Consumption of Niche Sports: Understanding Which Product Attributes Predict Consumption Across Different Levels of Team Identification

Jason M. Simmons*, T. Christopher Greenwell*, Dustin F. Thorn#, Marion E. Hambrick*, Greg Greenhalgh
University of Tampa*
University of Louisville*
Costal Carolina University#
Virginia Commonwealth University

Niche sports seldom command the sponsorship or media dollars of their mainstream counterparts, depending instead on direct revenues generated from their fan bases to sustain their business. Given niche sports’ consumer bases are often comprised of a significant percentage of lesser-identified customers, the purpose of this study was to examine differences in perceptions of niche sport attributes between highly identified and lesser-identified sport consumers. Specifically, this study examined which niche sport specific attributes were most predictive of consumption (frequency of attendance, media consumption, and merchandise consumption) for each segment. Using a sample of 410 minor league baseball consumers, this study found that accessibility predicted consumption for both consumer segments. The primary differences were that player similarity predicted consumption for lesser-identified respondents, while star power predicted consumption for highly identified fans. Affordability was negatively related to media and merchandise consumption for the lesser-identified spectators.


Year: 2013

Key Words: Team Identification; Niche Sports; Minor League Baseball; MiLB; Product Attributes; Sport Consumption