

Unveiling the stadium turnout: Predictors influencing local spectator attendance in football leagues

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Abstract

For sports to thrive in the long run, it is crucial to understand what motivates fans to attend games and tournaments. This study investigated the factors influencing home-game attendance for a professional football team. 370 supporters who were 18 years of age or older freely completed the surveys at a Malaysian Football League game held at Stadium Likas in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Two surveys used a five-point Likert scale to gauge team loyalty (The Tsotsou scale, 2013) and spectator satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). The Stadium Attendance and Non-Attendance Reason Scale (SANARS) used a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7 to measure stadium attendance, general atmosphere, team impact, and personal relaxation. Cronbach's Alpha for the scales ranged from 0.76 to 0.84, demonstrating excellent reliability and validity. The data was analyzed using SPSS 23.0 package software, using both descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modelling. Attendance at a stadium was shown to be significantly affected by factors including general atmosphere, spectator satisfaction, team loyalty, personal relaxation opportunities, and team effect. This research also showed how fans' satisfaction during games and the team effect influences fan loyalty. In conclusion, the long-term viability, growth, and success of football clubs and leagues depend on identifying and anticipating the characteristics that affect fan attendance. In the future, researchers may look into why local supporters refrain from frequenting their home stadium. When assessing the effectiveness of the proposed model, it is also essential to consider the demographics and regional behaviours of fans.

Key Words: Attendance, football, Malaysia, spectator, stadium.

Introduction

Matchday revenue accounts for around 15% of the yearly turnover for prominent European professional football teams (Deloitte, 2021). Hundreds of thousands of people of all ages and sexes gather weekly in football stadiums worldwide to watch the games (Mogajane, Slabber & Plessis, 2019), making football one of the most popular spectator sports in the world. Since the 1950s, several scholars have employed empirical analysis to understand better the factors that influence stadium attendance. Indeed, 235 studies of the demand for sports stadium attendance were uncovered in a significant scoping review (Madrigal, 1995; Schreyer & Ansari, 2022). Of them, over half were devoted to researching football in Europe. According to certain research conducted on the environment of sports stadiums (Schreyer & Ansari, 2022) spectators' enthusiasm for attending future athletic events increases after experiencing the sound effects of the sport.

Many marketing studies have looked into ways to get more people into stadiums to watch professional sports (Katz et al., 2018; Oh et al., 2017a) in an effort to raise demand from customers (Madrigal, 1995; Schreyer & Ansari, 2022). The effect of game outcome uncertainty (Madrigal, 1995; Schreyer & Ansari, 2022), brand community (Katz, Ward, & Heere (2018)., emotional excitement (Karakaya et al., 2016), soccer atmospherics (Karakaya et al., 2016), perceived game quality (Oh et al., 2017b), fan loyalty to his team (Karakaya et al., 2016), and identification with the team (Madrigal, 1995; Schreyer & Ansari, 2022). Studies have shown that these elements have a beneficial impact on stadium attendance overall, but there are also occasions when they have a detrimental impact. Researchers found no correlation between attendance and factors like socialization, safety, or tidiness (Ioannou & Bakirtzoglou, 2016; Karakaya et al., 2016). These divergent findings highlight the complexity of this phenomenon and the effect of several factors.

Football fans are defined as those who go to games in person and watch the action unfold up close (Biscaia et al., 2012; Mustaffa, M., Sadek, M., Nazarudin, M. N., Yusof, B., Wahab, S. A., & Abdul Razak, 2018). They are there to cheer on their favourite teams in the league, and they want to feel the energy and thrill of a live game. Spectators at football games come from different walks of life and are motivated by a wide range of factors, including displaying support for their chosen team, taking in the game's spectacle, mingling with other fans, and more. These fans are an integral part of what makes football games so exciting, not to mention a major part of the tradition and culture that surrounds the sport (Kabirin, Rahmati & Sharepour, 2016). People who have a deep connection to a sport, a team, or an individual player were formerly referred to as "fans" (Funk et al., 2018). Football teams rely heavily on gate tickets; therefore, fans are encouraged to attend games (Aycan et al., 2014). In addition to watching games, supporters serve as a moral compass for locals and a financial boon for sports teams and leagues (Funk, 2017).

While "fans" and "supporters" are often used when discussing sports, especially football, there is an important distinction between the two that is often forgotten in general usage (Kabirin, Rahmati & Sharepour, 2016). The typical supporter cares only "a little bit" or "not at all" about the team and the game (Lee Ludvigsen, 2023). They may find enjoyment in following their team through television broadcasts or infrequent in-person attendance at games rather than actively participating in the sport itself. On the other hand, advocates are more likely to care deeply about the issue at hand (Leitner et al., 2023). They are more likely to attend games, take part in fan events, and generally display a sense of pride in the club as a whole. According to Lawrence & Davis (2019) research, fans' emotional connection to their team is greater than that of supporters. Depending on the team's performance, they are more prone to experience intense emotions like exhilaration, irritation, and disappointment (Nemati et al., 2018). Some fans consider trips to the stadium to be a regular part of their routine. However, not every football fan will go to a stadium, no matter how much it costs them emotionally or monetarily. Purchasing a season ticket or a single-game ticket to a football game is analogous to using a service provided by a sports team. As a result, stadium attendance is affected not only by the standard factors influencing consumer demand but also by some features peculiar to the particular sport in question (Nemati et al., 2018). Fans' interest in attending a match depends on the quality of the sportscape elements, which means keeping them in excellent repair (Funk et al., 2018). Effective stadium settings are the subject of a wide range of physical and sociological studies. Fans were motivated to attend games based on the quality of the environment they expected to find once they arrived at the stadium (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010).

In Malaysia, football is the most popular sport. Originally established in the 1950s under the name North Borneo Football Association, the Sabah Football Association changed its name to reflect the new Federation of Malaysia in 1977. As a result of Malaysia's mandated privatization of football clubs, the Sabah Football Association will be known as the Sabah Football Club beginning with the 2021 season. Sabah FC, short for Sabah Football Team, is a Malaysian professional football team based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, that plays in the Malaysia Super League. One of the most successful football teams in Malaysia, this club represents the state of Sabah. Sabah FC plays its home games at Stadium Likas in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, which has a capacity of 35,000.

The latest statistics show that Likas Stadium has received 87,194 spectators in 9 matches, where the existing capacity only managed to accommodate 27.7% of the available space (Transfermarkt, 2023). They are ranked third behind Sultan Ibrahim Stadium in Johor and MBPJ Stadium in. Despite this, Likas Stadium has the second largest number of spectators after Sultan Ibrahim Stadium. The last three matches at Likas Stadium saw a total of 5666 spectators against Perak FC, 4858 against Kuching FC, and 8022 against Seri Pahang FC. This demonstrates unequivocally that more forceful measures are required to get more fans to the stadium.

The needs of each other shape both professional football clubs and their devoted fan bases. Weakness in professional football teams and/or fan attendance can affect the other. This paper aims to assess the factors that affect attendance in Likas Stadium, with the caveats that the effect of some factors on attendance may vary depending on the context, the characteristics of consumers, and the match day's low share of total Sabah FC revenues. In order to better explain the phenomena of stadium attendance, the present study provides a structural model that combines various components, both internal and external. This research aimed to look at what influences people to see the Sabah Football Club play live. Figure 1 was used to depict all of the study's hypotheses.

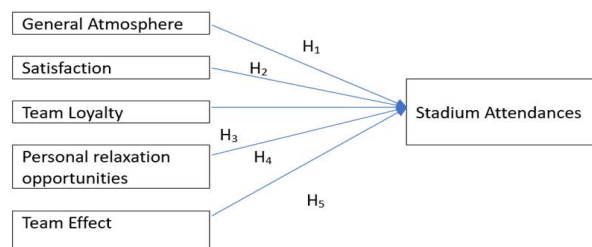


Figure 1. Research Model

This study's goal was to investigate the variables that influence Sabah Football Club supporters' attendance at home games during a Malaysia Super League with five hypotheses have been tested;

- H₁ General Atmosphere has a significant positive effect on Stadium Attendance.
H₂ Spectator's Satisfaction has a significant positive effect on Stadium Attendance.
H₃ Team Loyalty has a significant positive effect on Stadium Attendance.
H₄ Personal relaxation opportunities have a significant positive effect on Stadium Attendance.
H₅ Team Effect has a significant positive effect on Stadium Attendance.

Material & methods

Participants and Procedure

The research was conducted at the Stadium Likas in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, during a Malaysia Football League match. Participants in this poll were at least 18 years old and completely voluntary. The subjects of this study were spectators during a home game in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Convenience sampling was used to choose respondents for this study. A Google form QR code was provided to spectators 2 hours before the previous Sabah FC home game, which drew 8022 people. The data from the 396 respondents who completed the surveys was sent to the research assistants. There were 26 worthless surveys among the 370 legitimate responses. The final sample for this study was 370 respondents, with a response rate of 93.4%. Table 1 shows demographic information about responders.

Instruments

There were seven categories in the questionnaire: demographic information, stadium attendance, team loyalty, general atmosphere, spectator satisfaction, team impact, and personal relaxation. A modified scale (Oliver, 1980) was used to assess spectator satisfaction. The Tsotsou scale (Tsotsou, 2013), adapted from Zeithaml (Zeithaml et al., 1996) was used to assess team loyalty. All measurements were implemented using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7. Using the Stadium Attendance and Non-Attendance Reason Scale (SANARS), assess the stadium attendance, general environment, team effect, and personal relaxation opportunities. A five-point Likert scale was employed (5 = "Strongly agree", 4 = "agree", 3 = "undecided", 2 = "disagree", 1 = "strongly disagree"). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from 0.76-0.84 for all scales.

Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was a research procedure that explores the multiple relationships between variables (Hair et al., 2013). It consisted of two stages: the measurement stage and the structural stage. The measurement model was applied to confirm the relationship of the variables in the study with the constructs they purport to represent. The structural model was then applied to reveal the causal relationships between them. This enables SEM to be a very useful method to test multiple causal relationships simultaneously (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, it was deemed suitable for this research, which aimed to explore the causal relationships between six different constructs. The analysis was conducted using the Amos 23 program with a two-stage approach consisting of measurement and structural modelling (Arbuckle, 2011).

Results

370 people responded, with 56.76% being male and 43.24% being female. While 57.84% of those polled were married, 42.16% were single. Around 19.19% were under the age of 25; another 20.27% were between the ages of 25 and 34; 44.86% were between the ages of 35 and 44; 11.63% were between the ages of 45 and 54; and 4.05% were 55 or over. The stadium's attendance was divided as follows: 24.86% went 1-2 times, 53.52% went 3-4 times, and 21.62% went 5+ times.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Information

Variable	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	210	56.76
	Female	160	43.24
Marital Status	Single	156	42.16
	Married	214	57.84
Age	less than 25 years old	71	19.19
	25-34 years old	75	20.27
	35-44 years old	166	44.86
	45-54 years old	43	11.63
	55 years old and over	15	4.05
Attendance half season	1-2	92	24.86
	3-4	198	53.52
	5 and above	80	21.62
2023 (9 games)			

The Measurement Models

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to validate the constructs contained within the measurement model, which are general atmosphere (four items), spectator satisfaction (four items), team loyalty (five items), personal relaxation opportunities (three items), team effect (three items), and stadium attendance

(three items). The research revealed that the indicated exhibited a reasonable level of consistency ($X^2=682.356$ $p=0.000$, $DF=129$, $X^2/SD=5.678$, $GFI=0.914$, $CFI=0.953$, $TLI=0.953$, $IFI=0.953$, $RMSEA=0.076$).

Reliability Assessment and Construct Validity

The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values for each construct were calculated, and all of the values were more than 0.50 (Fornell, C., & Larcker, 2016). According to Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, (1979), the permissible limit for any factor loading should be 0.60 or above. All of the questionnaire items satisfied that requirement, indicating their link to the model's latent variables. The relationships between all of the constructs were tested for the external validity of the measurement model, and it was discovered that the correlation coefficients were statistically significant, even though all coefficients were less than 0.85. Cronbach's alpha coefficient should be at least 0.60, according to Malhotra, (2012) for the internal reliability of the constructs to be acceptable. As seen in Table 2, all values were more than 0.60. The findings revealed that the measurement model was valid and that the structural model could be built.

Table 2. Factor Loadings(λ), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's α Coefficient

Constructs/Items	λ	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α coefficient
Stadium Attendances		0.760	0.690	0.860
Highly likely	0.709			
Highly probable	0.827			
Very good chance	0.821			
General Atmosphere		0.815	0.883	0.715
Stadium Entertainment	0.827			
Stadium Atmosphere	0.821			
Competitive Atmosphere	0.828			
Games Excitement	0.827			
Satisfaction		0.895	0.680	0.795
I'm satisfied with my decision to go to the stadium	0.821			
	0.828			
My choice to go to the stadium was a wise one	0.821			
	0.828			
I think that I did the right thing when I decided to go to the stadium	0.821			
I am happy that I went to the stadium	0.926			
Team Loyalty		0.766	0.875	0.697
I follow my team in all of the games	0.693			
I attend all of the events of my team	0.709			
I am devoted to my team	0.827			
I am a loyal fan of my team	0.821			
I support my team even when it loses	0.828			
Personal Relaxation Opportunities		0.880	0.882	0.680
Get Away from Everyday Routine	0.717			
Forget About My Problems	0.752			
Relaxations	0.898			
Team Effect		0.842	0.792	0.742
Loyal Fan	0.754			
See My Teams Wins	0.779			
Star Player	0.843			

Fit indices: $X^2=585.356$ $p=0.000$, $DF=125$, $X^2/SD=4.878$, $GFI=0.915$, $CFI=0.943$, $TLI=0.953$, $IFI=0.933$, $RMSEA=0.077$

The Structural Model

The structural model was constructed and evaluated once the measurement model was validated. The research revealed that the model had acceptable values. ($X^2=685.356$ $p=0.000$, $DF=129$, $X^2/SD=5.878$, $GFI=0.908$, $CFI=0.943$, $TLI=0.930$, $IFI=0.939$, $RMSEA=0.072$).

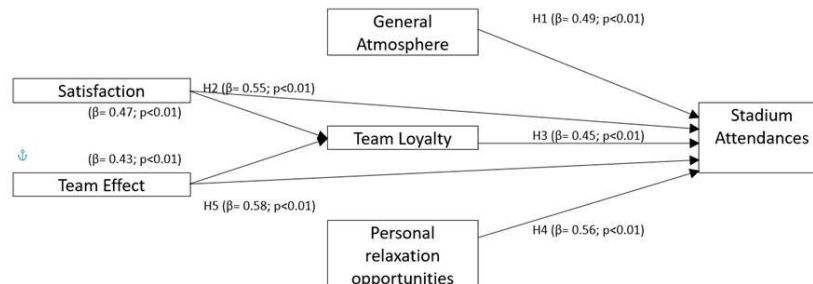


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model (Hypothesized Model).

Hypothesis testing

Figure 2 depicts a statistically significant relationship between all of the constructs ($p < .001$). The analysis of data collected from football enthusiasts confirmed the first research hypothesis. The results indicate that the General Atmosphere influences Stadium Attendance. Spectator Satisfaction influenced Stadium Attendance, thus confirming the second hypothesis. The research's third and fourth hypotheses were supported by the findings that Team Loyalty and Personal Relaxation Opportunities have a positive influence on Stadium Attendance. When the Team Effect had a positive influence on Stadium Attendance, the fifth hypothesis was also confirmed. In turn, this analysis revealed the impact of Spectator Satisfaction and Team Effect on team loyalty.

Table 3. Path Analysis

Path	β	t
General atmosphere \rightarrow Stadium Attendance	0.49 **	8.89
Spectator's satisfaction \rightarrow Stadium Attendance	0.55 **	9.89
Team loyalty \rightarrow Stadium Attendance	0.45 **	7.79
Personal relaxation opportunities \rightarrow Stadium Attendance	0.56 **	10.01
Team Effect \rightarrow Stadium Attendance	0.58**	11.32
Spectator's Satisfaction \rightarrow Team Loyalty	0.47**	8.57
Team effect \rightarrow Team Loyalty	0.43**	7.80

Note. B = Standardized path coefficients; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Discussion

The General Atmosphere Has a Positive Effect on Stadium Attendance

This finding was supported by Dhurup et al., (2010) and Soyguden & Schneider, (2022) research findings. Research by Dhurup et al. (2010) found significant positive correlations between the seven sportscape dimensions, the desire to stay within a facility and future attendance. The regression analysis reported significant predictive relationships between the stadium sportscares and the desire to stay within the stadium and future attendance. Meanwhile, Soyguden & Schneider (2022) found that the stadium attendance of Yankees fans was affected by the general atmosphere. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, 1979), people use their affiliations with other people as a means of maintaining and strengthening their sense of who they are as individuals. One's "in-group" is defined as an "out-group," and one's own group is likely to be seen favourably in comparison to the "out-group" while forming a group identity. This leads people to have a sense of belonging to a larger group and an associated good sense of identity (Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, 1979). This theory suggests that individuals derive their sense of self from the groups they belong to, including sports teams. The general atmosphere surrounding sports can therefore be influenced by the social identities of the fans and players.

Attendance at sporting events is demonstrated to increase when fans enjoy the venue's ambience. The conclusion that the general atmosphere is one of the elements that affect stadium attendance backs up this study (Soyguden et al., 2019). Fans' propensity to stick around during a game is significantly correlated with stadium amenities, including seats and concessions (Aycan et al., 2014). Research Aycan et al., (2014) found that billboards in the Malaysian football scene served as indicators of consumer satisfaction and intent to attend matches. The reasons that people travel to stadiums and arenas are many (Moraes et al., 2020) and include providing a wonderful entertainment experience, being with family and friends, cheap ticket costs, comfort, safety, and accessibility. The proximity of the stadium to the city centre is an effective component in attracting supporters from the city centre to the stadium, even though the quality and ambience of the stadium are also crucial (Argeris & Nagel, 2013). Fans' anticipation and enthusiasm may be amplified by a lively and exciting environment. Ticket sales and attendance rates are increased when fans have positive expectations about the game-going experience. Effective stadium settings are the subject of a wide range of physical and sociological studies. According to Uhrich & Benkenstein, (2010).research, fans are motivated to attend games based on how much they enjoyed their time at the stadium. The game-going experience improves if spectators are encouraged to participate in it through chants, cheers, and other fan-organized activities. By participating, spectators feel like they are part of something bigger, which increases the likelihood that they will attend future shows.

Going to a game is a great way for sports enthusiasts to meet new people who share their enthusiasm for the team. People are more likely to go out and mingle if they perceive a pleasant vibe at the location. Memorable events, such as game-winning goals or spectacular comebacks, are more likely to occur in a stadium with a good atmosphere. These moments are remembered for years to come, and they draw in new spectators who want to be a part of stadium history. The home team might benefit from a high morale and performance environment. Players' emotions can be lifted by the crowd's energy and encouragement, leading to improved play and more victories. This might lead to an increase in game attendance. If spectators have a good time at a stadium, they will likely tell their friends and family about it. Increased game attendance can result from this sort of word-of-mouth advertising. Parents are more likely to bring their kids to a game if they feel comfortable bringing them. Fostering an atmosphere that's welcoming to all ages can help bring in new, lifelong followers.

Spectator Satisfaction has a positive effect on Stadium Attendance

This research finding was supported by Foroughi et al., (2014) finding that the results also confirm the significant relationship between fan satisfaction and attendance. Fan satisfaction is shown to be partially mediating the relationship between event quality and game attendance. Based on the findings of Tolman (1932) empirical research on anticipation in animals (Oliver, 1980) proposed the expectancy-value hypothesis. Tolman (1932) discovered that an expectation would be formed based on a combination of real experience memories (mnemonics), present stimulus perceptions, and inferences from earlier experiences, such as trials on other stimuli. These results also have close ties to the selective exposure hypothesis, which postulates that some stimuli are selected automatically. Because consumer behaviour is similarly influenced by factors including experience, perception of social and environmental cues, and experimentation with comparable items, Tolman (1932) conclusions are applicable in this context as well. According to the Expectancy-Value Theory, fans' enjoyment of a sporting event depends on how well their expectations and values are met. Fans who go into an event with high hopes and a clear idea of what they'll get out of it are the most likely to leave happy.

There was a correlation between satisfied fans and higher stadium attendance. This conclusion was consistent with the findings of Silveira et al. (2019), who found that happy fans are more likely to buy tickets to upcoming games. There was a considerable correlation between contentment and the propensity to be loyal to a certain team beyond the direct influence of satisfaction on the inclination to purchase tickets. It's reasonable to infer that happier football supporters will be more dedicated to the team and more likely to purchase tickets in the future. Those who enjoy themselves as spectators are more likely to return for future events. If they had a good time the first time, they would probably want to repeat the experience by going to more games. When a fan has a good time at the game, they feel more invested in the team and are more likely to cheer for them in the future. Regular game attendance and unwavering support from loyal supporters are two signs of a successful club. People who enjoy themselves at an event are more inclined to brag about it to others. When fans are happy with their experience at a game, they are more likely to suggest it to others, which can lead to a rise in attendance.

In today's connected world, positive fan reactions may spread rapidly through internet platforms like social media and user reviews. Enthusiastic online discussions about a stadium visit might attract new fans and potential attendees. Spectators are more inclined to return to a stadium that regularly delivers a positive experience. Existing fans are more likely to keep coming to games if they have a good time at each one. Opportunities for fan participation, such as participatory games, pre-game entertainment, and post-game celebrations, are common elements of a positive stadium experience. Fans have a better time at a game and are more inclined to come back if they feel like they're contributing to the action. Away supporters might be influenced by the energy in the stadium as well. When away fans have a good time in the home stadium of the club they are rooting against, they may be more ready to go to the home stadium of their favourite team in the future. Family crowds at sporting events also report high levels of enjoyment. Families are more likely to make game day a regular tradition if they feel safe and welcome there.

Team Loyalty has a positive effect on Stadium Attendance.

Previous Cho et al., (2019) findings supported this research finding that team loyalty positively affects stadium attendance (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). Cho et al., (2019) results showed significant direct effects of team loyalty and desire to stay on revisit intentions. The stadium environment influenced the desire to stay and revisit intentions only through the interactions with team loyalty. More specifically, higher loyalty led to a higher desire to stay and revisit intentions, whereas fans' positive experience of the stadium environment intensified the effect. Having loyal customers is the key to a successful sports organization, especially if the underlying factors of loyalty are understood and developed. They exhibit behaviors such as repeated ticket purchases and appear continuously (Karakaya et al., 2016). Loyal fans and a winning team generally result in higher attendance at games (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). . The theory of Emotional Attachment is mostly linked to the scholarly contributions of John Bowlby (Bowlby, 1979). The theory of attachment, as proposed by Bowlby, is a psychological, evolutionary, and ethological framework that explores the dynamics of human interactions. According to the Emotional connection Theory, individuals form a sense of devotion towards a certain sports team due to the emotional connection they have developed towards this team. Individuals may have had notable instances of elation or disillusionment over their tenure as supporters of the club, strengthening their emotional affiliation with such a team.

Maintaining the loyalty of the sports consumer is essential to the success of the team due to the psychological perception of the importance of the fans in influencing the outcome of the match (Richard Giulianotti, 2012). Loyalty is an important construct for the sports consumer to have the intention of buying a ticket for a soccer game. Having loyal clients seems to have a high impact on the turnover of sports organizations through the constant attendance of fans who are more loyal and are not affected by bad results, and ticket prices among others. The possibility of detecting potential loyal fans is one of the factors that may arouse interest in increasing their attendance at the stadium. Loyal fans are committed to supporting their team and attending games regularly. Regardless of the team's performance or other external factors, loyal fans show up to cheer for their team, increasing stadium attendance. Team loyalty is often rooted in an emotional connection

between the fans and the team. This emotional bond compels fans to be physically present at the stadium to show their support, experience the game's atmosphere, and be part of the collective energy. Loyal fans are more likely to purchase season tickets or ticket packages for multiple games in advance. This commitment to attending a series of games boosts overall ticket sales and guarantees a certain level of attendance for each match.

Loyal fans tend to invest in team merchandise, such as jerseys, hats, scarves, and flags, which further reinforces their connection to the team. The visible presence of team colours and logos in the stadium creates a sense of unity among fans and enhances the overall game-day experience. When a team has a strong and loyal fan base, it creates a formidable home-field advantage. The energetic and vocal support from loyal fans can motivate the team and make it more challenging for visiting teams to perform well, leading to more victories at home. Team loyalty fosters a sense of community among fans by attending games, which allows fans to be part of this community, where they share common values, traditions, and experiences. The sense of identity derived from being a loyal fan can encourage attendance. Players can feel the impact of loyal fans and their unwavering support. Knowing that they have a dedicated fan base cheering them on can boost the morale of players, leading to better performances and creating a positive feedback loop with increased attendance. Loyal fans are more likely to talk about their team and encourage others to support and attend games. Positive word-of-mouth promotion from loyal fans can attract new fans to the stadium, thus expanding the fan base.

Personal Relaxation Opportunities Have a Positive Effect on Stadium Attendance.

Previous Soyguden & Schneider (2022) research supported this finding when they found that the stadium attendance of Yankees fans was affected by "Personal Relaxation Opportunities" and was the most influential. Based on Baumeister's escape theory (Baumeister, 2013), individuals who experience discomfort when confronted with self-awareness or their present emotional states tend to actively avoid engaging in cognitive processes that involve higher-level meaning-making, such as introspective thoughts or narratives concerning their identity or the consequences of specific events (Shireen et al., 2022). According to the Escape Theory, individuals engage in attending athletic events as a strategy to detach themselves from the routine and demands of their everyday existence. Individuals may seek respite from their professional obligations, familial duties, or other sources of stress that they encounter in their daily lives. The study Soyguden (Soyguden et al., 2019). Examined the many elements that impact the attendance of fans in stadiums. Their findings revealed that the availability of opportunities for personal relaxation positively influenced the likelihood of supporters attending the stadium. According to a study done by Funk (2017), ratings of the physical amenities by spectators indicate that the usual sports scene tends to underestimate spectator happiness.

Previous research found that football enthusiasts frequently attended games as a means to strengthen ties within their social networks. Athletes and fans have quite distinct demands when it comes to what motivates them to attend sporting events as spectators (Green, B. C., Parks, J. B., & Quarterman, 2003). Comfortable seats, covered places, and lounges are examples of facilities that might help make spectators more relaxed throughout the event. This improved convenience may make going to games a lot more fun for people of all ages. Fans are more inclined to stay for the duration of the game if they have places to unwind between intermissions and halftime. Staying longer means more money for the stadium and the team from fans buying food, souvenirs, and more. The stadium may be more welcoming to families by providing relaxation zones or specific family spaces. Having designated areas for children to play and relax before, during, and after games helps entice families with young children to come. Some stadiums have numerous games scheduled for the same day or host all-day events. The importance of having time for participants to unwind and re-energize between games, as well as during the day, increases in this kind of setting. Different categories of fans can enjoy individualized rest options. Some spectators would rather be actively involved in the game, while others would rather take it easy. Having both alternatives available increases the likelihood that more people will attend the games. Relaxation areas at stadiums can help make going there more of a social experience. There are plenty of places for people to relax and enjoy themselves while watching the game with their friends and family.

It's not always easy to enjoy yourself at a packed football event. Possibilities for individual stress reduction add to the overall quality of the experience and boost the likelihood that guests will return. Even if they are not huge sports fans, some people still want to go to games to see what all the fuss is about. Adding amenities for spectators to unwind might increase the number of infrequent visitors to the stadium. Including areas for fans to unwind shows that organizers care about giving visitors a complete and satisfying experience. There will be more people in the stands, and they will feel more connected to the team if they have a good time there.

Team Effect Has a Positive Effect on Stadium Attendance.

Previous Soyguden et al., (2019). research also supported this finding when they found that the stadium attendance of Yankees fans was affected by the "Team Effect". Numerous empirical investigations have been conducted and gathered since the inception of the phrase "team identification" in sports literature (Gantz, 1981). The concept of team identification pertains to the psychological bonds that supporters establish with a particular team (Warm, 2002). According to theoretical perspectives, individuals are inclined to participate in athletic activities as a means of establishing a sense of identification with their preferred team or player. Individuals may have a feeling of pride and a sense of affiliation with the team or player, leading them to attend games as a

means of demonstrating their support. This conclusion, that the team effect increases stadium attendance, was validated by (Aboagye & Opoku, 2022). Football followers reported that their attendance decisions were influenced by their favourite players. New arenas, giveaway days, the "superstar factor," record-breaking performance, violence, and the desire to achieve success are all factors that have been shown to increase attendance at sporting events (Osborn & Mehus, 2010; R. Hoyer, A., Smith, M. Nicholson, B. Stewart, 2013). When home teams are on a winning streak, more people are likely to want to attend their play. It seems logical to capitalize on that success by encouraging more people to visit the stadium in person. Fans' interest in watching a game is influenced in part by the caliber of the competing teams (DeSchrive, T. D., & Jensen, 2002; Yusof & Lee, 2008). Team quality is portrayed by indicators like winning percentage, number of superstar players, and intensity of rivalry (DeSchrive, T. D., & Jensen, 2002).

A larger and more devoted fan base is typically associated with a winning team. When a team is winning, supporters want to be there to share in the glory and cheer them on. Therefore, attendance rises. More fans will show up to see a game if the team is known for its thrilling and engaging performance. Skilful and exciting performances attract spectators, which in turn can boost game attendance. Fans get pumped up when their favourite teams are in the running for a title. The higher the stakes, the more people are likely to show up, especially for pivotal games. The presence of one or more superstar players may have a dramatic effect on a team's fan base. The increased demand for tickets and viewership at events featuring these players is unsurprising. Fans are more likely to show out to see their team play when they have an intense rivalry with another team. More people tend to show up to the game because of the electric atmosphere. Fans are more likely to show out to a game when their team has a significant home-field advantage. Fans who care about the team's success will make it a priority to attend home games. Unpredictable results, tight scores, or dramatic late-game comebacks can generate excitement among spectators. People are more likely to attend games in the future if they have heard about the enthusiasm of a previous game. The team's impact on stadium attendance is directly proportional to the level of participation by fans.

Attendance at sports is usually higher when fans are invested in the team and its success. When a team has been successful in the past and has a rich history, fans are more likely to stick with it no matter how the club performs in the present. Ticket prices, stadium amenities, and the quality of the entire fan experience all play significant roles in influencing stadium attendance alongside the quality of the club itself. Increased attendance can be a result of a winning team, but keeping fans engaged and entertained throughout the season is just as important.

Spectator Satisfaction Has a Positive Effect on Team Loyalty

Previous Woratschek et al., (2020) research supported this research finding when they found out that identification has both direct and indirect (i.e., via customer satisfaction and perceived social actors' contributions) influences on customer loyalty. The psychological theory known as Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, 1979) elucidates the dynamics underlying the connection between people and the organizations they are affiliated with. Social Identity Theory offers valuable insights into the formation of robust attachments and loyalty towards sports teams within the setting of sports team loyalty. The application of Social Identity Theory provides useful insights into the processes involved in the establishment and maintenance of team loyalty within the context of sports. Fans establish a profound bond with their preferred teams due to their perception of themselves as integral components of the team's identity and accomplishments.

Having happy fans at the stadium is good for business for the club in more ways than one. As a result, Silveira et al., (2019) argue that happy supporters are devoted followers who are more likely to purchase tickets to a soccer game. When fans have a good time at the game, they think fondly of the team and feel good about going there. When supporters have positive experiences when cheering for their team, they feel more connected to the players, the organization, and the sports world as a whole. When fans enjoy themselves, they feel more connected to one another. Fan loyalty and identification are strengthened when they feel like they are part of the team's community.

Interactive activities, fan gatherings, and meet-and-greets with players are common examples of fan interaction that add to a positive stadium experience. These interactions can help fans feel more connected to the team as a whole, which in turn can boost loyalty. Fans who enjoy themselves at an event are more inclined to tell others about it, both in person and online. An expanded and devoted following can be the result of effective word-of-mouth marketing. The loyalty of supporters to their team is bolstered when they have a positive experience as a spectator. Faithful followers stick with their team through thick and thin, showing unflinching dedication even in the face of adversity.

Fans who enjoy themselves at the games are more inclined to continue doing so. They go on to become dedicated season ticket holders or regular attendees, showing their undying devotion to the team via their consistent attendance and financial backing. Fans are more inclined to consider themselves part of the team's fan base if they have a good time during games. They may openly exhibit their support through the use of team apparel, the placement of team logos, and participation in team-related events. What happens in the stands can have an effect on how visiting fans view the host team. Even die-hard away fans might be won over by a pleasant experience at the home stadium of the opposition team.

Team Effect Has a Positive Effect on Team Loyalty

Having loyal fans and a winning team generally results in higher attendance at games (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995), but so far, there are no studies that specifically examine team effects on Team Loyalty. This research finding contributes to new knowledge when the result shows that team effect has a positive effect on team loyalty. Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRGing) and Cutting Off Reflected Failure (CORFing) are behavioural tendencies closely associated with team identification. BIRGing and CORFing (Campbell et al., 2004) are two theories of team identification that examine the different ways individuals behave in response to team success or failure. When people engage in BIRGing, they establish a psychological association between themselves and the accomplishments of their preferred team, intensifying their emotional bond and allegiance to the team.

On the contrary, the phenomenon known as CORFing has the potential to result in diminished levels of team identification and loyalty when people deliberately detach themselves from the team's shortcomings. Team identification theories provide valuable insights into the psychological processes behind the formation of strong emotional attachments to certain teams. These attachments play a pivotal role in cultivating and sustaining team loyalty. Consistently strong performances, victories, and accomplishments are associated with a more devoted fan base because of the team effect (Kucharska et al., 2020; Yun et al., 2021). Supporters are attracted to and feel a sense of pride in a winning team. A team's success on the pitch may give its supporters a sense of pride and belonging. Incredible comebacks, miraculous saves, and other dramatic finishes may leave supporters feeling energized and committed to their favourite side.

Supporting one's team may give one a sense of belonging and pride. When the team does well, the supporters take pride in their team and become more dedicated to the business. A dedicated fan base usually develops for a club that plays well at home and benefits from a significant home-field advantage. Playing in front of a supportive and enthusiastic home crowd may have a multiplicative effect on a team's success and fan base. Team loyalty may be boosted through the inclusion of popular players or personalities. Fans may show their allegiance to the team despite roster changes if they strongly connect to a particular player.

Supporters of teams with long histories and historic traditions sometimes feel pride and nostalgia for those times. The group's history may serve as a source of inspiration and pride. Fan loyalty may be bolstered by heated competition between clubs. The intensity of the games and the stakes of the competition frequently lead to heightened feelings and a strong attachment to one's team. Being a part of a dedicated fan base can strengthen social ties between individuals. When fans bond by their common experience of rooting for the same team, the bond becomes stronger than before. True supporters will always be there for their team, no matter what. There will always be die-hard supporters who will cheer for their team no matter how they're performing.

Conclusions

The findings showed that general atmosphere, spectator satisfaction, team loyalty, personal relaxation opportunities, and team effect significantly positively affect stadium attendance. Spectator's satisfaction and team effect also significantly positively affect the team. The assessment of factors influencing spectator attendance in football matches was relevant due to several causes, and it carries enormous ramifications for football teams and the broader sports industry. Football teams depended significantly on the income earned by selling tickets, refreshments, and goods to fans. The ability to make precise forecasts about attendance may assist clubs in optimizing their pricing plans, effectively allocating resources, and ultimately maximizing their earnings.

The financial viability of football teams was contingent upon the establishment of sustainable income sources. Accurate forecasts of attendance could help the clubs to efficiently allocate resources, strategically anticipate operating expenses, and mitigate potential financial volatility. An additional aspect that may be succinctly summarised is that the identification of elements that impact attendance can assist clubs in customizing their marketing and promotional strategies. Clubs can strategically focus on certain fan categories, develop relevant campaigns, and enhance advertising platforms to attract a larger audience. In addition to the aforementioned considerations, the upkeep, personnel allocation, and security measures of stadiums and facilities are contingent upon the projected attendance figures. Precise forecasts of attendance facilitate the effective management of logistical operations.

Moreover, the identification of elements that affect attendance can help clubs enhance the entire fan experience. Clubs may prioritize the improvement of stadium facilities, entertainment offerings, and fan interaction programs as strategies to attract and keep fans. Through a comprehensive analysis of the many elements that impact attendance, clubs may develop and implement effective plans aimed at expanding their fan base and attracting new supporters. This may need engaging with demographic groups that are now marginalized within the fan community. Understanding the elements that influence attendance enables teams to enhance fan loyalty. By effectively satisfying the expectations of fans and providing them with unique experiences, clubs can foster repeat attendance and cultivate long-term support.

Organizations that possess the ability to effectively forecast and exert control over attendance rates can attain a competitive edge. Organizations can make informed choices based on data, which may enhance their

competitive advantage in terms of both on-field performance and audience engagement. In the contemporary era characterized by the prevalence of data analytics and technological advancements, clubs possess the opportunity to use attendance prediction models as a means of making well-informed judgments about diverse facets of their operations, including marketing strategies and player recruiting endeavours. Accurate attendance forecasts are of paramount significance for league organizers. The collected data was used to assess the efficacy and level of public interest in the league, implement enhancements, as well as entice potential investments and sponsorship prospects.

In summary, the identification and prediction of the determinants that impact spectator attendance in football leagues were essential for ensuring the economic sustainability, expansion, and prosperity of football teams and leagues. It could help individuals to make well-informed choices, efficiently allocate resources, and enhance the overall fan experience, thus contributing to the long-term viability and advancement of the sport. Future studies might investigate why local spectators and nonlocal fans do not go to their stadiums. The demographics and geographical behaviours of fans should also be considered while evaluating the suggested model.

Conflicts of interest

Concerning the study, writing, and/or publishing of this piece, the author(s) state that there is no possible conflict of interest.

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