

Social media spectating by young sports spectators



The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has changed sports spectating from offline to online by preventing physical attendance of spectators to sporting events. This shift has highly impacted how spectators use social media regarding these events. One instance is that sports fans no longer heavily rely on information from traditional media. They increasingly use social media platforms for updates, highlights, and other information. They also share their experiences. This means that social media has the capacity to either enrich or destroy any event brand.

A research study was conducted by Mihloti Modiba, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to investigate the factors that influence the nature of social media content shared by young sports spectators. Three potential drivers of social media sharing intentions were explored: spectating motivations, level of involvement in sports, and consumption-focused self-expression, word-of-mouth. The Sports Experience Framework and Self-Expression Theory were used to underpin the study.

Data was collected among 398 spectators through an online survey. Findings show that a spectator's general tendency to share their opinions online, had the strongest relationship with sharing intentions. This was followed by being a dedicated sport spectator, and socialisation as the main spectating motivation. The experiences that young spectators are likely to share, include their feelings about the whole event, their plans to attend or watch the next event and a review on their experiences. This has implications for sport event organisers because the sharing of feelings can create either good or bad publicity for them. The positive or negative experiences will lead to the shared online WOM etc. Future studies can take a longitudinal approach, study

how individuals' behaviour evolved over a period of time and which factors became more or less important.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2021 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Mhloti Modiba under the supervision of [Prof Elizabeth Du Preez](#).