

Examining Factors that Influence Students' Spectating Status at the GUSA Games in Ghana

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Abstract

University sporting spectating behaviour is shaped by complex psychological, socio-cultural, and infrastructural factors, yet still, this area remains underexplored in the context of African sports and recreation. Despite the vibrancy of Ghana's inter-university sports culture, especially the Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA) games, there is limited empirical research on students' (non-athletes) attendance patterns and influencing factors. This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, coupled with descriptive survey analysis and qualitative interviews, to examine 702 students, which comprised both athletes and non-athletes from five selected major universities in Ghana: KNUST, UCC, UEW, UDS, and UG. With the aid of SPSS, which was used for findings, mean, regression, and Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the gathered data was analysed. The findings showed that attendance at GUSA games is notably low, with 62% of the students never having attended any games in the past five years, despite 96.7% indicating interest in future participation. Key constraints included ineffective communication, scheduling conflicts, institutional and travel-related barriers, and perceived event quality. Regression analysis and PCA identified two dominant categories affecting attendance: constraints (transportation, finance, communication) and event organisation (scheduling, quality, student-driven activities). Travel-related challenges, in particular, showed a significant negative correlation with actual attendance ($P < 0.05$). They concluded that the low attendance at GUSA games stems not only from a lack of interest but also from structural and logistical constraints. To improve students' participation, GUSA and university stakeholders should prioritise better communication strategies, more accessible scheduling, and subsidised transportation. These insights contribute to not only local students' engagement strategies but also to the broader global discourse on university sports spectating behaviour.

Keywords: GUSA Games, University Sports, Student Spectating Behaviour, Attendance Constraints, Institutional Barriers, Sports Engagement.

Introduction

Sports spectating has long been recognised as a significant aspect of university culture, fostering school spirit, social cohesion, and student engagement (Funk et al., 2019). The Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA) Games, as one of the most prestigious inter-university sporting events in Ghana, serves as a key platform for student-athletes to compete while offering spectators an opportunity to support their institutions (Amoah et

al., 2022). However, spectating behaviours among university students are influenced by a complex interplay of social, psychological, economic, and institutional factors (Wann et al., 2018).

Globally, studies have examined various determinants of sports spectating among university students. In the United States, research indicates that socialization, entertainment, and team identification are primary motivators for attending live college sports events (Funk et al., 2019; Byon et al., 2017). Conversely, barriers such as high-ticket costs, scheduling conflicts, and competing leisure activities often deter attendance (Wann et al., 2018). Similarly, in the UK, students increasingly prefer digital spectating (e.g., streaming) due to convenience, raising concerns about declining live attendance (Wann et al., 2018).

In Asia, studies highlight the role of technology and emotional engagement in shaping spectating habits. South Korean university students, for instance, demonstrate a growing preference for e-sports spectating via digital platforms, driven by accessibility and interactive features (Kim & Trail, 2021). Meanwhile, in Japan, emotional attachment to university teams significantly influences live attendance, with star athletes acting as major crowd-pullers (Oshimi & Harada, 2020). Chinese research further emphasises the rising influence of mobile streaming, though prestigious live events still attract substantial student crowds (Zhang et al., 2022).

Within the African context, university sports spectating is shaped by unique socio-economic and institutional dynamics. In Ghana, studies reveal that factors such as event promotion, peer influence, and other factors play crucial roles in determining student attendance at the GUSA Games (Amoah et al., 2022; Addo et al., 2021). Additionally, gender disparities persist, with female students reporting lower attendance due to safety concerns and a lack of relatable role models (Owusu-Ansah et al., 2023). In South Africa, research highlights the impact of event atmosphere and pricing on spectating trends, particularly in rugby and cricket (Tichaawa & Moyo, 2023).

The GUSA Games, as a major sporting spectacle in Ghana, presents an interesting case study due to its blend of traditional sports enthusiasm and emerging challenges in student engagement (Addo et al., 2021). While existing literature provides valuable insights into global spectating trends, the Ghanaian context warrants deeper exploration given its distinct cultural and institutional environment (Amoah et al., 2022).

Problem Statement

University sports spectating represents a complex behavioural phenomenon shaped by multiple interacting factors, yet remains understudied in the African context, particularly regarding Ghana's prestigious Ghana Universities Sports Association (GUSA) games. Existing international research demonstrates that spectator behavior emerges from psychological, sociocultural, economic, and institutional influences (Koronios, Travlos, Douvis, & Papadopoulos, 2020; Elmas & Balci, 2019), with studies from China highlighting motivational factors (Duan, Liu, & He, 2020; Wang, & Matsuoka, 2014) and Turkish research revealing demographic variations in sports consumption (Elmas & Balci, 2019). The digital

revolution has further transformed spectating patterns, with Malaysian studies showing how new media fosters engagement (Mohamad, 2024), while Pakistani research confirms the media's role in driving live attendance (Toor, Iqbal, & ul Momineen, 2024). In Africa, sports participation studies and Ghanaian health behaviour research provide tangential insights but crucially lack focus on spectating dynamics (Monyo, 2019; Quansah, 2024). This glaring research gap becomes particularly significant given Ghana's vibrant inter-university sports culture centered on GUSA games, which attract thousands of students annually, yet show inconsistent attendance patterns due to the exclusion of the non-student athletes, who form the greater majority of the student population. While international literature establishes theoretical frameworks for understanding spectating behaviour, the unique socioeconomic context of Ghanaian universities, including distinctive institutional cultures, transportation challenges, and digital adoption patterns, suggests these factors may operate differently than in studied contexts. Notably absent is an empirical examination of how financial constraints (Caton & Greenhill, 2013), peer networks (Commey-Mintah et al., 2023; Russell, 2021), or institutional policies specifically impact GUSA game attendance, despite their recognised influence on other student behaviours. The current study addresses this critical knowledge gap by systematically investigating the multifaceted factors shaping Ghanaian students' spectating behaviour at GUSA games. Two key research lacunae motivate this investigation: (1) the absence of spectating-focused research in Ghana university settings despite demonstrated sports engagement benefits (Commey-Mintah et al., 2023); and (2) insufficient understanding of how Ghana's unique institutional and transportation infrastructures mediate attendance; By illuminating these underexplored dimensions, this research will provide evidence-based insights to enhance student engagement strategies while contributing to global sports spectating literature with crucial data from an understudied regional context. The findings will prove particularly valuable for GUSA organisers and university administrators seeking to optimise event participation and strengthen the role of inter-university sports in student life.

Conceptual Framework

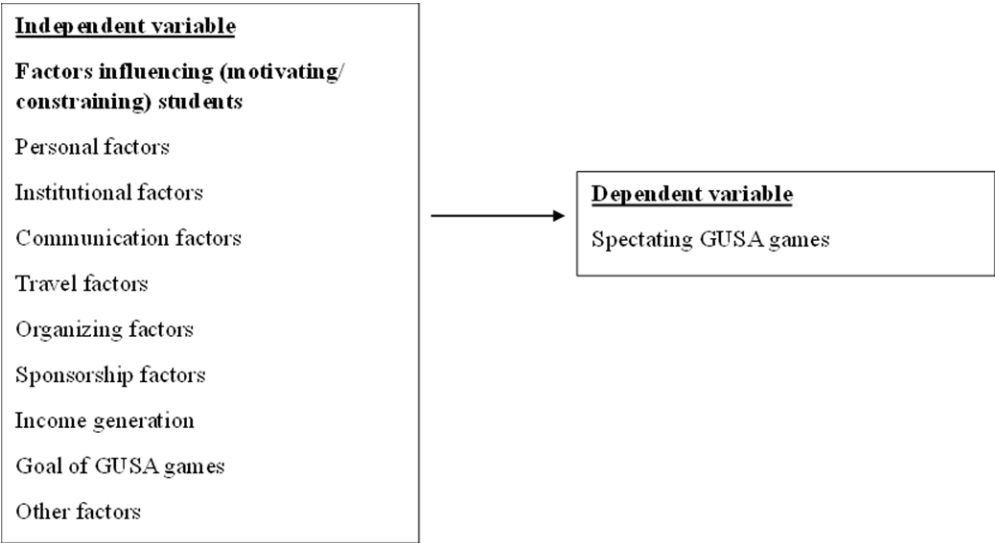


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is designed to explore the factors that influence (either motivate or constrain) students concerning spectating the Ghana University Sports Association (GUSA) games. In this framework, spectating GUSA games is identified as the dependent variable. It refers to students’ attendance and participation as spectators during the sports events. The focus is on understanding how this act of spectating affects various underlying factors that may either encourage or discourage student involvement. The independent variables are the different categories of influencing factors that are assumed to be shaped or affected by spectating the GUSA games. These include personal factors such as individual interest, time availability, and academic commitments; institutional factors like university support and organisation; and communication factors which involve how well information about the games is disseminated. Travel factors, such as the distance to event venues, transport availability, and safety, also play a role, as do organizing factors, which pertain to how well the events are planned and managed. Additionally, sponsorship factors may influence student participation by providing incentives or support for attendance. Income generation is another dependent factor, as some students may use the games as an opportunity to earn money through various means, such as selling merchandise or food. Furthermore, the overall goals of the GUSA games, such as promoting sportsmanship, unity, and student engagement, are also considered factors that may affect students’ motivation. Lastly, other external or contextual factors that do not fall into these categories but still influence student behaviour are included.

Methodology

Adopting mixed-methods analysis, the study conducted a descriptive analysis. Data was collected from 702 students through survey questionnaire and students’ sports leaders, coaches and non-athletes through interview guide from five universities in Ghana namely; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education (UEW), University for Development Studies (UDS), and University of Ghana (UG). These universities were selected based on their experience in

hosting GUSA games and their longstanding involvement with GUSA for at least ten years. The study targeted students enrolled in these universities for a minimum of at least a year. The participants selected are both athletes and non-athletes. This is because spectating in GUSA games is for all students admitted into a university in Ghana.

After data collection, SPSS was used for the data analysis with the aid of mean and standard deviation. Regression was used to test the level of significance of the factors. Later, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to categorized factors visually and discussed.

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the study respondents, taking into consideration their academic level, age, employment, and marital status. The data is presented using cross-tabulation according to the various institutions, where a $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ indicates a significant difference in the socio-demographic characteristics across the institutions.

The table below reveals the demographic characteristics of the various respondents engaged in the various schools selected for this study. The data gathered showed that the majority of the respondents from all the selected schools were males (589, 83.9%), and females were 113 (16.1%). The respondents are of their youthful age, and most of them are unemployed, meaning they are fully engaged with school. Out of the entire respondents, 650 of them are undergraduate students and the remaining 52 are post-graduates.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic variable	UCC	UEW	KNUST	UG	UDS	TOTAL
Gender						
Male	102(82.9%)	193(81.8%)	91(89.2%)	91(83.5%)	112(84.8%)	589(83.9%)
Female	21(17.1%)	43(18.2%)	11(10.8%)	18(16.5%)	20(15.2%)	113(16.1%)
Age						
17-25 years	54(43.9%)	121(51.3%)	50(49.0%)	45(41.3%)	64(48.5%)	334(47.6%)
26-35 years	64(52.0%)	111(47.0%)	47(46.1%)	63(57.8%)	63(47.7%)	348(49.6%)
36-45 years	5(4.1%)	4(1.7%)	5(4.9%)	1(0.9%)	4(3.0%)	19(2.7%)
Above 45 years	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.8%)	1(0.1%)
Employment level						
Employed	12(9.8%)	20(8.5%)	11(10.8%)	6(5.5%)	10(7.6%)	59(8.4%)
Unemployed	111(90.2%)	215(91.5%)	91(89.2%)	103(94.5%)	122(92.4%)	642(91.6%)
Religion						
Christian	94(76.4%)	184(78.0%)	83(81.4%)	81(74.3%)	94(71.2%)	536(76.4%)
Moslem	24(19.5%)	42(17.8%)	16(15.7%)	25(22.9%)	33(25.0%)	140(19.9%)
Traditional	5(4.1%)	10(4.2%)	3(2.9%)	3(2.8%)	5(3.8%)	26(3.7%)

Table 1 Contd.

Demographic variable		UCC	UEW	KNUST	UG	UDS
Marital status						
Single	71(57.7%)	140(59.3%)	55(53.9%)	62(56.9%)	84(63.6%)	412(58.7%)
In relationship	20(16.3%)	40(16.9%)	20(19.6%)	17(15.6%)	20(15.2%)	117(16.7%)
Married	32(26.0%)	56(23.7%)	27(26.5%)	30(27.5%)	28(21.2%)	173(24.6%)
Ethnicity						
Ewe	24(19.5%)	42(17.8%)	19(18.6%)	25(22.9%)	22(16.7%)	132(18.8%)
Northerner	34(27.6%)	65(27.5%)	26(25.5%)	29(26.6%)	38(28.8%)	192(27.4%)
Akan	57(46.3%)	118(50.0%)	44(43.1%)	53(48.6%)	59(44.7%)	331(47.2%)
Ga	8(6.5%)	11(4.7%)	13(12.7%)	2(1.8%)	13(9.8%)	47(6.7%)
Academic classification						
Undergraduate	113(91.9%)	216(91.5%)	93(91.2%)	104(95.4%)	124(93.9%)	650(92.6%)
Post-graduate	10(8.1%)	20(8.5%)	9(8.8%)	5(4.6%)	8(6.1%)	52(7.4%)

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the determinants GUSA games of spectatorship

This section presents the data on the PCA to determine which factors influence the decision of students to spectate GUSA games. The KMO and Bartlett's Test show that the data is suitable for the PCA analysis (Table 4.5).

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.755
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1614.875
	Df	36
	Sig.	.000

The data presented in Table 2 indicate that the KMO and Bartlett's Test was statistically significant ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$). This significance indicates that the data collected is suitable for factor analysis, which can help identify underlying variables that influence student engagement as spectators.

The KMO statistic evaluates if the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis. With the provided data, factor analysis may be helpful if the number is closer to 1. While numbers below 0.5 imply that factor analysis may not produce trustworthy results, values above 0.5 are typically regarded as acceptable. By determining if the correlation matrix is an identity matrix, this test determines whether the variables are unrelated and inappropriate for factor analysis. A significant result ($p\text{-value} < 0.001$) indicates that the variables are related, which supports additional research.

Communalities of the PCA

The table presents the communalities derived from a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which indicates how much variance in each variable is explained by the extracted factors. The Initial column shows the starting communality value of 1.000 for all variables before extraction, representing their total variance. The Extraction column reveals the proportion of variance retained after extracting the factors, where values above 0.5 (50%) are considered meaningful for inclusion in further analysis.

In this case, most variables meet the threshold (>0.5), confirming their significance as factors influencing the study's focus (e.g., constraints related to the GUSA games). For instance, Institutional constraints (0.756), Organising constraints (0.611), and Income generation (0.576) are well-explained by the extracted factors, suggesting they are key contributors to the underlying construct. However, Personal constraints (0.409) and Sponsorship constraints (0.307) fall below the 0.5 cutoff, implying they share limited variance with other factors and may be excluded from subsequent analysis. The remaining variables (e.g., Communication constraints, Travel constraints, and Goal of GUSA games) hover near or above 0.5, warranting cautious retention.

Table 3: Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Personal constraints	1.000	.409
Institutional constraints	1.000	.756
Communication constraints	1.000	.561
Travel constraints	1.000	.567
Organising constraints	1.000	.611
Other constraints	1.000	.536
Sponsorship constraints	1.000	.307
Goal of GUSA games	1.000	.559
Income generation	1.000	.576
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Total variance explained in the PCA

The data in Table 4 indicate that two components have been extracted, and these explain 54.3% of the total variance in the data. The extraction of two components suggests that two underlying factors significantly contribute to students' decisions to attend GUSA events. A cluster of related variables with a common variance is represented by each component. More than half of the variation in spectatorship may be ascribed to these two factors, since they account for 54.3% of the total variance. This percentage is significant since it implies that these factors account for a sizable amount of the factors influencing students' participation in sports activities.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.860	31.782	31.782	2.860	31.782	31.782	2.720	30.221	30.221
2	2.022	22.470	54.252	2.022	22.470	54.252	2.163	24.031	54.252
3	.867	9.633	63.885						
4	.778	8.649	72.534						
5	.655	7.278	79.811						
6	.567	6.305	86.116						
7	.486	5.405	91.521						
8	.458	5.087	96.608						
9	.305	3.392	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The screen plot in Figure 1 graphically presents the components with Eigenvalues greater than one which explains 54.3% of the variance in the data. The screen plot in Figure 4.1 shows that only two components had Eigenvalues greater than one.

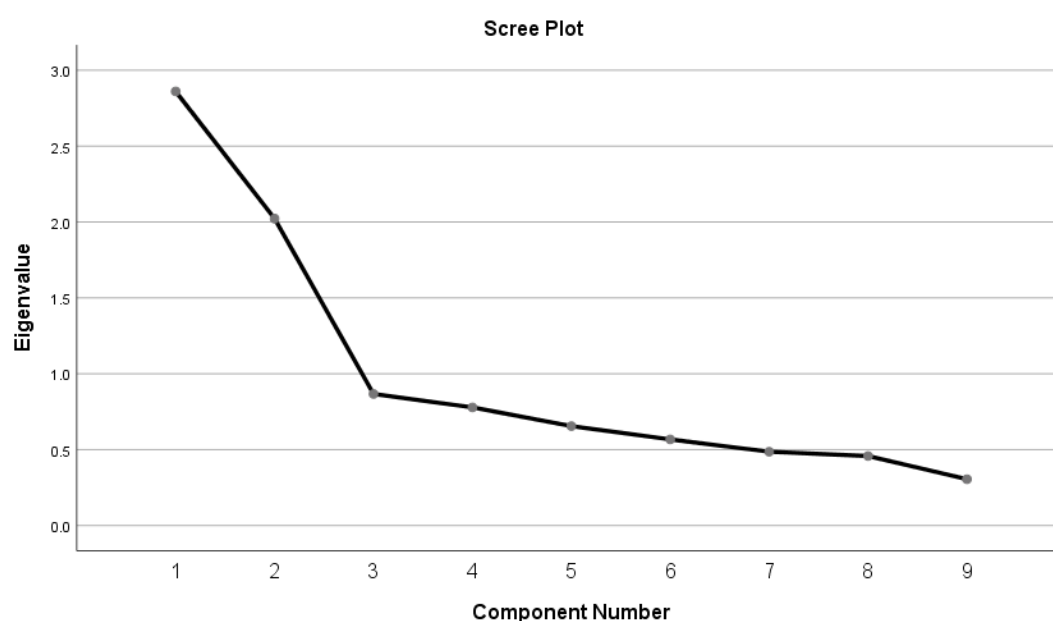


Figure 2: Screen plot of principal components

Component matrix of the PCA

This table presents the rotated component matrix from a Principal Component Analysis (PCA), showing how each variable loads onto two extracted components (factors). The values represent the correlation coefficients between the variables and the components, with higher absolute values (closer to 1 or -1) indicating stronger associations.

Component 1 is strongly associated with *Institutional constraints* (0.844), *Communication constraints* (0.721), and *Personal constraints* (0.628), suggesting this factor represents structural or systemic barriers affecting the study's focus (e.g., participation in GUSA games). Notably, *Goal of GUSA games* (-0.635) and *Income generation* (-0.444) load negatively, implying they inversely relate to these constraints or may form a separate dimension.

Component 2 captures *Organizing constraints* (0.744), *Other constraints* (0.717), and *Income generation* (0.615), indicating this factor reflects logistical or operational challenges. Variables like *Travel constraints* (0.406) and *Sponsorship constraints* (0.397) load moderately on both components, suggesting overlapping influences.

Table 5: Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Personal constrains	.628	.122
Institutional constrains	.844	.208
Communication constrains	.721	.202
Travel constrains	.634	.406
Organizing constrains	-.240	.744
Other constrains	-.148	.717
Sponsorship constrains	.387	.397
Goal of GUSA games	-.635	.394
Income generation	-.444	.615
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
a. 2 components extracted.		

Rotated component matrix of the PCA using Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

This table presents the rotated component matrix from a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, which helps to clearly separate variables into distinct components for easier interpretation. The analysis converged in 3 iterations, indicating an efficient and stable solution. Two main components were extracted, each representing underlying dimensions that group the variables based on their correlations.

Component 1 shows strong positive loadings from Institutional constraints (0.855), Communication constraints (0.741), Travel constraints (0.745), and Personal constraints (0.623), suggesting this component represents structural or systemic barriers related to the study's context (e.g., challenges in organizing or participating in GUSA games). Sponsorship constraints (0.515) also load moderately on this component, though it shares some variance with Component 2. The negative loading of Goal of GUSA games (-0.418) implies an inverse relationship with these constraints, possibly indicating that clear goals mitigate perceived barriers.

Component 2 is characterized by high loadings from Organizing constraints (0.777), Other constraints (0.715), and Income generation (0.743), indicating this dimension reflects operational and resource-related challenges. The moderate positive loading of Goal of GUSA games (0.620) here suggests that goals are more closely tied to logistical execution than to systemic barriers. Variables like Sponsorship constraints (0.203) and Travel constraints (0.111) show minimal cross-loading, confirming their primary alignment with Component 1.

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component	
	1	2
Personal constrains	.623	-.146
Institutional constrains	.855	-.156
Communication constrains	.741	-.111
Travel constrains	.745	.111
Organising constrains	.085	.777
Other constrains	.158	.715
Sponsorship constrains	.515	.203
Goal of GUSA games	-.418	.620
Income generation	-.154	.743
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

The figure below presents a Component Plot in Rotated Space, visualizing the relationships between variables and the two extracted components (dimensions) from a Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The plot positions variables based on their loadings, with Component 1 on the x-axis and Component 2 on the y-axis.

Variables clustered near Component 1 (right side of the plot) include Institutional, Communication, Personal, and Travel constraints, indicating these are strongly associated with the first dimension (e.g., systemic or structural barriers). Conversely, variables like Income generation, organising constraints, and other constraints align closely with Component 2 (top of the plot), representing operational or logistical challenges. The goal of GUSA games and Sponsorship constraints appear between the two axes, suggesting they share variance with both components or represent bridging themes.

The plot confirms the PCA results, showing a clear separation between the two components. Variables positioned farther from the origin (e.g., Institutional constraints and Income generation) are more influential in defining their respective dimensions, while those near the center (e.g., Sponsorship constraints) contribute less distinctly. This visualisation aids in interpreting the latent structure of the data and validating the factor analysis.

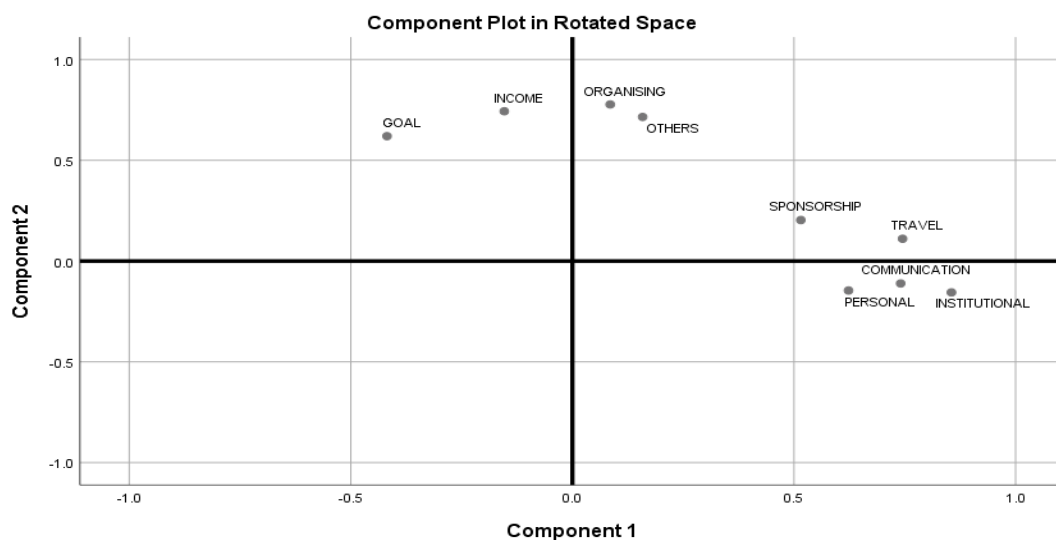


Figure 3: The component plot in rotated space

Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis

Most of the respondents agreed that communication constraints affect their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.34, std. = 0.874). Also, most of them agreed that travel constraints affect their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.31, std. = 0.823). Again, most of them agreed that organizing constraints affect their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.14, std. = 0.510). Not the least, most of them agreed that other constraints affect their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.38, std. = 0.604). Furthermore, most of them agreed that the goal of GUSA games affects their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.49, std. = 0.705). Finally, most of them agreed that the income generation avenue of GUSA games affects their ability to spectate GUSA games (mean = 3.38, std. = 0.755).

Table 7: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	
			Statistic	Std. Error			Statistic	Std. Error
Personal constrains	702	2.71	1.8099	.02139	.56665	.321	.468	.092
Institutional constrains	702	3.90	2.8930	.02781	.73692	.543	.031	.092
Communication constrains	702	4.00	3.3492	.03298	.87372	.763	-.449	.092
Travel constrains	702	4.00	3.3168	.03106	.82301	.677	-.500	.092
Organising constrains	702	3.71	3.1412	.01923	.50954	.260	-.105	.092
Other constrains	702	3.86	3.3791	.01975	.52326	.274	.037	.092
Sponsorship constrains	702	3.83	2.6135	.02281	.60446	.365	.522	.092
Goal of GUSA games	702	4.00	3.4868	.02659	.70454	.496	-.602	.092
Income generation	702	4.00	3.3414	.02851	.75545	.571	-.072	.092

Multiple linear regression analysis on the determinants of GUSA

The data in Table 8 show that the number of GUSA games that the study participants have spectated is negative and significantly related to travel constrains, institutional constrains, and organizing constrains (p -values <0.05). This implies that the number of games they spectated declines as travel and planning restrictions rise. The term “travel constraints” describes issues with transportation, such as the venue’s distance, the absence of convenient transportation options, or related expenses. Organizing restrictions include problems with the preparation and implementation of events.

Table 8: Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	5.880	.893		6.582	.000	4.126	7.634
	Personal constrains	-.047	.174	-.012	-.268	.789	-.389	.296
	Institutional constrains	-.125	.177	-.041	.708	.009	-.222	.473
	Communication constrains	-.065	.122	-.025	-.531	.595	-.175	.305
	Travel constrains	-.351	.130	-.128	-2.702	.007	-.607	-.096
	Organising constrains	-.402	.201	-.091	-2.002	.046	-.796	-.008
	Other constrains	.074	.189	.017	.390	.696	-.298	.445
	Sponsorship constrains	-.011	.152	-.003	-.073	.942	-.287	.309
	Goal of GUSA games	.259	.151	.081	1.722	.086	-.036	.555
	Income generation	-.239	.136	-.080	-1.757	.079	-.507	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Number of GUSA spectated

During the interview, it was also revealed that institutional and travel constrains are the major factors that spectating behaviour among students.

A respondent commented that:

"We have the interest for the GUSA games but you know, sometimes, the university will not create a favourable environment for us to spectate. For instance, lecturers sometimes threaten us with examination and this put fear in us to travel and spectate the GUSA games. So generally, most universities do not support the GUSA games fully." (Student leader 1, 2024)

Another respondent also commented that:

"Most of us do not work and cannot raise enough money to travel to the host university to spectate the games. A part from the athletes, no other student is supported with any means of transportation to attend the GUSA games. So if you are not an athlete, it becomes very difficult to attend the games. You can see that the spectators are usually dominated by the students of the host university." (Student leader 4, 2024)

The above comments affirm the impact of the institutional culture on GUSA games. Many public universities in Ghana do not have plans for GUSA games on their academic calendar and therefore see the occasion as a destructive element of the academic calendar.

Discussion

The results provide important new information about the variables affecting engagement and attendance. Interestingly, only 3.3% of respondents said they had spectated every GUSA game over the previous five years, while 62.0% said they had never gone to any GUSA games. On the other hand, 97.9% of respondents said they would suggest these activities to friends, and a resounding 96.7% said they planned to attend future GUSA games. This implies that limitations, not a distaste of the sports, are the reason why students are unable to watch GUSA games. There will be more students' spectating if the games are well-organized. Magliocca, (2020) is of the view that low spectating by students regarding university sports relates to various constraints or lack of motivation experienced by the students. The findings of this study suggest that students are willing to spectate GUSA games but are unable to do so due to some constraints.

Effective communication is essential when it comes to GUSA events. Low attendance rates may result from the association's active dissemination of information about sporting events, such as schedules and locations, if it is not engaging or does not reach students efficiently. In line with this finding, Mayer, & Hungenberg, (2021): Özsaydı, Uslu, Kaplan, & Gorucu, (2024) emphasized the importance of communication in sports attendance. According to him, communication is the first stage of creating awareness to promote attendance.

The GUSA game schedule has a significant impact on attendance. Students may be unable to attend due to conflicts with their extracurricular or academic obligations. To maximize participation, events must be scheduled to coincide with students' availability. This agrees with GÜLAY, (2023) who opined that location convenience and schedule convenience are important factors in promoting sports spectating behaviour among individuals. Usually, GUSA games are attended by students who are closer to the event venues if they are not part of the athletes.

Constraints and event organization are the two categories of elements that affect student attendance. Institutional, personal, communication, venue travel, and sponsorship are among the limitations noted. Additionally, the quality of events, the availability of student-led revenue-generating activities, and the event's objective all have a significant influence on attendance. Malchrowicz-Moško, & Chlebosz, (2019) stated that some people may spectate and participate in sport-related activities for potential economic gains.

Future attendance intentions are influenced by the perceived caliber of previous GUSA events. Despite their stated desire to watch, students may be discouraged from going to future events if past games were badly run or lacked a sense of competition. Positive outcomes from well-run events, like the University of Cape Coast's MINI GUSA, demonstrate how effective planning may raise attendance and spectator satisfaction.

Additionally, students agreed that their ability to watch GUSA games is impacted by travel restrictions (mean = 3.34, std. = 0.033). This suggests that major obstacles to attendance include things like the accessibility of transportation, the distance to events, and associated expenses. Travel and organizing constraints were inversely correlated with the number of

GUSA games that study participants had watched (p -values <0.05). This implies that the number of games they watch declines as travel and planning restrictions rise. These are essentially the main determinants of attendance. Students from other universities are unable to participate if the locations are far away and they lack any way to get there, such as buses that are arranged by GUSA officials or discounted transportation costs. Several studies, including Triantafyllidis, Ries, & Kaplanidou, (2018) have also found that transportation to sports venues is usually challenging for most students. In Ghana, students who are not part of the athletes will need to transport themselves to the host university and to event venues. So, it is unlikely to have spectators traveling from Tamale to Accra to spectate GUSA games. However, if there are free or subsidized means of transportation, some students will attend.

Theoretical Implication

The findings of this study provide important theoretical contributions to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by demonstrating how contextual constraints can override positive attitudes and intentions toward sports spectatorship. While the data revealed overwhelmingly positive spectator intentions (96.7% expressed willingness to attend future GUSA games), actual attendance remained low (62% had never attended), highlighting a critical intention-behavior gap. This discrepancy aligns with TPB's premise that perceived behavioral control, in this case, structural and logistical barriers, mediates the relationship between intention and action. Specifically, the regression analysis identified travel constraints ($\beta = -0.128$, $p = 0.007$) and organizing constraints ($\beta = -0.091$, $p = 0.046$) as significant negative predictors of attendance, suggesting that even when students hold favorable attitudes toward GUSA games, external factors like transportation difficulties and poor event coordination effectively prevent follow-through. Qualitative insights further reinforced this, with students citing institutional inflexibility (e.g., exams scheduled during events) and financial limitations as "deal-breakers." These results extend TPB's application to university sports in low-resource settings, emphasizing that contextual controls (e.g., institutional policies, and economic access) may exert stronger influence than individual attitudes in collective leisure activities. Future research should explore how institutional interventions (e.g., subsidized travel, and academic calendar alignment) could strengthen perceived behavioral control and bridge the intention-attendance divide.

Managerial Implications and Research Limitations

The findings of this study offer actionable insights for university administrators, sports organizers, and policymakers to enhance student spectatorship at GUSA games. First, addressing travel constraints, a key deterrent, requires collaborative solutions such as subsidized transportation, shuttle services between campuses, or partnerships with ride-hailing platforms to reduce cost and accessibility barriers. Second, institutional support must be strengthened by integrating GUSA games into academic calendars and encouraging faculty to avoid scheduling conflicting exams or assignments, thereby aligning institutional priorities with student leisure interests. Third, improving communication

strategies, through targeted social media campaigns, campus announcements, and student ambassadors, can boost awareness and engagement. Additionally, organizers should explore income-generation opportunities (e.g., vendor partnerships, student discounts) to mitigate financial constraints, as the study identified economic factors as a moderating variable. Finally, fostering a student-centered event culture, by involving student leaders in planning and soliciting feedback, could enhance perceived event quality and future attendance intentions, leveraging the high interest (96.7%) expressed by respondents.

Despite these contributions, the study has limitations. The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, and the male-dominated sample (83.9%) may not fully capture gender-specific spectating behaviors. Additionally, the focus on constraints overlooks potential motivators (e.g., social bonding, school pride) that could offset barriers. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, gender-balanced samples, and mixed-methods approaches to explore motivational factors alongside constraints. Lastly, the regional focus on Ghana may limit generalizability, warranting comparative studies in other African contexts. Addressing these gaps could refine interventions and broaden theoretical understanding of university sports spectatorship.

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