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**Preston Robert Tisch
Institute for Global Sport**

RE-VISITING

THE BLACK MARKET

**RE-EXAMINING AFRICAN AMERICAN SPORT CONSUMERS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**



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THE MARKET

While the recent COVID-19 pandemic has, in some ways slowed the progress of certain sport consumption patterns (e.g., ticket sales), it seems that other consumption related categories such as team identification, for example have managed to stay constant for sport consumers [1]. And, while the pandemic itself has veered marketers towards a focus on *how* to properly market to sport consumers, there seems to be a lack of focus on *who* their efforts should be focused upon.


That is, while marketers have been centering their attentions upon new and innovative marketing agendas amidst a post-pandemic sports realm, there seems to be a lack of focus on attaining and understanding new and/or additional sport consumers. Of particular interest towards this investigation is the lack of awareness towards African American sport consumers.



BLACK

THE MARKET

On the whole, it is becoming widely understood that the African American market division is both a valuable and esteemed market segment in the United States. African Americans not only represent a market that is both sizable and economically stable [2], but this demographic also possesses a great degree of purchasing power. In fact, as it relates to purchasing power in the United States, Cheryl Grace, Nielsen's Senior VP of Consumer Engagement stated the following: "At 47.8 million strong and a buying power that's on par with many countries' gross domestic products, African Americans continue to outpace spending nationally" [3]. This, along with the economic statistics available, showcase the idea that African American consumers are not only suitable for pursuit within the overall consumer economy, but certainly for pursuit within the sport industry itself.



OF NOTE

IN 2019

**Black buying
power was**

\$1.4 t

IN 2024

**It is expected to
grow to**

\$1.8 t

**Since
2000**

**The Black market has
seen its buying power
increase by**

114%





BLACK v THE MARKET

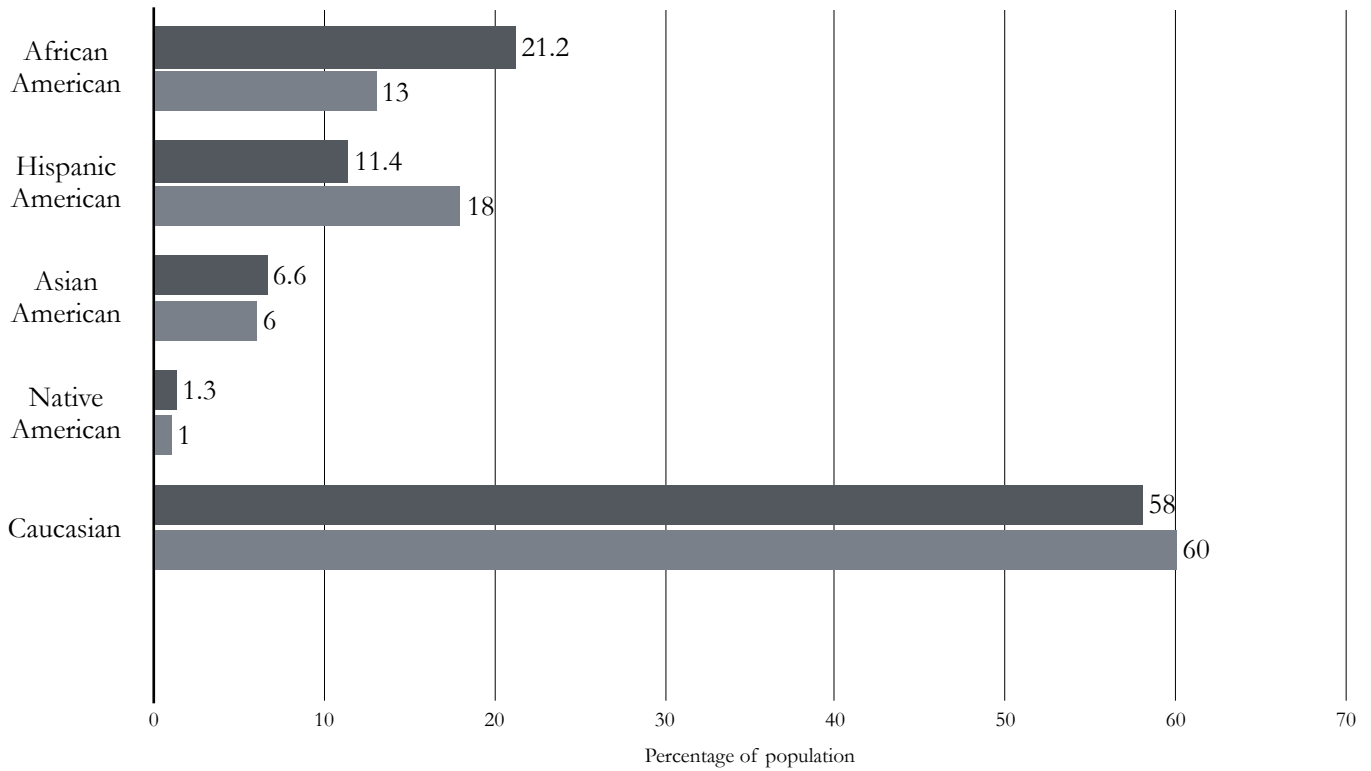




And while African American sport consumers have been reviewed in the past, particularly in the original “Black Market” study on African American sport consumers [4], there is a call to re-visit this market in order to perform an up-to-date, comprehensive examination upon African American sport consumption habits amidst the tail end of a post pandemic sports world, and with new variables available that may shed a better light on this population.

It is for this reason the authors have undertaken a research initiative intended to investigate African American sport consumers. On behalf of NYU’ and the NYU SPS Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport, and in partnering with executives from Fox Sports, the authors have undertaken an intensive, wide-ranging study – one that is regionally diverse, and comprehensive in scope.

As with the first, “Black Market” study, the objective of this investigation was to garner a “snapshot” on African American sport consumers. We intend to provide an understanding of this target market by comparing African Americans to their racial counterparts through our understanding of a new concept referred to as the Value Score - a variable which will be introduced in the upcoming pages. Further, the study provides an up-to-date exhibit on preferred consumption methods that are unique to African Americans, and provides an outlook upon the importance of family for African American (sport) consumers. In doing this, our overall hope is to offer an informed understanding of African American sport consumption habits.





 = Percentage of sample
 = Percentage of US Census

*Sample size = 11,797

*The sample for each demographic has been statistically verified, and thus represents a valid analysis

*The sample size is intended to adequately represent the United States census [5]

THE STUDY

VALUE SCORE

VALUE SCORE

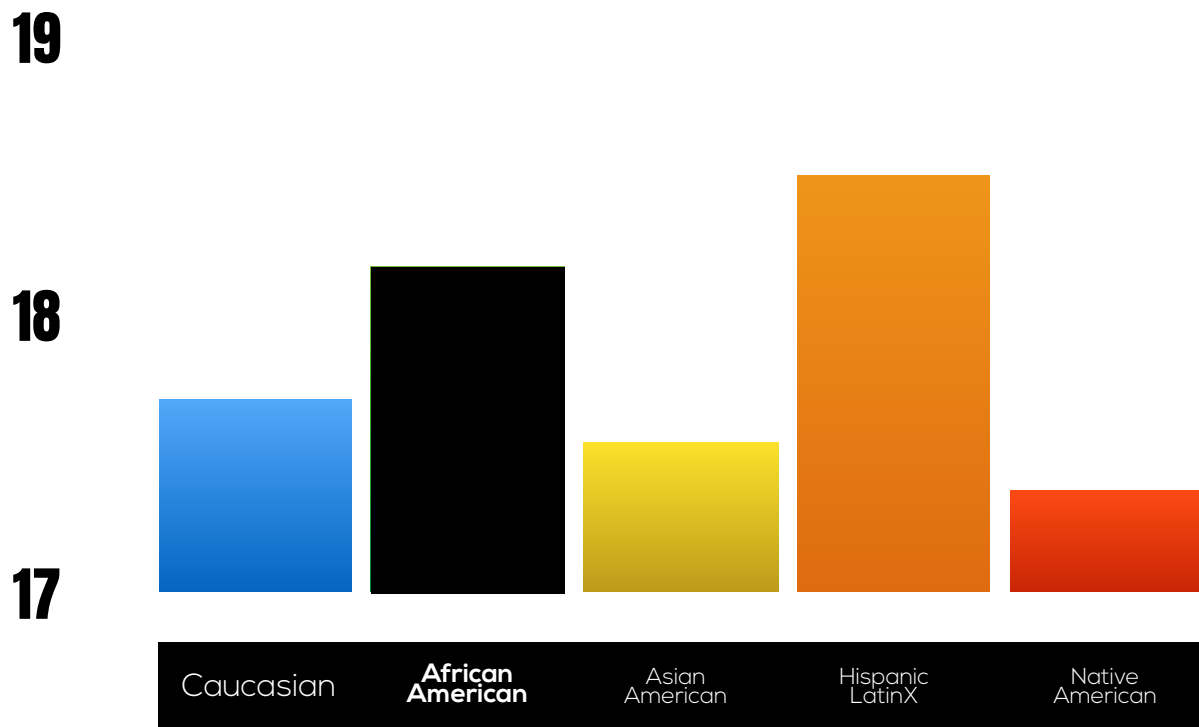
While there are a number of variables which can accurately represent (and therefore measure) sports fandom, we have decided to take upon the use of a new measurement – the Value Score.

Overall, the Value Score provides an accurate measurement of fandom through understanding one's overall passion towards a given team and/or sport. Furthermore, the Value Score takes into account one's behaviors, fan activities, and the frequency for which they partake in these acts. As such, the Value Score can offer sport executives a way to understand whether an individual and/or group is deemed as “valuable” based on their passion towards sport, and their associated activities with sport.

It should be noted that the Value Score is a unique variable due its ability to combine diverse factors (e.g., passion levels and various sport activities), and for its ability to re-dimensionalize fan “passion.” Based on previous investigations, the measurement of passion within the Value Score reconsiders the previously held belief of team fandom being an independent factor (i.e., not directly pertaining to the consumption of other teams or other leagues). Instead, the Value Score considers one's passion towards a favorite team as indicative of (and not independent of) one's passion towards the league for which the team resides. Further, the Value Score considers league passion as indicative of (and not independent of) one's passion towards other sports leagues. In sum, our new understanding of passion suggests that highly passionate sports fans are “valuable” because they are likely to interact with multiple teams, and multiple leagues.

By adhering to these assertions about passion, and by understanding factors such as: sports TV viewership, engagement activities as fans (e.g., going to a sporting event, going to a bar to watch a sporting event, gambling on sport [if applicable], listening to sports radio, wearing team-related clothing, discussing games with others in person or online, purchasing ticket packages, and playing fantasy sports), and the frequency of these actions, the Value Score provides a robust and accurate representation of fandom. The overall scale has been statistically tested and verified, and will be this study's centerpiece for investigating African American fandom and comparing their levels of fandom across race.

RESULTS



For the current investigation, we measured the Value Score variable for African Americans, and compared the results alongside of their racial counterparts (Caucasians, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans/Latin-X, and Native Americans) in an effort to find any differences.

Interestingly enough, results indicate African Americans had a significantly higher ($p < .05$) Value Score than all of their racial counterparts, aside from Hispanic Americans.



WHAT'S

GOOD

WHAT'S GOOD: LOOKING WITHIN THE VALUE SCORE

While the overall insight of African Americans scoring higher on the Value Score than the majority of their racial counterparts is a worthwhile finding, we felt this investigation would provide further depth if we compared our findings within and across particular categories. That is to say, we felt this investigation could provide more insight into the African American sports fan by seeing their Value Scores within particular states, regional divisions, and age groups. Additionally, a comparison of these categories across race can further show this group's uniqueness, and allow sport managers and marketers to better understand the market as a whole.

The following page will showcase the three age groups which scored highest in Value Score (whereas age groups were categorized by 18-34, 35-49, 50-64, and 65-75), the three states which scored highest in Value Score (whereas all states were measured), and the three regional divisions which scored highest in Value Score (whereas regional divisions were categorized by New England, Mid Atlantic, Northeast Central, Northwest Central, South Atlantic, Southeast Central, Southwest Central, Mountain, Pacific).

In that our effort was to not only showcase the values for African Americans, but to also showcase their unique nature in compared to other races, the above-mentioned categories are also shown for Caucasians and Hispanic Americans/Latin-X (i.e., the two groups with the next highest Value Scores)


Lastly, it should be noted that a comparison for African Americans across gender was conducted, with results suggesting no significant difference ($p < .05$) in Value Score between Male & Female.

** in that our results revealed noteworthy findings amidst Black females, the authors intend to put forth a further White Paper dedicated to Black Female sports fans*

RESULTS

The following chart is a list of the highest Value Scores for Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans, based on three separate categories: highest Value Score by Age, highest Value Score by State, and highest Value Score by Regional Division

RACE	CAUCASIAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC
AGE	18-34 35-49 50-64	35-49 18-34 50-64	35-49 18-34 50-64
STATE	Arkansas DC Nebraska	Nevada Michigan California	New Jersey New York Michigan
REG DIV	NE Central SE Central Pacific	Mountain Pacific Mid Atlantic	Mid Atlantic NE Central SE Central



OF NOTE

**THERE
ARE**

10

**States in which African Americans
rank highest In Value Score**

IN

25

**States African Americans have a
higher Value Score than Caucasians**

IN

6/9

**Regions African Americans have a
higher Value Score than Caucasians**

**THIS IS
HOW WE
DO IT**




THIS IS HOW WE DO IT:

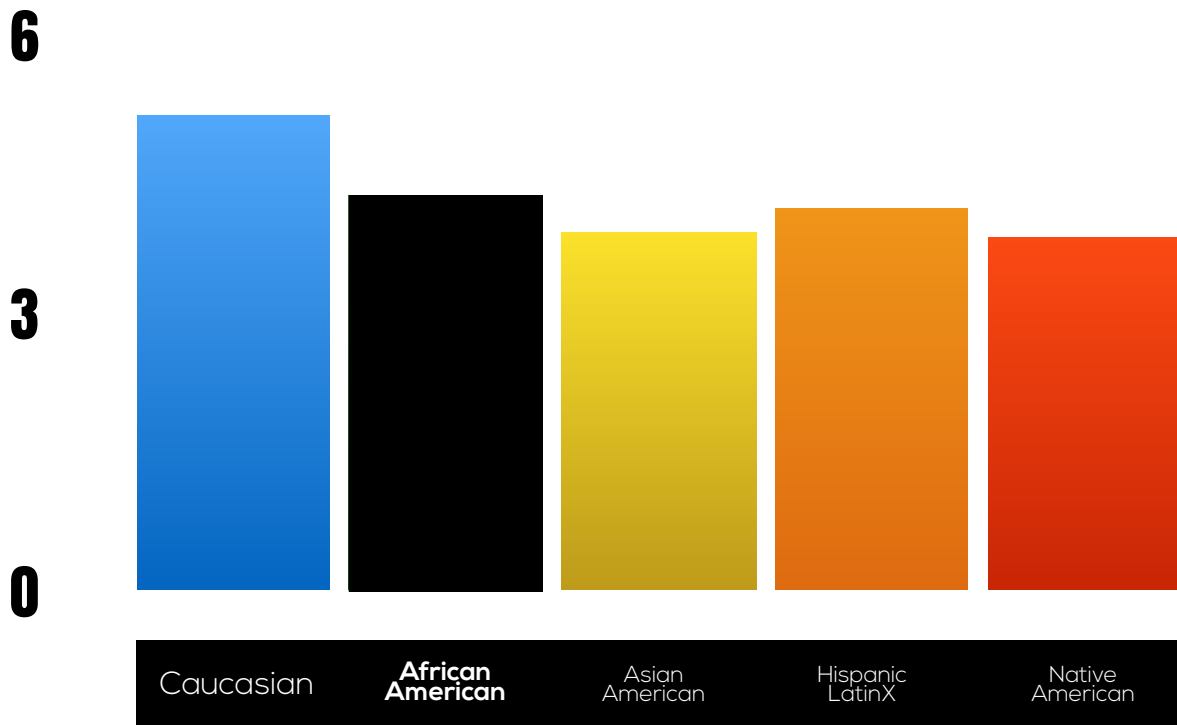
EXPLORING PREFERED CONSUMPTION TYPES

While the Value Score creates an overall picture towards one's fandom, the broader scope of fan value must be understood by comprehending *how* African Americans consume sport. That is, we sought to further understand the value of African American sport consumers by comprehending which mediums are most often used to consume sport. This is a particularly important concept to understand, as consumers not only have an abundance of consumption mediums available to them, but perhaps more importantly, because some studies suggest that live game consumption (e.g., attending a sporting event, or watching a sporting event as it occurs on television), no longer dictates one's fandom. Rather, fandom can be indicated by other factors such as watching highlights, for example [6]. In turn, and as a means to elucidate the driving forces of the Value Score, we assessed the amount of time participants spend on the following sport consumption mediums: watching live sporting events, watching sports highlights, watching sports documentaries, and watching sports debate/analysis shows.

The results will be shown for African Americans, along with their racial counterparts as a means to expose any differences, and in turn, better comprehend African American sport consumers as a whole.



RESULTS

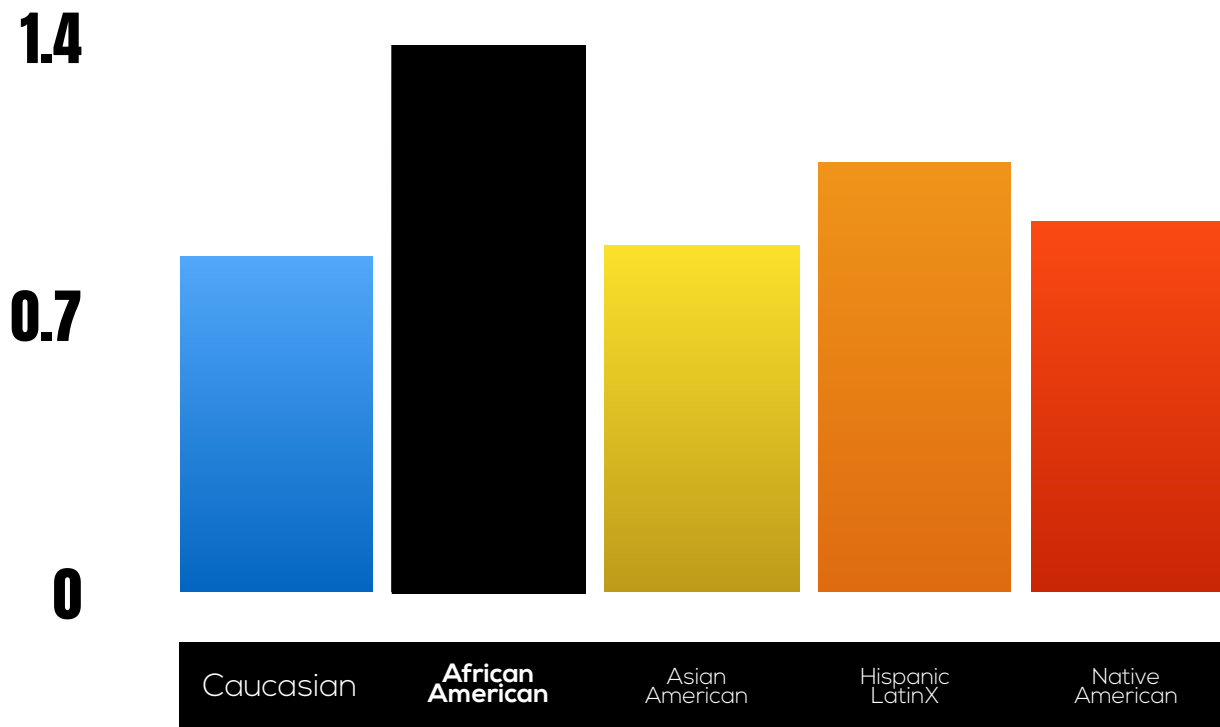


For the current investigation, we specifically asked participants to divide their weekly hours upon the following medium: Live Sports

The measurement indicates a comparison of all groups (Caucasians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latin-X, and Native Americans) based on their time spent watching said medium.



RESULTS



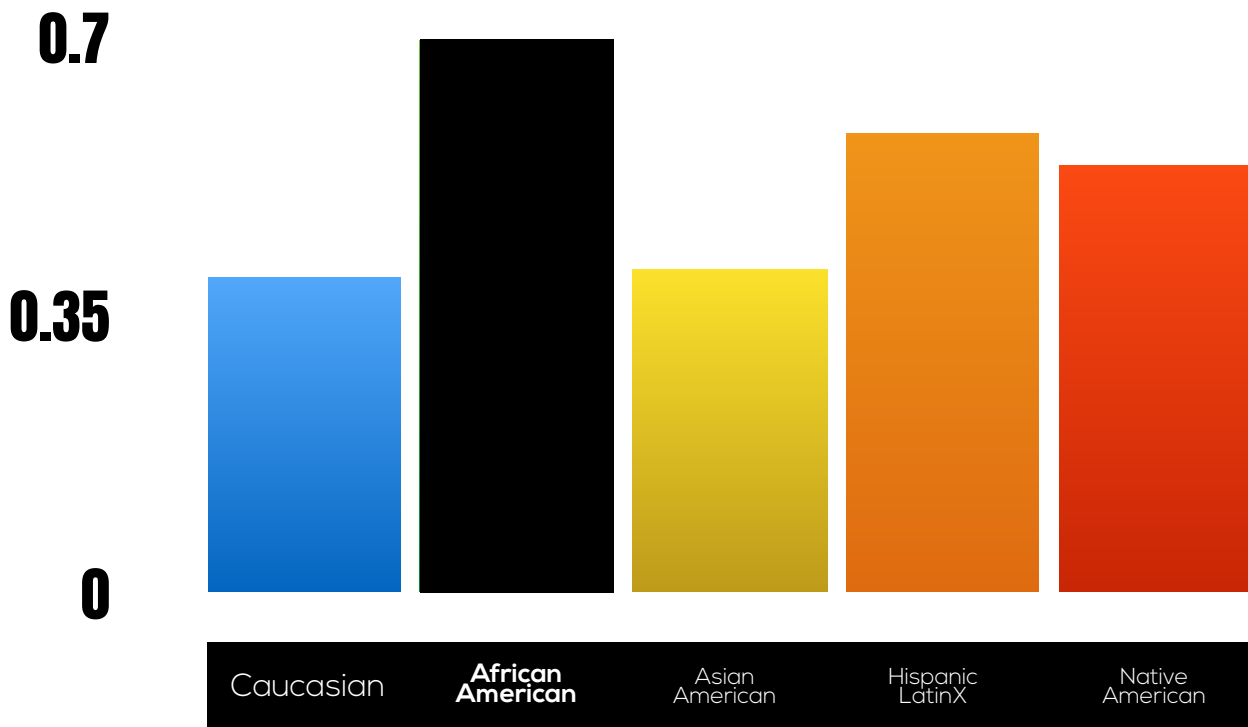
For the current investigation, we specifically asked participants to divide their weekly hours upon the following medium: Sports Highlights

The measurement indicates a comparison of all groups (Caucasians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latin-X, and Native Americans) based on their time spent watching said medium.



RESULTS

HRS SPENT - DOCUMENTARIES



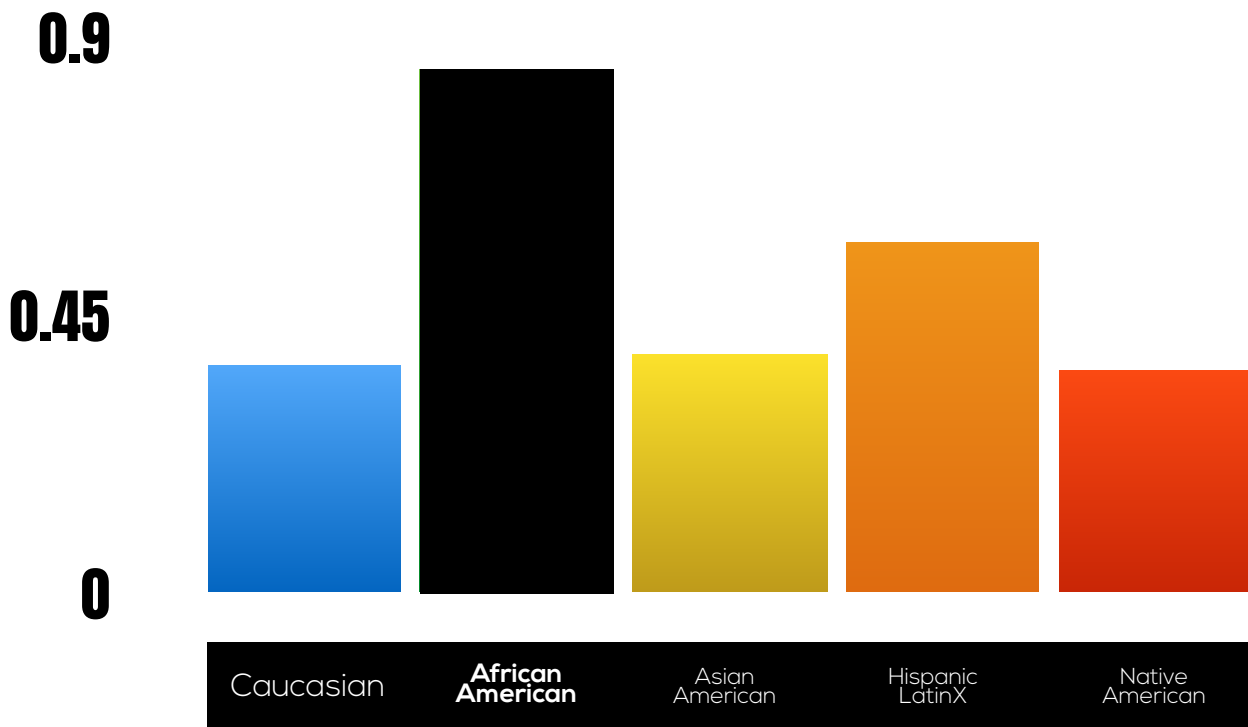
For the current investigation, we specifically asked participants to divide their weekly hours upon the following medium: Sports Documentaries

The measurement indicates a comparison of all groups (Caucasians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latin-X, and Native Americans) based on their time spent watching said medium.



RESULTS

HRS SPENT - DEBATE/ANALYSIS



For the current investigation, we specifically asked participants to divide their weekly hours upon the following medium: Sport Debate/Analysis Shows

The measurement indicates a comparison of all groups (Caucasians, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latin-X, and Native Americans) based on their time spent watching said medium.



RESULTS

Perhaps the most glaring highlight may be the fact that African Americans spend significantly less ($p < .05$) time watching live sporting events than *all* of their racial counterparts. Yet, as mentioned previously, it should be noted that this particular measurement - watching live sports - does not, and should not directly indicate one's fandom.

In fact, as suggested by the authors, the Value Score itself not only provides a more stable and reliable way to indicate fandom, but also acknowledges other outside factors that can influence one's fandom. In turn, the fact that African American respondents spent significantly more ($p < .05$) time than *all* of their racial co-horts on *all* of the latter measurements (i.e., hours spent watching highlights, documentaries, and debate/analysis shows) speaks volumes for this population's worth.

This is *not* to say that live sports are not of value - they certainly are; and, as can be seen, African Americans spend more time watching live sports than the other measured mediums. The information here simply tells another story - that African American sport fandom is not only influenced by different factors than other populations, but that sport managers and marketers can seek alternative mediums to target this population.

WE ARE

FAMILY




WE ARE FAMILY:

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

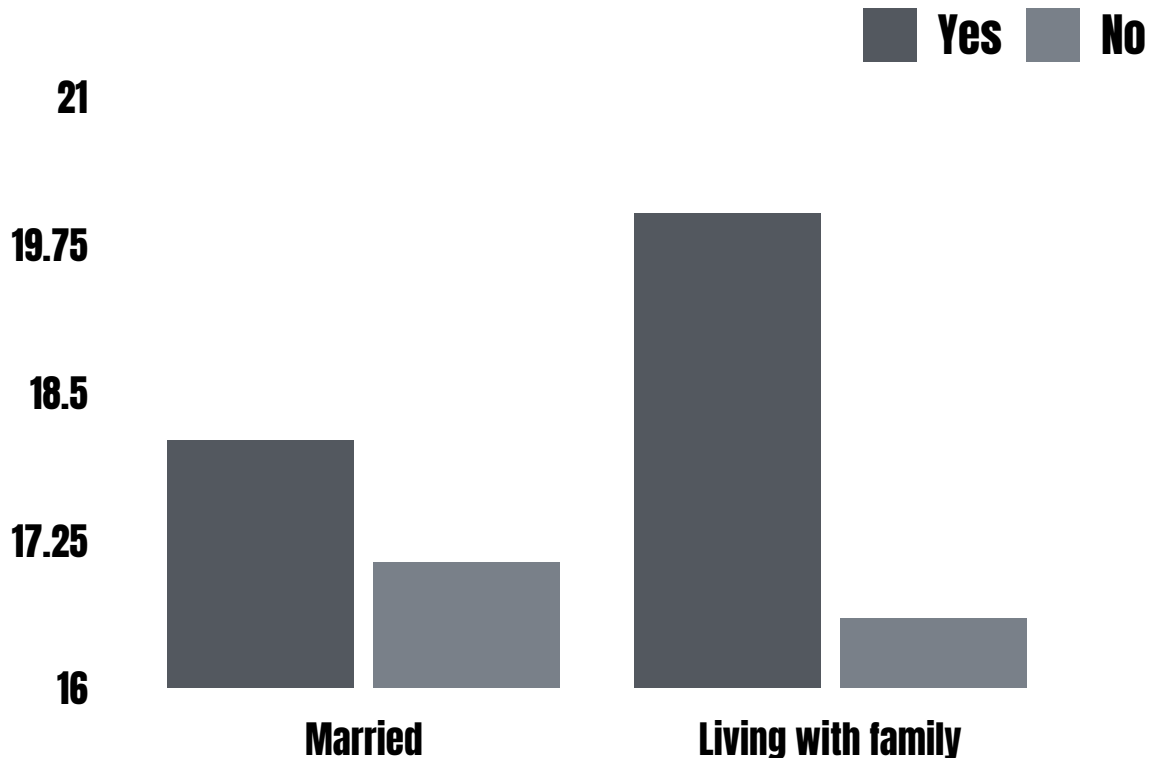
While not a novel concept, it should be noted that African Americans place an important value upon family [7]. In that African Americans often consider themselves marginalized in America [8], families can often serve as a stable and trustworthy source of comfort. Its importance therefore can have an influence upon a great number of factors for African Americans, particularly as it relates to consumption habits.

As it relates to the current study (and the sports realm overall), studies suggest that for African Americans, family gatherings can not only serve as a centerpiece for social assemblies, but if these social assemblies revolve around a particular topic (e.g., sporting events) than it is likely the participants will latch onto the centerpiece of the assembly for the sake of supporting what it represents (i.e., the overall family gathering). Furthermore, studies indicate that sports themselves can be a means to intimately interact with family when other mediums may not succeed at doing so [7].

It is for this reason we sought to examine how certain family dynamics had an influence - if at all - on the Value Score. Though our current study does not revolve around these factors, the study does take it into consideration due to the importance of the family dynamic for African Americans. Subsequently, the authors measured notions such as parent-child/child-parent relationship strength, and took into account living situations and marital status to see their impact upon our overall measure of the Value Score.



RESULTS



In order to comprehend the family dynamic, we measured Value Scores for African Americans who were married, against African Americans who were not married, as well as African Americans who were currently living with family members against African Americans who were not living with family members.

Results indicate that African Americans who were married had significantly higher ($p < .05$) Value Scores than African Americans who were not married. Additionally, results indicate that African Americans who were currently living with family had significantly higher ($p < .05$) Value Scores than African Americans who were not living with family.

Though not pictured above, of note is also the fact that **growth in parent-child/child-parent relationship strength is *directly* correlated with growth in Value Score.**

IN CONCLUSION

We believe the above study is altogether enlightening and informative. Our study suggests African Americans are a valuable population, worthy of pursuit as a target market. This population not only possess a strong buying power, but a strong Value Score - one which is significantly higher than the majority population (i.e., Caucasians). Yet, it should be noted that in saying this, and in portraying our thoughts on the entire study, we are by no means suggesting the African American target market is superior and/or “more valuable”. Rather, this study brings to the light the idea that the African American population is not to be forgotten as a target market. In fact, it is our belief that in some cases this target market is worthy of the attention of an entire (sport) marketing team. Given the financial aptitude of this population, along with the aforementioned statistics presented in this paper, it is suggested that (sport) marketers and managers veer from traditional marketing campaigns in an effort to specifically speak to the wants and/or preferences (e.g., different consumption mediums and an amplified penchant towards family) that are unique to African American sport consumers. Doing so will not only allow this population to be heard, but will allow for a more robust set of marketing goals and campaigns which will further compliment the overall sport market.

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THE PLAYERS

While the above study was spearheaded and written by Dr. Brandon Brown, of NYU's SPS Preston Robert Tisch Institute for Global Sport, Ben Valenta, and David Sikorjak, it was not without help. The following individuals contributed to the study by means of consultation, impact, or support: Dr. Daniel Kelly II, Vince Gennaro, David Hollander, and Dr. Bri Newland.

