

Camping for the Need of Speed: An Analysis of the Motives of NASCAR Fanatics to RV Camp at Racing Events

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Abstract

Traveling to attend sporting events has become an increasingly popular activity in recent years. Prior investigations of sport tourism found individuals travel primarily because of the social aspect of the experience while the location of the event was relatively unimportant. Although traveling via recreational vehicles (RVs) gained in popularity, little research examined RV tourism in the context of NASCAR. Therefore, this study investigated the motives of RV tailgaters to Talladega Superspeedway and the role of destination image in individuals' decision to travel. Results displayed RV tailgaters to Talladega were most motivated by the event's destination image. In addition, race attractiveness also was a significant predictor of future NASCAR RV travel. Examination of demographical differences showed females were more motivated than males concerning the family and race attractiveness motives. Implications of these results are discussed, and suggestions for future studies are presented.

Introduction

"NASCAR mailbag: Where were the fans at Bristol?" (Bianchi, 2016).
 "NASCAR attendance, TV ratings continue to decline" (Coble, 2016).
 "NASCAR Notebook: Attendance woes at Brickyard hard to ignore" (2016).

These headlines summarize issues facing the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) as it attempts to attract fans to its historically-popular racetracks. For example, attendance at the 2016 Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS) in Indianapolis, Indiana, was projected to be between 35,000 and 50,000, an all-time low for a race that once hosted an estimated 250,000 spectators in 1994 (Gaines, 2016; Levanduski, 2016). Similarly, approximately 70,000 fans attended the 2016 Food City 500 at Bristol Motor Speedway (BMS) in Bristol, Tennessee (Birchfield, 2016). While a respectable size, races held at BMS have been in sharp decline since its 55-consecutive sell-outs of over 150,000 people for races between 1982 and 2009 (Bianchi, 2016). According to Gluck (2016), attendance decline at these NASCAR events may be attributable to the fans' perceptions of rising ticket prices, travel costs, NASCAR's complicated rule changes, and an altered fan experience.

However, some popular NASCAR tracks appear to be unaffected by these issues. For example, the 2016 Cheez-It 355 at the Glen race, held at Watkins Glen International (WGI) in Watkins Glen, New York, sold out its 38,900 seats and attracted an estimated 95,000 people (Brown, 2016). Furthermore, WGI was voted by *USA Today* readers as their favorite NASCAR track and has maintained a steady attendance of over 85,000 during its 30 years in existence

(Levanduski, 2016). Additionally, Talladega Superspeedway (TSS) in Talladega, Alabama, saw an increase of 11% for its 2015 spring race – the Geico 500 (Dunaway, 2015). However, the 2.66 mile track has traditionally been a popular track for NASCAR fans, drawing over 190,000 visitors for its fall race (Phillips, 2015).

The popularity for certain NASCAR venues can be attributed to several factors including track differentiation. For example, WGI features a road course that offers exciting racing for fans while TSS is famous for its large 33-degree banks that produce exhilarating turns (Doyel, 2016; Levanduski, 2016). In contrast, IMS is a relatively flat track with nine-degree banks and unappealing sight lines (Hallman, 2016). However, the differentiation extends past track competition as each facility offers a unique setting for tailgating and camping on track grounds. According to Henson (2013), WGI is popular due to its location in the Finger Lakes region in New York as well as its structure for recreational vehicle (RV) tailgating.

Similarly, TSS is notorious for its raucous atmosphere among spectators. Founded in 1969, TSS is one of the most popular tracks among those sponsoring NASCAR races (Peltz, 2014). While the venue has showcased many famous competitions, the track is more known for its festive infield atmosphere that brings in RV campers with events such as a Mardi Gras-style parade known as “The Big One on the Blvd,” featuring some of NASCAR’s top drivers handing out merchandise (Wray, 2015). These activities are conducted to enhance the experience of its fans and turn race-day spectators into week-long infield campers (Bianchi, 2016), thereby attracting sport tourists. Interestingly, Talladega, Alabama, appears to be as popular as other common tourist locations containing NASCAR tracks such as Las Vegas, Nevada; Chicago, Illinois; and Miami, Florida (“NASCAR Announces 2016 Sprint Cup,” 2015). When compared to these urban locales, Talladega appears to maintain a particular destination image within the minds of many NASCAR spectators wishing to attend races, creating a particular fondness for the area and an image the track utilizes to attract bigger crowds to visit and camp each year. With attendance and television ratings in decline at many race tracks, the purpose of this study was to determine what makes Talladega an attractive destination. Specifically, the current study examined the motives and destination image of fans that choose to RV camp at TSS for a NASCAR race, with the goal of learning how other NASCAR tracks could market their events and destinations.

Literature Review

The desire to travel great distances and visit new places in order to experience a sporting event is a growing leisure and recreation activity for many individuals (Alexandris & Kaplanidou, 2014; Derom & Taks, 2011; Getz & Page, 2016; Robinson, Trail, Dick, & Gillentine, 2005; Trail & James, 2001). People have long traveled to specific destinations to witness a sporting event, an activity that has grown more common with the increased popularity of sports as well as the increase in many consumers’ disposable income and time to travel for leisure (Hinch & Higham, 2005; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005; Morgan, 2007; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2016; Ziakas, 2014). Sport tourism, as it has become known, is described as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (Gibson, 1998, p. 49).

Sport tourism is categorized into three segments: active sport tourism, event sport tourism, and nostalgia sport tourism (Getz, 2008; Getz & Page, 2016; Gibson, 2004, 2005; Weed, 2009). The focus of the current study was event sport tourism, which sees individuals traveling to act as

spectators for an event. Fans travel to a city or region with the specific intention of attending a game of their favorite team, a destination that they likely would not have otherwise chosen (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005). While the length of time one travels provides another element of distinction among sport tourists, this study specifically examined fans who traveled via RV and tailgated on-site the Friday of race week.

With sport tourism becoming more common, RV tourism has similarly seen a rise in popularity. According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA, 2017), the RV industry generated a \$50 billion economic impact in 2015 with over nine million households owning an RV. These numbers are expected to grow as aging individuals continue to enter the age range (i.e., over 50) in which RV ownership is historically accurate (RVIA, 2017). Despite this growth, there is still a scant amount of research that has examined the topic in the sport context. These travelers are especially worthy of more investigation due to their propensity to stay in an area for multiple days and thus spend more money (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003). Thus, to better understand the reasons for such RV sport tourism, the present study focused on the motives and destination image of RV tailgaters.

Travel motivation and destination image

Many of the motives for tourism also coincide with motives to consume sport. Crompton (1979) revealed two categories of motives for travelers: (a) socio-psychological and (b) cultural. The socio-psychological motives indicate the overall satisfaction and benefits individuals gain from a vacation experience, regardless of destination (Wann, 1995). Factors contained within this category include escape, self-evaluation, relaxation, regression, family enhancement, social interaction, and achievement (James, Breezeel, & Ross, 2001; Kirkup & Sutherland, 2017; Rode, 2015). The present study employed the escape and family socio-psychological motives as part of the study's instrument and also sought to ascertain other socio-psychological motives from the open-response section of the survey.

Cultural motivation meanwhile includes opportunities for sport tourists to gain knowledge about sport as well as certain novelty experiences (Rode & Hardin, 2017). Individuals traveling to a new place and gaining a new experience may not necessarily learn something new but rather enjoy the novelty aspect behind the tourist's motive for travel (Keaton, Watanabe, & Gearhart, 2015; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005; Trail & James, 2001). Therefore, in the case of the present study, individuals from another part of the country (i.e., outside the South) may be attracted to TSS based upon its novelty. Such distinction in travel motives may align with travelers' residence, which would assist TSS and other race managers in marketing to these fans.

Past research analyzed these travel motives from a variety of perspectives including the push-pull concept, which suggests tourists are internally motivated (i.e., pushed) to travel while external elements (i.e., pulled) motivate one to select a destination to travel (Caber & Albayrak, 2016; Dann, 1977, 1981; Jung, Han, & Oh, 2017; Wu & Pearce, 2014). Push factors refer to specific forces that relate to the needs and wants of an individual that allow him/her to decide to travel outside of his/her normal daily environment (i.e., desire for escape, rest and relaxation, social interaction, etc.) (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Pull factors are characteristics about a specific locale which allow an individual to choose one destination over others once the decision to travel has been made (Klenosky, 2002). Thus, tourists often make the decision to travel, and then select a desired destination that is influenced by the location's image.

Chon (1990) described destination image as a 'set of meanings by which an object is known and through which people describe, remember, and relate to it' (p. 4). This image of the destination factors into a person's decision to travel and explore a particular location (Pike & Page, 2014). Many researchers expanded on this core definition but note individuals often create different and unique images of a specific location or event based on their own past experiences and personalities (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chalip & Costa, 2005; Chen & Tsai, 2007). This perceived image of a location can be positive or negative depending on prior experiences as well as information acquired from multiple sources (i.e., family and friends, Internet, etc.) (Buultjens & Cairncross, 2015). Within the sport tourism industry, Kurtzman and Zauhar (2005) noted business is greatly impacted when one possesses a perceived image of a particular area.

Previous research of motives and the role of destination image in sport tourism found support for Crompton's (1979) socio-psychological and cultural motives (Keaton et al., 2015; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005; Trail & James, 2001). These motives include entertainment, escape, family, social, and game attractiveness. For example, with the popularity of neutral-site college football games, many fans may be attracted to attend a game solely due to the importance of the game while others are also attracted by the destination. Based off the aforementioned research, Rode and Hardin (2017) examined the motives and impact of destination image among college football RV tailgaters. They found five motives impact RV tailgaters' decision to travel: (1) game attractiveness, (2) achievement, (3) escape, (4) family, and (5) group affiliation. Additionally, destination image played a role in these travel decisions. Therefore, RV travelers were drawn by both socio-psychological and cultural influences.

Prior sport fan research has also found differences in motives according to gender (James & Ridinger, 2002; Vora & Naik, 2016; Wann, 1995). Females were previously shown to be more attracted by the family and social motives while males exhibited stronger connections to teams and sports. While many people travel together in RVs, the present study explored potential differences in motives based upon gender, which could assist NASCAR marketers in attracting specific groups. In addition, with novelty being a popular reason for tourism, this study also investigated potential differences in motives and destination image according to state residence. People who live in the region of the event may not be motivated to attend for the same reasons, which would also have practical implications. Although college football and NASCAR fans exhibit similar characteristics (Keaton et al., 2015), they also display their own distinct traits. Therefore, while literature on sport tourism and RV travelers assists in framing the current study, a review of NASCAR is necessary to demonstrate its unique nature.

The sport of NASCAR

NASCAR has long maintained a devout fan base that is willing to travel across the country for events since its inception in 1948 as the sanctioning body for stock car racing (Levinson, 2006). The sport saw tremendous growth among its fan base beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the 21st Century (Lee, Bernthal, Whisenant, & Mullane, 2010; Pillsbury, 1974), which allowed NASCAR to achieve higher television viewership and attendance figures than most sporting events (Amato, Peters, & Shao, 2005). Hugenberg and Hugenberg (2008) argued the high interest may be due to the lack of geographic boundaries as fans can closely follow their favorite drivers regardless of location. This distinction creates a strong contrast to city-specific sports where a team located in a particular area is considered greater than the sum of its parts (Goldsmith & Walker, 2015).

NASCAR fans are especially popular among marketers due to their loyalty not only to their favorite drivers but also their sponsors. Hugenberg and Hugenberg (2008) found NASCAR fans are three times more likely to purchase the products from race sponsors than fans of other professional sports. Additionally, 57% of NASCAR fanatics are loyal to the brand and products from various sponsors affiliated with the sport when compared to non-affiliated sponsors (Bodkin, Amato, & Peters, 2009). This knowledge allowed the sport to grow outside of its traditional base within the Southern U.S. to markets in the Western and Midwestern U.S. (Amato et al., 2005; Hurt, 2005; Lee et al., 2010).

Within the last five years, however, ticket sales and television ratings have decreased 38% and 10%, respectively (Goldsmith & Walker, 2015). Ourand and Mickle (2012) also noted interest among 18-34-year-old males decreased 25%. These data trends provide a significant economic disconnect of a sport reliant on the loyalty of its traditional base. NASCAR has attempted to correct these declines through reduced ticket prices, wider seats at races, additional restrooms, free parking, and specific race promotions (Eberly, 2012). However, LaFountain (2012) argued track changes, lack of accidents, and team/driver dominance alienated die-hard fans and dissuaded casual fans from becoming fully invested in the sport.

Unfortunately, few studies directly study NASCAR fanatics within their element. As an example, Amato et al. (2005) argued NASCAR fan demographics were changing as they found an increase in high-income, educated consumers and 18-24-year-old consumers. However, their work was rather limited as participants were found at a neutral site opposed to an actual NASCAR event. Similarly, Keaton et al. (2015) found NASCAR consumers opted to watch the product on a casual basis when compared to college football spectators. While key regarding identity formation and spectator motivation, the study surveyed participants at a large university in the state of Louisiana, which does not possess a NASCAR race track. Thus, it is difficult to determine fan motives to attend races away from an actual event, especially those who opt to travel to races via RV.

With the increasing popularity of RV tourism, these fans serve as a population that can potentially increase attendance at NASCAR events. Therefore, the present study was constructed to address the following research questions:

- RQ₁: What motives are specific to RV tailgaters at NASCAR events?
- RQ₂: Do RV tailgater motives and destination image predict future behavior?
- RQ₃: Are there differences in RV tailgater motives and destination image based upon certain characteristics (i.e., gender, state residence, etc.)?
- RQ₄: What is the relationship between RV tailgater motives and destination image?

Methodology

Data for this study were collected utilizing systematic, random sampling. According to TSS officials, the track sells 2,237 camping and RV spaces within its infield, which is divided into eight different areas. With numerous RV tailgating lots on the TSS grounds, the research team randomly selected two lots in which to survey participants. Once these lots were chosen, the research team randomly selected RV tailgaters to survey. Research was conducted at TSS prior to the fall 2015 Sprint Cup Series Campingworld.com 500. Following Institutional Review Board approval, the research team solicited spectators on race weekend that were set up within three of TSS's RV camping lots. Two of these areas were located within the track infield while the third was near the facility's grandstands. The researchers approached all RV tailgaters within these areas to gauge their interest in taking part in the study. The researchers asked RV

tailgaters both outside and within their RVs during the festivities. Participants who expressed interest were asked to verify their age to ensure they were at least 18 years old. Upon meeting this requirement, participants were given a paper-and-pencil survey and promptly returned it to the researchers once completed. A total of 233 completed and usable surveys were collected and included in data analysis, which accounts for 10.41% of all camping spaces and 23.65% of spaces within the surveyed areas.

Instrument

The survey instrument utilized was modified from one used by Rode (2015), who analyzed RV tailgaters at college football contests. The instrument was comprised of items with seven-point Likert-type scaled responses (i.e., 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree) and open-ended response questions. Participant travel motives were assessed through modified versions of the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) (Wann, 1995), the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) (Trail & James, 2001), and Schofield's (1983) scale measuring professional sport attendance, which all were employed in other studies (e.g., James & Ross, 2004; Robinson et al., 2005; Rode & Hardin, 2017; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008; Wann & Waddill, 2003). The motive factors demonstrated sufficient reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha (α) levels ranging from .673 to .922.

Destination image importance was investigated through 17 Likert-type scaled items employed by various tourism research studies (e.g., Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Rode & Hardin, 2017). Items included 'I traveled to Talladega to experience new places' and 'I traveled to Talladega to be adventurous.' This subscale also exhibited sufficient reliability and validity ($\alpha = .922$). Satisfaction was assessed with three items ($\alpha = .891$) and future behavior comprised five items ($\alpha = .973$), all of which showed sufficient reliability and validity. Demographic data collected included age, gender, ethnicity, income, relationship status, state residence, RV type, and RV ownership.

Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the motives to travel to TSS such as race attractiveness, achievement, escape, family, and group affiliation. An EFA was preferred for this study as the instrument was never applied to a NASCAR setting. Varimax, orthogonal rotation was utilized to allow for a clear identification of each motive analyzed and was preferred to other methods due to the instrument's previous use (Rode & Hardin, 2017). All factors with eigenvalues greater than one were retained (Kaiser, 1960), and items loading with a value of least .40 were retained (Field, 2013). The data were then examined to determine if they met regression and multivariate analysis of variation (MANOVA) statistical assumptions. Additionally, a linear regression analysis was conducted with behavioral intentions as the dependent variable and destination image and the various motives as predictor variables. The regression model utilized for the present research is:

$$\text{Future Behavior}_i = \beta_0 + \text{Destination Image}_i + \text{Race Attractiveness}_i + \text{Escape}_i + \text{Family}_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where i indexes each participant, β_0 is a constant, and ε is the equation error term. Results showed the data met all regression assumptions of linearity, independence of residuals, residual distribution, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. Normality tests and plots revealed most participants recorded high ratings of survey items, producing data that were not normal.

To investigate differences in RV tailgater demographics, MANOVA tests were conducted among RV camper motives and destination image. Main effects for characteristics as well as potential interaction effects were examined. This type of analysis is appropriate with its ability to reduce Type I error (Huberty & Morris, 1989) and was utilized in previous sport spectator motivation research (Fink & Parker, 2009; Lee & Bang, 2011; Wann et al., 2008). The grouping variables consisted of gender and state residence with the combined four motives serving as the dependent variables. Concerning state residence, states were grouped by region in order to accrue similar group sizes. Regions comprised of Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, and West.¹ Three states (Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia) were included separately due to the large number of participants from each state. The complete categorization of states is provided in Table 6. Finally, bivariate correlations of destination image, race attractiveness, escape, and family were analyzed to determine which motives maintained significance with destination image. Due to the robustness of the MANOVA test, however, this violation does not serve as a major detriment to the study (Field, 2013).

Finally, open-ended response questions were analyzed utilizing open and axial coding. Open coding is a review of the data for general domains, including the identification of key words and phrases, while axial coding collapses those open codes into broader categories by examining relationships (Hays & Singh, 2012). Specific words and phrases provided by the participants were examined and placed into categories based upon response totality.

Results

Table 1 provides the complete summary statistics for all participants. According to Table 1, the majority of participants was male (60%), Caucasian (93%), and married (68%). Approximately half of the participants were over the age of 50 while 38% maintained an annual income of \$100,000 or more. The most-represented state was Alabama (20%) followed by Louisiana (13%). Most of the participants (55%) traveled to Talladega via a motorhome.

Results of the EFA exhibited cross loading of the achievement and group affiliation factors. Therefore, these factors were removed from subsequent analysis. In addition, six items regarding race attractiveness and two items regarding destination image poorly loaded and were not included in the data analysis, creating the final scale with four items measuring race attractiveness, two items measuring escape, and two items measuring family. Destination image meanwhile was measured with 15 items. Table 2 provides these items. Following the EFA, reliability tests were run. Cronbach's alpha for family ($\alpha = .621$), escape ($\alpha = .794$), race attractiveness ($\alpha = .837$), and destination image ($\alpha = .943$) as well as the dependent variable of future behavior ($\alpha = .891$) all displayed acceptable values (Garson, 2016).

Mean ratings of the motives and destination image were first examined and are displayed in Table 3. The results exhibited race attractiveness ($M = 5.47$; $SD = 1.44$) was the highest-rated motive. In addition, destination image maintained a rating of 5.32 ($SD = 1.33$).

¹ Southeast – Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina Tennessee; Northeast – Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia; Midwest – Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin; West – California, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, Texas.

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	n	Percentage
Gender		
Male	126	60.0
Female	84	40.0
Age		
18-33	32	15.2
34-44	33	15.7
45-50	42	20.0
51-55	31	14.8
56-60	33	15.7
61+	39	18.6
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	201	92.6
Other	22	7.4
Income		
\$0 - \$49,999	48	25.0
\$50,000 - \$69,999	31	16.1
\$70,000 - \$99,999	40	20.8
\$100,000 - \$149,999	25	13.0
\$150,000+	48	25.0
Relationship status		
Single	44	20.1
Married	148	67.6
Domestic partner	2	0.9
Widowed	1	0.5
Divorced	24	11.0
RV Ownership		
Yes	144	67.6
No	48	22.5
RV Type		
Travel Trailer	56	26.4
5 th Wheel	25	11.8
Motorhome	117	55.2
Don't Know	14	6.6
Visit to TSS		
1 st year	40	18.2
2 – 3 years	34	15.5
4 – 5 years	22	10.0
6 – 10 years	50	22.7
11 – 15 years	37	16.8
More than 15 years	37	16.8
State		
Alabama	40	19.6
Louisiana	27	13.2
Georgia	19	9.3
South	46	22.5
Northeast	18	8.8
Midwest	28	13.7
West	26	12.7

Table 2: Scale Psychometrics for Motives and Destination Image

Item	Factor	α
Race Attractiveness		
I like to go to races so I can see the top driver's race.	.662	
I feel proud when my driver races well.	.788	.837
I attend races to watch my favorite driver(s).	.861	
I attend races because it makes me feel good when my driver wins.	.760	
Escape		
I attend races because it allows me temporarily escape my problems.	.839	.794
To me, attending races is like daydreaming because it takes me away from life's hassles.	.792	
Family		
I like to attend races because doing so gives me an opportunity to be with my significant other.	.795	.621
I like to attend races because it gives me an opportunity to be with my family.	.823	
Destination Image		
I traveled to Talladega to learn new things and increase my knowledge about a part of the country.	.856	
I traveled to Talladega to experience different cultures and ways of life.	.845	
I traveled to Talladega to experience new places.	.874	
I traveled to Talladega to experience different places.	.884	
I traveled to Talladega to go to places my friends have not been.	.768	
I traveled to Talladega to tell my friends about the trip.	.562	
I traveled to Talladega to do exciting things.	.762	.943
I traveled to Talladega to find excitement.	.697	
I traveled to Talladega to be adventurous.	.702	
I traveled to Talladega to have fun and be entertained.	.835	
I traveled to Talladega to see a part of the country I have never seen before.	.821	
I traveled to Talladega because I enjoy special events.	.707	
I traveled to Talladega for the festive atmosphere.	.861	
I traveled to Talladega so I could enjoy a festive crowd.	.800	
I traveled to Talladega because the race weekend is unique.	.850	

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables

Factor	Mean	SD				
1. Race Attractiveness	5.47	1.44	1			
2. Escape	4.53	2.01	.243**	1		
3. Family	5.13	1.82	.363**	.076	1	
4. Destination Image	5.32	1.33	.346**	.405**	.147*	1

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Results of the first research question displayed in Table 4 show RV tailgater motives and destination image predicted future behavior at a significant level ($F(4, 194) = 18.742, p < .001$) and explained 26% of the total variance in behavioral intentions ($r^2 = .264$). In regard to the second research question, examination of individual predictors displayed that destination image ($\beta = .316, p < .001$) and race attractiveness ($\beta = .283, p < .001$) accounted for a significant change in future behavior while family ($\beta = .086, p = .191$) and escape ($\beta = .007, p = .916$) were not significant predictors of future behavior.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Variable	β_{unstd}	SE	β_{std}	t-Stat	p-value
Race Attractiveness	.224	.055	.283	4.066	.000
Escape	.004	.040	.007	.106	.916
Family	.054	.041	.086	1.313	.191
Destination Image	.279	.062	.316	4.487	.000

$R^2 = .279$; Adjusted $R^2 = .264$; $F(4,194) = 18.742$, $p < .001$; Standard error = .983

Regarding the third research question, MANOVA results showed significant differences between participants according to state residence ($F(24, 545) = 1.798$, $p = .012$; Wilks' $\lambda = .767$; partial $\eta^2 = .064$). Follow-up tests exhibited differences concerning destination image ($F(6, 171) = 3.074$, $p = .007$; partial $\eta^2 = .097$). Western states displayed the highest rating of destination image ($M = 6.02$; $SD = .60$) followed by Northeast states ($M = 5.93$; $SD = 1.03$) while Alabama yielded the lowest score of destination image ($M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.64$). Differences were also exhibited among participants according to gender ($F(4, 156) = 4.469$, $p = .002$; Wilks' $\lambda = .897$; partial $\eta^2 = .103$). Follow-up univariate ANOVAs displayed family ($F(1, 182) = 10.233$, $p = .002$; partial $\eta^2 = .053$) and race attractiveness ($F(1, 182) = 6.932$, $p = .009$; partial $\eta^2 = .037$) maintained significant different ratings among participants. Females ($M = 5.59$; $SD = 1.64$) maintained higher mean scores than males ($M = 4.80$; $SD = 1.90$) regarding the family motive. The race attractiveness motive also yielded higher scores for females ($M = 5.85$; $SD = 1.12$) than males ($M = 5.25$; $SD = 1.53$). There was not a significant interaction effect between state residence and gender ($F(24, 545) = 1.107$, $p = .330$; Wilks' $\lambda = .847$; partial $\eta^2 = .041$).

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Motives/Destination Image by Gender

Variable	Female	Male	F-stat	p-value
Race Attractiveness	5.85 (1.11)	5.25 (1.53)	5.722	0.18
Escape	4.65 (1.89)	4.49 (2.05)	0.040	0.841
Family	5.59 (1.64)	4.84 (1.90)	14.287	<0.001
Destination Image	5.35 (1.33)	5.31 (1.33)	0.029	0.866

Finally, the fourth research question examines the relationship of destination image and motives. According to the results, destination image maintained a moderate relationship with escape ($r = .405$), a weak relationship with race attractiveness ($r = .346$), and a very weak relationship with family ($r = .147$). Mean scores of the motive factors were also examined, and race attractiveness ($M = 5.47$; $SD = 1.44$) was the primary motivator of TSS RV tailgaters, followed by family ($M = 5.13$; $SD = 1.82$) and escape ($M = 4.53$; $SD = 2.01$). Destination image maintained a mean of 5.32 ($SD = 1.33$).

Variable	AL	LA	GA	SE	NE	MW	W	F-stat	p-value
Race	5.42	5.84	5.72	5.30	5.65	5.24	5.61	0.858	0.527
Attractiveness	(1.45)	(1.70)	(1.00)	(1.31)	(1.42)	(1.80)	(1.29)		
Escape	4.83	4.60	4.21	4.54	4.75	4.75	4.30	0.768	0.596
	(1.86)	(2.22)	(2.19)	(1.93)	(2.04)	(1.86)	(2.16)		
Family	5.65	5.50	5.29	4.96	4.33	5.14	4.87	1.167	0.327
	(1.69)	(2.04)	(1.98)	(1.80)	(1.83)	(1.81)	(1.57)		
Destination	4.64	5.52	5.11	5.28	5.93	5.24	6.02	3.442	0.003
Image	(1.64)	(1.45)	(1.24)	(1.17)	(1.03)	(1.47)	(0.60)		

Discussion

The present study sought to uncover the motives and the role of destination image for RV tailgaters to travel to a NASCAR event. According to the results, destination image was the strongest predictor of attending a NASCAR event with an RV. TSS has a reputation as one of the premiere tracks due to its raucous atmosphere among attendees and appreciation for camping with RVs. This image is widely pronounced among NASCAR fans who wish to experience the venue's events for themselves, regardless of whether they are a first-time guest or a repeat customer. As such, TSS successfully created a pull factor to attract individuals to not only attend, but also stay on the track grounds in order to not miss any of the festive events. In return, TSS has focused much of its promotion toward expanding its RV and camping amenities in order to attract a high volume of attendees. While this element may be unique to TSS, the result suggests that NASCAR tracks should identify their own unique traits and plan on developing promotions to enhance their image to attract RV tailgaters. All tracks feature a distinctive element that will distinguish themselves from other potential events in the area. However, it is important for other NASCAR venues to utilize this unique item as a guide for a worthwhile experience and should stay on the track grounds with an RV opposed to other hospitality venues.

In comparison to destination image, race attractiveness was the only one of the three motives to significantly predict future behavior. This result is not surprising as it exhibits the focal point of the event. Many RV tailgaters are likely to attend races at TSS based upon an expectation of race events that have occurred in the past (i.e., close finishes, crashes, etc.). Thus, an appreciation for the track itself and its amenities can entice those to experience Talladega and other tracks in a format that these venues promote and provide. Interestingly, these motives only explained 27% of tailgaters' future behavior. Therefore, other factors not included in the present study were clearly at play in tailgaters' decision to RV tailgate. Further, the motives family and escape were not significant predictors of future behavior. One would expect family to be a significant predictor of future behavior as family maintained the highest mean score of the three motives ($M = 5.47$) and was the second-most reported primary reason for RV tailgating in the open-response section of the survey. It is possible participants knew family interaction was guaranteed to occur regardless of engaging in RV travel or not. Thus, NASCAR fans may not base their future race travel plans on the availability of family being able to travel and attend as a group. On the other hand, friends were the most popular reason for people to attend as well as being an element that stands out about an area. This result also seems to contradict the scaled-response section of the survey, as one would expect friends and family to yield similar results. Finally, while having a moderate relationship ($r = .405$) with destination image, escape

failed to significantly predict future behavior. This finding is surprising considering TSS markets itself as an event to have fun and participate in unique activities to escape from the daily rigors of one's life. NASCAR fans planning to RV camp on-site for race weekend are often there for several days versus one night. It is interesting that escape failed to predict future behavior as many fans are taking time from work and other activities to attend NASCAR events. However, the motive of escape can be satisfied in a variety of settings—not just attending a NASCAR event—and therefore may not be able to predict future attendance.

Regarding demographic differences, previous literature exhibited differences when comparing male and female motives (e.g., Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; James & Ridinger, 2002; Vora & Naik, 2016) including Wann's (1995) finding of females scoring higher on the family motive across sports. Therefore, females maintaining higher mean scores with the family motive was expected. However, females' higher score on the race attractiveness scale is interesting. Traditionally, the prototypical NASCAR fan is described to be male and aged 18 to 49 (Vavrus, 2007). While Table 1 agrees with this stance, this finding supports the Amato et al. (2005) study that NASCAR demographics may be changing but not from the standpoint they argued. Perhaps the appeal of the venue and potential to stay on the grounds may be appreciated more by females rather than males as RVs support a balanced and active lifestyle and can save on vacation expenses (RVIA, 2017). Thus, NASCAR tracks may want to further research the potential of marketing RV vacations toward females to attract more fans. In comparison, Wann et al. (2008) showed males scored higher than females on eustress and aesthetic motive, which maintain similar items to the race attractiveness items included in this study. Destination image was shown to be of greater importance to RV campers traveling farther distances as it was rated highest by participants from the West and Northeast while those from Alabama exhibited the lowest rating ($M = 4.64$). RV campers that are closer to the area may view the event as of great importance, but see the location as something not so new or exciting if it is located within close proximity to their home as opposed to fans that travel from out of state or even from another region of the country. This result contrasts with the RVIA's (2017) finding that those individuals that own RVs will take three or more mini-vacations per year at a camping ground near their home. However, this finding may be due to a high amount of participants that have attended TSS in the past. For example, 56% of RV tailgaters had visited TSS at least five times previously. Therefore, these participants may not have been impacted by the destination's novelty and image. With items including 'I traveled to Talladega to experience new places' and '... to go to places my friends have not been,' this result is not surprising.

Nonetheless, the motives of race attractiveness, escape, and family did not differ among participants from different states. It was anticipated RV campers traveling from farther distances would be more motivated by the family and escape motives while the race attractiveness might appeal more to participants from Alabama and nearby states. However, it appears these factors do not differ when individuals opt to travel. Further, while Alabama was the highest represented, Louisiana was the second most represented state as opposed to the neighboring states of Tennessee and Mississippi. It is likely that fans from other states choose other NASCAR states in which to attend. It could also be possible that some fans travel to Talladega because of a goal to experience all 24 NASCAR tracks in the U.S. Therefore, NASCAR tracks should probe their fans to determine the role motives and destination image play according to RV campers' state residence to determine which states' residents to attempt to attract.

Conclusion

The present study yielded compelling results concerning the motives of a fan's decision to travel to a NASCAR event. Specifically, the results exhibit the importance of highlighting the race while maintaining an attractive destination image. This study provided a foundation for future research on RV camper tourism in NASCAR and other sport contexts. With RV camping growing in popularity, future studies should be conducted within this area to determine how sport managers and marketers can best attract these fans.

Another interesting finding was the incompatibility of the survey in the NASCAR context. As noted, the instrument utilized in this study was modified from Rode's (2015) instrument surveying college football RV tailgaters. However, the results of the EFA from the present work displayed a convergence of motives. Previous research showed differences between college football and NASCAR fans including the connections NASCAR fans make with individual athletes (Keaton et al., 2015; Roy, Goss, & Jubenville, 2010). Other literature showed motivational differences according to type of sport. For example, Wann et al. (2008) found fans maintained higher scores for the family motive concerning team sports while individual sports received higher scores for the escape motive. Similarly, research of golf consumption displayed differences between team sports and golf based upon the uniqueness of attending and spectating a golf tournament including the layout of the course and the competition spread over a four-day period (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002; Robinson, Trail, & Kwon, 2004). NASCAR is also unique as drivers are arranged on teams, complicating the distinction between team and individual sports. Further, NASCAR competitions occur over the course of several days, and facilities feature spectator-viewing areas around the track as well as in the infield. Thus, the personal achievement spectators accrue from NASCAR races and event attractiveness may differ from other sports. Future studies should further probe the unique aspects of NASCAR to learn how the sport differs from other team and individual sports.

Although RV tailgaters are attracted by the race, other lesser-known tracks can attract fans based upon the ability to spend time with family and friends. Therefore, future research could determine what motivates fans to RV camp at other racetracks. Future research should also explore potential reasons for the seemingly contradicting results and look to quantitatively examine the role friends play in serving as a motive to RV camp at NASCAR races. Finally, as many NASCAR tracks possess unique features, future research could analyze the similarities and differences other tracks have with one another in terms of size and RV camping. For example, TSS is classified as a superspeedway as the track is over 2.0 miles in length. Only six of the 23 tracks used by NASCAR are classified as superspeedways ("Ranking All 23 NASCAR," 2017). Because of the difference in size, the destination image of these tracks could be explored to determine if any specific features make a difference in one's decision to travel as a day-tripper or fully fledged sport tourist and whether to camp on the track grounds.

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