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## **Benefit segmentation of women's soccer spectators regarding fifa women's World Cup 2011 in Germany**

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### **Background**

Organizing a mega-event is primarily characterized by high uncovered fixed costs. Especially in a new emerging market, like women's soccer in Germany, supporting information regarding spectator preferences is needed. Hence, at the beginning of 2009 the local organizing committee for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 of the DFB (German Soccer Association) asked for consultancy regarding benefit segmentation of women's soccer spectators to justify their strategic decisions. Briefly, market segmentation consists of dividing a market, presumably with heterogeneous characteristics and preferences, into smaller, more homogeneous components allowing use of different marketing strategies to improve the effectiveness of expenditures and the satisfaction of spectators. In sport management benefit segmentation techniques are little used. Moreover this kind of segmentation is beneficial, because out of economic theory preferences represent outstanding predictors of consumer behaviour.

### **Objectives**

As the DFB organizes several friendly matches at official 2011 World Cup arenas in Germany much information has been collected regarding demand for women's soccer. E.g. influence of kick-off time, day, opponent etc. During these friendly matches ticket prices were very low and had an average of 10€ per ticket. Due to the fact that one million tickets are needed to cover 27 million Euro and for defining optimal pricing strategy for the FIFA World Cup 2011 the local organizing committee needed support to ensure their ticket offering.

Our empirical study therefore aimed at:

1. Identifying market segments of the spectators that can be differentiated by their price sensitivity, ticket category and game category;
2. Determining the size and potential of each individual benefit segment for a FIFA Women's World Cup game at group stage.

### **Appropriate methodology / Data analysis**

The study was conducted in four stages. First, the exploratory stage included a group discussion to settle the relevant attributes:

- a) Category of the match: World Cup group match, European Cup qualification match and friendly match of the German national women's soccer team.
- b) Category of the ticket: Category 1 (main stand close to the pitch), Category 2 (main stand away from the pitch), Category 3 (behind the goal).
- c) Price of the ticket: 50 €, 35 € and 20 €.

Hence our research design contains three attributes of three characteristics each. According to Adelman we reduced these 27 possible combinations to 9 ticket dummies.

In the second stage, a feasibility study was conducted with the goal of assessing the clarity and the distribution of answers. The feasibility study was accomplished at the University of Bayreuth. Only minor changes were required. Additionally one week before the examination took place all 20 volunteers were trained to secure an identical data collection of high quality.

The third stage, the main data collection, took place at the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 in the Commerzbank Arena, Frankfurt (44.320 spectators; European record), by using convenience sampling. 405 spectators could be interviewed within 3 hours before the friendly match between Germany and Brazil started.

In the final stage, we finally conducted cluster analysis (single-linkage & average linkage) with normalized part-worths to detect homogenous groups and applied conjoint analysis for each segment.

Summarizing five clusters were identified: Cluster 1 (price sensitive spectators, representing 35%); Cluster 2 (relevance orientated spectators, 49%); Cluster 3 (fan section seekers, 4%); Cluster 4 (European Cup fans, 3%) and Cluster 5 (comfort orientated spectators, 9%).

## **Discussion**

The aim of our study was to analyze the effects of main attributes on spectator preferences regarding the FIFA women's world cup 2011 in Germany. Due to identified heterogeneous spectators a cluster analysis based on individual benefit structures was essential to derive usable implications for sport managers. In general this seems to be indispensable for every sporting event. Analyzing aggregated data could lead to wrong decisions regarding pricing and demand forecasting.

The results show that the biggest segment is seeking for the World Cup in 2011. The meanings of the particular categories vary within the detected segments and deliver important information for pricing policies and prospective marketing efforts.

Finally management implications will be discussed with regard to FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 in Germany.

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