

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2015

Department:Journalism

Degree:MA

Title:The Effect of Game-Day Promotions on Increasing
Game Attendance and Fan Engagement for Major League Baseball Teams

This study applies contingency theory to analyze how effective promotions are at increasing attendance and facilitating fan engagement. Contingency theory framework assumes there is neither a best way to organize nor is any strategy equally effective (Galbraith, 1973; Shank & Lyberger, 2014). This is consistent with the results from this study, as there were significant findings but no clear or definitive answers. This study utilized an online survey of MLB consumers ages 18 or older that attended a game during 2014 or 2015, within 150 miles of an MLB ballpark, and without season tickets (N = 382). Scale psychometrics for identity antecedents and motivations was used to analyze areas of fan engagement. Multiple linear regression equations were completed, indicating that the effect of external contingencies on willingness to attend games varies within levels of fan engagement, and appeal of game-day promotions varies within levels of fan engagement. A comparison of means also found that effect of promotions on willingness to attend games does not vary within promotional categories. The findings support contingency theory and provide important implications for next-step strategies for scholarship and industry.

Keywords: Contingency Theory, Fan Engagement, Major League Baseball, Promotions, Public Relations, Scale Psychometrics for Identity Antecedents and Motivations