh, he had 372 people respond to the survey for his study. He indicated that 70 of them had to be discarded making 302 surveys eligible for his study (Suh, et al., 2015). This is an attainable number to reach and Suh's study is most closely associated with this study, making it a great example to follow. There are around 4,000 students at St. John Fisher College, this includes graduate and part-time students. When you couple in around 300 faculty this leaves around 4,300 people as a sample size (St. John Fisher College, 2015). The goal, for this study, was to have a sample size of over 500 respondents out of pool of 4,300, however a total of 342 respondents' were used in this study. This was a response rate of approximately 8%.

Measures, Variables, and Operational Definitions

This particular study measured to what degree a consumer trusts different secondary ticketing sites. It also measured: to what extent time, or the popularity of that particular website played in their decision to buy a scalped ticket, and lastly the level of risk that consumer has with that website. This survey also counted platform use by consumers. It was important to measure all of these components to see what one carries the most weight in the decision making process of the consumer. It is a preconceived notion that trust will carry the most weight in what platform the consumer will ultimately choose. For most of the variables, an ordinal scale was the most efficient way to categorize consumer's responses. Ordinal scales have a rank order, but they do not differentiate between scores. The data is ordered, but there is no indication of how big of a difference there is between the players (Gratton & Jones, 2015). With that being said, trust and risk were quantified using an ordinal scale. For the trust component, the scale will be from 1 very little trust in the website, to 3 having a very high trust level with the website. As for risk, the scale will be either 1 you feel the site's risk is high, for example you highly question the legitimacy of the ticket you are receiving, or 2 you feel the risk level is low in the website and ticket you are receiving. This is the most effective way to organize and measure these two

variables. The answers will likely be converted into a percentage; for example “over 60% of people noted they fully trusted StubHub”. Confidence will be measured simply by using percentage categories. Time will be following a nominal approach meaning there will be a scale asking how much time prior to an event did the subject buy their tickets. Popularity will be simple yes or no question also taking a more nominal approach. A nominal scale groups subjects into different categories and does not suggest any relationship between any of the groups (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

Research Design

An online survey questionnaire is appropriate for this research project because the data being collected in this study is largely quantitative. Due to this, the results can easily be summarized through the use of tables and charts to answer this research question. A survey is the best way to sustain an accurate representation of the larger population because they are easily able to be sent out to a large number of people. There are many different advantages when using a questionnaire to answer a research question (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

There were multiple advantages that were assessed to ensure that a survey was the appropriate design for this research. One example of an advantage of using online, questionnaires is the accessibility (Gratton & Jones, 2015). The researcher is able to collect data, from a large population, without physically needing to ask the questions themselves, an email can just be sent out (Gratton & Jones, 2015). This will result in the data collection process being much faster and more efficient. There is also the advantage of possibly reducing bias if the questionnaire is well designed. The survey will eliminate a responder answering questions differently because a researcher is present. It is important to word the questionnaire carefully to avoid any bias responses. Anonymity is a perk of using an online survey to collect the data because the respondent’s name not being tied to answer will allow for a more truthful response. Although an online survey is a way for researchers to collect data quickly, it allows increased time for respondents to complete the questionnaire. Respondents can wait for a convenient time or to

return to the survey at a later time. An online survey also eliminates the cost of sending surveys via the mail and paying for postage (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

Creating questions for a survey was a long process. It is imperative the verbiage is extremely precise to avoid bias and the respondent simply not answering the question (Gratton & Jones, 2015). With that being said, trust will be asked using a table that will have all of the ticketing platforms and three trust levels. Consumers will be asked, for each platform they've used, do they have very little trust, moderate trust, or very high trust levels with that platform. The exact same approach will be taken with risk. Time will be addressed as "How much time prior to an event to do begin looking for tickets?" The same question will be asked for consumers when they buy a ticket. As far as determining the consumers choice of website from a popularity standpoint; "Which of the following best describes your choice of platform? 1. It was the first website that came to mind, 2. I went to the platform I have used in the past, 3. I searched Google for tickets and clicked one of the websites, 4. My friend or family member told me about this website, 5. Other, please specify." There will be a frequency question on the survey simply asking the subject if they have used any of the following websites with the intention to buy tickets before, "1. StubHub, 2. Vivid Seats, 3. Ticket Galaxy, 4. Other, please indicate website." See Appendix A for copy of the survey instrument.

All of these questions avoid being vague, leading, double-barrel, or threatening. These questions also avoid containing ambiguous or complex wording (Gratton & Jones, 2015). Once the design of the survey is complete, it will then be piloted. This will ensure the wording is appropriate and the questions are clear. Once it is perfected it will be generated using Qualtrics survey software. The, now online, survey will be piloted to experience completing it. Friends and family will be contacted to complete the finalized survey and feedback will be accepted. The survey will be sent out to the students, faculty, and staff at St. John Fisher; then the data will be collected and examined (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

The sample was reached via email. The survey link was embedded within the email along with a brief description giving the subjects background knowledge (see Appendix B for email). The population for this study was essentially everyone that has purchased a ticket from a secondary source. Distributing the survey to St. John Fisher students and faculty was an easy process. There ended up being a two week long piloting process for the survey. During that process the format of the survey was perfected. Once perfected, a meeting with fellow classmates to discuss the flow of the survey occurred. The survey stayed open for three weeks, and respondents were thanked for their time and effort.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data was fully collected it was coded into categories, in order to make sense of it. Most all of the questions on the survey were numerical making it easy to put into categories. For instance, “68 people answered they expressed very high trust levels when using Stubhub. Every answer was assigned a numerical value, making input into SPSS simpler. The way these questions were asked made the coding stage a bit easier and more straightforward (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

Once the data was entered it was important to double check to make sure there is not any input errors. “Inputting making a double key stroke by accident and entering ‘11’ rather than ‘1’” (Gratton & Jones, 2015, p. 249). Missing values will be dealt with by assigning them a number other than one assigned to one of the survey answers, such as 99 or 999 (Gratton & Jones, 2015).

Mode was the most important and telling descriptive statistic used for this research project. The goal is to find out what consumers do most often and potentially why. Finding the mode for the different questions asked will allow for generalizations of the sample set to be made (Gratton & Jones, 2015). Frequency was also important for this survey when asking about what website the subject used in the past. This told us the number of times a specific data point is chosen, indicating what website is used most. The last descriptive statistic that was used in data collection was percentage. This can be a

powerful tool to use when drawing conclusions about the data (Gratton & Jones, 2015). This was used to summarize the data collected.

Results

The purpose of this research paper was to find out why consumers choose the ticket platforms that they do and if trust and risk have anything to do with that decision. The online questionnaire attempted to find out just how much consumers took into consideration the presumed risk they were taking by purchasing a ticket on a secondary market. With that, just how much trust does the consumer have in that particular secondary platform? Does that impact their decision to buy? These questions were all answered through the use of an online questionnaire. This data will allow sport industry professionals to know how consumers feel about the different secondary platforms compared to the primary platforms. It will also tell them which platforms they trust more and which ones they find to be riskier. All of this will help professionals understand what matters most to the consumer and thus how to get them to buy tickets from their website.

Respondents totaled 324, this includes all of the undergraduates, faculty, staff, and graduate students at St. John Fisher College. Over half of the respondents (52%) were between the ages of 17-22 years old. Only 9% of respondents fell between the ages of 23-30, this was the smallest percentage in the survey. In terms of what websites was used most among primary platforms, Ticketmaster was used more than team websites by respondents. The respondents that indicated they only have used secondary websites were asked which ones they use most. Here, Stubhub was the most used by a very wide margin. The respondents that use both primary and secondary websites indicated that even they use Stubhub more than any other option such as Ticketmaster, however, this was a small margin (see Appendix C, Table 1 for platform usage). Respondents were also asked what their process was when buying a ticket on a secondary platform. Almost two-thirds (65%) of respondents indicated they will simply search until they find the best deal.

Another goal of this survey was to see how much time prior to an event a consumer will begin looking and even buying their ticket. Here it was found that over half of the respondents (53%) begin looking for their tickets four or more weeks prior to the event. There was a little bit of a difference when the respondent was buying a ticket. Although most individuals began looking for tickets four or more weeks prior (53% of respondents), a smaller majority actually purchased their tickets four or more weeks prior to the event (39% of respondents). The second highest response when buying a ticket was two to three weeks prior, where 36% of respondents indicated that answer (see Appendix C Table 2).

Based on the data collected and research purpose, data analysis was done primarily through correlation and chi-square analyses. Correlations were run for each platform, the level of trust associated with each platform, and the level of risk felt when using each platform. Within these analyses, only one correlation was significant and that was the risk of the team websites and the risk of Ticketmaster ($r=1.00$, $p<.01$). There was a significant difference between the presumed risk respondents stated with Ticketmaster versus Stubhub ($\chi^2(2) = 12.093$, $p<.01$). Also, there was a large difference between the risk presumed in Ticketmaster and the trust respondents and in Stubhub ($\chi^2(2) = 17.803$, $p<.01$). The trust respondents had in Ticketmaster was far different than the trust they had in Ticket Galaxy ($\chi^2(2) = 6.030$, $p<.05$). There was a very significant difference with the trust respondents had with Stubhub versus Ticketmaster ($\chi^2(2) = 25.968$, $p<.01$). Between Stubhub and Vivid Seats, there was a strong difference in presumed risk by respondents ($\chi^2(1) = 7.790$, $p<.01$). Each of these findings confirmed a prior hypothesis.

However, one unexpected finding was that of a significant difference in the trust respondents had with team websites versus Ticketmaster ($\chi^2(1) = 14.741$, $p<.01$). This does not make much sense given they are both primary platforms, however, this is a true testament to how trustworthy Ticketmaster really is. There was a significant difference between the trust and presumed risk respondents had with Stubhub ($\chi^2(2) = 24.345$, $p<.01$). In addition, the analysis showed a significant

difference with the presumed risk between Ticket Galaxy and Vivid Seats ($\chi^2(1) = 29.140, p < .01$). Lastly, also between those two platforms, the trust respondents had for the platforms was significantly different ($\chi^2(4) = 68.581, p < .01$). See appendices C and D for the complete presentation of inferential statistical analysis.

Discussion

Based off the data it cannot be distinguished which factor the consumer values more as they value both trust and risk when buying a ticket online. The respondents that used primary platforms reported having higher trust and lower risk levels than the users who used secondary platforms only. For example, there were low risk levels reported for Ticketmaster compared to Stubhub. In Suh's study he mentioned that if there is a lack of trust or too great of a risk, then the consumer will most likely not buy the ticket (Suh, 2015). The data showed, due to low frequency of usage in Ticket Galaxy and Vivid Seats that the aforementioned scenario is true. Respondents reported extremely low levels of trust and high levels of risk when using those platforms. This drives consumers to either use Stubhub or resort to a primary ticketing source. Despite Stubhub being a secondary ticketing platform, it had the highest frequency of use and also high levels of trust; with low perceived risk.

In a different study conducted by Suh, he found that when consumers buy tickets online, the perceived risk and trust they have in the platform go hand-in-hand (Suh, 2015). In this study there was a strong correlation between the perceived risk in both team websites and Ticketmaster. However, when looking at the trust within the same two platforms, levels were also high. This proves Suh's notion that perceived risk and trust go hand-in-hand. Guarantees were a large reason consumers have high levels of trust in Stubhub. When reviewing the literature, Stubhub guarantees that if the consumer buys a false ticket, they will provide you with a real one and give the consumer their money back (Stubhub, 2015). This is perhaps why consumers reported higher trust levels in Stubhub versus Ticket Galaxy and Vivid Seats.

Kemper and Breuer concluded that fans resort to secondary platforms because they waited too long and there are not any good seats left at the primary platforms (Kemper & Breuer, 2015). The results of the survey refute Kemper and Breuer's claim that fans procrastinate and thus resort to the secondary ticket market as over half of the respondents begin looking for tickets four or more weeks in advance of the event. Also, that the majority of consumers buy their tickets four or more weeks prior to the event. . In addition, Kemper and Breuer stated another reason consumer's resort to the online secondary market is because it provides them more options (Kemper & Breuer, 2015). Within this study, only 26% indicated that they used secondary sources because the primary source had limited availability. While our finding supports Kemper and Breuer's options idea, it was a very small percentage indicated that there were other more important reasons for consumers turning to secondary sources.

Conclusions

The results of this study should be considered by secondary ticket platform owners and operators as well as venue box offices. It can now be supported that if you are trustworthy and have little perceived risk, the consumer will spend their money through your platform. In addition, ticket availability does not matter as much to the consumer as finding the best deal does. To summarize, if a secondary website has a better deal, the venue is out of luck.

One of the limitations of the project was the sample size. The literature stated that around 500 respondents was ideal. Getting closer to that number would have only made the statistics more accurate. Another limitation of the project was having different scales for trust and risk. In the survey trust was rated on a scale of three potential answers, whereas risk was only had two potential answer. This was a clear mistake that didn't allow for more direct comparisons.

The framework of this study could also be the basis of future research focused on a larger sample size and a larger demographic. Gathering data than can be further legitimized due to a larger sample size and different demographic is something this study lacked. Asking questions such as gender

and perhaps household income could uncover more about why consumers chose to purchase from different online platforms. Another avenue for further research is a study that uses scales that are identical. This would allow for more comparisons to be made and would create more data, thus more conclusions that could be drawn. The inclusion of concerts in addition to sporting events in a study similar to this one would be another potential growing point.

It is clear that the trust a consumer has in a platform will weigh in on their decision to buy from it or not. It is also very clear that if the perceived risk is too high, they will shop at a different platform where perhaps they perceive the risk to be lower. But it seemed these two factors, trust and risk, didn't make people shy away from using Stubhub. This could be because the majority of people say they will shop around until they find the best deal, often Stubhub has those deals. Another clear assumption that can be made is the trust and risk associated with a platform by the consumer go hand-in-hand. Also, consumers do not procrastinate when looking and buying tickets. The majority of them buy their tickets four or more weeks before the event. What can be concluded overall is tickets scalping will never be extinct and will always continue to exist and evolve. The only hope for venue managers and primary platform operators is to contain it; which is something both parties have failed to do to this point in time.

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How much time prior to the event did you *begin looking* for tickets online?

- 4 or more weeks prior to the event
- 2-3 weeks prior to the event
- 1 week prior to the event
- 3-6 days prior to the event
- The day prior to the event
- Less than 24 hours prior to the event

How much time prior to the event did you *purchase* your tickets online?

- 4 or more weeks prior to the event
- 2-3 weeks prior to the event
- 1 week prior to the event
- 3-6 days prior to the event
- The day prior to the event
- Less than 24 hours prior to the event

What is your current age?

- 17-22 years old
- 23-30 years old
- 31-40 years old
- 41-50 years old
- Over 50 years old

Appendix B

Dear Participant:

My name is Joe D'Agostino and for my senior thesis project in sport management, I am examining consumers buying habits in the online secondary ticket market. I am inviting you to participate in this research study by clicking this link https://proxy.qualtrics.com/proxy/?url=https://sjfc.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_a8BC0c8Bh73Yznn to take my very brief survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 5 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to assist me and further the completion of my research project. Completion of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please do not hesitate to email me. Again, thank you very much for your contribution to my final project.

Sincerely,

Joe D'Agostino

jrd04127@sjfc.edu

Dr. Dane

Appendix C

Table 1

Platform Usage Among Respondents

	Team Websites	Ticketmaster	Stubhub	Vividseats	Ticket Galaxy
Individuals that use <i>primary</i> only	45	68	-	-	-
Individuals that use <i>secondary</i> only	-	-	132	19	2
Individuals that use <i>both primary and</i> <i>secondary</i>	-	122	124	20	3
Total	45	190	256	39	5

Table 2

Time Looking Versus Time Buying Tickets Online Among Respondents

	Time Looking	Time Buying
4 or more weeks prior to the event	106	79
2-3 weeks prior to the event	63	73
1 week prior to the event	21	26
3-6 days prior to the event	9	17
The day prior to the event	2	4
Less than 24 hours prior to the event	0	2

Table 3

Trust and Risk Levels per Website Among Respondents

	Trust			Risk	
	Very Little	Moderate	Very High	Low	High
Ticketmaster	0	41	140	175	4
Stubhub	3	62	52	100	16
Vividseats	27	23	6	24	27
Ticket Galaxy	30	13	2	14	27

Appendix D

Table 1

Chi-Squared Trust and Risk Analysis

	Trust						Risk					
	TM	Team	SH	Vivid	TG	Other	TM	Team	SH	Vivid	TG	Other
Trust												
Ticketmaster	-	14.741**	NA	.266	6.030*	.911	-	-	-	-	-	-
Team Website	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stubhub	25.968**	NA	NA	5.258	.812	2.005	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vivid	.266	NA	-	-	68.581**	11.000**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ticket Galaxy	-	NA	-	-	-	10.000**	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Risk												
Ticketmaster	-	.311	17.803**	3.778	.478	2.753	-	-	12.093**	.907	NA	NA
Team Website	.425	-	NA	NA	NA	NA	51.000**	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Stubhub	.451	NA	-	1.514	3.242	.270	-	NA	-	7.790**	2.953*	1.320
Vivid	.043	NA	2.304	-	11.094**	1.215	-	NA	-	-	-	4.800*
Ticket Galaxy	1.111	NA	.579	10.499**	NA	3.938*	NA	NA	2.953	29.140**	-	8.000**
Other	.356	NA	5.333*	1.667	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. Table values indicate χ^2 values. *p<.05, **p<.01. TM=Ticketmaster, Team Web=Team Websites, Vivid=Vividseats, TG=Ticket Galaxy.