

# The Relationship Between Participation In Physical Activities And Spectatorship Of The Football League Championship

Lee, Jiye<sup>1</sup>; Mason, Carolynne<sup>1</sup>; Park, Jongchul<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Loughborough University, United Kingdom; <sup>2</sup>German Sport University Cologne, Germany

E-mail: jennyjiyelee11@gmail.com

## Aim of the research

Since the emergence of professionalisation and commercialisation of football, revenues from match day, broadcasting, and sponsorship have played a significant role in stable management of clubs (Beech, 2004). Among them, the revenues of match day are mainly derived from spectators, which are related to admission tickets, food, drinks, and parking. As such, the spectators are considered important for success of professional sport in that they contribute to increase in the revenues directly and indirectly. Meanwhile, there have been a number of studies on the relationship between participation in physical activities and spectatorship. Thrane (2001) argued that the participants who often engage in physical activities were shown 17% higher probability of sporting events attendance than the non-participants. This means that understanding the spectators is likely to have a positive effect on the spectatorship and further the revenues. Therefore, the aim of this study is to understand the spectators of Football League Championship, and investigate the relationship between the participation in physical activities and consumption of the Football League Championship.

## Literature review

For this study, the spectators in professional sports should be understood to explore the relationship between the participation in physical activities and spectatorship. In terms of sport participation, Lera-Lopez, Rapun-Garate, and Suarez (2012) mentioned two conflicting results that taking part in exercise seemed to influence on professional sports attendance, whereas there was non-correlation between the amateur sports spectatorship and sports participation. The correlation between the spectatorship and the participation in exercise, therefore, appeared to be arguable. The association between the frequency of the sport participation and the spectatorship has been studied more variously. Wicker, Breuer, and Pawlowski (2010) demonstrated that the frequency and time of the participation in physical activities are positively related to the sport consumption activities. It can be inferred that the increase in participation in physical activities is directly associated with the spectatorship. Similarly, Wicker et al. (2010) argued that the level and type of sport activities have correlation with the consumption in professional sports. The study revealed that the level of their participation in 17 types of sports activities, such as badminton, tennis, and football, showed differences in spectatorship.

## Methods

Data were collected from 120 spectators watching Football League Championship match in the UK on July 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2015 by using convenient sampling method. After removing 17 cases of incomplete or faithless questionnaires, 103 were used for data analysis. The majority of the participants were male (73.8%), 20s (36.9%), and full-time employed (50.5%). For the study,  $\chi^2$  test, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were conducted by using SPSS 18.0.

## Results, discussion, and conclusions

As a result of  $\chi^2$  analysis for examining the difference in the level of the refreshment expenditure between sport participants and non-sport participants, the analysis resulted in a statistically significance association ( $\chi^2 = 15.314$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Specifically, 42.3% of the sport participants were in the expenditure range in '£4 to £6.99', compared to 16% of non-participants. Whereas, 24% of non-participants were in the 'Don't buy' and '£0 to £3.99' groups respectively, compared to 5.1% and 7.7% of the participants. In addition, the finding stated that more frequent participation in physical activities influenced on refreshments ( $\beta = .663$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and merchandise ( $\beta = .606$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and they explained significant proportion of variances in depression scores ( $F = 89.560$ ,  $R^2 = .439$  and  $F = 44.130$ ,  $R^2 = .367$ ). In terms of the relationship between the level of the sport participation and merchandise consumption,  $\chi^2$  analysis showed a statistically significance association ( $\chi^2 = 9.813$ ,  $p < .05$ ). 28.8% of the recreational participants were in the merchandise spending range in '£30 to £69.99', compared to 5.3% of competitive/elite participants. Also, 42.1% of the competitive/elite participants were in '£70 to £99.99' compared to 18.6% of the recreational participants. Lastly,  $\chi^2$  analysis indicated that the intention differed between the individuals sport participants and team activities participants ( $\chi^2 = 10.899$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Especially, 75.7% of the participants in team activities answered that they will definitely attend coming season matches, compared to 53.7% of the participants who did individual activities.

To sum up, the findings demonstrated that the spectatorship correlated with the participation in the physical activities. The findings from this study will help professional sport marketers to make sure how marketing strategies can create synergy effects regarding the revenues. Lastly, further study would be necessary not only to reflect more samples to have representation.

## References

- Beech, J. (2004). Introduction: The commercialisation of sport. In J. Beech & S. Chadwick (Eds.), *The business of sport management*. Pearson Education, Harlow.
- Lera-Lopez, F., Rapun-Garate, M., & Suarez, M. (2012). Determinants of individual consumption on sports attendance in Spain. *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 6, 204–221.
- Thrane, C. (2001). Sport spectatorship in Scandinavia: A class phenomenon?. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 36, 149–163.
- Wicker, P., Breuer, C., & Pawlowski, T. (2010). Are sports club members big spenders?: Findings from sport specific analysis in Germany. *Sport Management Review*. 13, 214–224.