

# Conceptualizing a Framework to Study Consumer Experience of Artistic Entertainment During Live Sport Events

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*This study aimed to develop a conceptual framework based on the Stimulus – Organism – Response (S-O-R) paradigm to facilitate the understanding of sports consumers' artistic entertainment experiences during live sporting events. Based on a comprehensive literature review, artistic activities and programs in sporting events were recognized in three categories, including game-induced, atmosphere-induced, and event-induced artistic entertainments. Further analyses revealed how sport artistic entertainments (SAE), as an external stimulus at a sporting event, could interact with people's intrinsic emotional, entertainment, and aesthetic needs and function together to affect spectators' cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Discussions are centered on the theoretical and practical implications, providing directions for future studies when adopting the framework to conduct empirical investigations.*

*Keywords: spectator experience, sport aesthetics, artistic enjoyment, consumer psychology, event management*

## INTRODUCTION

The primary revenue sources for sporting events include gate revenues (i.e., ticket sales for live sporting events), media rights, concessions, advertising, sponsorships, and merchandising (Allen et al., 2022). As a fundamental way of generating income, Gate receipts contribute significantly to event revenues; for example, it accounts for about one-third of the overall revenue for an NBA or NFL team (Gate Revenues, 2016). To a great extent, other revenue sources mentioned previously are direct or indirect results of game attendance (Greenwell et al., 2014). To attract event attendees, sport managers often seek ways to enchant spectator experiences during a game event to integrate unique entertainment activities to boost gate revenues (Young, 2020). Even so, sport events continue to face mounting challenges, mainly in three areas – spectators' diverse entertainment demands (e.g., Farrag & Althawadil, 2022; Leşe et al., 2021; Rogers et al., 2017), consumer and fan behavioral shifts (e.g., Nielsen, 2022; Vassiliadis et al., 2021), and most recently, impacts of the COVID-19 (e.g., Mastromartino et al., 2020; Parnell et al., 2020; Skinner & Smith, 2021).

In a scene of a sport drama film produced in 1989, *Field of Dreams*, Ray Kinsella hears a voice whispering, "If you build it, he will come". Ray designed his modest baseball field in response to the voice. There were no luxury seats, no entertainment, and no mascot in his stadium. Despite this, the baseball team

and supporters attended back then. However, sport spectators today expect much more than just high-quality sport competitions (Hallmann et al., 2021); they expect dazzling electrifying music, half-time shows, spectacular fireworks, and engaging creative activities. According to the Deloitte survey (2020), sport fans anticipate to be surrounded by an exciting atmosphere in addition to competitive games. When consumers have a pleasant experience throughout the entire game event, their satisfaction and loyalty rise, which ultimately benefits the service provider and increases their profits generation (Anderson et al., 1994; Dagger & Sweeney, 2007). In the meantime, modern sport consumers exhibit a diverse spectrum of entertainment preferences (Hallmann et al., 2021). They have grown weary of repetitive music, dancing, and magic shows. Increasingly, spectators anticipate creative and unique experiences to quench their desires for a deeper intimate connection with everything they encounter (Ellis et al., 2019; Mossberg, 2008). Today, consumers no longer want one-size-fits-all entertainment experiences designed by network programmers (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC], 2018). Obviously, sport entertainment managers face a significant task in determining how to deploy entertainment services to keep spectators entertained, enhance in-stadium and game-day experiences, and create unique memories.

Apart from the varied entertainment needs of sports spectators, consumer behavioral shifts present obstacles for modern sporting events. While attending live sporting events remains significant, numerous emerging go-to platforms have significantly impacted spectators' consumption behaviors (Kim, 2019). As Nielsen's (2022) recent report revealed, additional over-the-top (OTT) options featuring behind-the-scenes tales and other live materials distracted viewers' attention from live sporting events. TikTok is one platform that enables spectators to play a role in unique content creation and engage in multi-screen interactions, attracting people's attention. Perceivably, the younger generation's watching habits are evolving. Although 53% of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) identify as sport fans (Silverman, 2020), they spend the least amount of time watching live sports due to their preferences for short-form and user-generated content that traditional live events and entertainment activities cannot provide (PwC, 2022). Hence, introducing new, exciting, and enjoyable experiences to broaden sports spectator engagement is a critical issue for event managers.

Memorable experiences, both physical and virtual, help drive fan loyalty and increase spectators' likelihood of returning. Regrettably, the sports industry has been significantly impacted by the eruption of COVID-19. On the one hand, the pandemic motivates digital platforms to improve their consumer services and pioneer new ways of entertaining consumers (PwC, 2022). As crowds return to sports venues after the pandemic, spectator experiences become increasingly important. Generally speaking, the longer a sports consumer stays in a stadium, the more likely he/she will re-patronage, interact with sponsors, and purchase merchandise. When visitors enter a stadium or arena, the first element that they subconsciously encounter is typically the physical atmosphere (i.e., lasers, music, banners). A stadium's atmosphere adds value to sport competition as the core product and creates a unique entertainment experience (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010). Such atmospherics have the potential to directly affect people's emotional and behavioral responses (Darden & Babin, 1994).

Artistic entertainment (e.g., fireworks, music, dance, cheerleading performance) is widely adopted in modern sporting events to enrich game-day experiences and in-stadium atmospheres. It provides consumers with arts-related sensory and visual experiences, which can result in emotional enjoyment and feelings of pleasure (Carroll, 2009; Venkatesh & Meamber, 2008). Researchers and practitioners have investigated ways to incorporate artistic elements into the game experience (Kelley & Turley, 2001) and physical environment (Ko & Pastore, 2004), enrich facility aesthetics (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996), and offer augmented service (Ko et al., 2011). However, few studies have systematically examined consumer's experiences of artistic entertainment at sporting events. Findings of previous studies have revealed the relevance of artistic entertainment; yet, they lacked depth and specificity and provided little guidance for event operations.

Artistic entertainment is a part of cultural activities (Bates & Ferri, 2010). In 2025, the global entertainment and media market value is expected to reach \$2.6 trillion (PwC, 2021). Wolf (2000) proposed "entertainmentization", meaning that people spend significant amounts of time voluntarily engaging in entertainment, defining their identities and values through entertainment, and enjoying entertainment

products. Entertainment enables people to maintain a positive mental state, boost one's energy, and even create lifelong memories with family and friends. People generally adore entertainment because participating in such activities is intrinsically rewarding (Steen & Owens, 2001).

Sports and entertainment are inextricably linked as sports programs are "either the entertainment of competition or a product/service associated with the excitement of the event, or both" (Schaaf, 1995, p. 22). In 1927, Super Bowl I adopted the half-time show as an entertainment element for the first time, featuring a college marching band. As modern sporting events have evolved, more entertainment activities and artistic performances are added to game days on a regular basis. Among the numerous forms of entertainment, artistic entertainment demonstrates its potential power for attracting and retaining spectators. The Super Bowl is an illustration of this possibility. About 13% of viewers considered the musical act to be the most anticipated segment of Super Bowl LIII (Super Bowl Revenue, 2020). The half-time show of Super Bowl LI drew 117.5 million viewers, while the game drew 111.3 million (Schwindt, 2017).

Additionally, 2.2 million of the 5.1 million tweets about Lady Gaga's performance were posted during her performance at Super Bowl LI. Noticeably, half-time show formats are evolving. In the last decade, hip-hop played a larger role in Super Bowl halftime performances, but it was never up front and centerfold. That changed in Super Bowl LVI, when the genre headlined a half-time performance for the first time. The performance attracted over 103 million viewers (Gough, 2022), exceeding the game's average viewership of 99.18 million (Stoll, 2022). These preceding data indicate the power and potential for artistic performances to draw viewers to sporting events.

While one could argue that the increased number of viewers during the half-time show was a result of those artistic performances, some may argue that the sport competition drew in those people. Without empirical evidence, it is unknown whether artistic entertainment can help gratify audiences at sporting events and to what extent artistic performances can attract additional viewers. To answer these questions, it is necessary to understand how artistic entertainment affects spectators' game-day and in-stadium experiences and how they perceive artistic entertainment. Through a comprehensive review of literature, this study developed a conceptual framework to gain an in-depth understanding of artistic entertainment during live sporting events as a conjectural concept. It examined the functional mechanism of artistic entertainment activities by applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974a).

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Many studies have been conducted on the motivations of sport spectators (e.g., Sloan, 1989; Wann, 1995; Wann et al., 2001; Wann & James, 2019). There are eight prevailing motives: group affiliation, family, aesthetic, self-esteem, economic, eustress, escape, and entertainment (Wann et al., 2001). Among these, entertainment attracts sport spectators by providing a pleasurable pastime and aesthetically pleasing experiences (Sloan, 1989; Zillmann et al., 2012). Entertainment is an intrinsically motivated response comprising "various physiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral components" (Bryant & Vorderer, 2013, p. 4). Due to their inherent pleasurable nature, entertainment activities feature a sporting event (Jones et al., 2003).

### **Significance of Entertainment in Sporting Events**

When spectators are engaged in entertainment activities, their cognitive, affective, and even behavioral states may be influenced. Some psychologists believe that people would be more willing to spend time and financial resources for entertainment activities that can provide them with positive experiences (e.g., Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). Tan (2008) indicated that enjoyment is the heart of entertainment. Consumers involved in entertainment often give products both individualized and shared meanings, which can boost their gratification of the product and ultimately increase their loyalty to the product (Neale, 2010). Martin (1998) mentioned that the functionality of entertainment activities depends on their emotional engagement with audiences, or "involvement", which refers to a psychological bond that consumers have with the entertainment product. Often, emotions have strong potential to greatly influence a person's perception,

cognition, and action (e.g., Frijda, 1987; Scherer, 2005). The perceived value of entertainment activities in a sporting event can add to the event's overall entertainment capacity to influence consumer behavior.

Researchers contended that entertainment encounters are featured by pleasure, enjoyment, and delight (Bosshart & Macconi, 1998; Zillmann & Byant, 1994). Sport consumers experience sporting events as a hedonistic experience (e.g., Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Madrigal, 1995), which refers to "the diffuse sense of pleasure or generalized enjoyment that one feels" (Baisya & Das, 2008, p. 45). Arts can generate feelings of pleasure and emotional engagement in and of itself (Carroll, 2009; Eaton, 1988). Adding aesthetic elements into sporting events can help entertainment activities hold intrinsic interests for people (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Scholars have suggested that having aesthetic elements is important when designing sporting experiences (e.g., Hemphill, 1995; Rinehart, 1996); yet, research on sport spectators' artistic entertainment experiences is limited; in fact, little can be found.

Incorporating aesthetic elements benefits a sporting event by entertaining viewers and preventing them from being distracted by the event's discontinuous character or lack of attractiveness. In contrast to soap operas, sporting events do not go continuously; there are breaks, time-outs, faults, and the need to set up plays. If the non-competition time cannot be utilized, viewing figures may suffer, which could hurt revenue. As Mullin et al. (2000) noted, event managers face the challenge of keeping spectators entertained and maximizing their interests and engagement, even when the game is not appealing. Programmed artistic activities are a prominent strategy to link those stoppages in modern sports games. Artistic activities help generate excitement and enhance the entertainment value of the game. To ensure entertainment value, Zhang et al. (2005) advocated that spectators should experience constant artistic entertainment activities from the minute they step into a stadium/arena until they depart after the game. Artistic performances are crucial in attracting audiences and increasing viewership; therefore, it is essential to provide enticing artistic activities. Hence, understanding the artistic entertainment experiences of sports spectators is critical for developing and programming pleasurable artistic performances and activities.

### **Defining Artistic Entertainment in Sporting Settings**

To define artistic entertainment in sports settings, one must consider features of aesthetics, entertainment, and sports activities. Aesthetics is a multidisciplinary concept that encompasses components of psychology (Berlyne, 1971), sociology (Bourdieu, 2015), anthropology (Douglas, 2011), and marketing (Holbrook & Zirlin, 1985). The term "aesthetics" refers to the science of felt behavior (Ogden, 1933). The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language (2006) defines aesthetics as an artistically beautiful or pleasing appearance. Aesthetics is a discipline of philosophy concerned with the nature and expression of beauty (Dickie, 1997). From the standpoint of psychology, aesthetics is relevant to people's psychological responses to beauty and artistic experiences (Wang et al., 2013). In the marketplace, aesthetics is "the study of the buyer's cognition, affective, and behavioral response to media, entertainment and arts" (Baisya & Das, 2008, p. 44).

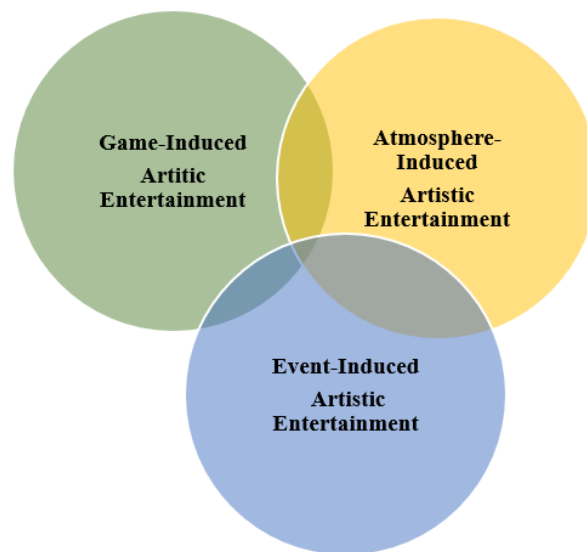
When it comes to entertainment, anything that can stimulate, encourage, or generate a pleasurable condition is considered entertainment; this includes activities that people enjoy or look forward to (Vogel, 2007). Barnouw and Kirkland (1992) argued that entertainment is an experience that a heterogeneous group of people can enjoy. It is a part of leisure and can be hedonistic, democratic, and simple (Dyer, 2005). According to Bates and Ferri (2010), entertainment should include components that incorporate external stimuli that pleasure to people. When considering the functions of entertainment for the audience, the major focus of entertainment is utopianism, and it should provide people with a better world to escape to (Dyer, 2005). From a business perspective, entertainment should be capable of generating absorption (Tan, 2008). Consumers appreciate entertainment that reflects and reinforces their personalities (Rentfrow et al., 2011).

Objective, communication, external stimulus, pleasure, and audience are essential to defining entertainment (Bates & Ferri, 2010). Artistic entertainment should contain conceptual categories that define aesthetics such as form and expression, harmony and order, symbolism and imagery, and beauty, taste, and feelings (Carroll, 2009). Based on these criteria, we developed the following definitions of artistic entertainment in sporting contexts: Sport-related Artistic Entertainment (SAE) in this study. As an ancillary product of sporting events, the SAE would consist of activities or performances that occur throughout a

sporting event or game. It communicates with spectators through arts-related sensory and visual experiences and brings emotional enjoyment and pleasure to the audience. In terms of aesthetics' nature, SAE is a sort of amusement that aims to offer spectators with gratification and, in some cases, to urge them to pursue utopianism. It can potentially elicit people's emotional responses; the influences of artistic entertainment can be manifested by emotional engagement. From a marketing viewpoint, SAE is intended to engage consumers in an aesthetic atmosphere that satisfies their needs for fun.

The prevalent forms of SAE are listed in Appendix with 77 stimuli in total. These artistic variables are conceptualized as external stimuli that can induce cognitive affect within sport spectators, which in turn would elicit certain behavioral responses. Concepts are developed and shared to "make sense of the world" (Hannan et al., 2019, p. 99); after possessing general concepts, people frequently categorize the thing they have encountered as an illustration of a specific concept (Hannan et al., 2019). Therefore, categorizing SAE with examples is important for facilitating comprehension of the previously stated artistic entertainment concept. To classify SAE reasonably, the current study referred to the sociological and cultural categorization philosophy proposed by Hannan et al. (2019), who state that categorization is the process of assigning objects (i.e., the stimuli) to concepts. The objects being categorized are "described (represented) by their positions in a multi-dimensional feature space" (p. 99). This paper divided SAE into three categories: game-induced, atmosphere-induced, and event-induced artistic entertainment (See Figure 1). Detailed justifications for this classification and descriptions of each category are provided below.

**FIGURE 1**  
**CATEGORIZATION OF ARTISTIC ENTERTAINMENT IN SPORTING EVENTS**



Game-induced SAE originates from sports game itself and is featured by stylistic sports such as figure skating, synchronized swimming, and artistic gymnastics. The inherent beauty and aesthetic expressions of athletes attract a large number of onlookers and provide people with artistic pleasure (Wann et al., 2001). Typically, spectators of these sports are exposed to the exact movements, athletic prowess, speed, grace, and coordination of the athletes, thereby giving them an aesthetic experience (Heinegg, 1985). Meanwhile, one must notice that game-induced SAE can also come from athletes' artistic performances such as leaping catches, stunning dunks, precise throwing/shooting contests, and exciting hurdles. Such events' artistic nature, beauty, and grace can impress and entertain spectators artistically (Wann et al., 2001). However, these artistic performances emerge from sports and athletes themselves, and event managers cannot design or program them, let alone enhance them. Therefore, the current article put this special type of artistic entertainment in the game-induced SAE category.

Atmosphere-induced SAE is designed and programmed to enhance the stadium/arena atmosphere. In the context of stadium atmosphere, researchers adhered to environmental psychology theory and categorized environmental cues into four dimensions: stimuli from spectators, organizers, actions of the game, and stadium/arena architectures (Koenigstorfer et al., 2010; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010; Uhrich & Koenigstorfer, 2009; Yoshida et al., 2021). When discussing atmosphere-induced SAE, this study maintains the four categories above.

The SAE originated from spectators, and their behaviors are typically self-organized when they attend sporting events (Baker, 1986; Tombs & McColl-Kennedy, 2003; Uhrich & Koenigstorfer, 2009). Popular forms include chanting, whistling, routines enacted by fans, and flag waving. Sports spectators express their feelings through these activities. Overtime, spectator-induced artistic entertainment activities can become a team's tradition and be formally incorporated into event programming.

Organizer-induced SAE comprises activities prepared and programmed by event organizers to enhance the atmosphere of a stadium/arena (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010). Short-term manipulable artistic stimuli, such as music, dances, and lighting, can be termed organizer-induced artistic entertainment. Long-term manipulable aesthetic stimuli, such as jersey walls and exhibition walls, also belong to organizer-induced artistic entertainment (Uhrich & Koenigstorfer, 2009).

Unlike artistic entertainment generated by athletes' artistic actions and performances, artistic activities prompted by the game actions can be directly enjoyed by spectators and enhance stadium atmosphere. For instance, an amazing touchdown in a football game may cause spectators to spontaneously do rhythmic cheers rather than be led by cheerleaders. Occasionally, even poor performances can inspire artistic entertainment; for instance, spectators may play the trumpet to encourage their team. One must differentiate these types of artistic entertainment from spectator-induced artistic entertainment. Generally, artistic activities inspired by actions of the game are unplanned and improvised, and they are created independently of the game outcome. In contrast, spectator-induced artistic entertainment is prepared and organized due to the uncertainty of the game (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010).

Some SAE designs and programs (e.g., background music, colors of the surrounding area, facility aesthetics) that are prevalent in a stadium/arena are relevant to its architecture. The primary objective of programming these activities is to elicit emotional responses or memories from visitors to enhance stadium atmosphere. This artistic entertainment takes advantage of physical properties (e.g., high volume of music, vivid colors) to naturally trigger people's responses (Groepel-Klein, 2005).

Last, other artistic kinds of entertainment (e.g., half-time shows, parachuting, acrobatics) can also be observed during live sporting events. These activities and performances vary from game to game and are not routine. Event-induced SAE can be used to excite and astound spectators, influence their perception and cognition of a sporting event, and even foster a sense of belonging among sport community and strengthen team affiliation (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). This kind of artistic entertainment is more inventive, and novel artistic activities can be found in nearly all arts areas. Following the categorization summarized by Wang et al. (2017), event-induced SAE is divided into visual, sound, literary, performing, new media, and multidisciplinary artistic genres.

Visual artistic entertainment can employ two or more dimensional elements, such as photography, painting, digital storytelling, and animation. It takes advantage of visual impact to create excitement. As its name implies, sound artistic entertainment uses sound to effectuate information transmission, new knowledge creation, and cultural identity expression. Typical examples in sporting events include detailed commentary and teams, audiences, or players' narratives. Literary artistic entertainment uses expressive, vivid, evocative, and engaging texts with which the audiences can identify (Chilton & Leavy, 2014). Poems, short stories, and slogans are well-known examples. Performing artistic entertainment synthesizes "aesthetic, critical and participatory modes of knowing" through performance (Chilton & Leavy, 2014, p. 410). Most frequently observed are dances, music, and half-time shows. It is also possible to see a teen welcome band performance, scene play, or symphony during a sporting event. Utilizing media technology, new media artistic entertainments "create social communities through aesthetic exploration" (Wang et al., 2017, p. 27). This broad category includes video games, tweets, Tik-Tok short videos, and Instagram and Facebook posts. Multidisciplinary artistic entertainment blends artistic forms based on programmers'

expertise, preferences, and experiences. Helicopter jumping, youth plays, opening ceremonies, cultural-related performances, and magic shows are entertainment synthesizing multiple aesthetic forms.

### **Understanding Artistic Experiences**

Baisya and Das (2008) defined artistic experiences as “attending to, perceiving and appreciating an object about whatever utilitarian function it might perform” (p. 44). Researchers proposed that artistic experiences encompass all sensory experiences induced by visual arts, crafts, music, and other performing arts (Holbrook & Zirlin, 1985; Schroeder & Borgerson, 2002). Experience and aesthetics are tightly linked as pleasure is significant for the inherently experiential feeling (Baisya & Das, 2008). Typically, aesthetic encounters and responses are triggered by such environmental factors as design, events, and entertainment program offerings (Fiore & Kim, 2007; Underhill, 2004). Individuals approach aesthetics in proximal or distal ways – exploratory behaviors in daily life are featured by extrinsic or goal-oriented motivation; on the other hand, aesthetic behavior is intrinsically motivated (Berlyne, 1971). Marković (2012) stated three components of aesthetic experiences – fascination, appraisal, and emotion. As ancillary products of a sporting event, artistic entertainment activities are experiential products. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), people consume experiential-type products to satisfy their desire for pleasure or hedonism. Consumers incorporate aesthetics into their consumption because artistic things have intrinsic and instrumental value.

Individuals are capable of describing aesthetic values and perceiving emotional responses when experiencing aesthetics. Tan (2008) underlined the importance of emotions in connecting distal and proximal causes of entertainment necessary for a person to experience showbiz. Zillmann and Bryant (1994) argued that people choose entertainment activities because they want to seek mood changes for the better. In aesthetics, expression theorists recognized that aesthetic experiences are founded in emotions and feelings (Townsend, 1997). Beardsley (1969) proposed that emotional reaction to certain aesthetic features would be associated with aesthetic experiences. If spectators are offered with aesthetically appealing entertainment, there would be sensory delight or pleasure (Cupchik & Kemp, 2000; Sparks & Sparks, 2000).

A terrific entertainment service would help increase consumer satisfaction and retention, resulting in increased stakeholder revenues (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The SAE, as a support program for a sporting event, is a form of customer service (Zhang et al., 2004). To evaluate the service quality, measurement scales were developed, and among these scales, artistic entertainment is a sub-construct (e.g., Funk et al., 2003; Wann et al., 2008; Wiid & Cant, 2015). Yoshida and James’s study (2010) delved deeper into aesthetic quality, which refers to spectators’ perceptions of the visually appealing characteristics of the service environment and ancillary products.

Good SAE contributes to creating memorable and pleasant in-stadium/arena atmosphere. The unique in-stadium atmosphere is one of the primary reasons people attend sporting events (Bauer et al., 2005; Holt, 1995). The term “atmosphere” refers to the quality of spatial surroundings (Kotler, 1973). From the environmental, psychological aspect, the atmosphere establishes a link between environmental stimuli and an individual’s emotional responses (Buckley, 1991; Darden & Babin, 1994). A pleasant aesthetic atmosphere is more likely to leave consumers with a favorable impression of a sporting event, which can influence a spectator’s intention to continue consuming and supporting the event (Yoshida et al., 2013). By immersing spectators in an exciting atmosphere and providing an unparalleled experience, one can enhance the likelihood of consumers returning to the stadium (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Schofield, 1983). As a result, sports stadiums and arenas are increasingly focusing on developing and delivering the ideal entertainment experience to their visitors. For instance, the Prudential Center introduced a teenager welcome band comprised of students from local high schools. Parents come to the stadium to see their children perform, and spectators are encouraged to interact with the band to get a sense of the game’s atmosphere. There is also a jersey wall that displays jerseys of all local high schools, which has enticed people to locate their respective schools’ jerseys (Bahniuk, 2019).

### **Theoretical Foundation: The S-O-R Paradigm**

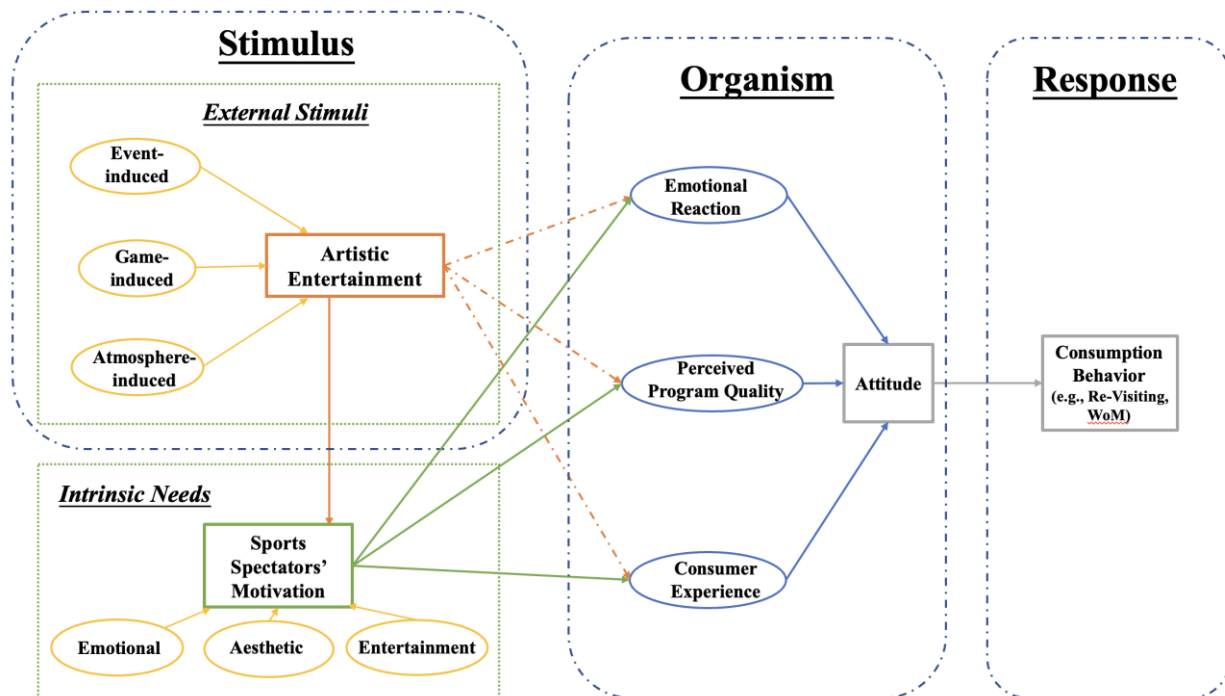
A conceptual framework is formulated based on the S-O-R theory to facilitate the examination of the impact of artistic entertainment activities on spectators' event experiences and their subsequent consumption behaviors, which posits that stimulus from external environment can trigger an individual's behavioral responses or psychological changes. The individual would respond appropriately based on how the stimulus is processed and how his/her psychological interaction is adjusted. Stimulus (S) refers to an external factor that belongs to the environment. Organism (O) is a term that represents people's internal evaluations of the environment cues (S). Response (R) refers to the behavioral responses to internal evaluations (O) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974a). Environmental psychologists extended the S-O-R model in an effort to better understand how environmental stimuli affect consumers' cognitive and affective states, and how these states affect consumer behavior (Eroglu et al., 2001). Wang et al. (2013) defined the cognitive state as "the process of information acquisition and interpretation that forms individuals' beliefs and knowledge of the environment" (p. 47), while the affective state is "the process of emotional reaction to environmental stimuli, which can be measured by Mehrabian and Russell's (1974a) pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD) trichotomous dimensions" (p. 47). This framework suggests that consumer's emotions are important in responding to the exposing environmental stimulus.

Due to its intuitive and powerful exploratory nature, the S-O-R model has been widely used in marketing studies to better understand consumer behavior (e.g., Buckley, 1991; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). This theory is particularly useful for comprehending how consumers' perception, cognition, and emotion are influenced by their purchasing environment or servicescape (e.g., Reimer & Kuehn, 2005; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010). For example, Uhrich and Benkenstein (2010) discussed fan perceptions of the stadium environment. Another application of S-O-R theory is to investigate the environment's emotion-eliciting or emotional qualities to understand consumer experiences (i.e., Cho et al., 2019; Jeong et al., 2020).

The S-O-R framework aids in the understanding of sport spectators' potential emotional responses elicited by SAE. Consistent with previous studies, the proposed framework takes hedonic, emotional, and internal motivations into account (e.g., McKinney, 2004; Turley & Milliman, 2000), and treats the artistic entertainment provided by a sporting event and/or stadium environment as an external influence during the stimulus (S) stage (Kotler, 1973; Robert & John, 1982). Apart from emotional reaction (e.g., Hul et al., 1997; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974b), this study incorporates two additional factors, attitudes and evaluations toward artistic entertainment quality and game-day/in-stadium experiences, as the "organism (O)" in the model (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010). The response (R) is operationalized as a shift in one's attitude toward consumption behavior and future consumption intentions (e.g., Gross, 2002; Grossbart et al., 1975) (See Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2**  
**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SPORTS SPECTATOR ARTISTIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCES**



*Intrinsic Needs – Sports Spectators’ Internal Motivations*

Deci and Ryan (2000) implied that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in determining whether or not to engage in an activity. Understanding internal needs that can affect sports spectators’ artistic entertainment engagement and experiences is vital. Holbrook (1980) noted that the desire for emotional arousal is a significant factor to explain why people consume sporting events. Previous research findings established that emotion is a key driver of engaging in entertainment, play, and aesthetic activities (Silvia, 2007; Tan, 2000). Schachter and Singer (1962) postulate that emotion results from the interaction of physiological arousal and cognition. Physiological arousal is interpreted cognitively based on environmental contexts, culminating in emotional experience. Jones et al. (2003) indicated that the multisensory and emotive components are critical of a hedonic experience. Through artistic entertainment, a live sporting event can provide unique multisensory elements such as sounds, lights, color, and atmosphere that can elicit a hedonic experience. Accordingly, sports spectators with emotional needs can generate hedonic emotions like hope, joy, and excitement through participating in those artistic activities (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

Many people become involved in sports spectatorship simply because it is perceived as an enjoyable pastime (Gantz & Wenner, 1996; Sloan, 1989) that can provide a hedonic experience. Sport is viewed as a consumer-centric, high-involvement, and high-identify entertainment product (Neale, 2010) that can meet people’s entertainment needs. As ancillary products, SAE is supposed to have the potential to satisfy the entertainment needs of sports consumers. Meanwhile, the atmosphere in a sports stadium provides additional value to the core product – game competition – by creating a unique entertainment value, including artistic entertainment, that helps to reinforce this value sought by spectators (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010).

Aesthetics is frequently associated with individuals’ meaning-making and identity formation. Individuals need to make sense of their worlds, and it is through this process that they shape their persona (Willis, 2000). Participating in the consumption of artistic entertainment enables consumers to construct

and communicate with aesthetics through personal experiences (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2008). Aesthetics enriches people's lives through emotional enjoyment and feelings (Carroll, 2009; Eaton, 1988). In this regard, providing SAE can meet sports spectators' aesthetic needs. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 1.** *The intrinsic needs of sports spectators – emotional, entertainment, and aesthetic – would motivate them to engage in SAE.*

#### *External Stimulus – Sports-Related Artistic Entertainment (SAE)*

Consumers' individual and situational preferences dictate whether they can have a positive aesthetic experience (Wang et al., 2013). In other words, both the internal motivations of sports spectators, including emotional, entertainment, and aesthetic motivations, and external artistic entertainment stimuli have the potential to influence an individual's artistic experiences.

The environment in which an individual stays can affect his/her consumption behaviors (Babin et al., 1994). Environmental stimuli have been shown to elicit emotional responses and lead consumers to perceive the environment's affective qualities (Machleit & Eroglu, 2000). When the theme of an aesthetic event is particularly meaningful to an individual, he/she may experience a strong emotional response (Scheff, 1979). Additionally, when consuming experiential-type products (e.g., sporting events), consumers seek pleasurable experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In other words, the consumption experience is "a phenomenon directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun" (Venkatesh & Meamber, 2006, p. 16), all of which correspond to people's entertainment and aesthetic needs (Baisya & Das, 2008; Bates & Ferri, 2010; Vogel, 2007). Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 2.** *Because SAE, as an external stimulus, has the potential to provide hedonic and enjoyable experiences, it can be more readily perceived by people with emotional, entertainment, and aesthetic needs.*

#### *Organism – Reactions to Internal and External Stimuli*

The central argument, in line with the S-O-R model, is that both internal and external stimuli associated with a sporting event influence the internal organism of sports spectators (i.e., emotional reaction, program quality evaluation, and consumer experience assessment), which in turn influence their responses (e.g., attitudes towards the event and/or stadium, future consumption behavior).

**Desired Emotional Reaction.** According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974a), emotional reaction is the aspect that is supposed to exist when stimuli are encountered. Consumers can attain gratification through entertainment, which can elicit their emotional responses (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000). When a consumer interacts with a stimulus, physiological states such as arousal or pleasure are modulated (Cupchik, 1995; Cupchik & Kemp, 2000). Frijda's (1994) appraisal theory of emotions mentioned that a match between environmental stimuli and an individual's internal needs could elicit positive emotions, while a mismatch can elicit negative emotions. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 3.** *Providing pleasurable SAE can elicit positive emotional reactions in sport spectators. When SAE activities meet spectators' internal needs, positive reactions are also elicited.*

**Satisfactory Programming Quality.** Providing pleasing customer services can motivate consumers to participate in additional activities (Anderson et al., 1994; Fornell, 1992). The quality of artistic programs is manifested in attributes of ancillary services such as atmosphere, performance, and overall entertainment activities (Bitner, 1990; Brady & Cronin, 2001). In their study, Uhrich and Benkenstein (2010) proposed that the effects of atmosphere on consumer behavior may be even stronger in a sport stadium than in the traditional retail setting, emphasizing the importance of creating desirable atmosphere to improve customer service. Artistic entertainment, as a component of game-day and in-stadium service, is responsible for enhancing environment atmosphere. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 4.** *Providing pleasurable SAE contributes to improving event quality as evaluated by sports spectators. When SAE meets the internal needs of spectators, program quality satisfaction will improve.*

**Memorable Consumer Experience.** When spectators evaluate their experiences at a venue, the aesthetic dimension of the service plays a vital role (Yoshida & James, 2010). If a spectator is satisfied with his/her experiences, it appears that his/her likelihood of attending future events increases (Madrigal, 1995). Scholars contend that experiencing is an activity that results in the formation of unforgettable memory although consuming is merely a process. The memory associated with experiencing usually persists even after the experience process is complete (Pine et al., 1999). From this vantage point, high-quality artistic entertainment contributes to the formation of memorable experiences associated with artistic activities, which benefits consumer retention. Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 5.** *Providing pleasurable SAE contributes to the development of memorable consumer experiences. When SAE meets the intrinsic needs of spectators, external stimuli and internal stimuli combine to create a lasting memorable experience for sport spectators.*

#### *Response – Sports Spectators' Attitude Change and Consumption Behavior*

Attitudes are formed due to outcome evaluations (i.e., program quality and consumer behavior) and prominent beliefs of behaviors (Peng & Kim, 2014). In the market setting, a belief is a thought about a product or service, and people's beliefs usually influence their purchasing decisions (Asiegbu et al., 2012). Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) reasoned action theory stated that people's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior, which is determined by their attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms. Cognition, perception, and emotion are important antecedents of attitude (Banyte et al., 2007). Consumers' perception of the product (i.e., artistic entertainment) determines whether they are willing to accept and adopt it. On the other hand, emotion also has the potential to affect consumers' perception, cognition, and behavior (Frijda, 1987). For example, previous research has demonstrated that spectators' perceived excitement induced by the stadium atmosphere positively affects customer satisfaction (Madrigal, 1995), re-visit and re-purchase intentions, and willingness to recommend to others (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999). As a result, the perceived qualities of the atmosphere created by artistic entertainment and the emotional reaction elicited by artistic services can influence a person's cognitive and affective states (Asiegbu et al., 2012). As a result of this outcome, the change of attitude would affect spectators' consumption behavior (i.e., re-visiting the stadium, WoM, and purchase behavior). Thus, the following is proposed:

**Proposition 6.** *The SAE influences sports spectators' consumption behavior by altering their attitudes, which can be accomplished by eliciting emotional reactions through providing highest possible quality of artistic programs and consumer experience. This path can also be realized via first meeting spectators' intrinsic needs.*

## **DISCUSSION**

This study is the first to examine the artistic entertainment experiences of sports spectators by adopting the S-O-R model. From the environmental psychology perspective, this study conceptualizes the effects of external stimuli (artistic entertainment) and intrinsic human needs (emotional, entertainment, and aesthetic needs) on sports spectators' artistic experiences. Particularly, this paper discusses how external stimuli elicit consumers' responses via satisfying their intrinsic needs. Meanwhile, this study incorporated service quality satisfaction and the creation of memorable experiences into the organism portion to gain a holistic understanding of sports spectators' SAE experiences.

Findings derived from the literature provide several theoretical and practical implications regarding the nature of artistic entertainment, its mechanism, and the experiences of sport spectators. The developed conceptual framework can be adopted when studying, designing, and programming SAEs. First, this paper

defined SAE through the lenses of entertainment, aesthetics, and emotion, bridging the academic gap regarding artistic entertainment's comprehension in a sporting context. Second, the study's discussion of the mechanism of SAE would encourage entertainment programmers to consider how to provide effective artistic entertainment services. For instance, a strong emotionally and experientially oriented artistic experience can elicit a search for deeper meaning (Cupchik & Laszlo, 1994) and personal memories (Cupchik et al., 1998), precisely what entertainment programmers intend to attain. No longer should entertainment managers apply one-size-fits-all artistic entertainment experiences to a sporting event. Thirdly, the proposed conceptual framework serves as a guide for event managers when attempting to deliver additional services; in particular, the application of the S-O-R paradigm can be referred to when designing and providing other game-day and in-stadium services.

This research also endeavored to categorize artistic entertainment stimuli. Hannan et al. (2019) assert that "routine social interaction imposes demands for producing categories and categorizations...Engaging in such conversation requires constructing an extension of the concept – a list of positive categorizations" (p. 97). For example, given categorization knowledge of artistic entertainment, event managers may ask spectators, "What form of artistic entertainment do you anticipate during a sporting game?" or "What type of performing arts would you recommend for providing better artistic programs?". As part of sporting event services, it is essential to identify operational segments in order to improve artistic service quality (Pollock & Williams, 2009); therefore, categorizing SAE helps event regulators describe and search for an object (Hannan et al., 2019), such as which artistic activities to design and promote. In brief, the entertainment value of a sporting event is a critical factor in determining how profitable a sport event can be. Satisfying with the artistic entertainment of the event increases the likelihood of a consumer revisiting the stadium, resulting in increased consumption behaviors and the conversion of the individual to a loyal consumer. The sporting event and stadium could increase revenue and establish a positive reputation by offering high-quality artistic entertainment activities.

It is necessary to note that the current study is a conceptual inquiry without empirical testing. Future scholars should consider conducting both qualitative and quantitative investigations to further verify the causal relationship depicted in the framework and make adjustments when deemed necessary. According to Tooby and Cosmides (2001), aesthetic activities are "developmental" adaptations. With the continued evolution, development, and advancement of aesthetics and sports, people may have varying perceptions and cognitions of artistic entertainment. Future researchers are highly encouraged to take into consideration the developmental trends in artistic entertainment and provide practitioners with vibrant insights into how to create innovative artistic experiences for spectators.

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## APPENDIX

### POPULAR ARTISTIC ENTERTAINMENT FORMS IN SPORTING CONTEXTS

1. Game-induced artistic entertainment	
Type	Example
Stylistic Sports	Figure skating
	Rhythmic gymnastics
	synchronized swimming
	Gymnastics
	Ice dancing
	Artistic Gymnastics
Athletic Performances	Leaping catches
	Stunning dunks
	Powerful discus
	Amazing pole vault
	Precise throwing/shooting contests
	Exciting hurdles

## 2. Atmosphere-induced artistic entertainment

<i>Type</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b>Spectator-induced Artistic Entertainment</b>	Chanting Whistling Flag waving Routines enacted by fans Choreographic routines Face painting
<b>Artistic Entertainment induced by Game Actions</b>	Encouraging trumpet playing Inspiring rhythmic cheers Team anthem chorus because of the game actions
<b>Artistic Entertainment designed for Architecture</b>	Background music Colors of the surrounding area Facility aesthetics Paintings/sculptures relevant to the team and stadium history Artistic designs in the hall of fame
<b>Organizer-induced Artistic Entertainment</b>	Stadium announcement Team anthem playing Live music Lighting Fireworks Laser show Light show Theme song chorus Dances Marching band Cheerleading performance Interactive selfie Jersey wall Exhibition wall Mascot performances Spectator Costume Contest DJ Youth plays

<b>3. Event-induced artistic entertainment</b>	
<i>Type</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b>Visual Artistic Entertainment</b>	Photography Painting Comics Collage Graphic novels Digital storytelling Scoreboard animation
<b>Sound Artistic Entertainment</b>	Commentary Storytelling from spectators, players, and teams Cultural storytelling
<b>Literary Artistic Entertainment</b>	Poems Short stories Slogans
<b>Performing Artistic Entertainment</b>	Dances Music Half-time shows Teen welcome band Scene play Symphony Drums
<b>New Media Artistic Entertainment</b>	Video games Blogs Tweets Tik-Tok short videos Posts on Instagram and Facebook
<b>Multidisciplinary Artistic Entertainment</b>	Parachuting Helicopter jumping Acrobatics Opening ceremony Cultural-related performances Circus performances Magic shows Smoke bombs