

A qualitative examination of the motivations behind participating in KU basketball camping

By

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Abstract

There are many rituals which sport fans partake in during or around a game that they are attending, and many of these take shape as ancillary events, such as tailgating. At the University of Kansas (KU), there is an ancillary event called KU basketball camping which is a ritual that allows students to obtain the best seats in the student section. Students who participate in camping spend time “camped out” in Allen Fieldhouse throughout the entire basketball season in order to be awarded seats in the front or heart of the student section. Being as there is minimal research on why fans participate in these ritualistic events, the purpose of this study was to uncover the motivations of KU basketball campers. To gather a deep interpretation of the overarching motivations of campers, the author conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with students who were participating in KU basketball camping. The results of these interviews discovered the most prevalent motivations to participate in camping to be the game itself, upholding tradition, and their identification with the team. The finding of upholding tradition as a motivation to participate in KU basketball camping was the most novel and deserves the most future consideration, especially in other sport ritualistic behavior contexts. This contribution to the literature also had practical contributions, primarily in sport marketing. This study is useful as motivations for sport fans to participate in rituals has been sparsely examined, and it compliments past research which has found the benefits of ritualistic behavior in sport. This study is impactful, especially as the study of ritualistic behavior involving sport is in its infancy.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The arena of sport provides opportunities for fans and participants to engage in a variety of ritualistic behavior and traditions. Ritualistic behaviors have been shown to create group cohesion and a sense of belonging that people yearn for in group settings (Marshall, 2002; McDonald & Karg, 2014; Rook, 1985). In the sporting realm, the only specific ritualistic behavior that has been studied has been tailgating, and scholars have found motivations beyond the game itself (Drenten, Peters, Leigh, & Hollenbeck, 2009; James, Breezeel, & Ross, 2001). Events such as the Texas A&M “yell practice,” which occurs at midnight the Friday before a Saturday home game, bring thousands of fans together because of the association they have with the team (Texas A&M University – Yell Practice, n.d.). Specifically, an estimated 50,000 fans came together for the first Texas A&M “yell practice” of the 2015 season in the renovated Kyle Field (Peshek, 2015). The fact that these ritualistic behaviors can have such an impact on a fan base warrants the investigation of these individuals’ motivations to attend such events.

The University of Kansas (KU) has its own tradition officially called KU basketball camping, by the athletic department and leadership team, where hundreds of students “camp out” at Allen Fieldhouse prior to each home game. This phenomenon is similar to “A&M’s yell practice” in the way that it brings many fans of a college team together. There is a relative absence of examination in the literature on ritualistic behaviors, with the exception of studies on tailgating by Drenten et al. (2009) and James et al. (2001). A critical examination of a unique event like KU basketball camping is warranted because of the lack of literature on similar events and the importance that these events may play. Even though rituals around sports have been minimally investigated, an individual’s motives behind attending games and being a sport fan has been studied at great length and multiple scales have been formed to measure these

motivations (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann 1995). Since the goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of motivations to camp, a survey questionnaire was incongruent with the study's purpose because simply determining which constructs motivated campers would not examine why or how each motivation was prevalent. Therefore, the author utilized qualitative design to conduct this study. As stated earlier, this study is important because of the lack of research on similar phenomena, with the exception of two tailgating studies and one study on how sport rituals are formed the author was unable to find research conducted on motivations of ritualistic fan behavior (Drenten et al., 2009, James et al., 2001; McDonald & Karg, 2014). Research has found that ritualistic behavior may improve consumption (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs, Wang, Gino, & Norton, 2016) and in the sporting realm ritualistic behavior has been positively correlated with increased merchandise expenditure and game attendance (McDonald & Karg, 2014). Based on the findings from past research the author considered a practical and theoretical examination behind the motivations of fans who participate in ritualistic behaviors around their sport team to be warranted.

The findings from research on tailgating led the author to believe that KU basketball campers have motivations besides attending the game. Events that can bring out many fans, and possibly even attract fans who are not interested in the sport or team, deserve to be studied so that sport marketers and managers can learn how to successfully utilize these ritualistic events. From a marketing stand point, this could be beneficial research because if non-basketball specific motives are apparent, there may be a way to market towards students who are not necessarily basketball fans, but may draw on another motivation that is connected to camping. Practically, discovering the motives of the KU basketball campers could be utilized by other universities, who may be interested in considering creating an identical or similar process for student section

seating. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the motivations behind KU basketball camping, a unique ritual that surrounds KU basketball. It will be worthwhile to investigate if camping is more than just a means to an end and discover what motivates attendance besides the game the event surrounds, as has been discovered with tailgating (Drenten, et al., 2009; James et al., 2001). As James et al. (2001) discovered with tailgating, their participants claimed they would continue tailgating regardless of the team's success, and some who tailgated did not care about the game itself. Studies on tailgating have found multiple motivations for beginning and continuing to tailgate, and many of them do not have to do with the team or the game (Drenten, et al., 2009; James et al., 2001). Although KU basketball camping is similar to tailgating, its context makes it a very unique event.

KU basketball camping, as a student-led and structured process, began in the mid-1980s (Skillet, 2015). This structure was created in response to many students camping outside of Allen Fieldhouse for multiple days at a time (Camping 101, n.d.). The reason camping was created was establish a safe and fair way for dedicated KU students to get the best seats in the student section (Camping 101, n.d.). KU basketball camping appears to be an extreme sport ritual, when considering that it is a process that is scripted and acted out with a sense of formality and seriousness (Rook, 1985). Research involving ritualistic behavior finds that participating in a ritual makes the consumption of the item more beneficial (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs, Wang, Gino, & Norton; 2016). KU basketball camping being an extreme ritual could mean that students feel that camping makes attending the game even better.

As hundreds of students attend a "lottery" at 6:00 a.m. following each home game and anywhere from 50 to 225 groups are created, organized, and follow rules to make sure they keep their spot, KU basketball camping appears to be an important part of attending a game for many

students (Camping 101, n.d.). Similar to tailgating, the extensive commitment and structure that facilitates camping makes it a sports ritual that deserves recognition and research (Marshall, 2002; Rook, 1985). Based on the lack of research on comparable ritualistic behaviors around sport, it is difficult to make assumptions as to what would be the motivations of these students. For the purpose of this study, the author looked at the context of KU basketball camping with the theories behind sport fan motivation, ritualistic behavior, and tailgating as a base.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review will examine the relevant literature that helped frame this study and the research questions. This section will focus on: motivation, sport fan motivation, ritualistic behavior motivation, and ritualistic behavior motivation in sport, as well as how these concepts all related to the motivations of those who participate in KU basketball camping.

Motivation

The sport management literature has drawn on many definitions of motivation, but Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) provide an often relied upon definition of motivation, framing it as “the driving force within individuals that impels them to act” (p. 87). Alternatively Shank (2002) describes motivations as an “internal force that directs behavior towards the fulfillment of needs” (p. 157). According to Shank (2002), motivational factors have a great impact on consumers’ decision-making processes, leading to a focus in the sport management literature on sport consumer motivations. Tokuyama and Greenwell (2011) specifically mention the plethora of sport fan research on the “effects of motivation on various behavioral characteristics, including emotional reactions to games attended, number of games attended, purchase of team merchandise, team related media consumption, and level of spectator support for women’s sport” (p. 149). Motivation of sport consumers, understandably, has garnered significant attention from sport

marketing scholars because understanding the motivations of fans and participants could be beneficial for those in the sport management and sport marketing fields.

There are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual does something because they want to, and the outcome of doing the act is not considered by the individual (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation occurs when someone decides to do something because they are curious or for exploratory reasons. Extrinsic motivation occurs when an individual does something because they are externally motivated by an outcome, oftentimes by a type of reward (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivations can be rewards, such as money or a feeling of accomplishment, but they can also be avoidance of negative consequences. Ryan and Deci (2000) describe the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with an example: “a student may be motivated to do their homework to avoid the negative repercussions from their professor, but they may also be motivated to do their homework because they think it will be beneficial for their education” (p. 60). Scholars have considered both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the sport management literature, as the sport fan motivation scales (which will be discussed below) use both types of motivation. For example the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) by Trail and James (2001) utilizes intrinsic motivations including achievement and eustress as well as extrinsic motivation like the physical attractiveness of the athletes and the aesthetics of the sport itself.

More recently, the validity of the intrinsic-extrinsic model of motivation has been brought into question by multiple scholars. These scholars believe human motivation is multifaceted, meaning it does not just split into two types (Reiss, 2012). A study conducted by Warneken and Tomasello (2008) examined 20 month old children who appeared to lose some of their intrinsic motivation to help because of the praise or reward they were receiving. This study was arguing

that extrinsic motivation can start to impact intrinsic motivation. Scholars are debating and questioning the model of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for its lack of consideration that motivations are multifaceted and for lack of control for variables such as the reward novelty (Reiss, 2012; Warneken & Tomasello, 2008). Motivation is an incredibly complex concept, for the sake of this study the author will consider the often cited and straight forward definition found in Schiffman and Kanuk (2004): “the driving force within individuals that impels them to act” (p. 87). The extensive research on motivation is also apparent in the sport management literature.

Sport Fan Motivation

The importance of sport fan motivation has not gone unnoticed by scholars as sport fan motivation has been researched extensively for decades. Sloan (1989) brought forth and tested early theories of sport fan/participant motivations whereas he considered five theories for his experiment: salubrious effects theories, stress and stimulation seeking theories, catharsis and aggression theories, entertainment theories, and achievement themes. Results from Sloan’s (1989) study only showed significant support for achievement themes to be a likely motivation for attending the sporting events. Although Sloan’s (1989) results did not show significant support for most of the theories he studied, the achievement theme has been a building block for many of the scales created and studies conducted on sport fan motivations.

Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS). According to Wann (1995), the SFMS was constructed to empirically test eight types of sport fan motivations. Wann (1995) states:

Although the specific names given to these motives change from theorist to theorist, most can be categorized into one of eight types: eustress (i.e., positive levels of arousal), self-esteem benefits, escape from everyday life, entertainment, economic factors (i.e. gambling), aesthetic qualities (i.e., artistic), group affiliation, and family needs. (p. 377)

The SFMS scale utilized a 23-item Likert-scale measure (one - this is not at all descriptive of me, to eight – this is very descriptive of me) (Wann, 1995). The 23 questions in the survey all inquired about the individual's main motivations in regards to sports and the questions were broken down where each of the eight categories above had two to three questions that related each construct (Wann, 1995). Utilizing the results from five studies using the SFMS scale, Wann, Schrader, and Wilson (1999) examined possible gender differences in sport fan motivations. In these studies, it was found that male fans were more likely to be motivated by eustress, self-esteem, and aesthetics, whereas female fans were more likely to be motivated by family needs. Trail and James (2001) questioned the validity of SFMS, including the content validity as it was not apparent where the motivations came from or if a panel of scholars examined the list. Another considerable issue with the SFMS regarded construct validity, specifically the eustress and self-esteem motives appeared to load on the same factor and may not be distinct enough constructs (Trail & James, 2001). It was interesting to note that those motivated by economic gain and family may not be sport fans, as only one of the four experiments had a positive correlation with these two subsets and degree of fanship (Wann et al., 1999). Whereas the other six subsets (eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, aesthetic, and group affiliation) were positively correlated with degree of fanship in all four data sets (Wann, et al., 1999). Wann's (1995) seminal work on sport fan motivation, and creation of the SFMS, led many scholars to create more sport fan consumer scales.

Motivations for Sport Consumers (MSC). McDonald, Milne, and Hong (2002) evaluated the MSC scale (McDonald & Hong, 1999), which measured sport consumer motivations and they considered spectators as well as participants for this measurement. The study combined past sport fan motivation research by Sloan (1989) with Maslow's human needs hierarchy. McDonald et al. (2002) considered each of their constructs based on if they fulfilled a deficiency

need, growth need, or could fill both needs, and they broke down deficiency needs as psychological or social needs; as well as growth needs as self-esteem or actualized needs. The 13 constructs selected for their measure were: physical fitness, risk taking, stress reduction, aggression, affiliation, social facilitation, self-esteem, competition, achievement, skill mastery, aesthetics, value development, and self-actualization (McDonald et al., 2002). The concerns that Trail and James (2001) brought up about the MSC had to do with criterion and convergent validity. The main issue with the MSC was that it measured participation as well as spectating and the MSC included constructs, such as skill mastery, that only impact participating and not spectating (Trail & James, 2001). The issues with the two scales above, as well as other less notable scales, encouraged Trail and James (2001) to create a well-developed scale which has become a highly accepted and utilized measurement for sport fan motivation.

Motivations Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC). Trail and James (2001) created the MSSC to attempt to correct the validity issues that were apparent in past scales such as the MSC and SFMS. According to Trail and James (2001) the SFMS had many validity problems, specifically describing the SFMS as such:

Thus, for the SFMS, concerns exist in the areas of content validity, discriminant validity, criterion validity, and to some extent convergent validity. By providing the first effort to operationalize potential motives for sport spectators, the SFMS provides a good starting point for building upon the positive attributes of the scale to develop a new instrument with better psychometric properties. (p. 113)

As for the MSC, the main issue Trail and James (2001) noted was the lack of validation in the construction of the scale, and specifically considered the fact that the MSC was tailored to participating as well as spectating could cause content validity issues.

The MSSC was also distinct in regards to the subjects used to test the validity of the constructs, as Trail and James (2001) administered the scale to season ticket holders for a major league baseball team, whereas most past scales had used college students for their validity test. The rationale behind this was the assumption that season ticket holders are certainly interested in sport, or at least this specific team, making this sample more representative to the population of interest in comparison to past sport fan motivation scales (Trail & James, 2001). The MSSC measured nine motivation constructs, utilizing a 27 item survey to measure the nine factors, and in their initial study they also used a three-item scale to measure level of team identification, the number of games attended, and a self-rating of fanship of the team (Trail & James, 2001). The nine constructs measured by the MSSC were: achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, drama/eustress, escape, family, physical attractiveness of participants, the quality of the physical skill of the participants, and social interactions (Trail & James, 2001). These motives were measured in this scale by very specifically worded items attempting to avoid confusion, and experts in the field were consulted to evaluate the constructs (Trail & James, 2001). The MSSC has been utilized and adapted for many studies and deserves consideration when examining sport fan motivations. Not only was KU basketball camping examined with the past sport fan motivation literature in mind, the author also had to consider ritualistic behavior and specifically, literature on tailgating motivations.

Ritualistic Behavior Motivation

The ritual of KU basketball camping dates back to the 1970's and has become a much more structured and attended event in recent years (Official Rules). Dennis Rook (1985) defines ritual as a "type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time. Ritual behavior is dramatically scripted

and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity” (p. 252). This definition affirms that KU basketball camping is a ritual as it is acted out under strict rules after every game, has gone on for many years, and is overseen by a “leadership team.” (Official Rules).

The motivations behind engaging in ritualistic behavior has been tested in a few settings whereas some studies have shown that a ritualistic process involving consuming (food or drink) makes the item “special” or makes consuming the item more enjoyable (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs, et al., 2016). Watson-Jones and Legare (2016) investigated group rituals in the social living context and found that rituals serve four purpose in social group living: “(a) provide reliable markers of group membership, (b) demonstrate commitment to the group, (c) facilitate cooperation with social coalitions, and (d) increase social group cohesion” (p. 45). In these examples, rituals appear to make the final product more enjoyable and can lead to a strong group connectedness or cohesion.

Ritualistic behavior in children has also been studied, and has similar findings from the studies involving adults. Wen, Herrmann, and Legare’s (2015) findings were consistent with studies conducted on adults, and found that children who participated in ritualistic behavior had an increased affiliation with in-group members. Zohar and Felz (2001) found that young children’s amount of ritualistic behavior was correlated with their level of fears including monsters, strangers, night-terrors, and harm, and ritualistic behavior was often used as a type of coping mechanism. Research on ritualistic behavior in children has shown they can form early, and are motivated greatly by the idea of group cohesion as well (Wen et al., 2015; Zohar & Felz, 2001). As found with children and adults, ritualistic behavior can increase group cohesion, and can improve how people experience events.

Scholars have demonstrated that ritualistic behavior can improve consumption (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs, et al., 2016), can be motivated by the need for group cohesion (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016; Wen et al., 2015), and are found in individuals at an early age (Wen et al., 2015; Zohar & Felz, 2001). Research on ritualistic behavior as well as sport fan motivations are abundant, but ritualistic behavior in sport has been sparsely researched.

Ritualistic Behavior Motivation in Sport

When it comes to rituals in sports, it has been compared to religion in some of the cult like ways sport fans demonstrate ritualistic behavior (McDonald & Karg, 2014). McDonald and Karg (2014) considered research by Turner (1969) and defined a ritual as “ritual involves obligation, and that all members of a society should follow the rules of the ritual. They are likely to feel a sense of guilt or a fear of being an ‘outsider’ if they act differently from those who follow the rules and conventions of sports” (pg. 296). Since KU basketball camping operates as a ritual, participation may allow student fans to avoid being an ‘outsider’ which could lead them to feel obligated to continue or begin camping.

McDonald and Karg (2014) conducted a study on fans of new teams in a soccer league that played in Australia and New Zealand; they were studying how rituals formed and what benefits were received from those who participated in rituals. Their study showed that rituals were formed quickly and completely by the fans, with no prompting from the team, specifically the fans in this study listed over twenty rituals that were participated in because of the team or game (McDonald & Karg, 2014). The findings by McDonald and Karg (2014) were similar to research on ritualistic behavior but also expanded on this in the sports context stating, “sport fans undertake ritual behaviors to improve social bonds, enhance pleasure, and as an attempt to standardize the quality of their experience, given inherently unpredictable outcomes (i.e. game results)” (p. 304). Overall,

the study by McDonald and Karg (2014) discovered that the fan created rituals enhanced the atmosphere of the game for participants and non-participants alike, and because of this acted as a motivation to attend the games.

The only ancillary sporting event that utilizes ritualistic behavior that has gotten attention, albeit minimal, has been tailgating. James et al. (2001) conducted interviews and surveys with fans participating in tailgating and part of their purpose was to examine why fans began tailgating as well as why these fans continued to tailgate. Interestingly, 35% of respondents did not recall why they began to tailgate, but friends, family, part of the game, and fun all showed to be significant reasons for fans to start tailgating (James et al., 2001). As for continuing to tailgate, the biggest factor was social interaction, where 39% of respondents claimed this was their reason to continue. Drinking and food were the second and third most popular reasons to continue tailgating, at 19% and 17%, respectively, but appeared not to be a reason to start tailgating, instead food and drink were aspects that enhanced and impacted continual tailgating (James et al., 2001).

Drenten et al. (2009) expanded on the motivations of football tailgating and discovered that tailgating goes beyond the game, and had multiple motivations behind participation. According to the authors, “commitment to the ritual of tailgating is driven by motives that consist of yin-yang type contradictions which tailgaters negotiate and attempt to balance over time” (p. 95). The authors proposed that tailgating is not driven by single motives, but instead “by the process of negotiation the related contradictions (e.g., camaraderie and competition) that embody particular basic motives (e.g., social interaction)” (p. 95). The specific motivations discovered in this study included: involvement (preparation and participation), social interaction (camaraderie and competition), inter-temporal sentiment (retrospection and prospection), and identity (collectivism and individualism) (Drenten et al., 2009).

The Drenten et al. (2009), James et al. (2001), and McDonald and Karg (2014) studies on ritual fan motivation set the basis for the expected outcomes that the author found most reasonable. Based on the past sport management literature, the motivations the author concluded may be apparent in KU basketball camping include: the game itself, upholding tradition, team identification, and social interaction.

The game itself. This motive relates back to the research that shows ritualistic behavior may improve that actual consumption of the item (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs et al., 2016). Also, the motivation the author calls “the game itself” is most comparable to the sport consumption motivation that was labeled entertainment in past sport fan motivation literature (McDonald et al., 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Entertainment has been found to be a strong motivator of attendance this was apparent in James and Ross (2004) who stated, “the entertainment of sport that is likely drawn from the drama physical skill and action associated with sport are motives that may serve as topics for promotional campaigns regardless of the sport or the level of sport” (p. 24). Wann et al. (2008) studied motivation across many different sports and found that entertainment was the strongest motivating agent for each sport that they examined. Entertainment has been found to be a strong and often used motivating factor to attend a game, and being a part of a game has been even more specifically examined when it comes to the tailgating literature.

When it comes to tailgating, the studies conducted by James et al. (2001) and Drenten et al. (2009) had participants who considered tailgating simply a “part of the game.” James et al. (2001) included a motivation which they called “game” and it asked questions involving whether or not tailgating was important to attending a game. Specifically, the survey asked participants whether or not they would attend a game without tailgating, and if tailgating made attending a game “complete” (James et al., 2001). Research on rituals and tailgating, the research of a

phenomenon most similar to KU basketball camping both have aspects that could create a motivation to participate similar to being a “part of the game.” If participating in a ritual makes the consumption of the item or activity better, for KU basketball camping that would be attending the game, it could be the case that camping was motivated by the game and how it improved the game.

Upholding tradition. Drenten et al. (2009) had multiple tailgater’s state that it was simply a tradition, one stating “I mean, it’s a big part of your life like any family tradition” (p. 101). The study by Drenten et al. (2009) was the most in-depth look at motivations of tailgating, and the scholars found “longing for the past” and “tradition” as parts of the inter-temporal sentiment motivation. Although upholding tradition has only been examined and discovered as a motivation in one particular study, it was found in the study that was most relevant to the context of KU basketball camping (Drenten et al., 2009). The long standing tradition of KU basketball and KU basketball camping could be a motivating factor for students to begin and continue to participate in camping.

Drenten et al. (2009) even compared the traditional manner of tailgating to the way holiday traditions are upheld and repeated. Holidays rely upon strong traditions, families create and react traditions each year at the time of the holiday, which makes these traditions very ritualized (Etzioni & Bloom, 2004). Etzioni and Bloom (2004) even question whether the commitment to holidays would suffer if the traditions that make up these holidays were to be changed or even reengineered. Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) conducted a longitudinal study on how multiple families conduct their Thanksgiving holiday each year and one of their primary findings was how important it was to continue, or negotiation changes when made, the tradition’s from past years. According to Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry (1989), items or events that are deemed sacred, or become rituals are

conducted or consumed with the idea of upholding the tradition and with a great deal of seriousness.

Research on how “upholding tradition” can be a motivation for ritualistic events is sparse, but has been found in the most relevant literature to this study. As the Drenten et al. (2009) study was the most similar to the current study, their findings that upholding tradition was a motivation to continue tailgating was an extremely important consideration when researching KU basketball camping.

Team identification. According to Wann and Branscombe (1993), many authors believe the most highly identified fans are those supporting college teams. Having the basketball team play on campus could increase the number of “local fans” who according to Hunt, Bristol, and Bashaw (1999) are fans that exhibit fan like behaviors because of their identification with a geographic area. The success of KU basketball plays a role in their fan base as well, as they may have accumulated many “fair-weather fans” which Wann and Branscombe (1990) define as “persons who seem to join in the fun when the team is performing well (i.e., they take advantage of the association and bask in its successful glow)” (p. 111). According to Wann and Branscombe (1993), highly identified fans often invest more time and show more involvement than fans who are not as strongly identified with the team. Based on the increased involvement that KU basketball camping entails, it is possible that these fans are highly identified and may be motivated to camp by their identity.

Drenten et al. (2009) considered identity one of their four main motives, and this motivation was separated into collectivism and individualism. Collectivism included representing their school colors and saying “we” when talking about the team, whereas individualism created a hierarchy of fans as the tailgaters could consider themselves the “true” or “die-hard” fans (Drenten

et al., 2009). Throughout their study, Drenten et al. (2009) found that tailgaters were very proud of their perfect attendance of tailgating at every game or how they continue to tailgate even if they woke up with a fever. Tailgating might create a hierarchy of fans, where tailgaters feel they are more committed fans, and as a result many likely enjoy identifying with the group of “committed fans” (Drenten et al., 2009). As participating in KU basketball camping is a sign of being an identified fan, and because the most closely related study on tailgating found identity to be a strong motivator it was imperative that the author considered identity while researching KU basketball camping.

Social interaction. Throughout research on tailgating, social interaction was a very prevalent motivation (Drenten et al., 2009 & James et al., 2001). James et al. (2001) found that social interaction was the biggest motivator to continue to tailgate, and Drenten et al. (2009) considered social interaction one of their main four motivations for tailgating. McDonald and Karg (2014) found that rituals created by the fans increased social bonds with other fans. Both the SFMS and MSSC utilize a motivation of social interaction/group affiliation, and proved to be a powerful motivation in team sports such as basketball (Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008). Also, Trail et al. (2000) stated how prevalent social interaction as a motivation has been in the sport management literature, “Many authors have suggested that spectators are motivated to attend games because of a need for interaction with others” (p. 160).

The strongest association with social interaction and game attendance are the findings by Yoshida, Gordon, Heere, and James (2015) on the impact of fan community attachment on attendance. These scholars define fan community attachment as “the intrinsic connection that fan community members feel toward one another and the collective sense of difference from others not in the fan community” (p. 107). In fact, in one study, fan community attachment was the only

significant predictor found for repeat attendance, whereas team identification, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions all were not found to be significant predictors for repeat attendance (Yoshida, Heere, & Gordon, 2015). If fan community attachment has a strong impact on attendance for sport fans, then it would make sense that it may be a strong motivation for attending ancillary sporting events.

Research on ritualistic behavior has demonstrated that group affiliation is an important aspect and motivation of participation (Watson-Jones & Legare, 2016; Wen et al., 2015). Wen et al. (2015) found that children who performed rituals increased their in-group affiliations, and Watson-Jones and Legare (2016) found group cohesion to be an outcome of social group ritualistic behaviors. As social interaction is very prevalent in past literature regarding sport consumption, ritualistic behavior, and tailgating, it deserved strong consideration for this study.

The goal of this study was to discover the motivations of individuals to participate in KU basketball camping. The focus of the research relied on literature involving motivation, sport fan motivation, ritualistic behavior, and ritualistic behaviors involving sport. Specifically this study attempted to answer the broad research questions below, as they pertain to the overarching question of what are the motivations of KU basketball camper's participation. Therefore, the specific research questions for this investigation are as follows:

RQ1: How does the KU basketball fan experience impact student's motivation to camp?

RQ2: What role does "upholding tradition" play in motivating students to participate in camping?

RQ3: How does an individual's fan identification with the team play a role in their motivation to camp?

RQ4: How do various social memberships (fraternity/sorority, club sport team, etc.) influence individual's motivation to camp?

Chapter 3: Methods

The following sections detail the process the author went through to collect and analyze data for this study as well as explore the background of the KU basketball program as well as KU basketball camping. Specifically, the following sections will explain who took part in the study, how these individuals were selected, the overall design of the study, as well as how the data was analyzed and the process the author went through to insure reliability and validity.

Content

As KU basketball camping is such a unique process and is fostered by the historic success of the KU basketball program, the author thought it was important to detail both of these cases. Below the author has given a brief depiction of the historic success and beginnings of both KU basketball and KU basketball camping.

History of KU basketball. The tradition of KU basketball begins with the first man to oversee their basketball program, Dr. James Naismith (Rains, 2009). It was only seven years after Dr. Naismith had created the game of basketball that he was named the Head of the Department of Physical Education, and his job description included teaching, overseeing athletics and leading daily chapel service (Rains, 2009). Nowhere in Dr. Naismith's job description did it include coaching a basketball team, but only three months into his tenure at Kansas he had begun selecting players for the first men's basketball team (Rains, 2009). As basketball had spread quickly, it was already played across many areas in Kansas, but was viewed more as a "women's sport" and had received little attention (Hecker, 2004).

In February of 1899, KU participated in their first men's varsity basketball game and lost 16-5 loss to a Kansas City YMCA team, in which Dr. Naismith officiated (Rains, 2009). At this time, the dribble was not yet a part of the game and the KU team was considered to be at a great

disadvantage as they played their home games at a skating rink, much different from how the YMCA was set up (Hecker, 2004). Surprisingly, Dr. Naismith is the only KU basketball coach to ever hold a losing record (55-60) (Rains, 2009). The tradition of KU basketball begins with the inventor of the game itself, but it has been continued by consistent success ever since.

The second coach in KU basketball history was Dr. F.C. “Phog” Allen, who was a player at KU under Dr. Naismith (Kerkhoff, 1996). Dr. Allen was much more involved in coaching and considered basketball a competitive game, whereas Dr. Naismith saw the game to be more an effective way for people to stay active (Kerkhoff, 1996). Dr. Allen was regarded by many as the “father of basketball coaching” and was integral in getting basketball into the Olympic games in 1936 (Phog Allen, n.d.). Dr. Phog Allen coached basketball at KU for 39 years and accumulated 590 wins, while also serving as the athletic director for many of those years (Kerkhoff, 1996; Phog Allen, n.d.). KU’s historic basketball program benefited from having such a strong influence from the creator of the game and the “father of basketball coaching” but more than that the team has been extremely successful which has built on to the great tradition.

In more recent memory, the KU basketball program has continued to be extremely successful on the court, as the team has not had a losing season since the 1982-1983 season (Sports Reference – Kansas Jayhawks). In that 33 year span, the team has also only missed one NCAA tournament, and has finished a season ranked in the AP top five 12 times (Sports Reference – Kansas Jayhawks). Also, this reign has been led by three highly regarded head coaches, Larry Brown, Roy Williams, and Bill Self, all three of these most recent head coaches at KU never had a losing record (Sports Reference – Kansas Jayhawks). KU has also had great individual players on these teams as 44 of their student athletes have played in the NBA over

KU's 33 years of dominant performance (Sports Reference – NBA and ABA players who attended the University of Kansas).

Combining the importance of the men who began and helped grow the KU basketball program with the historic, and especially recent, success allows KU to be considered one of the most historic and successful college basketball programs ever. When considering how the team has not had a losing season since 1982-1983, it is no surprise that the formation of the camping process began around that time.

History of KU basketball camping. KU basketball camping, as a student-led and structured process, began in the mid-1980s during the Larry Brown era (Skillet, 2015). It has grown rapidly in popularity and gone through many changes. Starting in the 1970's students camped outside of Allen Fieldhouse to get the best seats, and the best seats were given to those who began camping the earliest (Camping 101, n.d.). Students were allowed to camp inside Allen Fieldhouse, at times, during the mid-1980s but the best seats were still given to those who showed up the earliest (Mills & Steiner, 1985). Following an incident in the early 1990's at Kansas State involving a student being attacked while camping overnight, the administration at KU decided to implement a rule that camping could only be conducted between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. (Erickson, 1996). The administration's decision to disallow camping overnight is the only aspect in which they aided in creating what is now known as KU basketball camping. During the time that camping was still outside Allen Fieldhouse, staff ran extension cords to campers to allow them to use space heaters and other electronic devices, yet one day this process blew multiple fuses in Allen Fieldhouse and that was when camping was required to come inside (Camping 101, n.d.). It is unclear when exactly the lottery system began, where it was no longer the first people camping got the best seats, but this system has been in place since at least 1998 (Burner, 1998).

The purpose of camping is to give a safe environment and a more fair opportunity for the best seats in the student section. After each home game, there is a lottery the following morning (6:00 a.m. on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. on weekends) (Camping 101, n.d.). For lottery, each group draws one number for every five people they have in attendance (up to six), and the lowest number they draw is the one they use, the lower the number the closer they are to the front of the line on game day (Camping 101, n.d.). Once groups have drawn spots, they are responsible to have a representative from their group in their location every weekday from 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on weekends, unless the leadership team, or a unanimous vote by campers, suspends camping. Roll can be called by any camper, and if a camping group is not represented at that time they are moved to the back of the list (Camping 101, n.d.). Once game day arrives, camping is suspended three hours prior to the game; and the groups are then awarded their official numbers, based on who has been crossed off the list and added to the bottom, and they then line up and enter the game two hours before tip-off. The students who camp are the first few hundred fans allowed into Allen Fieldhouse for each game (Camping 101, n.d.).

Participants

All research subjects were University of Kansas students who were participating in camping at the time that they were asked to be interviewed. For the purpose of this qualitative study, the author interviewed 30 students from different camping groups. The sampling method for these interviews was purposive sampling, which Maxwell (2013) describes as “selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need to answer your research questions” (p. 97). As the purpose of this study was to discover the motivation of KU students to camp, it was appropriate to purposefully select students who were

camping to partake in this study. To select participants, the author asked campers in different areas of the hallway where camping was held, to avoid getting campers of the same group, if they were willing to take part in a short interview regarding their camping experience. The participants in this study ranged from ages 18-28 and were all students at KU, ranging from undergraduate freshman to second year graduate students. The interviews were conducted with 16 male and 14 female student campers.

Research Design

The author conducted this study using a qualitative design, which Maxwell (2013) describes saying that during a qualitative study, “any component of the design may need to be reconsidered or modified during the study in response to new developments or to changes in some other component” (p. 2). Qualitative, or field research, is appropriate when the purpose is to gather a deep understanding of a social phenomenon (Babbie, 2007). In this study, the author specifically conducted a phenomenology, which according to Johnson and Christensen (2004) can be defined as “descriptions of one or more individuals’ consciousness and experiences of a phenomenon” (p. 364). Phenomenological research is utilized to discover what a specific phenomenon means to the individuals in the study and even more so, the goal is to discover the overall essence of the experience for participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). While conducting a phenomenology, there is an assumption that there is some commonality in human experience, meaning even through the uniqueness of individuals there will be shared experiences, and it is these shared experiences that are most coveted in a phenomenology (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). As the author planned to discover a deep meaning of the motivations to participate in KU basketball camping, such as why a motivation was apparent and

what aspects of the motivation were strongest, the author deemed a phenomenology to be the most appropriate design.

The author utilized semi-structured interviews (see appendix 1 for interview protocol), which is constructed using a few predetermined questions and many possible prompts to help guide the interview (Petty, Thompson, & Stew, 2012). Qualitative interviewing design is adaptable, and unlike surveys or other quantitative methods can change throughout the process (Babbie, 2007). When conducted correctly, qualitative interviews are primarily a discussion where the interviewee does most of the talking (Babbie, 2007). Petty et al. (2012) described semi-structured interviews as, “the researcher uses the rigidity of the structured interview but leaves some flexibility in the protocol to alter the sequence of questions or probe for more in-depth responses by means of follow-up questions” (p. 97). These interviews are advantageous because of the flexibility, as research questions can be adapted throughout the process as new trends or concepts are discovered. The author’s usage of predetermined questions was to discover what motivated each student to attend basketball games, why they were fans of KU Basketball, and what made KU basketball special. Additional questions and follow up questions were in place to try to develop an understanding of what motivated the campers specifically to camp, and how that differed from their motivations to attend games.

The author conducted interviews on four separate dates; these dates were intentionally selected as they were each within a few days of different games. The rationale for conducting interviews close to separate game days, was that camping would be less likely to be suspended, and that different individuals would camp for different games. Conducting interviews on different days, before multiple games assisted the author in creating more variability in his sample, which was important as the goal of this study was to discover overarching motivations

for camping participants. The interviews were conducted in the media room which was next to the area of Allen Fieldhouse in which students were present while camping. A separate room was utilized for interviews to avoid distractions and to ensure good quality of the audio recordings.

Analysis

A third party who was contracted by the author transcribed all of the interviews. The third party transcriber's profession in the legal field and background in transcribing qualified assist the author with the transcribing. Also, the third party who transcribed had no connection to the basketball team, University of Kansas, or the author. As someone other than the interviewer transcribed the interviews there was the possibility of issues involving the "transcriptionist effect" (MacLean, Meyer, & Estable, 2004). According to MacLean et al. (2004), there are five types of possible errors from the transcriptionist effect including: misinterpretation of content, unfamiliar terminology, response to emotion-laden tape content, class and cultural differences, and language-specific errors. Of the possible errors, unfamiliar terminology was the biggest concern, and the author corrected this by open communication with the transcriptionist and by listening to the audio recordings for accuracy in areas that discussed KU or basketball specific terminology. After evaluating the transcription for accuracy, the author used open coding to search for trends in the interviews. According to Elo and Kyngas (2007) open coding helps create categories and abstractions, and has the researcher create headings and notes in the margins of the text as they are read through. Once the documents have been transcribed, or coded initially, the researcher again goes through and evaluates the headings and notes to create categories (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch (2011) describe how codes can be theory-driven (deductive) or data-driven (inductive), "codes can be developed a priori from existing theory or concepts (theory-driven); they can emerge from the raw data (data-

driven); or they can grow from a specific project's research goals and questions (structural), with most codes being theory- or data-driven" (p. 137-138). For this study, the author used theory-driven and data-driven coding, first the author coded the transcriptions just considering the raw data, and the second time, coded the data with the past literature and theories in mind.

Specifically, the author utilized descriptive coding, which is effective when trying to find common trends among research because it takes interview questions or field notes and allows the researcher to give it a label of a single word or short phrase (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Reliability can be defined as the consistency of the results discovered by the author (Pederson & McEvoy, 2011). For qualitative research, reliability requires the author to "sort out their own biases and points of view" (Babbie, 2007, p. 314). Validity refers to how accurately the study measured the designed purpose, or simply how well did the study investigate what it was intended to measure (Pederson & McEvoy, 2011). To declare the research reliable and valid, the author used five verification strategies from Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) which includes, (1) methodological coherence, (2) appropriate sample population, (3) collecting and analyzing concurrently, (4) thinking theoretically, and (5) theory development.

Methodological coherence is the process of keeping consistency between the research questions and the method, in qualitative research this is vital because aspects of the method may be altered as data is collected (Morse et al., 2002). When changes to the method are made, such as additional interview questions, they must be warranted by necessity as well as continue to follow the overall methodological assumption (Morse et al., 2002). Throughout the data collection, the author made changes to the semi-structured interviews that were needed to gain a better understanding of the motivations of the campers. These changes did not disrupt the

reliability of the study because as Morse et al. (2002) state changes to the methods that are warranted and follow the overall methodical assumption allow the research to be reliable.

Morse et al. (2002) describe having an appropriate sample to include having “participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic” (p. 12). According to Morse et al. (2002), it is also necessary that the sample reaches saturation and includes negative cases, as these are both important to ensuring validity. The purposive sampling of students who were currently camping was the author’s way of collecting an appropriate sample, as the purpose of this study was to discover the motivations and KU basketball campers. The author only selected people who were camping, because they would be able to answer questions regarding their motivations to participate.

Collecting and analyzing the data concurrently is important as it creates an interaction between “what is known and what one needs to know” (Morse et al., 2002, p. 12). Collecting and analyzing data at the same time allows the author to make any adjustments deemed necessary throughout the research and can lead to theory development or the creation of new theories. When the author made adjustments, it was to increase the validity of the data collection, as all of the adjustments were made to move the data collection to be more congruent with the purpose of the study.

Thinking theoretically is important because it allows research to build upon past research as well as give scholars new ideas for research (Morse et al., 2002). Morse et al. (2002) states that theoretical thinking also requires: “macro-micro perspectives, inching forward without making cognitive leaps, constantly checking and rechecking, and building a solid foundation” (p. 13). Thinking theoretically can include considering past theories, sport fan motivations and tailgating motivations, as well as considering theories which develop throughout the coding

process. While coding, the author was building on the motivation theoretical framework, and constantly going back and seeing if the new codes were matching up with the past coding. This step is important for the validity of the research as the author is constrained by this and not allowed to make “cognitive leaps” that may be speculative and not theory driven.

The last portion of validity is theory development, which is explained by Morse et al. (2002)

...theory is developed through two mechanisms: (1) as an outcome of the research process, rather than being adopted as a framework to move the analysis along; and (2) as a template for comparison and further development of the theory. Valid theories are well developed and informed, they are comprehensive, logical, parsimonious, and consistent.

(p. 13)

Developing theory and having an outcome of the research process is the final step and is important for upholding validity. Any new theory that is developed from studies must be “well developed, informed, comprehensive, logical, parsimonious, and consistent” (Morse et al., 2013, p. 13). The author strived to meet all of these aspects in the theory development and by doing so was increasing the validity of the study.

Morse et al. (2002) contend that these five points of verification build on the validity and reliability of qualitative data by ensuring rigor:

Together, all of these verification strategies incrementally and interactively contribute to and build reliability and validity, thus ensuring rigor. Thus, the rigor of qualitative inquiry should thus be beyond question, beyond challenge, and provide pragmatic scientific evidence that must be integrated into our developing knowledge base. (p. 13)

Utilizing Morse et al.'s five steps of verification, the author is confident that the discoveries of this research should be valid and reliable.

Chapter 4: Results

From the analysis of the transcriptions the author discovered the relevant findings and those findings are displayed in this section. The results of the authors open coding primarily fell into three main motivation categories: the game itself, upholding tradition, and team identity. Below, the author categorized each overarching motivation to detail how the motivation emerged from the data, providing context for the finding as well as illustrating it with direct quotes.

The Game Itself

The game itself refers to the students being motivated to camp because they wanted to attend the game. This most prevalent theme of the game itself emerged because students considered camping primarily a means to an end, where camping was simply a process they participated in to guarantee a good seat in the student section. While the “game itself” was an obvious overall motivation, it broke down to three sub-categories including getting “better seats,” wanting to sit in the atmosphere of the student section, and how camping had become an essential part of attending the game. These three sub-categories are examined below.

Better seats. The first and most prevalent motivation involving the game itself, was the motivation to obtain “better seats.” The notion that the students were camping to get the best seats was very consistent throughout, as students answered what their primary motivation to camp was or what the main benefit of camping was with comments like “Ah, just, going to the games made me want to camp, so I could get good seats for the game” and “I love KU basketball, so at all times I want the best seats I can possibly have.” The statement below

described how participating in camping allows students to get better seats, and how it would he/she would be less motivated to attend the game without camping:

I think it would be a harder sell for me to show up to the game if I didn't have a good seat because the campers get the better seats. If you're in the long line, the longer student admission line you're gonna be, you know, have a worse seat, I think that would be a harder sell for me to get to the game.

The comment above gave more substance to the question of why they continue to camp. On the surface, it appeared the primary motivation to camp was to get "better seats" but when examined at length, other aspects of the game itself emerged as motivations, including the atmosphere of the student section.

Student section atmosphere. Within the notion of the game itself, the game atmosphere was an aspect that was a dominant overall motivator for camping. The atmosphere appeared to be the factor of attending the game that motivated the students to obtain these "better seats," and this was best depicted by the quote below:

I continue to camp because I love KU, I love going to KU basketball games, I love the atmosphere, I love being a part of the student section and kind of being that sixth man that everybody talks about when they come to Allen Fieldhouse. I really enjoy feeling a part of, you know, feeling a part of the team, the atmosphere and everything that makes Allen Fieldhouse great. And it's, for those of us who, you know, aren't a five star McDonald's All-American, it's our way of being able to be a part of Kansas basketball.

This student described how important the game atmosphere is for students who partake in KU basketball camping. Experiencing the atmosphere of the student section was another prominent motivation involving attending the game, and the campus's overall desire to sit in the student

section is likely what led to KU basketball camping becoming the ritual that it is today, and in this led to another theme involving the game, as camping had become a part of attending a KU basketball game.

A part of the process. The third sub-section involving the motivation of the game itself was how camping had become a part of attending a KU basketball game. It was an apparent motivation as campers would attend a game if they did not camp for, but it would not feel the same. When asked if camping was a part of the game, students insisted it was, and it was a part of the game beyond just getting better seats or sitting in the student section. One camper explained how camping impacted the overall process of attending a KU basketball game:

Yeah, I'd say it's part of the process. It's part of getting ready and you know, I mean, going to a KU basketball game is exactly that; it's a process. It's a lottery, it's camping, it's organizing when you guys are going to get in line to for when the doors open, it's actually getting in line and getting through the door, it's figuring out, ok are we going band side or are we going nearside, for where we're going to sit, and all that stuff, and like I said, it is a process and there's a lot of steps to it and I don't really think of it is as anything extra, I think of it as just another step to getting in the door, really.

The comment above displayed the overall concept that camping had become an essential aspect of attending a KU basketball game. Another camper discussed how camping had become part of attending basketball games and how it made her focus on the game all week and even got her hyped for the game:

Yeah, definitely. I never went to basketball stuff in high school, I didn't care for basketball at all in high school. I like KU basketball, but it definitely makes me feel more like a part of the school and like. It's very easy to sit in your dorm room and not go

anywhere and, I mean, I would have days where there's a football game and I would wake up at noon and be like, oh there was a game today, wasn't there, but it didn't really make a difference in whether or not like my happiness, like whether or not I went, but like with camping, it kind of gets you hyped up for the game, it gets you excited for the game and you want to go.

This student discussed how camping made her more excited for the game and in a sense made the upcoming game stay on their mind for the entire week. This student even discussed how she would not realize when a KU Football game was being held, which would not be possible for her to do with basketball as she camps all week. Throughout the data collection, camping as a part of the KU basketball experience emerged as an overarching motivation.

When questioned about the main reason or motivation to camp, the theme that emerged the most had to do with the game itself. The game itself seemed to be the strongest motivation throughout the KU basketball community, and fell into the three sub-categories of better seats, the student section atmosphere, and that camping had become a part of the process behind attending a game. Beyond the game itself, there seemed to be another overarching motivation to camp that was embedded in a feeling of upholding tradition.

Upholding Tradition

Besides attending the game, one of the most salient motivations to camp was the feeling of upholding a tradition. The motivation to uphold tradition involved not only KU basketball tradition, but also being a student at the University of Kansas as well. The motivation of upholding tradition was depicted well by a student who believed camping added a great deal to the KU basketball tradition:

I do; I think it's just a part of, you know, obviously the tradition's so rich, that's kind of the cool thing that's drawn me in. And I get the chills every game, like no matter what, I've seen a million times, you know, I've been through the whole thing a millions times, I always get the chills every game, and I'm always like...I think that camping, although it kind of sucks because it is a long process, it is, you know, very detailed, it's very you know, for everyone, it's just kind of hard, especially, with college kids, we have busy schedules. But, I think it is very important for the tradition.

In this example, the student even admitted that KU basketball camping was not a process that he enjoyed greatly, but understood how important it was to uphold this as part of KU basketball tradition. Another way students believed they were upholding tradition was by connecting camping to being a part of the student experience at KU. A student who was in the foreign exchange program and was spending only one year at KU, went as far to describe camping as being a part of being a student when discussing what kind of tradition KU basketball camping entails:

I think there's an element of that, which is quite nice. And that's what we said with the Kentucky game is, oh, you have to do the proper camping once because we're only here for a year but like, okay, we've got to do this once to be proper KU students. So, yeah, there was an element of that definitely.

This student learned about camping in the orientation program, and she stated how the group of exchange students would find out from friends which games they "had" to camp for to get the best seats. Also, it shows how important camping is to part of the student population as this exchange student saw camping as a part of being "a proper KU student." Another student who was born and raised a Kansas basketball fan, made a statement similar to the one above:

...I want the full experience of being a KU student and so camping is part of that, like camping is kind of a universal KU student experience, I feel like. And in my opinion, if you're a KU student and you don't camp, you're missing out on part of that experience. Like, my roommate doesn't even have basketball tickets. And I can't imagine going to KU and not getting basketball tickets.

KU basketball camping appeared to be an important aspect of being a student at the university based on the responses of the students in this study. The importance of upholding or adding to the tradition of KU basketball was a prevalent theme.

Another student, who was aware of camping before coming to KU, responded to what influenced him/her to start camping: "Yeah, I mean I was always, but I feel like everyone around me always did it so I was just like, it would be weird not to." This student felt it would be weird not to camp, and he had this feeling before even stepping foot on KU's campus as a student.

One student discussed how the tradition of KU basketball camping enhances the tradition of KU basketball and allows students to feel more connected to the team as well:

I would say it is to a degree, it's one of the things that helps contribute to making KU basketball special. It's part of the tradition. It's not the entire tradition, but whereas the team has, this is where basketball started, and Naismith coached here, and all that other sort of stuff, this is how camping starts. This is the tradition that students, regardless of whether or not they're here for four years or if they're one of the players out on the court it's their way of getting involved, their way of participating.

This student believed camping added to the tradition of KU basketball, and allowed students to participate in the game in a way larger than that of a typical spectator. KU basketball camping appeared to be a way that students could feel connected to the team itself. One student observed

the aspect they liked most about camping had to do with the traditions of basketball, camping, and Allen Fieldhouse:

...the thing that I particularly think that I like the most about camping is that it's unique and it also allows, in my opinion, it's a direct, it directly implicates the environment that you have during the games, meaning that I don't think it's a stretch to say that Allen Fieldhouse is part of reason why they have won so many consecutive basketball championships. I mean, and at least this is going off what the ESPN announcers have said, just that a lot of the time, it's hard to win in Allen Fieldhouse. That being said, it's because of the environment, there's a huge tradition in the building, there's a huge tradition around the program and just the fact that camping I don't want to say a weed out process, but it's definitely a how committed process are you, that you get students in there that are sitting in those front forty or fifty rows that really, really want to be there and put the work into being there and so when they get to be there, when they pull that one spot at lottery or groups that they might cross of during the camping process and they end up sitting in that front row, they're ready to go.

This observation also suggested that students who camp are proving how committed they are and because of this commitment in a sense they "earn" the best seats in the student section. This specific quote also suggested that camping makes these students more amped and ready to attend this game. As campers appeared to believe that being committed was a part of camping, there was also a common theme that campers were strongly identified with the KU basketball team, and team identification also proved to be one of the primary motivations for students who participate in KU basketball camping.

Team Identity

Overall, students in this study described themselves as die-hard KU basketball fans, and this proved to be an important motivation factor for why students began and continued to camp.

This regular camper explained what he believed made them a die-hard KU basketball fan:

Since, I hate to say this, but since I've come to KU I've probably missed more classes than I have KU basketball games. Whether or not that was my choice or not, it's honest, I've probably missed more classes than I have KU basketball games so I consider that to be one of the die-hard factors and I think I kind of also associate emotionally with KU basketball and how they do. I remember watching the game, both the games in Ames this season, and again more in town this season then we lost both, I just remember yelling at the TV, turned off the game with a minute left because I couldn't bear to watch another court get stormed when we lost. Just things like that.

This student described how strongly they identified with the team, and this strong identity and connection to the team was an overarching motivation to participate in camping. Another student talked about the dedication students who camped showed and how these students feel connected to the team and athletics:

Yeah, I would say. I think that most of the students here who are camping are usually pretty dedicated to the team, and I think it's really awesome that athletics even pitches in to provide, like food sometimes, or different things that they do. I think that really makes all the students, including myself, feel really connected to athletics and the team and whatnot.

Overall, based on the interviews conducted it appeared KU basketball campers were highly identified to the basketball team and this influenced their motivation to begin and continue camping.

Beyond just being identified KU basketball fans, a theme that emerged was that these campers were possibly more committed KU basketball fans, and this quote depicts that concept well:

Well, yeah, everyone's done it as far as I know, so I'm not going to be the one, like I don't want it switched, if you are a die-hard fan, you should get good, better seats than someone who's just a bandwagon fan or just wants to see one game.

This student specifically considered campers the die-hard fans, and treated camping as the means for those die-hard fans to get the best seats. The idea that campers who commit this extra time, such as getting up for lottery at 6:00 a.m. and spending hours days before a game holding a groups spot in a hallway, are more committed or highly identified is not surprising.

An even more apparent theme was the distinction campers felt between the KU fan base and other university's fan bases. It was obvious that campers felt the dedication they showed by camping was important as throughout the interviews determination and tradition were the words that emerged as the best descriptors of camping. One student answered if camping made KU basketball distinct from other schools saying: "I do. Ah, I mean, there are other places that camp, but no place camps as often or as long as we do and I think that makes it pretty special." Another student mentioned how they knew someone who worked for another school who was curious about the system KU used:

I know other schools do basketball camping because like a friend of mine, his mom works at Iowa State athletics, and she was asking actually asking him how they did camping here, like so they could model it off of that. So I think it does make us stand out a little bit because we seem to have it pretty well figured out here.

The uniqueness and detailed process behind camping was very well understood by the campers and was the main reason they thought KU basketball camping was distinct from other schools. KU basketball campers felt camping showed their student sections dedication and set them apart from other schools student section. They appreciated identifying with such a strong and dedicated student section, and camping was a way to show how impressive this student section is.

Throughout the interviews, the game itself, upholding tradition, and team identity were the most reoccurring elements for the motivation to participate in KU basketball camping and therefore can be classified as themes for this study. The results from this study allowed the author to consider the four research questions considered above, and aligned very well with the past relevant literature to KU basketball camping.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study's purpose was to discover the motivations of students who participate in KU basketball camping. In the following section, the author has examined how the major themes developed aligned with the research questions and past literature, as well as detailed the practical implications for this research, the limitations of this study, and future considerations.

The most prevalent motivation for camping that emerged from this study was the game itself, which meant that students camped because they wanted to attend the game, whereas camping was viewed as a means to an end. This finding was most comparable to the motive in the tailgating literature called the "game" (James et al., 2001). Another motivation study on tailgating by Drenten et al. (2009) had a participant state that "it's part of the game. In fact, it is sometimes more fun than the game" (p. 101). Being motivated by the game is also very similar to the entertainment motive, which has been greatly studied in sport fan consumption literature, and has been the

strongest motivating factor in multiple studies (James & Ross, 2004; Wann et al., 2008). The “game itself” motivation also relates closely to notion of event attractiveness, a market demand variable that has been found to influence attendance in the context of high school basketball (Cianfrone, Zhang, Pitts, & Byon, 2015). Event attractiveness was considered the “core product” of the game by the authors, and included suspects such as player’s skills, team’s style, and team records (Cianfrone et al., 2015). The construct of event attractiveness considers that people are impacted by the aspects of the product on the court, and is very similar to the motivational construct the author has titled “the game itself” (Cianfrone et al., 2015). The literature on sport fan consumption, as well as tailgating, has found aspects of the game itself to be strong motivating agents. Therefore, it is not surprising that the game itself was the strongest motivation theme in this study. As the results indicated, being motivated by the game categorized into three different areas including wanting better seats, desire to experience the student section atmosphere, and camping being a part of the process of attending a KU basketball game.

When it came to why students participated in camping, the simple answer was to obtain the best seats in the student section, which was an idea that was specific to this context, as past literature on attending a game and tailgating had nothing to do with getting “better seats.” As the motivation of the game itself was examined more closely, it was observed that “better seats,” besides the front row where one student mentioned the excitement of “banging on the boards,” was truly the students desire to be able to participate in the atmosphere that was the front of the student section.

Overall, students felt Allen Fieldhouse was a special arena to watch a game in and that their experience was enhanced if they were in the student section. As the campers insisted, they camped to get better seats and it was apparent that the primary reason better seats were important

was not sightlines or being closer to the action, but rather being a part of the student section atmosphere. The entertainment aspect of attending the game relied most heavily on the excitement of the student section and students were greatly motivated to attend games with the purpose of experiencing Allen Fieldhouse's student section. While specific game elements were not examined in the tailgating literature, it was noted that tailgating had become a part of the game for those who participated (James et al., 2001; Drenten et al., 2009).

The third section of this motivation theme involved camping becoming part of attending a KU basketball game. This was found in past literature on tailgating, especially in research by James et al. (2001) and the motive that they quantitatively assessed, the "game." Although there were validity concerns with the "game" motive in the quantitative study by James et al. (2001), the construct warranted further consideration in this setting due to the fact that gaining prime access to the game was a primary reason why students engaged in the camping ritual. As James et al. (2001) and Drenten et al. (2009) both had findings that included tailgating becoming an important aspect of attending a game, it was no surprise that this study found KU basketball campers to be motivated to camp because they simply viewed it as a part of attending a game. The idea that camping was a part of the process of attending a KU basketball game was an interesting finding, as many students felt they "had" to camp to attend a game and sit in the student section. Becoming a part of the game was not as important to the students as was being a part of the student section atmosphere, but was the motivation involving the game that was most related to the phenomenon of KU basketball camping.

Overall, the most prevalent motivation to participate in KU basketball camping involved the game itself. These findings showed that the game itself was the most influential motivating factor thus addressing research question one. This finding was not surprising as entertainment has

been an influential motivation construct in past sport consumption literature (James & Ross, 2004; Wann et al., 2008). Cianfrone et al. (2015) found that event attractiveness was the most influential market demand factor, and the game itself was found in the most related literature on tailgating (Drenten et al., 2009; & James et al., 2001). As KU basketball camping was put in place to allow students to claim the best seats in the student section, it makes sense that the game itself was the most prevalent motivation to participate in camping, whereas another primary motivation to participate, upholding tradition was a much more surprising discovery.

Another very strong theme that developed from the interviews was how campers were motivated by their feelings of “upholding tradition.” The traditions that motivated students to camp involved the KU basketball team, as well as being a KU student. It appeared that students were motivated to participate in KU basketball camping because it was a tradition of KU basketball, which aligned well with the literature on tailgating which found that tailgaters were motivated to participate because they felt tailgating was a tradition they wanted to continue (Drenten et al., 2009). The most unique finding in comparison to the past related literature on sport fan rituals was how KU basketball camping was considered a tradition affiliated with being a student at the university.

The upholding tradition motive aligned well with Drenten et al.’s (2009) findings about tailgaters who felt tailgating was “a family tradition” and explained that longing for the past and feelings of tradition were aspects of one of their overarching motivations. Research examining rituals of holidays found that these rituals were imperative to the success and pleasure surrounding the holidays, and that in fact, holidays may not hold the same allure without these ritualistic behaviors (Etzioni & Bloom, 2004; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). More specifically in the sport context, McDonald and Karg (2014) found that fans felt the experience of attending the game was

enhanced by the ritualistic behaviors they participated in, before, during, and after the game. As past research has found that upholding the tradition of the ritualistic behaviors can be a motivating factor to attend events, it was not surprising to see that upholding tradition was an important motivating factor of participating in KU basketball camping.

The unexpected finding involving upholding tradition was how students viewed KU basketball camping as a tradition involving KU students overall. One student went as far to considering camping a part of being “a proper KU student.” The basketball program and their historic success has a strong influence on the campus overall, but the fact that students considered camping, a ritualistic event around the game itself, an integral part of being a student was interesting. This finding is very specific to the context, as campers can identify as a student as well as a KU basketball fan, and it appears that camping has become the norm for these students who camp. In a similar context, Lu, Lin, and Cheng (2011) found that subjective norms, which refers to the perceived social pressures that may alter behavior, positively impacted sport fan’s intention to attend a game. In the context of KU basketball camping, it is likely the feeling that students must camp to obtain the best seats which has made camping a norm. As well as being a norm, it seems camping upholds tradition beyond basketball and the most comparable example is from Drenten et al. (2009) where one tailgater treated camping like a family tradition, so it may be that some tailgating groups feel they are upholding a tradition to something beyond the team as the KU basketball campers appeared to. This finding could also be evaluated through the lens of past research on holidays and ritualistic behavior, as scholars found that changing rituals around holidays could harm the enjoyment and commitment to the holiday itself (Etzioni & Bloom, 2004; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Pope and Pope (2009) found that schools with successful football or basketball programs had higher enrollment rates and Perez (2012) specifically found that

success in football or basketball leads to increased enrollment from local students. Based on the research involving success in basketball programs, students may be drawn to KU because of the basketball team, but the tradition of being a KU student basketball fan may be an additional aspect of the school that increases enrollment.

Upholding tradition was a strong overarching motivation for KU basketball campers; this finding related to upholding a tradition involving KU basketball as well as being a KU student in general. This finding was very unique to the context of KU basketball camping, as it was able to add to the tradition of the basketball team while standing as its own tradition. Also, the fact that students viewed it as an aspect of the student experience was a novel finding that deserves more investigation in similar college sport ancillary events. This finding gave insight into research question two and made it apparent that the role of “upholding tradition” motivated student to participate in KU basketball camping. As this was an interesting finding, especially in the sense of how this event was considered a tradition of being a student in general, it was not entirely surprising as upholding tradition was found to be a strong motivating force in the tailgating literature (Drenten et al., 2009) and ritualistic behaviors were found to be created by fans and to enhance attendance for fans of an Australian soccer team (McDonald & Karg, 2014). This finding was the second most prevailing motivation, while the third most prevalent motivation theme was much less surprising as it was focused on the student’s team identification.

Team identification as a motivating factor to attend KU basketball camping was a finding the author expected, it related to research question three, and it was apparent that these fans were motivated by their high team identification. This finding was viewed through a different lens than McDonald and Karg (2014), which found team identification to be an outcome for fans who participated in ritualistic behavior. Drenten et al. (2009) utilized identity as one of their four main

motivation to tailgate, and separated identity into collectivism and individualism, the first considering the tailgating community and the latter involved considering their self or group to be superior or more die-hard fans. The author was able to conclude that campers believed the activity of camping made the KU student basketball fans special or at least unique from other universities in that they believed it showed the extra commitment or determination their student section had. By identifying with the team, campers may be fulfilling a sense of their social identity and it has been found that team identification is a very common way for individuals to achieve a type of group membership and increase their sense of belonging (Jacobson, 2003). Many scholars have found that team identification has positively influenced individual's social well-being in diverse settings, including local fandom (Wann & Weaver, 2009), college basketball and baseball fans (Branscombe & Wann, 1991), and non-marquee college teams (Wann, Keenan, & Page, 2009). Also, students who camped felt that because they committed more time to the team by camping, they were more committed fans and considered campers to be "die-hard" fans. The way campers felt a distinction between KU student fans and other university student fans, as well as KU campers and other KU student fans aligned incredibly similarly with the tailgating literature and showed how team identity was a motivating factor for participants of KU basketball camping (Drenten et al., 2009). The distinction campers feel from other school's fans and other KU basketball fan's aligns well with the team identification literature that says fans create in-groups and out-groups and feel favorably towards the in-group, and speak more highly of members of the created in-group (Lock, Taylor, Funk, & Darcy, 2011).

In this study, unlike the McDonald and Karg (2014) study, identity was treated as a motivation rather than an outcome, and there are likely reasons for why KU basketball would have many identified fans. The fact that KU basketball campers appeared to be highly identified was

not surprising, as a strong indicator of highly identified fans is investing more time and showing more involvement in the team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). There could also be a great deal of students who become identified with the team by becoming “fair-weather fans,” who are attracted to a team because of the success of the team and associate with winners, or “local fans” who can form an identity with a team because of a geographic area (Hunt et al., 1999; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). As the KU basketball team has been extremely successful and plays on campus, there are likely many student who identify with the team, but are also “fair-weather fans” or “local fans.” Adding to the success and the proximity of the team to the students is the idea that Wann and Branscombe state “several authors have indicated that the most highly identified fans are those supporting college teams (Goldstein & Arms, 1971; Schurr, Ruble, & Ellen, 1985; Zillmann et al., 1979)” (p. 4). Specifically, scholars have found that more highly identified fans put forth more effort towards their teams involving college basketball fans (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), fans tailgating for football (Drenten et al., 2009), Australian soccer team fans (Lock et al., 2012), and Major League Baseball fans (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002). These campers are motivated to participate by their strong bond and identification with the team. Social interaction was expected to emerge as an overarching motivation to camping based on the past literature, but was not a part of the findings in this study.

Research question four asked how social obligations aside from the basketball team or camping group influenced campers’ motivation to participate, and the author did not find this to be an overarching theme. The author expected social interaction/group affiliation, especially involving outside social memberships, to be a strong motivating factor for participation in KU basketball camping because of the past literature on the construct. The outside social memberships that the author expected to impact camping motivations included fraternities/sororities, sport clubs,

or any other university groups. The expectation was that individuals would have started camping because of joining a camping group affiliated with another social membership and would have felt a moral obligation to camp for that group, this was not a theme that developed. A plethora of sport fan consumption motivation research has found social interaction/group affiliation to be a strong, and at times the strongest, motivation for attending sporting events (Trail et al., 2000; Wann et al., 2008; Yoshida, Gordon, Heere, & James, 2015; Yoshida, Heere, & Gordon, 2015) and the tailgating literature has also found social interaction, within their specific tailgating groups, to be a vital motivation for beginning and continuing to tailgate (Drenten et. al., 2009; James et al., 2001). As past related research has found, social interaction/group affiliation to be such a strong motivation in sport, the author expected the finding to demonstrate that social obligations outside of the game or basketball itself would motivate people to camp. Social interaction/group affiliation did not emerge as a theme of student's motivations to camp, and this may be due to the context of KU basketball camping. Tailgating and attending an event involves interacting with many people who are an individual's friends or at least share a similar fandom with them, and this is not the case for KU basketball camping. The way camping is set up, only one student per group is camping at a time and there is little to no interaction with other students, a vast majority of the campers are doing different individual activities. As the setting of KU basketball camping is not set up or created to involve much social interaction, it is understandable that social interaction/group affiliation did not appear to be a motivation for why students camp.

The results of this study led the author to find that the game itself, upholding tradition (for the basketball team and as a student), and team identification were the main motivations to participate in KU basketball camping. The findings also addressed all of the research questions proposed by the author in the manner expected, except for research questions four, which was

discussed above. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the motivations of KU basketball campers, and this study found a few strong overarching motivations which were discussed above. Below, the author has considered this studies practical implications, limitations, and considerations for future research.

Practical Implications

This study has useful practical considerations primarily in the marketing realm. From a marketing standpoint, it is important to consider what motivates sport fans to attend their events, which is why scholars have examined this so closely, but it is also important to consider motivations to participate in ritualistic behaviors like KU basketball camping. The motivations of fans who participated in ritualistic behaviors around the sport is vital because it may enhance the overall attendance of a game (McDonald & Karg, 2014). Also, if the findings from this study are consistent in other sport contexts than these planned out rituals allow the fan who participate to feel more strongly identified and give them a feeling of distinction from other fans (of their team and other teams) and past literature has thought that highly identified fans put forth more effort towards their team (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann et al., 2009; Wann & Weaver, 2009). The findings supported some of the same motivation themes that other sport fan motivation literature has suggested (the game itself and identity), but the most unique finding of this study was how upholding tradition was a motivating factor for students who camped.

As McDonald and Karg (2014) found, rituals around a team can be formed by the fans rather than the organization, and as the scholars found ritualistic behaviors involving a team help deepen the fans connection to the team and enhanced the attendance for all fans. Although it was not explicitly examined, based on the McDonald and Karg's (2014) findings, a ritual like KU basketball camping could be a great way for marketers to deepen fans connection to the team, and

either identify or create more highly identified fans. The findings that students felt a distinction from other KU fans as well as other school fans could be a way that their connection to the team was strengthened. Also, past research has shown that fans who participate in rituals are positively correlated with increased merchandise purchasing and game attendance (McDonald & Karg, 2014). As this study found campers to be motivated by the game experience, upholding tradition, and team identification, it may be in the best interest of a university with a strong student fan base, or any sport team that could do so, to implement a structure like KU basketball camping that may improve the experience or positively influence the purchasing and attendance behaviors of their fans.

Limitations

As this study was conducted qualitatively, there is not a focus on the breadth of data, but rather on the depth of data from each subject and gathering data from more participants could have been beneficial. Another limitation of this study was that it was only conducted over one season; ideally this study could be conducted longitudinally and track the motivations of campers over the years and see if as they got older and continued to camp their motivations changed. Also, the games that campers were interviewed for were all late season conference games and as a result it would have benefited the research to gather data before games of multiple levels of popularity.

When it comes to the findings of this study, sample and setting need to be considered as a specific phenomenon. First, this study only considered college students, and some research has found fans of college sports to possibly be the most dedicated fans (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Also, KU basketball camping is a very specific example and the findings from this study need to be considered as such, as all specific scenarios may differ. It is not to say that this literature should not be expanded and considered for other ancillary sporting events, but as each ancillary event is

unique, each event needs to be approached with the specific context in mind as the author had to do with this study. Although there were some limitations with this study, there is still a great deal of future research that can be conducted from this study.

Considerations for Future Research

This study continued the line of research on ancillary sporting events conducted on tailgating by Drenten et al. (2009) and James et al. (2001) and should be used in future research regarding these activities. From a marketing aspect, it is important for those in the field of sport to have an idea of what motivates their fans to attend these events, as this study and the past tailgating literature has done, further, scholars should consider what benefits participants receive from these events. If marketers can discover what motivates their fans to attend these events and then discover what benefits they feel, the marketers can tailor these ancillary events to increase the benefits for the participants.

As upholding tradition was the most novel finding from this study, it deserves the most future consideration. Upholding tradition may be important because it could improve the attendance of the actual game, this idea was not examined in-depth, but would align with past ritualistic behavior research. Studies conducted on ritualistic behavior before consuming food or drink have shown that these rituals can make the consumption better or “special” (Kapitany & Nielsen, 2015; Vohs, et al., 2016). Also, the research by McDonald and Karg (2014) found that ritualistic behavior may improve attendance at a game for all fans, even those who do not participate in the rituals. Specifically, future research should be conducted on sport rituals to see if “upholding tradition” is a common motivation theme, and if it appears to be so, examine more specifically what influences this motivation. It is possible that ancillary events like tailgating or KU basketball camping actually improve the attendance of the game, which could explain why it

is an apparent motivation of attending events like camping, and this consideration deserves more future consideration.

For future research, the author would like to interview subjects prior to, early non-conference games (low popularity), early conference games (medium popularity), and late conference and especially prior to the big rivalry game against Kentucky (high popularity). Different motivation themes may have been more present during low popularity games, or new motivational constructs all together may have emerged. It would also be beneficial to reconnect with subjects in the future and see if they have continued to camp or if their motivations to camp have changed, it is possible that a motivation like upholding tradition or identity could evolve within students who have camped for an extended period of time. Scholars should also research other similar ancillary events like the Texas A&M yell practice to discover if the motivations to attend these events are similar to the students who participate in KU basketball camping. Research on other similar events could strengthen the findings from this study or make new motivation discoveries, therefore adding to the literature. As research on ancillary sporting events is in its infancy, there is a great deal of research avenues that could be capitalized on.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Semi-structured Interview Protocol

1. What year in school are you?
2. What is your age? (Note gender)
3. Where are you from originally?
 - a. Were you a KU basketball fan before you were a student?
 - i. Is your family KU basketball fans?
 - ii. Would you consider yourself a die-hard fan of KU basketball?
 1. If so why?
4. How important is it to YOU that KU wins? And, why?
5. How strongly do YOU see YOURSELF as a fan of KU basketball?
6. What venues do you use to follow KU basketball and how often do you follow?
7. How many games have you camped for this season?
 - a. Which games and why?
 - i. Does KUs success impact if you camp?
 - ii. Does the opponent impact if you camp?
8. What/who made you aware of KU basketball camping?
 - a. What did you think of the concept before you participated?
9. Who camps with you? Why do you choose to camp with these people?
 - a. If your group stopped camping would you find/form another group?
 - i. Why/why not?
10. Is there any competition or interaction with your group and others?
11. Describe your group's process behind camping. How does your group prepare, organize, and communicate?
12. Who/what influenced you to start camping?
13. What do you like most about camping?
14. Does engaging in camping make you feel more connected to athletics? University?
 - a. Does it make this fan base distinct from other schools?
 - b. Are campers distinct from other KU student fans?
15. Is camping a part of attending KU basketball game?
 - a. Would you attend a game you didn't camp for?
16. Does camping make KU basketball special?
 - a. If not, what makes KU basketball special to you?
 - b. Do you camp to uphold a legacy or tradition (if not already mentioned)?
17. Would you camp out to get tickets for any other sport? Why or why not?
18. Does the setting of Allen Fieldhouse make camping special?
 - a. How so?
19. Does camping give you a feeling of exclusivity?