

Different Activity, Same Story: Women's Perceptions of Why Fantasy Sport is Male Dominated

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Abstract

Fantasy sport participation rates continue to increase, as does the economic activity related to it. Though research has grown greatly on this topic, there is a gap related to gender and fantasy sport. To further explore the dynamics of gender and fantasy sport, this study examined insights of women as to their perceptions of the overall fantasy sport experience, as well as the reasons why fantasy sport is an activity that is primarily consumed by men. Data was collected utilizing qualitative open-ended questions. Major themes emerged indicating that women perceive the overall experience to be (a) too time consuming, (b) an old boys club, (c) too much work looking up statistics, (d) potentially fun. Regarding why men dominate participation, they indicated (a) men having more disposable time to participate, (b) affirming of traditional social gender roles, and (c) perpetuation of male hegemony. Implications are provided regarding participation in fantasy sport.

Introduction

Participation in fantasy sport has exploded in the past decade from a small pastime to an activity consumed by an estimated 41 million North Americans (Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015). Further, fantasy sport is big business generating \$1.5 billion in economic activity with an annual growth rate of nearly two million participants per year (Billings & Ruihley, 2014). In addition to this growth, it is difficult to not tune into a sport program online or on television and not hear about impact and implications towards fantasy play. Certainly, if judging by participation expansion, economic growth, and media attention, fantasy sport is a powerful activity.

The explosion in popularity of fantasy sport participation has drawn the attention of various researchers. This research includes such topics as message on fantasy sport websites or boards (Hiltner & Walker, 1996; Rowe, Ruddock, & Hutchins, 2010; Ruihley & Hardin, 2011b), psychological factors for involvement (Suh, Lim, Kwak, & Pedersen, 2010), motivations for participants (Farquhar & Meeds, 2007; Lee, Seo, Green, 2013; Ruihley & Billings, 2013; Ruihley & Hardin, 2011a), and legal issues related to fantasy sport (Grady, 2007; Moorman, 2008). However, a limited amount of research (Billings & Ruihley, 2014; Davis & Duncan, 2006; Ruihley & Billings, 2013) has examined women's roles in fantasy sport, and none exists that examines fantasy sport from a woman's perspective. To gain a full understanding of participation, or lack thereof, in fantasy sport, an examination is needed to understand the unique perspective that women have of fantasy sport. Further, understanding the perceptions of women may help to understand why more women do not participate in fantasy sport.

Conceptual Background

Fantasy Sport

According to the Fantasy Sports Trade Association (Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015), there are 41 million North Americans participating every year; 20% of which are women, making fantasy sport a predominantly male-consumed activity (Farquhar & Meeds, 2007; Lomax, 2006). Other major demographic information paints the average participant as a 34-year-old, white male, not married, and college educated (Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015).

Participating in fantasy sport involves understanding sport and its players at a different and amplified level (Billings & Ruihley, 2013). The activity requires participants to draft real-life athletes to represent members on a roster and make roster decisions (i.e. start, sit, add, drop, and trade). In addition to the required activities, fantasy sport promotes social activities, surveillance of expert opinion and statistics, and competition (Billings & Ruihley, 2014; Ruihley & Hardin, 2011a). Success of a fantasy team is based upon how individual players perform in real games, but across many teams (Ruihley & Hardin, 2011a). In other words, the activity is "...different from other parts of sport consumption because they are based both on the real world (e.g., using statistics from actual games and players) and the virtual world (e.g., engaging in a simulated league on the Internet)" (Suh, Lim, Kwak, & Pedersen, 2010, p. 4). Fantasy sport, in contrast to spectator and participant sport allows participants with the unique opportunity to live vicariously as a head coach or general manager. Initially fantasy sport required a tremendous commitment to knowing statistics and pouring of data of player. However, with the growth of the Internet and technological advances, statistics are readily provided and calculations are done automatically (Berentson, 2000).

Hegemonic Masculinity

Messerschmidt (2012) explained hegemonic masculinity in terms of practices that establish, reinforce and maintain men's power over women. In the sport context, Whisenant, Pedersen, and Obenour (2002) defined hegemonic masculinity as the production, reproduction, and preservation of power by certain social groups over others, in this case, specifically referring to men over women. Messner (1992) and later Fink (2008) noted that sport and athletic competition is a male world in which male hegemony is perpetuated. Curry (1998) and Mean (2001) contended sport is a major place that reinforces hegemonic masculinity by perpetuating what it means to be a man through interactions that take place.

Duncan and Brummett (1993) indicated the engaging nature of sports media serves to create another from by which men can demonstrate their masculinity and dominance in the world of sport. Davis and Duncan (2006) found fantasy sport league participation reinforced hegemonic ideologies via emphases on traditional gender roles and male bonding. "The very nature of participation in fantasy sports suggest that it is a haven for affirming masculinity in the sport domain" (Davis & Duncan, 2006, p. 247). It takes a significant amount of time to research players and statistics and thus it created an environment where people less informed are ridiculed. Men can demonstrate their sports knowledge and bond with other men over that knowledge in a social setting via participation in fantasy sport. Thus, a result is that a hostile environment is created for women and it is therefore not surprising that women do not participate (Davis & Duncan, 2006). Ruihley and Billings (2013) noted, "...fantasy sport offers a new frontier in which hegemony is reinforced and boorish behavior is more likely to be tolerated" (p. 4).

Social Role Theory

Originating from the field of social psychology, social role theory (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000) suggests gender differences in behavior derive from the differential social roles of men and women. In other words, women are expected to behave or hold positions that entail feminine qualities, while men are expected to hold positions involving masculine qualities. Social role theory contends that there are qualities and behavioral tendencies believed to be desirable for each sex, as well as expectations regarding the roles men and women should occupy. According to this theory, social roles of both men and women are comprised of descriptive and injunctive norms desirable for each gender (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Descriptive norms, or stereotypes, are socially shared expectations of what individuals in a certain group actually do, while injunctive norms are expectations of what individuals should do. Many of these expectations are based on communal and agentic qualities ascribed to women and men (Eagly, 1987). Women are ascribed communal qualities such as being kind, nurturing, helpful, gentle, sensitive, and affectionate, while men are ascribed agentic qualities such as being aggressive, independent, dominant, self-confident, ambitious and forceful (Eagly, 1987; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). Gender role expectations for men and women have been limiting factors for both men and women wanting to enter careers (Burton, Grappendorf, & Henderson, 2011), or to participate in activities that have been labeled as masculine or feminine. Thus, these stereotypes indicate women 'should' behave in more communal roles and men in more agentic roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

Another important consideration when addressing gender roles and participation in fantasy sport is the concept of time and how it impacts women's participation or lack of participation. Crawford and Godbey (1987) and later Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) explained how structural constraints and factors could impact participation in leisure activities. A major structural constraint noted as one of the most common constraints in leisure activities were time and how it impacts women's participation in leisure (Alexandris & Carrolls, 1997; Jackson, 2005). "It is believed that leisure has always corresponded more to the lives of men than women, where men find more time and freedom to engage in leisure, while women remain constrained" (Khan, 2011, p. 106). Specifically, it has been found that women in heterosexual relationships have significantly less time to spend on leisure (Lee & Bhargava, 2004), while Shank (1986) found women in dual career women (i.e., those being a breadwinner and homemaker) had limited time to spend on leisure while Harrington, Dawson, and Bolla (1992) found time was the most frequently reported constraint by mothers. Specific to fantasy sport, Suh, et.al, (2010) noted time as a constraint for women related to traditional gender roles while Davis and Duncan (2006) noted traditional gender roles in fantasy sport were reinforced.

Therefore, the gendered nature of women's lives related to roles they have traditionally been in and the associated structural constraints can be important in determining why people participate or do not participate in activities (Suh, et.al, 2010).

Little is known about female perceptions of fantasy sport or why they believe it to be male-dominated. Thus, the research questions that guided this initial study:

RQ1: What are female sports fans' overall perceptions of fantasy sport?

RQ2: What are female sports fans' perceptions of why fantasy sport is primarily an activity consumed by men?

Methodology

To gain an initial understanding about a demographic of fantasy sport non-participants, an online questionnaire, featuring open-ended questions, was developed to understand women's view of fantasy sport; specifically examining women's response as to why of why fantasy sport is dominated by men. A discussion of participant recruitment, the questionnaire and data collection, and data analyses are included in the following section.

Given the disproportionate four-to-one ratio of men to women participating in fantasy sport (Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015), the researchers felt it important to gauge opinions from a large group of women. Further, considering that not a lot of information is known about women and fantasy sport, the investigators tried to gain as much information as possible to gain further understanding in this initial study. Participants in this research were purposively recruited and selected based on their gender, their identification as a sport fan, and their *non-participation* in fantasy sport activities. Researchers targeted this specific person through social networking channels, academic listservs, and personal contact. For example, Facebook, Twitter, as well as listservs in the field of sport management were utilized. In addition to initial contact, researchers asked participants to forward the research invitation to others that may fit the target description. Due to the specific criteria needed for this study (i.e. gender, identification as a sport fan, non-participation currently in fantasy sport) snowball sampling was utilized to reach participants (Babbie, 2002). Thus, the researchers were able to reach more participants whom met the criteria. Once the participant chose to participate, and provided consent, she was directed, via hyperlink, to an online questionnaire.

The online questionnaire was created to address the purpose of this study and specific research questions. SurveyMonkey was used to create, host, and store data for this research. An initial round of emails, with a recruitment letter, was sent with follow-up reminders one week later. Two weeks after initial recruitment, a final reminder was sent. Data in this research was collected as part of a larger survey examining women's non-participation in fantasy sport. The larger, mixed-method, survey consisted of a variety of quantitative measures gathering demographic data and qualitative open-ended opinion response. Open-ended questions were utilized to gain initial, and a broad understanding of what perceptions existed amongst participants. Addressing the research questions for this study, participants were asked to write an open-ended response about (1) their perceptions of the fantasy sport activity and (2) their perception of why men primarily consume fantasy sport. Demographic information was also collected including areas of age, education, relationship status, ethnicity, and state of residence.

Data Analysis

Due to electronic entry and hosting of the survey, no transcription was needed to view the data. Open-ended responses were gathered and analyzed in search of the over-arching themes. Data coding was conducted by authors of this research and followed the open, axial, and selective coding structure as outlined by Creswell (2007). Open coding requires examining the responses for themes and "segmenting them into categories of information" (Creswell, 2007, p. 239-240). Axial coding then seeks out discovered themes shared between multiple responses. Finally, selective coding "takes the central phenomenon and systematically relates it to other categories, validating the relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and developments" (Creswell, 2007, p. 240; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Through this set of processes, coding categories were discovered, created, and examined.

Researchers organized data into an Excel sheet and then coded it. Responses were read and re-read by the researchers so that the researchers were immersed and focused on the research question (Wolcott, 1994). Next, data was coded and emerging themes from responses identified. Themes emerged from the repeated use of words (e.g., “I do not have the time,” and “Men have more time.”) to the identification of key words (e.g., “time”) to the discussion by the researchers regarding what themes were emerging (Kruegar & Casey, 2000). Comparative analysis was conducted and agreements were reached. If any discrepancies in the codes were found, a third investigator would have been used until an agreement was reached (Creswell, 2007; Krueger & Casey, 2000). However, there were no discrepancies, and thus, a third member was not needed.

To address the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were implored. First, to address credibility (e.g. internal validity) comparative analysis was utilized. With this, participant comments from open-ended questions into classifications that eventually became specific themes (Neuman, 2006). Second, although the purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of women concerning why fantasy sport and why it is male dominated and not generalize about an entire population, steps were made to address external validity (Merriam, 1998). Thick descriptions of comments were utilized to ensure the meaning of participants' responses with the investigators codes. This strategy is referred to as transferability (external validity) (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Third, both researchers read and reread the data to determine whether the data was dependable, which is often referred to as reliability in quantitative research. Fourth and finally, confirmability (objectivity) was based on the researchers' ability to limit bias and premature conclusions by using the constant comparative analysis, external auditing, and rereading the data (Erlandson et.al, 1993; Kruegar & Casey, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Neuman, 2006; Wolcott, 1994).

Results

Participants

The participants in this study totaled 195, non-fantasy sport participating, women. Consistent with fantasy sport demographic data (Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015), the average participant was 34 years old (ranging from 18 to 71 years), Caucasian (90.8%), married or with a partner (48.7%), and college educated (75.4% with an undergraduate or graduate degree). Participants were geographically diverse representing 34 of the United States. See Table 1 for more information.

Research Question 1

The first research question pondered what women sport fans' perceptions would be of the fantasy sport experience. The major theses that emerged were: (a) It takes too much time, (b) It seems like it would be fun, and (c) It is male dominated. Each theme will be discussed and provide participant comments.

It takes too much time

A major theme that arose from the data was the perception that fantasy sport participation took too much time. In fact, the perception that fantasy sport participation requires a tremendous amount of time was the most pervasive and discernible theme. This was not a surprising finding, as time has been noted as a reason by women as a constraint to participation in leisure and

sport activities (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jackson, 2005; Suh, et.al., 2010). Quotes from participants included: “It seems like it would take up a lot of time,” “Painstaking amount of time for no results,” “That it takes a lot of time to keep up with the statistics to manage your team and make team decisions,” and “Too timing consuming.”

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Factor	Research Participants (n=195)	
	n	%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	178	91.3%
African-American	11	5.6%
Hispanic	4	2.1%
Other	2	1.0%
Marital/Household		
Married/Partner	95	48.7%
Single	59	30.3%
In a Relationship	31	15.9%
Single-Divorced	7	3.6%
Single-Widowed	2	1.0%
Education		
College Degree	53	27.2%
Master's Degree	49	25.1%
Some College	42	21.5%
Doctorate Degree	40	20.5%
High School Degree	6	3.1%

The perception that fantasy sport participation is too time consuming appears to be a major barrier as to why more women are not participating. It is not a far reach to suggest that this may be preventing women from exploring or trying to participate in fantasy sport. An accurate portrayal and information could potentially eliminate this concern.

It seems like it would be fun

Another major theme, emerging from the data, was the perception that participation in fantasy sport might actually be fun. Quotes included: “Fun way to connect with friends over sports and the knowledge of sports,” “Lots of fun,” “I think it seems like it would be fun while it kept me current with the players.” However, along with

the notation that it would be fun, many of the comments included the caveat of that it would be fun, *but* it seems too time consuming. For example, quotes included “It looks fun, but time consuming,” “Looks like fun, but involves a lot of time,” and “Seems fun, a little confusing but just don't have the time to learn and participate.”

The fact that participants perceived fantasy sport to be fun is an encouraging finding if trying to get more women participating. It is interesting, despite the fact that they think it takes too much time and is male dominated, that the idea of participating in fantasy sport still seemed like it would be a fun activity for women to do. The fact that women perceive it to be fun provides groundwork to build upon when trying to increase the number of women participating. This insight also provides an opening to accurately educate about the actual time required to have the experience.

It is male dominated

The third major theme included data and responses focusing on the idea that fantasy sport appeared to be male dominated. Some stated that its’ “A guys game,” “Fantasy sport is mainly a guy's thing,” and “Definitely perceive it as male dominated.” Participants not only noted that it was male dominated, but seemed a bit put off that it was so. Quotes such as “My perception of fantasy sport is something that guys do to occupy themselves,” “It also seems to be a strange male-bonding exercise,” and “Is a bunch of men sitting around talking about fantasy drafts, drinking beer, and throwing out stats.” Lastly, participants noted, “It is part of the good ol' boys

network and they don't want women to participate," and "I feel like women might like to get involved but guys have their own circles and usually do not extend an invitation to women."

Considering that 80% of fantasy sport participants are male (Farquhar & Meeds, 2007; Lomax, 2006), the perception of women, that fantasy sport is male-dominated, is accurate. The fact that it is male dominated may not in itself be an issue, but the perception that it is reserved for men has more far reaching implications. In other words, there are plenty of notable fields that have been traditionally male dominated (e.g., science, technology, engineering, sport leadership) but women have continued (albeit slowly) to make in-roads into those fields. However, if the perception is that fantasy sport is *reserved* for men or that women are not welcome, that is a larger issue that must be addressed. Research examining the welcoming or non-welcoming atmosphere of fantasy sport could be addressed, in addition to how to make it more inviting to women. Suggestions include more women fantasy leagues, more leagues geared towards women's sports, and group leaders who proactively invite and engage female participants.

Research Question 2

When asked why men primarily consume fantasy sport, results formed three major themes of data. The three themes consist of the following: (a) men's disposable time, (b) reinforced traditional gender roles, and (c) preservation of hegemonic masculinity.

Men's disposable time

A pervasive theme that arose from the data was the idea that men had more disposable time to dedicate to fantasy sport. Previous research has noted time as a potential reason why more women are not participating in general sport activities (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Jackson, 2005; Suh, et. al., 2010). Thus, it is not surprising that participants described time as a reason why more men participate in fantasy sport. Within this theme, two sub-themes regarding men having more disposable time emerged. The first sub-theme was that men simply *have more time* to devote to the activity. For example, comments made by participants that demonstrate this sub-theme included: "They have more time on their hands," "Men have more time to dedicate to it," and "Because they have the free time to do it!" Another participant eluded to not only to the perception that men have more free time, but that fantasy sport also requires a significant amount of time stating: "Women in general have less time to spend on something as time consuming as fantasy sport."

The statements made by participants reflect previous research focusing on time. Lee and Bhargava (2004) found women in heterosexual relationships as having significantly *less time* to spend on leisure; the second sub theme in this area. The women in our study seemed not only aware of this, but aware and fairly annoyed pointing out the inequality in household expectations. One participant stated: "Sports [are] male dominated. And men don't have to do the dishes, clean the house, take care of the kids, etc. They can get away with not doing it and women can't." Another participant noted, "I think men primarily consume fantasy sports because women are too busy taking care of the house, children, bills, etc." Another stated: "They have the time to do it, even if they have partners or kids. Women are expected to do so much more (second shift) that we don't have time to engage in an activity with so few outcomes," while another participant indicated "Time, priorities, tendency to focus on sorts of sport content. Their mind doesn't have a to do list of 100 things that need to get accomplished like a women's mind does." A final poignant quote on this theme came from one participant stating:

Women are busy living in reality. Maybe because they were the first to play fantasy sports and only invited other men to play? Or maybe because women like me think it is too time consuming and their time could be better spent elsewhere.

Traditional gender roles

A second major theme emerging from the data included women feeling like men were likely to participate in fantasy sport because they were socialized into sport (Messner, 1992; 1997), and fantasy sport is an extension of that. In other words, they noted traditional gender roles, as reason fantasy sport is common and acceptable for men to participate in fantasy sport, but not women. Our findings are aligned with research by Suh, et. al, (2010) indicating gender roles are constraints important in determining why people participate in activities. Participants noted early socialization into general sport activities for men. Two specific comments demonstrate this:

[Men] tend to be [more] sport oriented than women. They play sports all through childhood then move from playing in the yard to playing on teams. This not to say that girls don't play sports when they're younger, but we start of in areas like dance or gymnastics before moving into softball or soccer...

And,

I think men are socialized into sport at an earlier age and in a different way. Men typically grow up as boys that are influenced directly by fathers and professional sport role models and the norm is to consume and debate sport. Girls are not socialized by as many direct and indirect groups to do the same.

In addition to socialization, women in this study discussed gender roles, in terms of heroes and those athletes men admired and looked up to in early developmental years. A participant stated, "Because they are conditioned from the time they are young children to see sports icons as heroes...they are usually more interested in sport than women." Another stated:

Men are socialized from childhood to look up to sports hero(e)s and imagine themselves playing sports professionally. Most men who play a fantasy sport have played that sport on some level in their own lives. Women' don't play football in high school so they are less likely to have it be a major component of their life. It's also more acceptable for men to let sports consume more of their life. If a man takes a Saturday off to watch a football game, that's normal. If a woman does that she could be seen as lazy or less feminine. Adding to the notion of traditional gender roles and echoing the findings of Davis and

Duncan (2006), participants mentioned fantasy sport primarily revolving around men's sports. One comment, in particular, reads:

Most fantasy leagues focus on professional men's sports and the [fans] for those sports are disproportionately male. I think that's due to how boys and girls are raised and encouraged to participate in sports. Girls don't usually get to play football when they're younger, so they don't learn the game in as involved a way as boys do. Even if they watch it, they don't share that experience...So fantasy sports are not an interest or hobby take up as adults. Boys who used to play grow into men who use fantasy sport to stay involved.

Responses from participants related to gender roles continued to indicate early socialization into sport, but also noted the continued social acceptance of men participating in fantasy sport. One participant noted, "It is socially acceptable for men to participate." Another participant pointed out specific traditionally acceptable masculine orientation of fantasy sport by stating,

Because fantasy sport is about control and hypercompetition. The appeal for men is picking and choosing a team, that team doing better than other fantasy teams, and taking credit for the success of a "fantasy" team. The activity is nothing about relationships, loyalty, or dedication- it's about individuals, competition, and performance: traditionally masculine traits.

Preservation of hegemonic masculinity

A final theme emerging from the data included responses and feelings about how men use fantasy sport to perpetuate hegemonic masculinity. Sport and athletic competition has been noted as male domains in which male hegemony, along with hegemonic masculinity is perpetuated (Fink, 2008; Messner, 1992). Participants were notably aware of the dynamic of hegemony occurring in fantasy sport. Further, a negative tone from the comments emerged. One participant stated, "Sport, in general is still a male preserve. Men are still worried that if they let women participate, they will lose their place in the sports world." Another participant added, "Sport is the last bastion of masculinity and initially these leagues for NFL/NBA have been marketed to men." One participant placed the blame on society as a whole stating, "In our patriarchal society men many times are allowed to watch sports and be served during their downtime allowing them a greater amount of time to devote to research of stats for the fantasy league." Participants also noted belief that men used their knowledge of sports and statistics to gain power. One participant stated, "I think it is this way because men generally do not believe that women are as knowledgeable as men when it comes to sports," while another stated "Also, men tend to not take women seriously."

Coupled with perpetration of hegemonic masculinity is the idea that fantasy sport can be viewed as an 'old boys club.' One discussed this idea by the lack of league inclusion stating, "The men I know who participate have never invited me to join them. Therefore, I believe it is a boys club and they don't want women to join." Another stated, "Men work with and their networks are more with men, too competitive and don't want to get beat by women because the culture of sport is male," while another participant indicated "They never ask women to join their league." Another participant added her thoughts about the activity being homogenously consumed by simply noting the idea that men "don't include women in the activity as much." A final comment on this theme gets straight to the contemporary point, "I think it could [be] because women don't have the invitation to participate- it's a 'young boys' club."

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine and understand more about the imbalance of gender in the activity of fantasy sport. This study provided insight into gender dynamics surrounding fantasy sport including examinations of female sport fans perception of fantasy sport, as well as impressions of why the activity is primarily consumed by men. Three major themes emerged outlining women sport fans' perceptions of fantasy sport. These themes indicated perceptions that the activity: (a) takes too much time, (b) seems like fun, and (c) is male-dominated. In addition, three major themes emerged from data as to why women sport fans feel men primarily consume the activity. The themes indicated that women felt men had more time, gender role

played a part in the participation disparity, and masculine hegemony existed within the activity. With similarities between the results of each research question this discussion will address the overall themes.

Time

The participants in this study believe that the factor of time is a factor in women's decision in not participating in fantasy sport, and clearly why more men participate in fantasy sport than do women. Related to sport and leisure, this constraint is consistent with findings in previous research (Suh et. al.2010). The participants' perceptions that fantasy sport requires a significant amount of time led to the beliefs that (a) men had more disposable time and (b) there was inequality in expectations related to disposable time that made it easier and more likely for men to participate in fantasy sport. Further, the negativity within the responses was quite evident toward men participating in fantasy sport. There appears to be continued conflict between men and women as it relates to household expectations and women feeling that men get a "choice" when it comes to what they get to do in their free time, whereas women are more confined by traditional gender roles. Whiteside and Hardin (2011) contended that due to the fact men often consume sports media as an escape and women more to build and work on relationships with men and their families, that women would be less likely to want to spend their leisure time consuming sport. Until there is a societal acceptance in the divisions of labor in the household and household responsibilities, this feeling is not likely to change by women.

An area of interest related to time and the fantasy sport industry, is the growth of technology and the accessibility of sport, sport media (i.e. viewing or listening to live games). Women's perceptions of fantasy sport and attitude towards how the activity draws men's time should be of concern. Technological advancement and access to fantasy sport information could lead to less time spent on the activity for men, as information is more readily available. On the other hand, there may be more a time drain, as it allows for *more* access *more* of the time. In addition, for those men involved in a relationship with a fantasy-disgruntled woman, having more access may cause more stress in the relationship and more tension surrounding the fantasy sport experience.

Gender Roles

The women in this study were quite aware of the gendered dynamics of fantasy sport participation, and particularly, in regards to social roles and hegemony. Results indicated continued presence and influence of traditional gender roles with participants. This was evident with comments on how men were socialized into sport at an early age and how fantasy sport is a continued extension of that socialization. Participation in fantasy sport leagues appears to be an acceptable place where men's participation is consistent with their gender role (i.e. Know-it-all mentality, statistical gathering, competition, male-bonding, and extension of sport). It appears fantasy sport is a safe haven for men, where they do not have to deal with, struggle, or contemplate their gender roles in an ever-changing society where gender role lines have become blurred. In other words, as more women enter the work force, hold top positions in companies, and are breadwinners, men's superiority, dominance, and ultimately, masculinity is questioned. However, by participating in fantasy sport, they can retreat to a male dominated space and domain, where traditional and potentially comfortable gender role lines are clear (Messner, 1997).

Masculine Hegemony

Results from the current study also indicated that women felt fantasy sport was another outlet in which hegemonic masculinity was being preserved, as well as perpetuated. Women in this study believed fantasy sport to be another area of sport where men can create a 'boys only' space reinforcing masculine gender roles. Davis and Duncan (2006) noted this separate space in fantasy sport as a place where men can maintain their masculine stronghold and practice their masculinity. They go on to state that this environment can actually be hostile for women to participate in. Based upon the findings of this study, women are aware of hegemony and the 'boys club' in fantasy sport. Understanding these perceptions provides insight into why more women are not participating in fantasy sport. With the current perceptions of women, one cannot expect women to positively view or seek out opportunities to participate.

Fun

Despite the views that fantasy sport is male-dominated, preserves hegemonic masculinity and reinforces gender roles, and is time consuming, women still had the perception that fantasy sport participation seems like fun. It appears that this perception could provide the basis for addressing the other more concerning and negative perceptions that women have of fantasy sport participation. Emphasizing that fantasy sport participation can be a fun and social activity where women are welcome is recommended.

Practical Implications

Practitioners of fantasy sport can view these results and react in several different ways. They can view the results and comments and think there is not a chance of attracting women to an activity that is so disproportionately male. This type of thinking would keep the industry in the same demographic state until there was a change. Change happens to be the second option. There are several ways fantasy sport organizations can see this data and utilize it for the good. First, there needs to be a realization that barriers do exist. It is not anecdotal; it is not someone's friend, girlfriend, wife, or coworker that is just aggravated with sports or fantasy sport. These are comments from highly identified sport fans that actually have an interest in the activity. Acknowledging the barriers helps with the next step, developing strategy.

Sport organizations, especially large media organizations, have the resources, personnel, and technological facilities to try and incorporate more women into the activity. This can come in the form of more social leagues, hiring female spokespersons, altering advertisements away from the boy's club feel, and offer/promote fantasy sport utilizing women's athletics. This type of effort has a lot of different outcome potential. An organization may lose money, hours of resources, and time, but the upside offers so much more. The potential to tap into such a large demographic seems like a no-brainer considering that this is a group that enjoys sport and, for 40% of our sample, actually have an interest in fantasy sport.

The last step an organization must take when trying to recruit women into the activity is to evaluate. Whether on the front end of recruitment or on the back end of participation, organizations need to conduct their own internal audit to learn more about their current consumers, the women that have and currently participate, and those women that have tried and stopped participating. This type of evaluation will assist in understanding what steps to take with further strategy and recruitment measures.

Limitations & Future Research

There are limitations related to this study. The first limitation involves the participants. While the study adhered to strict recruiting of women sport fans not participating in fantasy sport, the study was limited to predominantly Caucasian women. The participants hailed from all across the United States (34 states), but racial diversity was not an outcome of the recruitment. This speaks largely to the fact that not only is fantasy sport participation mostly male (80%), but it is even more predominantly Caucasian (90%, see Fantasy Sports Trade Association, 2015). Learning from racial minorities would have added a lot of useful data to this study and allowed for further breakdowns of data. Future research is needed to examine why more racial minorities are not partaking in fantasy sport. As the fantasy sport industry is extremely homogenous (i.e. white male), understanding more about minorities (i.e. gender or race) in fantasy sport is vital for industry growth.

A second limitation involves the fact that recruitment of participants included social media sites and listservs. As previously mentioned, purposive sampling was utilized to initially recruit participants, but others may have been forwarded or contacted about the survey via snowball sampling methods. For future studies, it is recommended to use a variety of sampling techniques to gain more qualitative data; including but not limited to in-person methods of focus groups or interviews. Future research could build on this work and incorporate more in-depth methods including focus groups of women that *do* participate in fantasy sport, focus group discussions of *men and women* discussing the topic of fantasy sport, interviews with women that have participated and stopped, or qualitative inquiry of *male sport fans* not participating in fantasy sport.

Conclusion

As research related to fantasy sport continues to grow, it is important to examine the perceptions of not only participation consumers, but also of those not participating. If fantasy sport is to continue to grow in terms of participation and economic viability, it should be of interest to track the many variables (positive or negative) affecting growth. Specifically, as modern sport is a fundamentally sexist institution created by, and for men (Messner, 1992), it will be of interest to track if fantasy sport continues to fall along these same lines. From this study, women perceived fantasy sport to be male dominated, time consuming, that men had more disposable time to participate, and that it perpetuated traditional gender roles and hegemonic masculinity. Despite the aforementioned, it is noteworthy that they still thought it sounded like a fun activity. With these perceptions, it would be difficult, but not impossible, for fantasy sport organizations and marketers to reach female sport fans, a major missing demographic.

Data from this study add insight into the dynamics of gender and fantasy sport participation and builds on theoretical frameworks provided by previous research, while also proposing a new framework from social role theory. By substantiating previous research, and contributing a slightly different angle to examine gender dynamics related to fantasy sport, we hope to perpetuate further discussion and research on this topic.

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