THE ROLE OF HOME TEAM PERFORMANCE ON FANS' FUTURE ATTENDANCE

Submitting author: Mr Minkyo Lee
Indiana University-Bloomington, Kinesiology
Bloomington, 47405
United States

All authors: Minkyo Lee (corresp), Ju Young Lee, Juha Yoon, Paul Pedersen, Michael S Willet, Mingu Rhee, Byungik Park, A Williams

Abstract

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The aim of the current investigation was to examine the influence of teams' performances on their subsequent game attendance. The research question that guided this study involved which factors of team performance have an impact on the attendance in subsequent games.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Sport consumption is a form of experiential consumption in which products and services tend to involve individual preferences, emotions, feelings, and behaviors (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). In the professional segment of the sport industry, consumption (e.g., ticket sales) is often associated with team performance, which has unpredictability as a fundamental trait. While unpredictable, scholars such as Gray and Wert‐Gray (2012) have noted that team performance is a primary determinant in attracting sport spectators. Fans' emotional and experiential consumption of sports is an important aspect of the phenomenon known as Basking In Reflected Glory (BIRGing). Denaux, Denaux, and Yalcin (2011) indicated that when a team is winning its fans want to pack the stadium and have intentions to revisit other games as well because they want to be witnesses of additional victorious moments. While previous research has often focused on analyzing specific BIRGing phenomena, only limited studies have used longitudinal data to investigate the role of BIRGing behavior. Such an approach – through the examination of the influence of team performance on future game attendance – was the focus of this exploratory investigation.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

This study utilized secondary data collected from 2,470 professional football (soccer) games across 14 seasons of the K-League in South Korea. Any football contests that were played at third-party venues were

eliminated as well as any games that were univariate and multivariate outliers, in accordance with the suggestion of Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). A total of 2,289 games were included in the final data analysis, which focused on the number of goals scored, the number of goals given up, final score differentials, overall shots, shots on target, fouls, cards, and offsides. All data were converted to z-scores to minimize variance among teams due to differing teams' circumstances and performances. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors among team performances of the following matches' gate (e.g., attendance) figures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that final goal differentials, overall shots, and fouls were significant predictors for the size of the attendance at subsequent games. Overall shots explained the most variance, followed by final goal differentials. Fouls were negatively associated with the following games' attendance figures. The results indicate that higher goal scores and fewer fouls were significant factors to predicting the attendance for subsequent games. Such findings support previous research which indicated that home teams which performed well (i.e., positive goal differences) led to the fans' positive future intentions of participating in the next home games (Madrigal, 1995). Furthermore, it should be noted that offensive game flow (i.e., shooting) and less delayed playing time (i.e., called fouls) tend to attract more spectators to future games. A logical assumption is that such actions assist a team's bottom line with the increase in ticket sales, concessions, parking, etc. because of the increase in attendance at subsequent games.

There are some practical implications as well as limitations related to this study. Based on the results of this investigation it could be suggested that a professional sport league conduct a campaign and establish educational programs to advise head coaches, players, officials, and league managers of the importance of offense-oriented strategies as well as reducing the number of fouls. Such a suggestion has already been implemented by the K-League, which used a campaign – 5 Minutes More – to speed up play and extend actual playing time. To keep the pace of the game from stalling, the behaviors delaying the game (e.g., unnecessary foul, protesting against referees' call, wasting time) were discouraged. In addition to on-field application based on this study, practitioners could use the approach and findings of this examination to predict a team's next home game attendance based on its most recent team performance, thus allowing sport managers to be more effective in their sport marketing endeavors and event operations. In terms of study limitations, the investigation's focus on one league in one country reduces its generalizability.

References
REFERENCES
Denaux, Z. S., Denaux, D. A., & Yalcin, Y. (2011). Factors affecting

EASM 2014

attendance of Major League Baseball: Revisited. Atlantic Economic Journal, 39, 117-127.

Gray, G. T., & Wert‐Gray, S. (2012). Customer retention in sports organization marketing: Examining the impact of team identification and satisfaction with team performance. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 36, 275-281.

Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. Journal of Consumer Research, 9, 132-140.

Madrigal, R. (1995). Cognitive and affective determinants of fan satisfaction with sporting event attendance. Journal of Leisure Research, 27, 205-227.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). Using multivariate statistics (6th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

EASM 2014