

Perceptions of Viewers on the Entertainment of the Indian Super League (ISL) of Football

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to address the variability of viewer engagement across distinct age groups within the Indian Super League (ISL) audience, focusing on excitement, patriotism, social influence, and player fandom. The primary objective is to discern how viewer engagement levels vary based on age demographics within the ISL audience, aiming to inform targeted strategies for sustained viewer interest and league success. A survey-based approach was employed to collect data from a representative sample of ISL viewers across three age brackets (18-24, 25-32, 33-40), utilizing mean scores to analyze the collected data. The analysis revealed significant age-related patterns in viewer engagement. Younger viewers (18-24) exhibited the highest levels of excitement and patriotism towards ISL teams, with excitement scores gradually declining with age. Social influence and player fandom scores remained consistent across all age groups, indicating their universal impact on viewer behaviour. These findings underscore the necessity for age-tailored engagement strategies within the ISL, understanding the varying preferences and motivations of different age demographics is crucial for sustaining viewer interest and cultivating a dedicated fanbase, thereby contributing to the long-term success and growth of the ISL.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Super League (ISL) has become a juggernaut, igniting a nationwide passion for football in India. Its unique franchise model fosters fierce local rivalries and city pride, while the diverse mix of Indian and international stars broadens the league's appeal. Mirroring the IPL's impact on cricket, the ISL has revolutionized football entertainment. From glitzy collaborations with Bollywood stars to innovative fan engagement initiatives, the league offers a spectacle beyond the pitch. This entertainment factor has proven commercially successful, attracting large audiences and generating significant revenue for stakeholders. However, a crucial question remains unanswered: how do viewers perceive the ISL's entertainment value? While some reports suggest a potential decline in interest, others point to a growing viewership and increased spending on match-related activities. This research delves into the factors shaping these perceptions, aiming to ensure the ISL's continued success and solidify its place as a premier football entertainment destination in India.

OBJECTIVES

- Analyze how viewers of different ages perceive ISL entertainment (excitement, drama, social influence, star players) and their intention to watch.
- Identify the specific entertainment aspects (excitement, nostalgia, star power) that most influence viewership within different age groups.

- Use surveys, interviews, and data analysis to understand viewers' preferences, emotional connections, and engagement with the ISL, focusing on age comparisons.
- Develop actionable recommendations based on the findings to improve the ISL's entertainment value, leverage nostalgia, and enhance fan engagement across all ages.

HYPOTHESIS

H01: There is no significant difference in Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 18 - 24

H02: There is no significant difference in Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 25 – 32

H03: There is no significant difference in Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 33 – 40

METHODOLOGY

The following methodological steps were taken in order to conduct the present study

Sample – To conduct the study a total of 146 samples were taken from three age groups 18 -24, 25 – 32 and 33 – 40 through convenience sampling method from offline as well as online channels.

Table of Sample Selected

Age Group	Count
18 – 24	48
25 – 32	54
33 - 40	44

Tools – For the Data Collection, the questionnaire is an adapted version of the scale designed by Bennett et al (2007) and kashif et al. (2018). Some modifications in terms of content, as well as the number of questions, were done to adapt the same for viewers in the Indian context.

Procedure –

The research sample consists of 146 participants, with 73.3% being men and 26.7% being women. The research methodology applied by the researchers for the study is a survey method using a questionnaire as a testing tool. The researcher conducted a pilot study consisting of 20 subjects before commencing the main data collection.

The researcher briefed the subject about the study and the questionnaire.

Analysis -

Comparison of Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 18 -24

Table 1 Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 18 -24

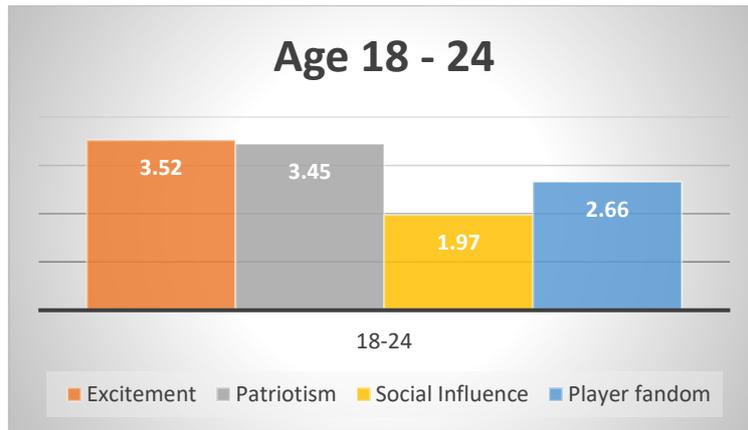


Figure 1 Graphical representation of Mean Score of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 18 -24

The results of the graphical representation of mean scores among ages 18-24 show a strong inclination towards excitement (3.52) and patriotism (3.45), with lower scores for social influence (1.97) and moderate interest in player fandom (2.66). This indicates that this age group values thrilling experiences and regional pride, while being less influenced by external factors and showing moderate interest in individual players.

Comparison of Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 25 – 32

Age	Excitement	Patriotism	Social Influence	Player Fandom
25 - 32	3.24	2.62	1.92	2.5

Table 2 Mean scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 25 – 32

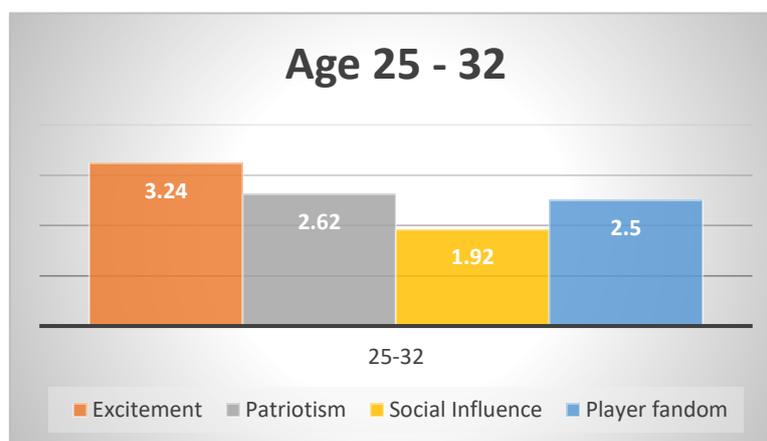


Figure 2 Graphical representation of Mean Score of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 33 – 40

The 25-32 age group values excitement (3.24) and player fandom (2.5) similar to the younger cohort but exhibits a moderate level of patriotism (2.62) and lower susceptibility to social influence (1.92). They are inclined towards engaging experiences and supporting specific players while showing less attachment to regional pride and being less influenced by external factors compared to the younger age group.

Comparison of Mean Scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 33 - 40

Age	Excitement	Patriotism	Social Influence	Player Fandom
33 - 40	3.34	2.88	1.95	2.61

Table 3 Mean scores of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 33 – 40

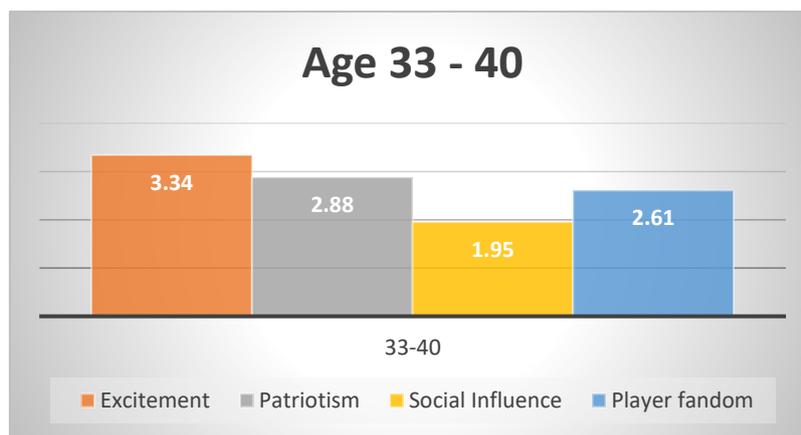


Figure 3 Graphical representation of Mean Score of Excitement, Patriotism, Social Influence and Player Fandom among Ages 33 – 40

The 33-40 age group shows a moderate level of excitement (3.34) and patriotism (2.88), with lower susceptibility to social influence (1.95) and a moderate interest in player fandom (2.61). They are less influenced by external factors, possibly due to established preferences and a deeper understanding of their interests, leading to focused engagement in specific players or teams rather than broader social influence.

Findings and Discussion - The findings reveal that excitement is the strongest motivator for viewers across all age groups, with scores consistently around 3.3, highlighting the appeal of dramatic turns and thrilling experiences in ISL matches. Patriotism follows closely behind, indicating a slight prioritization of national pride but a greater emphasis on the entertainment value of the games themselves. Social influence and player fandom have a weaker impact on viewership, with scores ranging from 1.9 to 2.6. This hierarchy of entertainment elements suggests a paramount focus on enhancing the on-field experience to increase viewership. Further investigation into the consistency of these factors across different age demographics could provide valuable insights for tailored marketing and content strategies within the ISL audience.

Conclusion - In conclusion, excitement and national pride are the primary drivers of viewership across all age groups in the ISL, with social influence and player fandom playing a secondary role. Understanding these motivators can guide targeted strategies for enhancing fan engagement and league development within the ISL ecosystem.

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