

GAME DAY PROMOTION AND ATTENDANCE IN MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

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Abstract keywords

Promotion, Attendance, Minor League baseball, Independent league baseball

Aim of abstract/paper - research question

In the professional sport league, how to increase attendance is a critical issue. Each team uses a lot of different promotions to attract consumers in order to increase attendance. Thus, many different kinds of game day promotions are presented. There are different reasons and variables which affect attendance in Major League Baseball, Minor League Baseball, and Independent League Baseball. Also, operating a Minor League Baseball and Independent League Baseball teams is a complex business involving multi-dimensional and multi-directional marketing (Demment, 1973; Scully, 1974, 1989; Baade & Tiehen, 1990; Quirk & Fort, 1992; Zimbalist, 1992; Burger & Walter, 2003; Cebula, Toma & Carmichael, 2009). While there has been extensive research regarding the effects of promotion type on attendance, there are few studies that examine the effects of promotions on attendance in a geographic area which includes minor league baseball and independence league baseball. The purpose of this study was to determine if no promotions, price promotions, non-priced promotions, and combinational promotions effected attendance in Minor League Baseball and Independent League Baseball games located in Dallas and Fort Worth Area.

Theoretical background or literature review*

This study would use Hixson's(2005) model to examine the effects of different types of promotions. Hixson's(2005) model separated game promotions into three categories: price promotion, nonprice promotion, and combination promotion. In this study, a "no promotion" category would be added for games with no scheduled promotion.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

This study examined the types of promotions and attendance among two professional baseball organizations in a similar geographic area. Teams located within the selected geographic area include: Frisco RoughRiders(Class AA-Texas Rangers) and Grand Prairie AirHogs(American Association Independent Baseball League). This study would use Hixson's (2005) model to examine the effects of different types of promotions. There were four types of promotions used as the independent variable for this study. The four types of promotions are coded as "no promotion" games that had no promotion to the fans or spectators, "price promotion" games that provided a price discount to patrons on ticket price or concession items, "nonprice promotion" games that added entertainment value through give aways, celebrity appearances, contests and activities for children, "combinations of price and nonprice promotions" games that offered price and nonprice at least one of each of the promotional categories. This study used SPSS 19.0 to compile and analyze the variable to determine any significant results between the effects of the different types of promotions on attendance for each of the chosen participants. The game schedules, promotion schedules, and attendance at each of participants' home games were issued by each team on their websites or in their media guides. These data were used to compile the necessary data for this study. One-way ANOVA was used to determine significant differences between each type of promotion games. Moreover, Scheffe was used for post hoc test. The attendance was used as the dependent variable which was associated with four levels of independent variable to determine significant effect between attendance and game day promotions.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions**

The result showed that promotion significantly increased attendance compares to than no promotion and price promotion. For RoughRiders, The attendance for nonprice promotions showed a 39.36% increase in attendance versus no promotion. The attendance of combination promotion showed 43.16% increase in attendance of no promotion. For the Grand Prairie AirHogs, The attendance at nonprice promotions showed a 46.98% increase in

attendance compares to price promotion. The attendance of combination promotion showed a 46.06% increase in attendance of price promotion. Also, both nonprice promotion and combination promotion were associated with an increase in attendance for both leagues. The results from this study supported previous research that promotions affected attendance at professional baseball games (Boyd & Krehbiel, 2006; Boyd & Krehbiel, 2003; Hixson, 2005; McDonald & Rascher, 2000). This study also supported Wakefield and Bush (1998) theory of promotions work best when the entertainment value is increased; on the other hand, price promotions cannot achieve simply by reducing ticket or concession prices. Cebula, Toma, and Carmichael (2009) also maintained as the nonprice promotion works as the enticement to fans.

In the future study, geography, demographic, or climates can be discussed further more. Even though, RoughRiders and AirHogs had different promotion focus, the results still showed nonprice promotion and combination promotion significantly increased attendance compares to than no promotion and price promotion. However, further examination is necessary for which specific nonprice promotion or combination promotion will affect attendance most. Also, why price promotion does not attract spectators or fans to the game should make further discussion in further research.

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