

A multidisciplinary view of professional sport consumption

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Aim

Sport management is a multidisciplinary subject field that incorporates finance, marketing, economics, sociology and psychology. With limited sport management research using multidisciplinary theoretical and methodological paradigms, this research aims to partially fill that gap by considering the topic of sport consumption and football fans.

Literature review

There are multiple disciplines within the sport management field focusing on sport consumption directly, namely; (sport) economics, (sport) marketing and (sport) sociology. This research triangulates sport marketing theories – team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1990) and socio-psychology motivations (Trail & James, 2001); with sport economic theories – determinants of demand (Borland & McDonald, 2003); to build an empirical model based on quantitative evidence. The tridimensional model, which merges a heterodox economic consumption model (Thibaut, Vos & Schreeder, 2013) and a marketing means-end chain model (Guttman, 1982), addresses a gap in sport consumption research highlighted by Stewart, Smith & Nicholson (2003) and Kim, Trail & Magnusen (2013). The argument here, stipulates that depending on a fans' identity to their team, their (socio-psychology) motives for attendance, that is, social interaction, drama, knowledge acquisition, escapism, physical skill to name a few will differ. Additionally, depending on their motives for attendance, economic determinants of demand, or situational factors affecting attendance, such as; competitive balance, price, broadcasting, game quality, viewing quality, will influence attendance differently.

Methodology

To test the multidisciplinary consumption model of professional sport 950 English football fans were surveyed using Wann & Branscombe's (1993) Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Team Identification); Trail & Jeams' (2001) Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (Socio-Psychology); and a newly create DoDScale (Bond, 2016; determinants of demand); to measure constructs in each dimension. Split further into 514 season ticket holders and 436 non-season ticket holders, with excellent representative demographics. The model was then developed through a 3 stage modeling process: exploratory factor analysis; confirmatory factor analysis; then structural equation modeling.

Results and discussion

The result of the SEM analysis provides two separate multidisciplinary consumption models, representing the alternative types of ticket holders. The results show differences in the consumption structure between the two, proving one of the key contributions of this study. The path analysis demonstrates that as team identification increases within

season ticket holders, they seek product-related motives (achievement, knowledge acquisition, and aesthetics) more, and non-product-related motives (escapism and social-interaction) less. Unlike non-season ticket holders, when team identification increases, they seek both product and non-product related motives more than less identified fans.

Implications

This research has empirically proven relationships between multiple (inter) disciplines within sport consumption, providing insight into the consumption of professional sport. The implications for the sport management academic field – which is often completed in disciplinary silos – should be research cutting across disciplines. This not only builds upon and creates new knowledge; it should compliment the already vast body of research. Finally, it allows professional sport organisation to fully understand the consumer and complex nature of creating business and marketing strategies to align to the intricacies of sport fans.

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