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The Thrill of Victory and the Agony of Defeat: Using the Social Media Listening Center to Examine Post-game Twitter Content in College Rivalry Games

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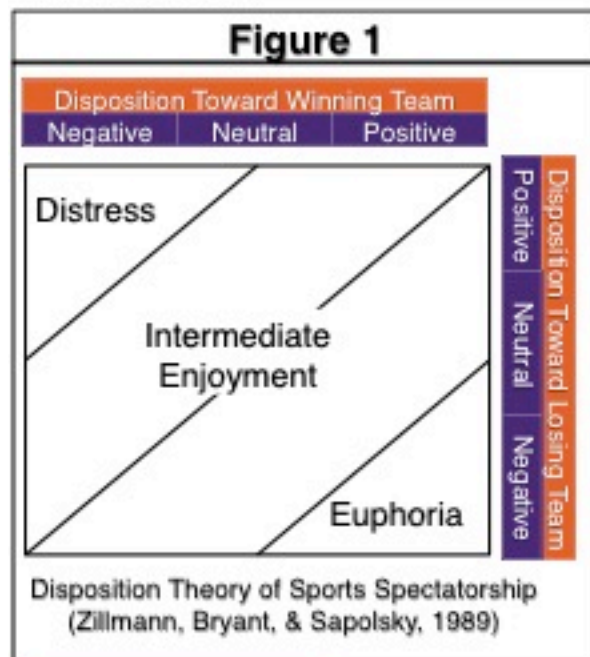
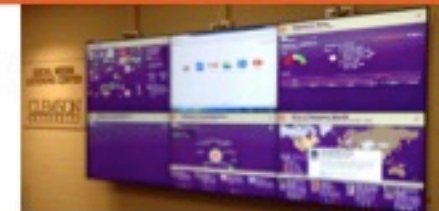
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The Thrill of Victory and the Agony of Defeat:

Using the Social Media Listening Center to Examine Post-game Twitter Content in College Rivalry Games

This CI tested the immediate post-game reactions of college sports fans to wins/losses against rival teams on Twitter. Specifically, we coded tweets to determine whether these reactions would fall in line with the Disposition Theory of Sports Spectatorship (Zillmann, Bryant, and Sapolsky, 1989). Our overall findings validated this theory, but offered potential avenues of expansion for future research.



Method

- Located college football and basketball games that fit theoretical framework (see Figure 1).**
 - Games had to be closely contested to finish as they created immediate, disposition-based reactions when the game concluded, which could then be located.
- Found hashtags (#) used specifically by team fans.**
 - Hashtags are relevant keyword/phrase (no spaces) to categorize tweets. Isolated "true fans" of teams.
- Created search terms that allowed us to locate and gather specific tweets.**
 - Using Social Media Listening Center software (Radian6), the first 200 tweets from fans of both the winning and losing teams were located.
- CI students independently coded tweets.**
 - Tweets from each fanbase were added to Nvivo software, which allowed CI students to independently code tweets into themes.
- CI students meet with faculty advisor to determine larger themes**
 - During CI meetings, teams of 3-4 students discussed their thematic findings with each other and CI mentor; developing a consensus-based set of themes for each game.

Overall Conclusions

- Disposition theory validated, but...**
 - Fans of winning teams largely expressed euphoric responses through excitement over the win, school/team pride, and gloating/degrading rivals.
 - Fans of losing teams generally expressed distress through disappointment and anger.
- Themes from tweets were not universal across games**
 - Some games featured varied reactions. More specifically:
- Reactions were driven by winning/losing outcome as well as fan expectations, game quality/performance, and other variables**
 - For example, Oklahoma/Texas was noted as an "ugly win" by winning OU fans and a "moral victory" by UT fans (Texas expected to lose).
 - Indiana's loss to Purdue featured IU fans expressing dislike of current head coach.
 - Kentucky fans made references to expectations for perfect season.
- One common theme emerged for winning/losing teams: Expression of school and team pride**

Winning Team Themes	Excited reactions to close win	Gloating and Degrading rival	Expression of school and team pride	"Good game" (congratulating both teams)
Losing Team Themes	Disappointment in close loss	Anger over loss	Expression of school and team pride	Rationalizing loss and looking forward to future



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Games Coded	2013	2014	2014	2015	2015
2,000 Overall Tweets	42	31	30	67	67
	41	26	24	63	63