

HOW ATTRACTIVE IS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL REALLY? SURVEY RESULTS FOR THE WORLD CUP 2011 IN THE CITY OF BOCHUM

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Abstract

Aim of the abstract/paper

In the scope of a comprehensive ex ante market research, this paper presents survey results for the case of the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup (WWC) city of Bochum in the Ruhr Area. The analysis focus is set on measuring as well as explaining the intention to buy (ITB) a ticket for WWC matches in Bochum as a key indicator for the actual purchase when controlling for a variety of socio-demographic and psychographic variables. The aim is to detect significant determinants of the ITB and, thereby, to deduce strategic advice on how to effectively reach target groups.

Literature review

There still is a considerable lack of research on women's football in general [2], but particularly so in management and marketing [1]. Apart from a couple of commissioned spectator surveys [3, 4], there are literally no international studies on the economic aspects of women's football. Likewise, large-scale surveys in the run-up and during major sport events are rarely found in the literature [5, 7].

Methodology

Since in such an analysis of the potential demand the population is unknown, the only solution for the survey sampling is a thorough cluster sampling [6]. The reason is that the spatial drawing potential, i.e. the local market size, for the attendance demand for women's football World Cup matches is undetermined. Hence, a random multistep sampling of clusters of theoretically likely visitors in a sensibly chosen geographical area of the event (for the case of Bochum, the Greater Bochum region and the Ruhr Area) should be a suitable procedure, in particular, as the pooled sample size increases.

Therefore one subsample for the target group (1) of men's football fans has been taken at the season opening 2009/10 of the professional men's football club VfL Bochum (n=881). The subsample (n=1.069) on target group (2) of women's football fans consists of a test match of the German women's national team vs. Russia (n=389) in August 2009, a number of home matches of the Ruhr Area based first division clubs FCR Duisburg and SG Essen-Schönebeck, a girls' football festival in Bochum, and a small sample from the Women's Football Cup Final in Cologne. Moreover, subsamples (n=714) had been generated for the target group (3) of event visitors in the Greater Bochum and Ruhr Area outside football events (IIHF World Cup 2010 opening match between Germany and the USA in Gelsenkirchen, a big rock festival in Bochum, and a popular arts event as part of the Ruhr 2010 program for the European Capital of Culture). Finally, target group (4) of "general residents" is less defined and set up from subsamples (n=1.431) drawn at the Citizens' Registry and Information Center of the City of Bochum as well as in a number of samples from mall-intercepts or comparative procedures, a bit from all over the Ruhr Area.

Whereas the in-depth data analysis of the described large overall sample is still in progress (to be finalized soon), earlier results on the first 2009 subsamples (n=1.270) from the mentioned (i) season opening of the men's football club VfL Bochum and (ii) the women's national team test match, both surveyed at the Bochum stadium, indicated the prospects of an extended analysis of such rich survey data sets.

Results, discussion and implications

In the Logit regressions, the strongest explanatory power for the ITB is found for the intention to visit the "Fan Fest," some awareness variables (knowledge of Bochum being WWC city and of local women's football clubs; esp. sample (1)), a general positive attitude ("nice that the WWC is hosted in Germany/Bochum"), the expectation of a great ambiance like at the men's World Cup 2006 (esp. sample (1)) as well as frequent shopping in Bochum and listening to local radio stations (both esp. sample (2)).

The findings suggest that there actually is a substantial demand potential for WWC matches and the "Fan Fest" among the key target groups of women's and men's football fans alike. Inter alia, this is supported by the evidence that socio-demographic characteristics (income, education, age, gender) do not appear significant for the individual ITB. The Bochum LOC should, first, focus its promotion on the local radio and in shopping areas by stressing the good ambiance to be expected at the WWC. Second, apart from raising the awareness, the campaign should be clearly image-oriented, emphasizing opportunities of hosting the WWC. Third, the "Fan Fest" may be used as a point of last-minute ticket sales given the assertive ITB of visitors met there.

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