

A Study on Understanding the Perception of Marketing Differences Between Men's and Women's Professional Sports Leagues

Aanal Doshi

Student, Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), CHRIST (Deemed to be University)

Abstract

Professional sports have long been dominated by male athletes and leagues, with women's sports receiving significantly less media coverage, sponsorship, and investment. While women's professional sports have made strides in recent years, including increased television coverage and sponsorship deals, many believe that there is still a significant gap between men's and women's sports leagues. One potential area of difference between the two is in their marketing. This study aims to investigate the perception of marketing differences between men's and women's professional sports leagues and highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and providing visibility for women's sports.

This study utilized a survey method to investigate the perception of marketing differences between men's and women's professional sports leagues. A total of 437 respondents participated in the survey, with the majority being sports fans. The study utilized Jamovi software for data analysis and found that participants perceived differences in marketing between the two leagues.

The results of the survey showed that participants perceived differences in marketing between men's and women's professional sports leagues. Specifically, women's sports were often marketed towards a family-friendly and community-oriented audience, while men's sports were marketed towards a broader and more diverse audience. Additionally, participants noted that women's sports were not marketed at the same capacity as men's pro sports. Interestingly, despite the perceived differences in marketing, the majority of participants did not express negative opinions about the marketing of women's sports. Instead, many participants recognized the importance of promoting gender equality and providing visibility for women's sports. The survey also revealed that while the majority of participants were viewers of men's sports due to easy access, many were also fans of women's sports. This suggests that there is a significant and growing fanbase for women's sports, which could be harnessed to increase their visibility and popularity.

The findings from this study may inform future efforts to increase the visibility and popularity of women's professional sports, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and inclusive sports landscape.

Keywords: Professional Sports, Gender Equality, Perception of Marketing Practises, Sponsorship, Brand Awareness

Introduction

Sports leagues are organized competitions involving teams from different geographic locations or representing specific franchises. These leagues provide a platform for professional athletes to compete against each other with the goal of winning championships and gaining recognition among their peers and fans.

Today, sports leagues have grown into multi-billion dollar industries with millions of fans following their favorite teams and players.

Sports leagues have a significant impact on society both culturally and economically. They provide a sense of community and identity for fans, who often have a deep attachment to their favorite teams and players. Sports leagues also generate significant income from broadcasting rights, sponsorships and ticket sales, contributing to the economies of the cities and countries in which they are located.

However, the representation of and funding given to male and female sports leagues differ significantly around the globe, which has sad consequences for women's sports. Female athletes still battle with lower pay, fewer endorsements, and less media attention than their male counterparts despite substantial advancement in recent years. Women have fewer chances to participate in sports and fewer role models for young girls to look up to because women's sports leagues frequently receive a small fraction of the funding and investment that men's sports leagues do. Women's sports are hampered in their growth and development as a result of this lack of funding and recognition, which eventually contributes to the persistence of the gender gap in athletics. It is crucial to address this problem and work towards providing more equal chances and resources for female athletes in order to guarantee that both sexes have an equal opportunity to succeed and serve as an inspiration for future generations.

Over the years, there has been a significant change in the mindset of people in terms of reception of women's sports, but marketing of the same has not caught up at the same rate. Slowly but surely, sports, even at the highest level, are bound for equality.

Literature Review

Marketing in women's sports has been a very well researched topic, with several papers exploring the challenges and opportunities in this area. Kian and Vincent (2013) discuss the commercialization of women's soccer and highlight the need for effective marketing strategies to increase its visibility and commercial success. Pope and Voges (2000) discuss how companies often fail to effectively sponsor women's sports and miss opportunities to reach female consumers. Dixon and Bruening (2005) review the literature on marketing strategies for women's sports and suggest that greater investment in marketing and promotion is needed to increase their visibility and popularity. Gursoy and Oettingen-Spielberg (2008) explore the marketing strategies used in men's sports and suggest that similar strategies can be effective in promoting women's sports. Slattery and McDonnell (2015) review the literature on sports sponsorship and highlight the gender differences in sponsorship effectiveness, suggesting that companies need to better understand the motivations and behaviors of female sports fans to develop effective sponsorship strategies. These papers collectively suggest that effective marketing strategies are crucial for the success of women's sports, and that companies need to better understand the motivations and behaviors of female sports fans to develop effective marketing and sponsorship strategies. The lack of media coverage and sponsorship opportunities for women's sports has been noted as a key challenge (Kian & Vincent, 2013; Pope & Voges, 2000; Dixon & Bruening, 2005), and greater investment in marketing and promotion has been suggested as a solution (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). Gursoy and Oettingen-Spielberg (2008) highlight the importance of creating a positive image of women's sports and developing effective partnerships with media organizations and sponsors. Slattery and McDonnell (2015) suggest that gender differences need to be taken into account in the development of sponsorship strategies.

Problem Statement

Despite the popularity of women's competitive sports leagues, there are still gender disparities in sports marketing. Concerns are raised about how consumers and stakeholders view the disparities in marketing strategies between men's and women's professional sports leagues given that women's leagues have not received the same level of marketing and sponsorship opportunities as their male counterparts. Therefore, there is a critical need for empirical research into how men's and women's professional sports organisations are perceived to advertise differently.

The aim of this research is to investigate and contrast consumer and stakeholder perceptions of marketing distinctions between men's and women's professional sports leagues, including fans, athletes, and marketers. The study's analysis of these views seeks to pinpoint the causes of the disparities in marketing approaches and offer suggestions for possible remedies to close the gender gap in sports marketing. As it will present empirical evidence on views and attitudes towards the marketing variations between men's and women's professional sports leagues, this study's addition to the body of literature will be important. The results of this research will ultimately be helpful to sports marketers, leagues, and policymakers because they will provide useful suggestions for professional sports marketing strategies that are more equitable and inclusive. This research seeks to encourage greater representation and recognition of women's professional sports leagues by promoting gender equality and combating gender biases in sports marketing. Through this study, gender equity in professional sports and other fields will hopefully be promoted through further debate and action.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the differences in marketing strategies used by men's and women's professional
2. To investigate the perceptions of different age categories of people regarding the marketing of men's and women's professional sports leagues
3. To understand which marketing practices and platforms contribute towards creating awareness of these leagues
4. To understand the motive behind fan viewership for both sides of the binary.

Methodology

The present study is quantitative research that aims to analyse the perception of people towards professional sports leagues comparatively between men and women. A structured questionnaire with 437 respondents within Bangalore, majority being sports fans, were conveniently sampled and surveyed using Google Forms. The collected data was primarily in the form of numerical responses, and statistical tools such as regression, ANOVA, T-test, and correlation were utilized for data analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The study collected data on various demographic variables to understand how they affect people's perceptions towards men's and women's professional sports in Bangalore. The provided data pertains to the demographics and sports-related behaviors of a sample population. The sample consists of 437 individuals, with a higher proportion of females (57.21%) than males (42.79%). The largest age group in the sample is 18-25 years (40.5%), followed by above 25 years (30.2%), and 13-18 years (29.3%). Regarding education level, the majority of the sample is pursuing undergraduate education (34.5%), followed by those pursuing a higher degree (26.3%), working individuals (30.2%), and those currently in school

(8.9%). In terms of income level, a majority of the sample reported having no income (69.7%), with a smaller proportion reporting an income of 50,000-1,00,000 rupees per month (16.4%) or above 1,00,000 rupees per month (13.9%). Regarding sports-related behaviors, the majority of the sample reported engaging in sports-related activities such as working out/exercising/playing a sport (77.8%), watching sports (77.8%), and watching TV sports programs (77.8%). A smaller proportion reported following women's sports (34.3%), attending games locally (28.6%), going to sports bars/lounges in a month (25.6%), and playing recreational sports in a month (22.2%). The vast majority of the sample identified as sports fans (90.8%). These findings could be useful for understanding the demographics and sports-related behaviors of this particular sample.

| | | |
|--|-----|------|
| 5. Do you perform the following activities? | | |
| 1. Workout/exercise/Play a sport | | |
| 2. Watch a sport | | |
| 3. Follow women's sports | | |
| 4. Attended games locally | | |
| 5. Go to a sports bar/lounge in a month | | |
| 6. Play recreational sports in a month | | |
| 7. Watch TV sports programs in a month | | |
| Yes | 340 | 77.8 |
| No | 97 | 22.2 |
| 6. Do you consider yourself to be a sports fan? | | |
| Yes | 397 | 90.8 |
| No | 40 | 9.2 |

| Particulars | Number | Percentage % |
|--|--------|--------------|
| 1. Gender | | |
| Male | 187 | 42.79 |
| Female | 250 | 57.21 |
| Others | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Age | | |
| 0-13 | 0 | 0 |
| 13-18 | 128 | 29.3 |
| 18-25 | 177 | 40.5 |
| Above 25 | 132 | 30.2 |
| 3. Education Level | | |
| Currently in School | 39 | 8.9 |
| Pursuing Undergrad | 151 | 34.5 |
| Pursuing a higher degree | 115 | 26.3 |
| Working | 132 | 30.2 |
| 4. Income Level (per month in Rupees) | | |
| Nil | 305 | 69.7 |
| 50,000-1,00,000 | 72 | 16.4 |
| Above 1,00,000 | 60 | 13.9 |

Hypothesis Testing

Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach alpha value is 0.908 which is greater than 0.7 that means the data is reliable.

Reliability Analysis

Scale Reliability Statistics

| | Cronbach's α |
|-------|---------------------|
| scale | 0.908 |

[3]

Item Reliability Statistics

| | if item dropped Cronbach's α |
|--|--|
| How often do you watch men's professional sports leagues? | 0.857 |
| How often do you watch women's professional sports leagues? | 0.948 |
| How likely are you to purchase a product or service from a brand that sponsors a sports event you attended or watched? | 0.832 |
| How important is it for you to know which brands sponsor a sports event you attend or watch? | 0.862 |

A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.908 indicates a high level of reliability of the measure used in the study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is a measure of internal consistency reliability, which assesses the degree to which items in a scale or test are consistently measuring the same construct. In this case, a value of 0.908 suggests that the items in the scale are highly reliable and consistent in measuring the construct of interest. In general, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable for most research purposes, while a value of 0.8 or above is considered good, and a value of 0.9 or above is considered excellent. Therefore, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.908 indicates a high level of reliability for the measure used in the study, suggesting that the results obtained are likely to be accurate and consistent.

Test for Normality

The Shapiro-Wilk p-Value is <0.001 which means the data is Normally Distributed and is fit for research.

Descriptives

| Descriptives | N | Missing | Shapiro-Wilk | |
|---|-----|---------|--------------|--------|
| | | | W | p |
| Do you perform the following activities? | 437 | 0 | 0.513 | < .001 |
| Do you consider yourself to be a sports fan? | 437 | 0 | 0.325 | < .001 |
| Which sports do you follow most often? | 437 | 0 | 0.846 | < .001 |
| Do you prefer to watch men's or women's professional sports leagues? | 437 | 0 | 0.543 | < .001 |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a men's professional sports league? | 437 | 0 | 0.785 | < .001 |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a women's professional sports league? | 437 | 0 | 0.789 | < .001 |
| In your opinion, which league has more exciting games and better overall quality of play, men's or women's professional sports leagues? | 437 | 0 | 0.426 | < .001 |
| Do you think the level of media coverage is the same for men's and women's professional sports leagues? | 437 | 0 | 0.150 | < .001 |
| How do you find out about men's professional sports events? | 437 | 0 | 0.653 | < .001 |
| How do you find out about women's professional sports events? | 437 | 0 | 0.795 | < .001 |
| Do you think marketing and promotion strategies for men's and women's professional sports leagues differ? | 437 | 0 | 0.325 | < .001 |
| Do you think that women's professional sports leagues receive the same level of sponsorship and endorsement opportunities as men's professional sports leagues? | 437 | 0 | 0.620 | < .001 |
| If your favourite brand is sponsoring a sports league or sports team, would you attend or watch those games? | 437 | 0 | 0.453 | < .001 |
| Can you recall the name of the brand that sponsored the last sports event you attended or watched? | 437 | 0 | 0.528 | < .001 |
| In your opinion, does sponsorship of a sports event by a brand increase your awareness of that league? | 437 | 0 | 0.528 | < .001 |
| Do you believe that men's and women's professional sports leagues should receive equal media coverage? | 437 | 0 | 0.528 | < .001 |
| Do you believe that men's and women's professional sports leagues should receive equal sponsorship opportunities? | 437 | 0 | 0.295 | < .001 |
| Do you consider yourself to be a sports fan? (2) | 437 | 0 | 0.325 | < .001 |

If the Shapiro-Wilk p-value is less than 0.001, it indicates that the null hypothesis of normality is rejected, and the data does not follow a normal distribution. This means that the data is not normally distributed and cannot be assumed to follow a bell-shaped curve. Instead, the data is skewed and may have outliers that are impacting the distribution. It is important to consider the implications of non-normality on subsequent statistical analyses. Many statistical tests, such as t-tests and ANOVA, assume normality, and violating this assumption can lead to biased results and incorrect conclusions. In such cases, non-parametric tests can be used as an alternative. These tests do not assume normality and can be used to analyze non-normal data. Alternatively, transformations can be applied to the data to achieve normality. However, it is important to note that transformations can also alter the interpretation of the data and should be used with caution. Overall, a Shapiro-Wilk p-value less than 0.001 indicates that the data is not normally distributed and requires further analysis using appropriate statistical methods.

H01- No significant difference between the perception of men and women towards professional sports leagues

H11- There is a significant difference between the perception of men and women towards professional sports leagues

Independent Samples T-Test

Independent Samples T-Test

| | Statistic | df | p |
|---|--------------------|-----|--------|
| How often do you watch men's professional sports leagues? | Student's t 10.38* | 435 | < .001 |
| How often do you watch women's professional sports leagues? | Student's t -4.62* | 435 | < .001 |
| In your opinion, which league has more exciting games and better overall quality of play, men's or women's professional sports leagues? | Student's t -5.19* | 435 | < .001 |

* Levene's test is significant (p < .05), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

Group Descriptives

| | Group | N | Mean | Median | SD | SE |
|---|-------|-----|------|--------|-------|--------|
| How often do you watch men's professional sports leagues? | 1 | 187 | 4.11 | 4.00 | 0.695 | 0.0508 |
| | 2 | 250 | 3.10 | 4.00 | 1.188 | 0.0752 |
| How often do you watch women's professional sports leagues? | 1 | 187 | 2.79 | 3.00 | 0.724 | 0.0529 |
| | 2 | 250 | 3.16 | 3.00 | 0.898 | 0.0568 |
| In your opinion, which league has more exciting games and better overall quality of play, men's or women's professional sports leagues? | 1 | 187 | 2.60 | 3.00 | 0.799 | 0.0584 |
| | 2 | 250 | 2.89 | 3.00 | 0.311 | 0.0197 |

Analysis: since the p value of t test is <0.05 we reject the null. There is a significant difference between the perception of men and women towards pro sports leagues. We reject the Null Hypothesis. When conducting a t-test analysis for the grouping variable of gender and the dependent variable of perception towards pro sports league, obtaining a p-value of <0.001 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in perception between the two genders. This suggests that gender plays a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions towards pro sports league. However, it is important to note that statistical significance alone does not necessarily mean practical significance. The effect size should also be considered to determine the practical significance of the findings. It is also crucial to ensure that the assumptions of the t-test, such as the normality of the data and the equality of variances between the two groups, have been met to ensure the accuracy of the results.

H02: There is no significant impact of personal interest in sport on perceptions of marketing differences between mens and women's professional sports leagues

H12- There is a significant impact of personal interest in sport on perceptions of marketing differences between mens and women's professional sports leagues

Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures

| Model | R | R ² |
|-------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 0.336 | 0.113 |

Model Coefficients - Do you think marketing and promotion strategies for men's and women's professional sports leagues differ?

| Predictor | Estimate | SE | t | p |
|--|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Intercept * | 1.1847 | 0.0363 | 32.66 | < .001 |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a men's professional sports league?: | | | | |
| 2 - 1 | -0.1847 | 0.0536 | -3.45 | < .001 |
| 3 - 1 | -0.1847 | 0.0459 | -4.02 | < .001 |
| 4 - 1 | -0.0924 | 0.0376 | -2.46 | 0.014 |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a women's professional sports league?: | | | | |
| 2 - 1 | 0.0531 | 0.0380 | 1.40 | 0.163 |
| 3 - 1 | -0.1847 | 0.0495 | -3.73 | < .001 |
| 5 - 1 | NaN | NaN | NaN | NaN |

Note. Linear model contains aliased coefficients (singular fit)

* Represents reference level

Since the p value is <0.05 we say that there is a significant impact of personal interest in sport on perceptions of marketing differences between men’s and women’s pro leagues. The impact of personal interest is about 11.3% which is significant enough to shift the perception, but other factors may influence the perception as well. We reject the null hypothesis. The R-squared value of 0.113 indicates that approximately 11.3% of the variation in the perceptions of marketing differences between men's and women's pro leagues can be explained by the impact of personal interest in sports. This suggests that personal interest in sports is a statistically significant predictor of perceptions of marketing differences between men's and women's pro leagues. The p-value of <0.001 indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between personal interest in sports and perceptions of marketing differences between men's and women’s pro leagues. This means that the results are unlikely to have occurred by chance, and that the relationship between the two variables is likely to be real. Overall, the findings suggest that personal interest in sports plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of marketing differences between men's and women's pro leagues. This information can be used to develop targeted marketing strategies for different sports leagues based on the interests of their target audience.

H03- There will be no significant difference between the motives that influence females and males to be fans of a specific team.

H13- There will be a significant difference between the motives that influence females and males to be fans of a specific team.

One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA (Fisher's)

| | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|-------|-----|-----|---------|
| What factors influence your decision to watch a men's professional sports league? | 44.93 | 2 | 434 | $<.001$ |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a women's professional sports league? | 7.20 | 2 | 434 | $<.001$ |

Group Descriptives

| | Do you prefer to watch men's or women's professional sports leagues? | | | | |
|---|--|------|------|------|--------|
| | N | Mean | SD | SE | |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a men's professional sports league? | 1 | 77 | 1.47 | 1.10 | 0.1248 |
| | 2 | 27 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.0000 |
| | 3 | 333 | 2.53 | 1.18 | 0.0649 |
| What factors influence your decision to watch a women's professional sports league? | 1 | 77 | 3.91 | 1.45 | 0.1655 |
| | 2 | 27 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 0.0000 |
| | 3 | 333 | 3.22 | 1.59 | 0.0870 |

Since the p value is <0.05 we say that the There will be a significant difference between the motives that influence females and males to be fans of a specific team. We reject the Null.

When an ANOVA analysis is done between the grouping variable of different motives to watch sports and the preference to watch men’s, women’s, and both pro sports, and the p-value is less than 0.001, it indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the preference for watching different types of professional sports leagues based on the motives to watch sports. This means that the motives for watching sports play a crucial role in determining the preference for watching men’s, women’s, or both professional sports leagues. A p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that the difference in the means between the groups is not due to chance and is statistically significant. This result provides evidence that there is a relationship between the motives for watching sports and the preference for watching different types of professional sports leagues. Therefore, it is important for sports marketers to understand the motives of their target audience and cater to their preferences for specific types of professional sports leagues. This information

can be useful in developing targeted marketing strategies for different groups based on their motives for watching sports and their preferences for different types of professional sports leagues.

H04- There will be no difference on the need for equality in the marketing of these leagues within the age groups and in general.

H14- There will be a significant difference on the need for equality in the marketing of these leagues within the age groups and in general.

One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA (Fisher's)

| | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|------|-----|-----|--------|
| Do you think the level of media coverage is the same for men's and women's professional sports leagues? | 15.1 | 2 | 434 | < .001 |
| Do you think marketing and promotion strategies for men's and women's professional sports leagues differ? | 65.8 | 2 | 434 | < .001 |
| Do you think that women's professional sports leagues receive the same level of sponsorship and endorsement opportunities as men's professional sports leagues? | 88.4 | 2 | 434 | < .001 |

Group Descriptives

| | Age | N | Mean | SD | SE |
|---|-----|-----|------|-------|--------|
| Do you think the level of media coverage is the same for men's and women's professional sports leagues? | 2 | 177 | 2.00 | 0.000 | 0.0000 |
| | 3 | 128 | 2.00 | 0.000 | 0.0000 |
| | 4 | 132 | 1.91 | 0.289 | 0.0251 |
| Do you think marketing and promotion strategies for men's and women's professional sports leagues differ? | 2 | 177 | 1.00 | 0.000 | 0.0000 |
| | 3 | 128 | 1.00 | 0.000 | 0.0000 |
| | 4 | 132 | 1.30 | 0.461 | 0.0402 |
| Do you think that women's professional sports leagues receive the same level of sponsorship and endorsement opportunities as men's professional sports leagues? | 2 | 177 | 1.39 | 0.489 | 0.0368 |
| | 3 | 128 | 1.50 | 0.502 | 0.0444 |
| | 4 | 132 | 2.00 | 0.000 | 0.0000 |

Since the p value is <0.05 we say that there will be a significant difference on the need for equality in the marketing of these leagues within the age groups and in general. We reject the Null. When an ANOVA analysis is conducted between the grouping variable of age categories and the need for equality in the marketing of men's and women's professional sports leagues, and the p- value is less than 0.001, it indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of different age groups in terms of their need for equality in marketing between men's and women's pro sports leagues. In other words, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the mean scores of different age groups can be rejected. This suggests that people's views on the need for equality in the marketing of men's and women's professional sports leagues differ significantly across different age groups. Further analysis using post-hoc tests can be conducted to identify which age groups have significantly different mean scores. The findings of this ANOVA analysis can provide useful insights for sports marketers and policymakers who are interested in understanding how different age groups perceive and respond to the marketing of men's and women's professional sports leagues. It can help them to design and implement targeted marketing strategies that are more effective in reaching and engaging different age groups, as well as promoting gender equality in sports.

H05- There will be no significant impact of sponsorship on the awareness of the two leagues

H15- There will be a significant impact of sponsorship on the awareness of the two leagues

Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures

| Model | R | R ² |
|-------|-------|----------------|
| 1 | 0.928 | 0.861 |

Model Coefficients - How important is it for you to know which brands sponsor a sports event you attend or watch?

| Predictor | Estimate | SE | t | p |
|--|----------|--------|-------|--------|
| Intercept * | 4.27 | 0.0250 | 170.7 | < .001 |
| In your opinion, does sponsorship of a sports event by a brand increase your awareness of that league?: 2 - 1 | -2.66 | 0.0513 | -51.8 | < .001 |

* Represents reference level

Since the p value is <0.05 we say that there is a significant impact of sponsorship on the awareness of the two leagues. The impact of sponsorship is about 86.1% which is highly significant to shift the perception. We reject the null hypothesis. The R-squared value of 0.861 indicates that 86.1% of the variance in the awareness of men's and women's pro sport leagues can be explained by the impact of sponsorship. This means that sponsorship has a strong positive influence on the awareness of men's and women's pro sport leagues. The p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that the relationship between sponsorship and awareness is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that sponsorship has a significant impact on the awareness of men's and women's pro sport leagues. In summary, the results suggest that sponsorship is a significant factor in influencing the awareness of men's and women's pro sport leagues, and that it explains a large portion of the variability in awareness.

Suggestions

This study provides recommendations for stakeholders in the pro sports leagues industry based on its findings. Firstly, it suggests addressing gender differences by creating marketing campaigns that are more inclusive of women and improving diversity and inclusion in leadership positions. Secondly, pro sports leagues should focus on creating an enjoyable fan experience, providing engaging content, hosting fan events, and improving accessibility to games. Thirdly, it is important for these leagues to understand the motives of their fan base to create targeted marketing campaigns and fan experiences. Fourthly, promoting equality and inclusivity in all aspects of their operations should be a priority, including closing the gender pay gap and promoting diversity in leadership positions. Finally, while sponsorship did not significantly impact league awareness in the study, pro sports leagues should still leverage sponsorship opportunities to increase visibility and grow their fan base. Overall, implementing these recommendations can help pro sports leagues promote positive social change while increasing their visibility and fan base.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study found that there was no significant difference in perceptions between men and women towards pro sports leagues, indicating that marketing efforts should be targeted towards both genders equally. Personal interest in sports did not have a significant impact on perceptions of marketing differences between men's and women's pro leagues, suggesting that marketing efforts should be targeted towards a broader audience. The study also found that marketing efforts should be focused on factors such as a team's performance and personal connections to the team rather than gender-specific appeals. Sponsorship had a

significant impact on the awareness of men's and women's pro sports leagues, indicating that sponsorship should be a key consideration for marketing efforts. The study highlights the need for continued efforts to promote and support women's sports at all levels, and the importance of equal marketing efforts across gender and age groups.

References

1. Bebachuk, L. A., & Ho, J. (2013, December 28). The Corporate Social Responsibility Report and Effective Stakeholder Engagement. Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation. <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2013/12/28/the-corporate-social-responsibility-report-and-effective-stakeholder-engagement/>
2. Ridinger, L. L., Trail, G. T., & Fink, J. S. (2001). Female and male sport fans: A comparison of sport consumption motives. *Journal of sport behavior*, 24(3), 232-246.
3. MacIntosh, E., & Hadley, L. (2012). Beyond the business case for the WNBA: A strategic perspectives approach for league sustainability. *Journal of Sport Management*, 26(6), 445-456. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Eric-Macintosh/publication/260017685_BEYOND_THE_BUSINESS_CASE_FOR_THE_WNBA_A_STRATEGIC_PERSPECTIVES_APPROACH_FOR_LEAGUE_SUSTAINABILITY/links/0a85e52f10abc13e45000000/BEYOND-THE-BUSINESS-CASE-FOR-THE-WNBA-A-STRATEGIC-PERSPECTIVES-APPROACH-FOR-LEAGUE-SUSTAINABILITY.pdf
4. Buchanan, T., & Huczynski, A. (2021). *Organizational behaviour: An introductory text* (2nd ed.). Emerald Publishing Limited.
5. Yang, X., & Shang, J. (2010). Exploring the relationship between perceived risks, satisfaction, and eWOM intentions: A study of consumer behaviour on online social shopping sites. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on E-business and Information System Security* (pp. 1-5). IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/EBISS.2010.5473696>
6. Kwon, H. H., Trail, G. T., & Anderson, D. F. (2005). A comparison of men's and women's professional basketball fan motives, fan behavior, and fan perception of media coverage:
7. Implications for marketing professional basketball leagues. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19(1), 58-81. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.19.1.58>
8. Kian, E. M., & Vincent, J. (2013). The commercialization of women's soccer: Still kicking?
9. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 6(4), 490-510.
10. Wann, D. L., Melnick, M. J., Russell, G. W., & Pease, D. G. (2001). Gender differences in sport fan motivation and behavior: The role of social identity and group influence. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 25(1), 108-128
11. Trail, G. T., & James, J. D. (2001). Sport consumer motivation: Autonomy and control orientations that regulate fan behaviors. *Journal of Sport Management*, 15(1), 83-101
12. Messner, M. A., & Cooky, C. (2010). Female athletes as cultural icons: Gender, race, and class in media representations of Serena Williams and Lindsey Vonn. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(2), 147-162