

Session: **Factors Affecting the Market Demand of High School state Basketball Tournament**  
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### **Examining the importance and relevance of market demand factors: Theoretical and practical implications**

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A review of literature revealed that two common market demand factors, event attractiveness and economic consideration, were most likely to influence the decision making of consumers to attend a high school basketball event (Byon & Zhang, 2010a; Zhang, Lam, & Connaughton, 2003). Unlike other typical sporting events, the high school basketball state tournament had the following unique characteristics: (a) there are usually a massive number of teams at the high school basketball state tournament events (e.g., 32 teams in the current study: 16 boys' teams and 16 girls' teams), (b) multiple games are usually held simultaneously in the afternoon and also in the evening (e.g., six games in the current study), (c) the tournament event is usually held within a short period of time (e.g., four days in the current study), and (d) there are usually a large number of audience at the event and these audience are usually affiliated with one or possibly more teams in some way (e.g., parents, same town). These unique characteristics of this tournament often lead to strong consumer demand on venue accessibility, such as parking, crowd control, traffic convenience, and facility cleanliness. Additionally, due to the single elimination mechanism of the tournament and the small-scale nature according to Byon and Zhang (2010b), local tourism attractions often play a significant role in drawing consumers to the event. Consequently, formulating the market demand section of the survey form included the following four factors: Event Attractiveness, Economic Consideration, Venue Accessibility and Local Attraction, with a total of 14 items. To measure consumption behavior, two items were formed to assess previous and future event attendance (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007). Data collection on market demand and consumption variables was conducted at the same time as the sociodemographic variables, which are explained in the third part of this symposium.

A confirmatory factor analysis was first conducted to examine the factor validity of the market demand factors. After deleting an item that exhibited low factor loading, the four-factor model with 13 items fit the data well (e.g., RMSEA = .073, CFI = .920), with all indicators statistically significant. Alpha reliability coefficients were .74, .60, .81, and .71, respectively for Event Attractiveness, Economic Consideration, Venue Accessibility, and Local Attraction factors, indicating that these factors were overall of acceptable internal consistency. One-sample t-tests with adjusted alpha level revealed that mean Economic Consideration, Event Attractiveness, and Venue Accessibility factor scores were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) greater than the respective mid-point score of each factor, indicating that the attendees considered these three factors important when making a decision to attend the event; conversely, mean Local Attraction factor score was significantly ( $p < .05$ ) lower than the mid-point score of this factor, indicating that the attendees did not consider this factor important when making a decision to attend the event. With respect to

the relevance of the market demand factors, general linear model analyses revealed that they were significantly (Wilks'  $\lambda = 46.945$ ;  $p < .05$ ) related to whether the attendees attended this event in previous years, where Event Attractiveness was the significant ( $p < .05$ ) contributor to the relationship, explaining a total of 24.1% variance. However, the market demand factors were not found to be significantly (Wilks'  $\lambda = 1042.683$ ;  $p > .05$ ) related to whether the attendees would attend the event in the future. Regression analyses revealed that of the market demand factors, Local Attraction was significantly ( $F = 34.428$ ;  $p < .05$ ) predictive of the total budget spent on making the trip, with 5.6% variance explained.

These findings indicated that Event Attractiveness was a key factor of pulling consumers to the event and the Local Attraction factor was a key factor of pulling consumers to the event location, which suggest the adoption of the dual-factor approach of promoting state high school basketball tournament events. High school athletic departments have relied on public funding and private donations to fund their programs. An increase in family and community support may help defer some of the costs of managing the sports, especially in the current economic crisis. When high school teams are successful on the field/court, support may be more prevalent. High school sectional tournaments may prove to be an area to foster fan involvement and grow the community support. As spectators travel to the event, they are spending money on local attractions and impacting the host community. It is important for the host cities to promote the local attractions to the visitors, so they are aware of what the city has to offer. There is no doubt that the organizing bodies must focus on event attractiveness as the primary promotional mechanism.