A REAL LOOK AT FANTASY: DOES MONEY MATTER?

Author:
Joris Drayer

email:
jdrayer@temple.edu

Co-authors:
Dwyer, Brendan - Virginia Commonwealth University
Shapiro, Stephen - Old Dominion University

University:
Temple University

Abstract

In 2006, legislation was passed making many online gambling activities illegal in the United States. However, while sports betting and online poker were included in this legislation, fantasy sports were specifically given an exemption which has sparked considerable debate within the gambling literature (Holleman, 2006; Leonard, 2009). This exemption is significant given the rapid and precipitous growth of fantasy sports into a multi-billion dollar industry with 30 million participants within North America alone (Fantasy Sports Trade Association [FSTA], 2008).

With regard to the research questions, MANOVA results suggested significant differences between the groups with respect to attitudinal and behavioral contrasts (F [df]=5.526 [14], p<.001; F [df]=3.603[18], p<.001). Interpreting the Tamhane’s post hoc results, the entertainment motive scores were different between NEFPs and HEFPs, while the gambling and social interaction motive scores were different between NEFPs and both LEFPs and HEFPs. Additionally, a significant difference between NEFPs and HEFPs for the amount of money spent on fantasy baseball products, the likelihood of purchasing MLB Extra Innings, and the likelihood of purchasing favorite team merchandise. Significant differences between NEFPs and both LEFPs and HEFPs were present for the likelihood of attending a MLB game and the likelihood of purchasing MLB merchandise. Lastly, a significant difference resulted between HEFPs and both NEFPs and LEFPs for the total number of years of fantasy baseball participation.

There were several interesting motivational differences between groups. Of particular importance was the difference in the social interaction motive. Specifically, those who made a LEF contribution of any amount were, on average, more highly motivated by the social benefits associated with fantasy baseball. While the literature suggests one of the primary reasons many forms of gambling remain illegal is due to their “anti-social effects” (Holleman, 2006, p. 74), these findings suggest fantasy baseball has just the opposite effect on its participants. The findings related to the gambling motive also merit additional discussion. First, the scale scores remained low meaning that for all participants, money is not a primary reason to play fantasy baseball. Second, while it confirmed the distinction between respondents who do not pay fees and respondents who pay fees, there was not a significant difference between the low fee group and the high fee group. These surprising results further indicate the limited influence of gambling in fantasy baseball participation which once again supports fantasy sports exemption from anti-gambling legislation.

The current study also yielded several interesting results related the impact of LEFs on consumption behavior. These additional results, discussions points, and suggestions for future research will be presented.
References: