

The Role of the Fan in Sports Management

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Contextualization

- 1** Sport in general, and football in particular, play a decisive role in Portuguese culture.
- 2** Research into the relationship between fans and clubs initially arose due to psychological effects.
- 3** Sporting events are one of the main concerns of sports organisations and managers.
- 4** Various studies have been carried out by experts who have investigated the motivation of spectators to watch and personally support their favourite team (Correia & Esteves, 2007).
- 5** According to Stott, Pearson and West (2020) sports fans and spectators of sporting events have different reasons and motives for attending a sporting event.
By understanding the fan's inherent motivation, we can better define commercial strategies to increase revenue.

Introduction

- Sport-pleasure => Sport-spectacle
- In the field of social psychology, common sense explanations of the behaviour of individuals and complex events in social reality are the object of analysis of causal attribution models (Sousa, Rosado and Cabrita, 2008).
- Sporting events have specific characteristics
- The growth and interest in research into sports spectators and fans has been based on a multidisciplinary approach that draws theoretically from sociology, psychology, consumer behaviour and marketing (Frank and James, 2010).
- Understanding the factors that influence people to attend sporting events and worship certain teams or athletes is a topic that has interested sports researchers (Cunningham & Know, 2003; Chen, 2010).

Introduction

Previous studies:

- ✓ Falls and Natke (2014) argue that there has been widespread interest in explaining participation in sporting events
- ✓ The growth and interest in research into sports spectators and fans has been based on a multidisciplinary approach that draws theoretically from sociology, psychology, consumer behaviour and marketing (Funk and James, 2010).
- ✓ Research into the relationship between fans and clubs initially arose due to psychological effects and then various studies were carried out by experts investigating the audience's motivation to watch and personally support their favorite team (Correia and Esteves, 2007).

Literature review

✓ Sports Event

According to the FPF (2023) "a sporting event is a planned event, which takes place at a specific time and place, and which aims to promote relations between the organising body and the public it is interested in, with a view to achieving objectives it has set itself".

The implementation of the event comprises the practical, real-time application of the event organisation and management process. This phase includes the execution of all the planned procedures, through the application of instruments to control and monitor the event. At this stage, the event manager must be aware of all the processes, tasks and their results, preventing possible failures and mitigating the occurrence of potential problems (Ribeiro & Correia, 2022).

✓ Fans

- According to the FPF (2023), the fan has different roles within the sports organisation, such as source of human capital, source of revenue, generator of sharing, network facilitator and performance auditor.
- Uhrich (2021) defines the construct of perceived fan participation in sports managers' decision-making and explores its antecedents and consequences. He concludes that the perception of fan recognition, the perception of transparency in management decisions and the congruence of objectives between fans and managers and managers positively influence perceptions of fan participation.
- As such, we believe that understanding the perceptions of cheerleaders in relation to the event and their participation in organising it is a relevant topic of study in order to better understand the conflict that has existed in recent decades in Portugal.

- ✓ Various authors have studied and categorised fans (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw (1999); Giulianotti (2002); Tapp and Clowes (2002))
- ✓ Fans can be defined as enthusiastic devotees of the sporting object with some level of psychological attachment and association (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; Reysen & Branscombe, 2010) and as individuals who accept the illusion that the outcome of a competition is important.
- ✓ Wann, Schrader and Adamson (1998) argue that fans with a strong attachment to their favourite team display attitudes that are difficult to predict. Considering that the dimension of team/athlete support refers to the spectator's loyalty to their team, regardless of the results of the event.
- ✓ Falls and Natkel (2014) concluded that all team performance variables (season wins, lifetime winning percentage, number of cup appearances in the last 10 years) were highly significant and positively influenced stadium attendance.

Motivational theories and the sports fan

The study of motivation has primarily addressed issues related to motivational orientations and intrinsic motivation, outcome expectations, measuring motivation (e.g. self-motivation), the sports commitment model, or analysing the motivational climate (Gouveia, 2001).

In sports marketing, there are two general service dimensions: core services and additional services (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002). Jetten, Hogg, & Mullin, 2000 state that the core service dimension in sport is the game itself, while the additional service dimension is everything that includes non-game extras such as car parking, public access, and entertainment presented at half time (Van Leeuwen, Fast, & Daniel 2002).

According to Trail (2012) the basic motivations for sports consumption are related to: Personal fulfilment, Acquisition of knowledge; Aesthetics; Unknown; Escape; Physical attractiveness of athletes; Physical skills of players and Social interaction.

- It should be noted that the most frequent division is the one that divides fans' motivations into internal motivations, i.e. those intrinsic to the individual (defended by Trail and James (2001) and Funk et al (2001)) and external motivations (defended by Zhang and Byon (2017)).
- This division is very much in line with the taxonomy of human motivation developed by Deci & Ryan (1985), who presented this theory within the Self-Determination Theory, which aims to explain the different regulations that affect individuals' behavior.
- Lagualt (2017) defined self-determination theory (SDT) as "a broad theory of human personality and motivation concerned with how the individual interacts with and depends on the social environment.
- SDT defines intrinsic motivation and various types of extrinsic motivation and describes how these motivations influence situational responses in different domains, as well as social and cognitive development and personality."

- Understanding emotions - and the variables that affect them - is important to appreciate the complexity of fan behaviour (Kwak, Kim, & Hirt, 2011)
- Thus, over the last two decades, several scales have been developed to measure fan motivation:
 - Attendance Motivation Scale (Zhang et al., 2001)
 - Sports Interest Scale (Funk et al., 2001)
 - The Sports Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) by Wann (1995) is one of the first and most widely used scales, which is why it was used for the purposes of this study. It is a reliable and valid measure of the motivation of sports spectators (Wann et al., 1999) that measures eight motivation factors of sports fans: Self-esteem, Sport, Entertainment, Economic, Aesthetics, Group Affiliation, Family and Escape.

Methodology to be used

- ✓ Psychological assessment methods based on observation, psychological tests and questionnaires and individual scales.
- ✓ Lickert Scale
- ✓ The aim of the questionnaire is for the supporter to express their perceptions and motivations inherent in supporting their anonymous club/society and to obtain information on whether or not there has been any episode that has affected them in terms of motivation.

Conclusions, Implications and Future Research

Conclusions

- 1 Systematic research into this topic is important for both sports researchers and sports professionals, given the social impact that sports have on the population.
- 2 To arouse the interest of Portuguese researchers in understanding and explaining the determining factors of fan identity and its consequences in areas such as family, professional and school life, among others.

Implications for sport managers:

- 1** Understanding that fans have different levels of identification and different types of motivations will allow sports marketers to better adapt strategies to reach target markets more effectively.
- 2** It allows them to categorize their demand precisely, which in turn would allow them to target and satisfy the right market segments.
- 3** However, knowing and understanding fan motivation when they go to the stadium is a challenge for sports managers whose aim is to maximize revenue (between television broadcasts and stadium attendance).
- 4** Will allow the manager to adapt his strategies when planning the match day.

Future work

- 1** Extending the study to different types of competitions, which have different effects on organizations, and analyzing whether fan motivation varies with the type of event.
- 2** Extend the study to different sports.
- 3** Make international comparisons.



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