Exploring the Motivations of Chinese Female Football Supporters

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Abstract: This study extends the Sports Interest Inventory (SII) model, to better characterize the motivations of Chinese female football supporters in the digital age. A questionnaire was administered to Chinese female football audiences following professional football games, adapting the SII model to include gender-specific factors. The research aims to challenge prevailing stereotypes in the Chinese media environment, which often portray female supporters as primarily motivated by peer influence and the appeal of star players. The findings reveal that among 15 identified motivation factors, Peer Influence ranks the lowest, and Interest in Player is the 9th most significant. These results suggest that the current media narratives do not accurately reflect the true motivations of Chinese female football supporters. The study provides valuable insights for researchers and practitioners in sports marketing and event management, offering a nuanced understanding that can inform future strategies to better engage and support female spectators at mega sports events.

Keywords: Motivation to sports, Female spectators, Professional football games, Sports mega-events

1. Introduction

The headline of a BBC News article posed a critical question just before the FIFA World Cup: Is football still sexist[1]? This article cited a widely circulated cartoon on Chinese social media platforms, which highlighted a phenomenon in China where ordinary female fans cannot watch professional football matches in peace without being labeled as 'fake fans' both online and offline[2]. This article serves as a representative example of the current paradoxical situation faced by Chinese female sports supporters. On one hand, the sexist stereotype of labeling female supporters as 'fake fans' is still prevalent in both the virtual and real worlds[3]. On the other hand, the rapidly growing market share of female consumers in sports-related products and services (Crawford, 2004) has made marketers increasingly recognize the importance of female consumers compared to traditional target market groups, such as male consumers. Today, this question is once again raised to both audiences and researchers: are female football fans 'real' or 'fake'?

Traditionally, football is perceived as a sport strongly associated with patriarchal society, where the role of female supporters and participants is often marginalized and considered less important than that of their male counterparts[3] [4]. Despite these historical stereotypes, current research indicates that female support and participation in football are approaching levels of equality with males[5]. In the 21st century, the increasing interest and attendance rates of female supporters at professional football matches have raised awareness among media and event organizers about the significant role of female supporters in the professional football market[6]. Although some progress has been made, stereotypical images of female supporters, such as being rough, watching football for male partners, or having knowledge limited to football superstars like Beckham, are still widely accepted by the media and society[7]. These stereotypes reflect long-standing gender discrimination in athletics and sports, limiting the attention and concern from sports event managers and marketers regarding the diversity of female consumers' motivations for participating and supporting their teams. This has led to an increase in media exposure of female supporters but with a perpetuation of stereotypical images[8]. Meanwhile, several researchers have explored the motivations behind why females watch sports from a gender differences perspective[9] and provided explanations using social role theory[10].

This study presents the results of Chinese female supporters' intentions and motivations for watching major football events such as the FIFA World Cup and UEFA Champions League. In the Internet era, the

motivations of these supporters differ from those identified in the late 1990s when Funk et al. conducted their research on sports spectators' motivations[11]. The results of this study extend the former Sports Interest Inventory (SII) theory by incorporating the dimension of online social networks. Given the rapid expansion of the Internet and social media, the study indicates that spectators' motivations are influenced by their social networks and relationships online. This research contributes to the field by providing a more nuanced and vivid insight into the motivations of female spectators, challenging the stereotype that labels female supporters as 'fake fans'. Additionally, it offers potential suggestions for marketers and mega-event managers who wish to expand the female market in sports-related products and services.

2. Previous Literature

In order to have a better understanding on the motivation of Chinese female supporters participating the sports mega-event and the existing stereotype of the female supporters in the Chinese media environment, in this study, we distinguished the motivation study of general football supporters with the gender study in the sports management area.

To describe the very first of the sports supporters' motivation and interest, in the research by Funk et al. [12], the SII model was introduced to examine the potential factors that would affect the spectators' interest towards the sports. In the research, 10 main areas of factors that were supposed to be the motivation of spectators participating in the 1999 Women's World Cup was examined. After the introduction of the origin SII model, several improvements to the model were carried out[11] [13]. In the improved models, the social opportunities as a factor, considered as a key factor affecting the motivation of the spectators. Moreover, specifically considered by the research focusing on the 1999 Women's World Cup in the US, the factor supporting women's sport was listed in the following study by Funk et al.[11].

Except for the research by Funk on the SII model, other researchers also launched research on the motivation of the supporters of the sport on the edge of media communication. Researchers confirmed in their research, using self-administered questionnaires, that fans who preferred sports in which individuals compete alone had higher levels of aesthetic motivation[14]. And compared with the supporters of individual sports, those fans of team sports reported higher scores on the eustress and self-esteem subscales. In the research, the motivations of the supporters were divided into the categories of aesthetic and self-esteem motivations. The research was followed up by several researchers in their research focusing on sports consumers' behavioral and cognitive responses[15]. In the research, the supporters who received message-induced emotions will be influenced on their sports brand-related product evaluation.

The studies of gender differences of the sports market area are considered as combination study of the sports management and sociology. In former research, the apparent sex differences in sports interest and motivation were examined in the form of an evolutionary perspective[16]. The findings suggested that the prenatal hormones had the influence on the existing differences between males and females on their interest and motivation of supporting sports, however, the evidence showed that socialization, in this research, plays a role remains equivocal. Others conducted their research on the effect of sex, age, partner status, and parenthood on the affection of participating the sports[17]. The study reported that the family bond, or being a parent, was included in the significant main and interactions effects, which confirmed the media message that people, especially female supporters, participating the sports for the reason of being a member of a sports-preferred family.

Based on the previous literature, it could be found that the SII model is still a useful model of the motivation research of the supporters of the sport. However, in the Internet era and the propose of discovering the motivation of female supporters in China, the previous SII model could not provide enough factors for the research. The research of the gender differences on supporters of the sports presented an alternative option and, in this research, the SII model would be expanded to be suitable for the researchers' proposal.

3. Research Procedure

In order to collect the data for this research, the procedure of data collection is presented below. The survey was mainly focusing on the female spectators of the professional football games and related mega sport-events. Questionnaire-based on the extended SII model by Funk, Mahony, and Ridinger was designed and several changes were conducted in this questionnaire to answer the research questions: Are these motivations affected by the social relationships? Do female supporters in the mega sport-events

influenced by the wide use of the SNS in their social relationships? Are peer influence and family bond main factors affecting the female supporters' motivation[11]? These changes on the questions were based on the interviews with eleven female members randomly selected from five football fan clubs. In these semi-structured interviews, the female fan club members provided potential factors which motivated them on participating the sport events. The interviewees highlighted the effect of the online social media, which played an important role on the dissemination of information during the event, motivating them on the spread and co-creation of messages about the mega sport-events. After the questionnaire was designed and a pilot test was delivered by the researcher among a small number of female spectators of the professional football games in China from a certain football fan club, the questionnaires were distributed to the female spectators after the sampling procedure. The final questionnaire based on the SII includes 7 items, both in behavioral and demographical sectors and 45 items to measure 15 factors affecting the motivation of the female supporters. All the 45 items were derived from seven Likert-type scales with endpoints ranging from 1 to 7. The model of the questionnaire in this research is an extension of the former SII model used in the survey in 1999 and two factors are replaced by factors more relevant to the research questions[11]. Excluded the 15 factors which contained the different motivations of the spectators watching the professional football games, a general factor of the support level of the spectators. In this general factor, the spectators were asked to rate their level of interest in the professional football games, their degree of interest in football, their knowledge of the basic rules of football.

The sampling procedure for selecting the objects is a stratified sampling way, which unique character fits for the requirements of this research [18]. First, we contacted the football fan clubs on the SNS platforms and listed the twenty clubs with largest members. The second stage in the sampling procedure is randomly sampling one club in each cluster. Each club was coded and held a unique number. The sampling was generating a random number and the clubs with that number in each cluster were picked out. The research objects would be defined as the female members in the fan clubs as samples after the sampling.

The questionnaires were delivered to 4 fan-communities and the female members were randomly selected to receive the questionnaire via the online messages containing a link to the online survey. With 450 messages sent, 241 questionnaires were finished, showing a response rate of 53.6%.

4. Analysis and Results

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach alphas for spectator motives and spectator level of Chinese female spectators support for football

Female Supporter Motivation	M	SD	α
EXCITEMENT	5.44	1.85	0.97
AESTHETICS	5.21	1.79	0.95
FAN CO-CREATION	5.00	1.80	0.91
DRAMA	4.79	1.63	0.80
INTEREST IN SOCCER	4.75	1.95	0.93
VICARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT	4.71	1.70	0.82
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE	4.69	1.67	0.81
INTEREST IN TEAM	4.44	1.82	0.85
INTEREST IN PLAYER	3.92	1.82	0.88
SOCIAL NETWORK INFLUENCE	3.84	1.93	0.92
SOCIAL VALUE	3.83	1.43	0.66
FAMILY BONDING	3.50	1.63	0.78
NATIONAL PRIDE	3.45	1.60	0.80
ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT	3.09	1.42	0.72
PEER INFLUENCE	1.84	1.29	0.87
Female Spectator Support Level	5.67	1.27	0.94

First, a descriptive analysis of the questionnaires returned was carried out for the researcher to have a general insight into the female football supporters. The descriptive analysis included the behavioral profile of the spectators who responded in this research. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to examine the scales of each factor to see how well the scales represented for the factors. The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted by the IBM SPSS Amos 25.0. The SEM model's fit was evaluated by five indices including 2/df, RMSEA, NNFI, CFI, and SMRM. In order to examine the inter-reliability of the factors, the means, standard deviations, and Alpha coefficients were computed in this

research. Then multiple linear regression analysis was used to develop the relationship between the factors and the general spectator support level and a Correlation Matrix was generated.

To report the behavioral profile of all the spectators who finished the questionnaire in this report, the descriptive statistics result could be discussed. In all the female spectators, the mean of age was 24.7. 80.1% of the spectators have received a higher education (college or university) and the mean income of the spectators in this research is 2321 RMB per month. In the result, the geographical profile of the spectators showed that the female supporters who lived in the mega-cities in China, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen made up the 35.3% of the spectators in this research. While the individuals in this research held a high interest in the professional football game and great knowledge on football on average, very few individuals in this research facing to the female football spectators have the history of attending football games in person. Most of the individuals in this research chose to watch the games on television or in the arena. Moreover, football was considered their most favorite sport despite their lack of personal participation in football. Of the sample, the spectator's age and occupation in this research result showed not an important factor affecting the motivation and preference on the game. The behavioral profile of the individuals in this research turns to be a group of female spectators aging between 20 to 30, living in the upper-to-middle sized cities in China who have been watching football for many years and love the game. In addition, the result of the descriptive analysis of the behavioral profile research also presented that the spectators have a strong will of watching the games with friends and family. In the result, 68.5% of the female spectators in this research watched football games with others.

After the behavioral profile, Table 1 shows the measures of the scale analysis of the 241 questionnaires, including the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach Alphas. The 15 factors of the motivation in this research were ranged by the means from M=5.44 to M=1.84. The internal consistency measures were completed towards all the 15 factors and the Cronbach Alphas for the 15 motivation factors ranged from α=0.97 to α=0.66. In all the 15 factors, except the factor Social Value (α=0.66) ranked below the 0.70 benchmarks, the other factors are all over the benchmark. The standard deviations of the 15 factors ranged from 1.95 to 1.25. According to the means in the 15 factors, the Excitement ranked the very first with a mean of 5.44 followed by the Aesthetics with 5.21. The new factors added in this research, Fan Co-creation, Social Network Influence, Alternative Entertainment, and Peer Influence ranked the 3rd, 10th, 14th and the 15th with means of 5.00, 3.84, 3.09 and 1.84. In this result, the mean of Peer Influence, in which the research presented the general acknowledgment that the female spectators' main motivation of watching football games is under the pressure of the peers, mainly male peers, ranked the last of all the 15 factors.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Involvement Antecedents from Standardized Phi Matrix (N=241)

	SOCCER	VIC	EXC	TEAM	AESTH	SOCIAL	SNS	PEER	NAT	DRAMA	PLAYER	FAMILY	ENT	ALTER	CCREA	SUPP
SOCCER	1															
VIC	.66	1														
EXC	.82	.71	1													
TEAM	.76	.80	.73	1												
AESTH	.86	.69	.90	.74	1											
SOCIAL	.56	.64	.62	.60	.62	1										
SNS	.73	.59	.63	.68	.67	.61	1									
PEER	-.10	.16	-.07	.10	-.06	.38	.15	1								
NAT	.35	.57	.41	.53	.40	.48	.44	.32	1							
DRAMA	.43	.45	.58	.40	.57	.46	.41	.06	.41	1						
PLAYER	.29	.45	.37	.36	.36	.41	.30	.27	.29	.40	1					
FAMILY	.39	.52	.45	.46	.44	.61	.44	.33	.49	.36	.40	1				
ENT	.53	.57	.65	.55	.62	.58	.50	.12	.40	.62	.43	.51	1			
ALTER	.41	.51	.40	.52	.42	.60	.53	.50	.41	.39	.42	.54	.51	1		
CCREA	.68	.64	.79	.66	.75	.69	.66	.46	.59	.41	.47	.73	.53		1	
SUPP	.63	.71	.69	.69	.67	.64	.59	.18	.45	.53	.47	.50	.64	.51	.68	1

Note.

SOCCER= Supporter's interest in soccer VIC= Vicarious Achievement EXC= Excitement TEAM= Interest in the team AESTH= Aesthetics SOCIAL= Socialization SNS= Social network influence

PEER= Peer infiuence NAT= National pride DRAMA= Drama PLAYER= Interest in player FAMILY= Family bond ENT= Entertainment ALTER= Alternative entertainment

CCREA= Fan co-creation

A correlation matrix was presented in Table 2. After the examination of the correlation matrix, the validity of the correlation coefficients among the factors was below the r<.85 ceiling. The result of presented correlation coefficients between the 15 factors and the general support level could show the relations between the factors and the overall attitude of the football games among the researched female. In Table 3, the result of the confirmatory factor analysis was shown. The very top factor Excitement explained 54.30% of the variance. And the 2nd to 5th factors Aesthetics, Fan Co-creation, Drama and Interest in Soccer together explained 26.99% of the variance. In order to increase the validity, a single item among the Alternative Entertainment would be slightly re-worded. The result of the validates the questionnaire used in this research to survey the female spectators' motivation towards the professional football games.

The multiple linear regression used in this research was aiming to explore the relative importance of the 15 motivation factors. The mean response of the general supportive level in this research turned to be 5.67, with a standard deviation of 1.27 and the inter-reliability measure was $\alpha=0.94$. In Table 4 the regression model is presented with the R-square value ($R2=.66$) and the adjusted R-square value ($R2=.63$). The result of the regression model shows the $F=28.50$, $p<.01$ df=241 and the examination of the model presents the Beta coefficients revealed that Vicarious Achievement (b=.147) was the most influential with regarded to the general support level and the second was Interest in Team (b=.134), followed by Entertainment Value (b=.100).

Table 3: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Factor Loadings for Individual Items, Path Coefficients, t-Values, and Average Variance Explained by Latent Factors

ITEM	Factor loadings	Lambda X	*t*-values	Avg. var. explained
INTEREST IN Football				75.9%
I consider myself as a football fan.	.95	.87	35.13	
I love to follow the game of football.	.93	.84	42.50	
I am a huge football fan.	.93	.84	28.99	
VICARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT				63.6%
I feel my status as a fan increases when my favorite team wins.	.90	.82	41.97	
I feel a sense of accomplishment when my team wins.	.93	.84	43.81	
I feel a personal sense of achievement when my team wins.	.75	.54	25.97	
EXCITEMENT				75.2%
I find the professional football games very exciting.	.96	.92	43.31	
I enjoy the excitement surroundings of the matches.	.98	.97	45.25	
I enjoy the high level of excitement during the football games.	.98	.96	44.97	
INTEREST IN TEAM				72.3%
I consider myself to be a big fan of my favorite team.	.88	.72	32.00	
Compared to how I feel about other teams, my team is more important.	.86	.68	31.11	
I am a loyal fan of my team no matter if they are winning or losing.	.89	.75	36.06	
AESTHETICS				76.6%
There is a certain natural beauty to the game of soccer.	.95	.89	39.85	
I enjoy the gracefulness associate with the sport of soccer.	.96	.91	44.10	
Successful plays and strategies performed by the players are enjoyable.	.94	.88	44.70	
SOCIAL VALUE				44.9%
I like to talk with other people about the football games.	.87	.76	38.47	
Watching football games gives me an opportunity to socialize with other people.	.94	.78	34.49	
I watch the games because of the opportunity to socialize.	.44	.41	21.02	
SOCIAL NETWORK INFULENCE				74.3%
I like to share my opinions on the SNS platform about the games.	.95	.88	27.45	
I like to share my support of my team on my SNS.	.94	.87	28.89	
I am very active on the SNS about the games during the football games mega events (i.e., FIFA World Cup).	.90	.79	29.50	
PEER INFLUENCE				72.6%
I watch football games because of my friends or partners.	.86	.71	19.86	
I support the team because my friends or partners support them.	.92	.81	19.33	
If I do not watch the games, I will lose my friends or partners.	.91	.79	20.34	
NATIONAL PRIDE				67.3%
I watch football games to support a certain national team.	.89	.75	26.76	
When the team wins, I feel like I am a member of this country.	.77	.55	31.40	
I support the team because I like this country.	.89	.75	26.43	
DRAMA				69.5%
I prefer watching a close game rather than a one-sided game.	.87	.69	38.83	
I like watching matches where the outcomes are uncertain.	.80	.58	37.99	
A close match between two teams is more enjoyable.	.86	.68	38.48	
INTEREST IN PLAYER				72.4%
I tend to follow individual players more than the team.	.92	.81	31.97	
I am more a fan of a certain player than I am of a team.	.91	.80	27.79	
The main reason I watch the games is to cheer for my favorite player.	.86	.71	29.94	
FAMILY BOND				58.5%
I enjoy sharing the experience of watching the games with my family.	.91	.84	31.22	
	.93	.84	29.74	

Watching the football games gives me a chance to bond with my family. An important reason why I watch the games is to spend time with my family.	.63	.40	21.76	
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE Football game are entertaining. Football game great entertainment for the cost. I watch football game because it is a cheap entertainment.	.87 .85 .83	.28 .65 .63	38.00 36.16 36.32	70.8%
ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT It is hard to find other entertainment during the football games. I have no other entertainment during the football games. During watching football game mega events (i.e., FIFA World Cup), other entertainments were linked with them.	.88 .88 .66	.71 .72 .40	24.87 21.89 33.65	61.2%
FAN CO-CREATION I watch the fan co-creation contents of the football games on the Internet. I find the fan co-creation contents very enjoyable. I created some of the co-creation contents myself.	.92 .91 .98	.83 .81 .82	41.06 40.19 37.65	75.6%

Table 4: Regression of Spectator Support Level (N=241)

Variable	b	SE	β
INTEREST IN SOCCER	.046	.062	.070
VICARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT	.147	.057	.195
EXCITEMENT	.052	.073	.076
INTEREST IN TEAM	.134	.057	.192
AESTHETICS	-.006	.076	-.009
SOCIAL VALUE	.079	.061	.089
SOCIAL NETWORK INFULENCE	.014	.044	.021
PEER INFLUENCE	.073	.056	.073
NATIONAL PRIDE	-.037	.043	-.047
DRAMA	.070	.044	.089
INTEREST IN PLAYER	.059	.034	.084
FAMILY BOND	.024	.043	.031
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE	.100	.048	.040
ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT	-.024	.055	.663
FAN CO-CREATION	.063	.057	.270
Note. Full Model: R^2=.66; Adjusted R^2=.63; F=28.50, $p<.01$ df=240.			

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The research presented the result of Chinese female supporters' intention and motivation watching football mega-event, like FIFA World Cup and UEFA Champions League. In the Internet era, the supporters' motivation differs from that in the late 1990s when Funk et al. carried out their research on the motivation of sports spectators[11]. The results of this study extended the former SII theory on the dimension of the online social network, under the background of the fast expansion of the Internet and social network that indicates the motivation of the spectators would be influenced by the social network and social relationships on the Internet. This research contributes to the area which provides a more vivid insight on the female spectators' motivation and falsifies the stereotype that claims the female supporters as 'fake fans'. This research also provides the potential suggestions for the marketers and mega-event managers who wish to expand the female market on sports-related consumptions.

According to the analysis, the top-rated motivations drive the female spectators are excitement (M=5.44), aesthetics (M=5.21) and fan co-creation (M=5.00). It shows that the factor excitement, which contained three sub-questions in the questionnaire "I find the football games very exciting", "I enjoy the excitement of the football matches" and "I enjoy the high level of excitement during the football games", was identified by the female spectators as the most important factor that motivates them to be involved in the professional football events. The factor excitement, tightly connected to the attraction of the football game itself, could be regarded as the evidence that the female spectators enjoyed more on the match itself and the game would be attractive for the spectators. Moreover, the second and third factor, aesthetics and fan co-creation are both factors that presented the game and related information. To the hypothesis Do female supporters who watching football games influenced by the wide use of the SNS in

their social relationships, it is interesting to find that the fan co-creation factor ranked the third among all the motivation factors. The fan co-creation contents are defined in this research as the contents and information that are created by the fans of one specific team, one specific player or the general football game on the Internet. The categories of the co-creation contents included review articles on the past games, humor videos, and images, unofficial prediction on upcoming games and champions etc. In those contents appeared on the Chinese Internet environment, some of the contents still included strong gender stereotype towards the female supporters. However, the female spectators still held the view that the contents motivated them to keep participating in the event. It is clear that the SNS had its influence on the motivation of the female supporters. However, combined with the factor social values (M=3.83), the influence of the SNS towards female spectators held a deviation of the information contents on the SNS but not the social actions on the SNS platforms.

The factor interest in team (M=4.44) ranked one place higher than the factor interest in players (M=3.92) according to the data analysis. The factor interest in players is a factor that reflected the stereotype that female supporters are only fans for some particular superstars and could not enjoy the real beauty of the game. Moreover, the analysis of the factors peer influence, family bond and social values also contributes to the findings to the hypothesis Are peer influence and family bond main factors affecting the female supporters' motivation? The findings to the hypotheses are that the peer influence and family bond had limited contribution to the intention of participating in the event. It is obvious that the female spectators in China were not watching football games under the pressure of their male partners or family members. So the bias that the female spectators watched the games to please their partners and family members could be confirmed as false information. For the other hypothesis are these motivations affected by social relationships, this research presented the result of the analysis of the Correlation Matrix. In the correlation matrix, the factors related to the social relations and the support level of the female spectators and other factors showed that it could be observed that the motivations factors were weakly affected by the spectators' social relationships. In the Internet era, the social relationships on the Internet is strongly reforming the information exchanging method, but the motivation of female spectators to watch the game is not just simply influenced by the media and it is improper to justify the female as 'fake fans' since their main intention of watching the game is enjoying the beauty of the game itself.

The findings of this research offer valuable insights for marketers and event managers in the sports industry who aim to expand the female market. Female spectators' motivations for participating in mega sports events are primarily driven by the inherent appeal of the events and the sports themselves. Social relationships, as a motivational factor, present a dual-edged dynamic in marketing strategies. On one hand, social relationships serve as an effective means of information dissemination in the Internet era, particularly among young female spectators who are adept at using social network services (SNS) and digital media. On the other hand, the information conveyed through social relationships must be carefully curated to avoid including content that could negatively influence perceptions and perpetuate stereotypes. Given the current media environment in China, which often stereotypes female football supporters, marketers and event managers should endeavor to challenge and reduce these stereotypical images and avoid the objectification of female supporters. This approach can foster a more inclusive and respectful environment, contributing to the continuous growth of female interest in mega sports events and the broader sports market.

In conclusion, this research examines the motivations of Chinese female football supporters who watch mega sports-events. Building upon the SII model and its development by Funk et al. [11], this study adopts a more nuanced approach in the context of the burgeoning Internet and the pervasive use of social networks. The motivations of female spectators participating in these mega-events are categorized into 15 factors. Unlike the original SII model and Funk's model, this study introduces four new factors designed to explore the spectators' Internet usage and social media activities during significant football tournaments in greater depth. The top five individual factors influencing the motivation of female spectators are Excitement, Aesthetics, Fan Co-creation, Drama, and Interest in Soccer. Initial media narratives, as presented by BBC stories, suggested that Chinese female spectators watch football matches primarily to support star players and to appeal to their male peers. However, the research findings challenge this notion, demonstrating that Peer Influence ranked last among the 15 motivation factors, while Interest in Player ranked 9th. Collectively, these results suggest that the prevailing stereotypes about Chinese female football supporters do not accurately capture their true motivations. The study's insights are valuable for researchers and marketers seeking to expand the sports market among female consumers and to address and mitigate negative motivational factors and media stereotypes. Overall, the research provides a unique and nuanced understanding of the motivations of female spectators at mega sports events and can inform future event management, media coverage, and marketing strategies.

6. Limitations

There are still several limitations in this research and further research should be carried out in order to reduce the limitations the research presented. The first limitation in this research is the motivation factor analyzed in this research could not cover all the factors that drive the female spectators in participating in the event. More qualitative research could be done in order to cover a larger member of the female spectators in China. The second limitation is that the qualitative research analysis conducted was mainly in the large cities in China and the data of the questionnaire also showed the unique character that female in large cities participated more in this research. This could cause a bias in the data collected that the result covered fewer spectators in small-to-medium sized cities in China.

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