DETERMINANTS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHOICE IN MASS SPORT

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Abstract

Aim of abstract - research question
Sport participation is a well researched phenomenon and studies on general sport participation or on participation in different sports have analysed different demographic-economic indicators of that phenomenon. Yet, it is still unclear what fosters participation in different organisational forms such as a sport club or a commercial sport provider. There are different theoretical approaches that explain the choice for a sport organisation such as for instance trust-related theories (Anheier, 2005) or failure theories (Heinemann, 1995). However, little empirical work in this area concerning sport participation has been undertaken until now. The purpose of this research is therefore to examine the determinants of sport participation in a sport club and a commercial sport centre, i.e. the key drivers of institutional choice.

Theoretical background
With regard to economic models of sport participation, a demographic-economic model (Breuer, 2006) based on the new household theory was used to analyse the determinants of institutional choice in mass sports. According to this study, constraints in time, income, and human capital influence sport-related choices besides demographic variables which in turn are correlated with preferences (Pawlowski & Breuer, 2011). Moreover, crucial empirical work in this area concerning sport participation has been undertaken until now. The purpose of this research is therefore to examine the determinants of sport participation in a sport club and a commercial sport centre, i.e. the key drivers of institutional choice.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions
The first estimated regression model for sport participation in a sport club reveals a significant influence of the demographic-economic model and body image on being active in a sport club ($a=326.525, -2LL=1,785.541; p=.000$) with $R^2$ of 15.5%. Thereby, income, human capital, and the importance of being physically active are significant positive predictors while being female and having a migration background are negative predictors for being active in a sport club. Age and age$^2$ are also significant predictors, forming a u-shaped curve with age having a negative influence and age$^2$ a positive impact. The second model for sport participation in a commercial sport centre shows a significant impact of the predictors ($a=88.280, -2LL=1,352.718; p=.000$) with $R^2$ of 6.1%. Human capital, being female, working time, and importance of being physically active have a significant positive impact on doing sports using a commercial provider.

The results suggest that the importance of being physically active is a decisive criterion for one's sport participation, indicating an interrelationship between sport participation and body image. Yet, the responsibility for one's bodily abilities had no impact. The influence of the demographic-economic indicators is generally congruent with previous findings on general sport participation, although clear differences between choosing a sport club or a commercial sport centre are shown. Long working hours have for instance a significant positive impact on choosing a commercial sport centre whereas having a migration background negatively influences the choice of sport clubs. Thus, the economic and demographic change of societies in most Western European countries will most likely influence the structure of mass sport markets.
References: