

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION
THE CONSUMER MARKET OF THE SPECTATOR TEAM SPORTS,
BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF FOOTBALL

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1. BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ticket holders – matchday attendees - are at the core of professional football, since market size is determined by them. First, clubs can obtain so called „match day” revenues (ticket and season ticket sales, merchandising, buffet and other additional services) and second, advertising space value is determined also by the number of attending spectators. Payments, paid after television broadcasting rights are taking up an ever increasing part of the revenue structure of professional sport (FEULLIET et al. 2019, SCHELLES et al. 2020). These revenues are also calculated upon the number of spectators present, since it can be rightfully assumed by TV media companies, that TV viewers most probably follow sport events on television which represent a high number of fans. (ANDRÁS, 2004, VÁRHEGYI 2016). In case of a live television coverage, advertising space available in the stadiums become more valuable, since these advertisements reach not only the ticket holders but also reach a much broader audience, namely the media consumers and as a consequence of this, sponsors are ready to pay higher fees for advertising spaces. An additional value of television broadcasting is, that it is able to get to new consumers, who, later, can become stadium attendees, and consequently spend money on buying ticket, use additional services and buying merchandising products. That is the logic of the professional football business model, that can be viewed as a concentric process, that is stemmed in the number of ticket holders. The market of the European football has been exponentially growing in the last decades, but the majority of the market is still dominated by western European leagues. Hungarian professional teams lag behind and differ from, as both their revenue and structure of revenue are concerned, western teams, that strongly affects the operation of these clubs. More than half of the Hungarian football teams’ income, can not be considered business type of income as stated by MUSZBEK (2019). Without consumers we can not consider sport a business oriented sport as stated by ANDRÁS (2003), and so, the missing parts of the business aspects of the classic spectator sports business model can be traced back to the „empty” stadiums and so, filling stands by fans is of key importance.

Spectator sports in Hungary have been suffering from the lack in numbers of spectators since the transition to a democratic system, in 1989, that is explained away by the public as

„bad product”, that can easily be seen as not justified in the case of for example handball and waterpolo, whose national leagues belong to the world elite.

The sheer fact that many international studies target the factors, influencing passive sport consumption, shows, that it is a hot issue these days.

It became clear, as a consequence of the outbreak of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, that business based spectator sports – despite the ever growing broadcasting and sponsor revenues – can not be imagined without flesh and blood ticket holders.

I believe, that a thorough investigation is needed in order to explore the reasons behind low consumer interest towards Hungarian professional football and also in order to formulate adequate measures to these challenges. So far, such study has not been carried out in Hungary, that is why I have chosen the user market analysis of the Hungarian football as the topic of my doctoral dissertation.

The main targets of my study

The main target of my study is to reveal, what factors lie behind the low number of matchday attendance at football matches in Hungary, despite the ongoing modernization of sport infrastructure.

My further aims are:

1. To reveal the factors that determine football fan's interest
2. To examine, whether fans behave in a rational way and do not follow matches due to their poor standard.
3. Fan's attitude is passed along generation by generation as part of parent's model copying in socialization interactions with children. I determined as one of my aims, to map the reasons why „fan's supply” dropped dramatically around the time of the political transition – actually almost entirely disappeared – and this decreasing trend has not changed ever since.
4. I am also determined to investigate, whether news appearing in the media, have any influencing effects on people's opinion and decisions with regard to football matches.
5. My aim is to reveal, whether the measures, that have been introduced by the state and sport authorities since 2010, have had any positive affect on passive sport consumption.

6. Last but not least, it is also my aim, to try to reveal what solutions are possible to the problem of empty stadiums in the Central European region.

Hyphothesises of the study:

The essential hyphothesis of my dissertation is that, football fans stay away from stadiums in Hungary not only because of economical but socio cultural reasons as well.

Further hyphothesises

H1: *The interest of football fans is not only influenced by economic but also socio cultural factors as well.*

H2: *Low attendance at football matches is not only the result of poor quality play and general lack of success, but is also affected by socio cultural factors, such as altered free time spending habits.*

H3: *As a result of change in the way people spend their free time, they have distanced themselves from their teams, as a consequence of which, younger generation has no first hand connection to clubs, identification with the club has become non existent.*

H4: *Media news about Hungarian football, effect negatively the interest in passive sport consumption.*

H5: *Sport federal measures, that have been introduced since 2010, has a negative, while state measures, such as subsidies flowing into Hungarian football and the development of sport infrastructure, have a positive affect on the interest of sport consumers.*

H6: *Against the trend of turning towards globalization, as in the case of the West, here, in the Central European region, the strenghtening of local values can result in the filling of the stadium stands.*

2. DATABASE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODS USED

The aim of my study is to find an answer to the question, why there are so few visitors at Hungarian football matches, present at the stadiums. Although the majority of the NB1 and NB2 league teams could have moved into either in a new stadium or at least a renewed former one since 2010, but, despite of expectations, attendance has not grown significantly, utilization of the new premises has always been a great problem either to the team or respectively the stadium operators. Differently from former Hungarian studies carried out in this matter, I do not only examine the issue among fans but my sample also consists of people, staying away from stadiums.

It is my aim in my dissertation to reveal the motivator factors of match attendees and also to highlight the factors that influence people staying away from stadiums. Passive sport consumption habits, factors influencing their interest and their correlation will be examined, among match attendees. As for non attendees, I will study their relationship to passive sport consumption, the possible reasons why they stay away from matches and also the correlations between the two fields.

In order to answer my questions, I have employed both primer and secunder data and information gathering methods. As a secunder method, I collected and processed the topic relevant, formerly published, both national and international professional literature. As a method of primer analysis, I chose to carry out a survey both among fans going to matches and among people not attending matches.

2.1. Data bases and methods used for secondary study

The secunder data and information gathering is an inevitable part of any studies. During my secondary studies, the essential concepts regarding the topic, were defined, professional football markets were introduced and consumer market was characterized by me, with the aid of relevant national and international professional literature. Consequently I contrasted the „human image” of the traditional and the behavioural economy, then I turned my attention to consumer behaviour, focusing mainly on commitment and loyalty. As the next step, factors, effecting passive sport consumption and fan types were determined. Lastly, two, internationally acclaimed, excellent practicies, the German Bundesliga and the Polish Ekstraklasa were introduced. My secunder studies provided a sound basis for the

theoretical foundation and data collecting of my primer studies and also helped me to select the statistical method and furthermore contributed to the correct interpretation of data.

2.2. Theory and method of primer study

Based on my study questions and professional sources, a quantitative data gathering, a survey, that is one of the most favourite study methods (MALHORTA, 2008, BONCZ 2015), was carried out. This method enables you to carry out a wide range, high number sample study and the data collected can be processed clearly, without bias and efficiently, furthermore data can be quantified and so it can be analysed using different statistical methods. (BABBIE, 2008)

In order to meet the targets of my dissertation, two surveys were compile, one for the fans and one for the people not attending matches. The two surveys were pieced together by taking the results and experiences of the processed professional sources into account. By considering both professional and methodological factors, I came to the conclusion that the joint application of SMSC (Scales for Motivators of Sport Consumption) modell – associated with KIM and Trail 2010 – and CSCS modell – (Constraints on Sport Consumption Scale) – could bring the most beneficial result in answering my study questions, thus I chose to employ them at my surveys. SMCS motivational scale contains both internal and external motivator factors, whereas CSCS sport consumption scale contains both internal and external constraint factors. At the same time, due to the differences between Hungarian and North American sport culture, I found it necessary to introduce further factors into the modell, whose relevance are supported by professional literatures. (SUTTON et. al, 1997; DUKE, 2002; BÜHLER, 2005; UHRICH – KOENIGSTORFER, 2009; CLEMENS et al. 2011; RANC, 2012; CHEN et al. 2013; YOSHIDA et al. 2013; MCDONALD et al. 2016; BALOGH-BÁCSNÉ, 2019c).

The structure of the two surveys are similar, both can be divided into 3 main parts. The first part consists of questions concerning socio demographical questions, the second one deals with the passive sport consumption of the filler. In the third part, fans reacted on statements based on SMSC whereas non goers reacted on statements based on CSCS modell, where the reactions ranged from 1 to 7 on a likert scale, based on how much the filler agreed on the

respective statement. (1 totally disagree to 7 totally agree) The two surveys were pilot tested in the fall of 2019, on the sample of 232 fans and 251 non goers.

The surveys then were filled altogether by 3031 people out of which 1967 were fans and 1064 were non goers.

In the next two subsections, I introduce the two surveys, the two samples and also the statistical methods applied by me.

2.2.1. Presentation of the Fan Sample.

My survey was delivered online to the fans of teams represented in the OTP Bank League in the 2019/2020 season, due to Covid pandemic restrictions. As a first measure, I contacted the above mentioned clubs, inquiring whether they would have been able to help me in reaching their fans through their social media or fan sites. Out of the 12 teams represented in the NB1, 6 teams replied to my inquiry (Budapest Honvéd, DVTK, Kisvárda, Paks, Újpest és Zalaegerszeg). These teams have continuously helped my work, contributing greatly to its findings. The other six teams' fans were reached using alternative routes, accessing closed fan groups in the media.

The complex internal and external motivator factors are shown on the following table:

Table 1. Complex fan motivation scale

Internal motivator factors	External motivator factors
Success	Spectacle
Sport fan	Outcome uncertainty
Local patriotism	Good atmosphere*
Loyalty*	Stadion*
Identification with the team	Advertisements
Entertainment	Szövetségi intézkedések*
Attachment to the community	

* added factor

Source: Own editing based on KIM-TRAIL (2010)

My fans sample base is 1967 people, out of which, the majority, 80% is men, 20% is women.

As for the age is concerned, my sample is quite diverse, with really different proportions. The majority of the sample (28%) belongs to the 26-40 generation, followed by 25% of the 41-50 group. Nearly 20% belong to the age group from 18, to 25, and 14% comes from the age group of 51-65. Under 18 people represent 9% of the sample, while over 65 represent a mere 4% only. As for their marital and partnership status are concerned, 60% of them are either married or live in a partnership, 25% still live with parents and 19% are single.

As for their residence is concerned the sample can be considered quite balanced. The majority of them (30%) live in urban areas, 28% live in the capital, 25% live in county capitals and 18% of them live in villages.

When we focus on their qualification, 23% of the fans have basic qualification (primary school or vocational training) 41% boast secondary school leaving certificate, whereas 34% have some kind of higher education graduation either college or university. The remaining 2% marked qualification as „other.”

Majority of the people (41%) does white collar, whereas 25% blue collar work, the remaining 22% are either pupils at elementary education or students at higher education.

When answering questions about their financial status, repliers typically considered themselves average or better than average.

People answering fan survey, belong to 10, NB1 teams supporters. Most of them support Ferencváros 26%, followed by DVTK 17%, Budapest Honvéd 16%. Also above 10% of surveys received from fans of DVSC 13% and over 5% the supporters of Újpest.

2.2.2. Presentation of the Absentee Sample

My survey, initially, could be answered online, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Absentee were accessed typically by comfort sampling, through different, closed social media groups – typically connected to local communities (such as Debrecenben, Miskolcon, Pesten hallottam, szeretem Fehérvárt, etc.). My survey was shared on these sites. Due to these facts, my sampling can not be considered representative.

The complex internal and external constraint factors are presented on the following table:

Table 2. Constraints on Sport Consumption Scale

Internal constraint factors	External constraint factors
I am not a sports fan	Costs
No Interest from Others	Other leisure programs
Lack of Someone to Attend with	Weekly commitments
Lack of Success	Media*
The lack of identification with the team *	Broadcasting
	Lack of spectacle*
	Sport Federal and State measures *
	Lack of Experience *

* added factor

Source: Own editing based on KIM-TRAIL (2010)

The absentee survey was answered by 1064 people. The majority of the sample is women 61% and 39% man, so in contrast to the fan survey, the majority of the fillers are women.

As for their age is concerned, there is similarity between the two surveys, since under 18 and over 65 represent only a tiny fraction of all surveys. The 18-40 age group represents over 66% among the non goer surveys.

As for marital status, the majority of absentee 59%, are either married or live in a partnership, followed by 22% of singles and lastly 19% who live with their parents.

When we take their residence into account, the absentee answerers dominantly live in county capitals 60% in contrast to only 12% living in the capital,18%, who live in urban areas and 10% living in villages. One of the reasons of this can be the nature of the sample taking, since closed, socail network groups, can typically be associated with county capitals. At the same time, we should also take into consideration the fact, that out of the 12 teams taking part in 2019/2020 football season, 5 teams reside in county capitals (Debrecen, Kaposvár, Miskolc, Székesfehérvár, Zalaegerszeg) although, they are unquestionably overrepresented in the sample.

50% of absentee have some kind of higher graduation – either college, university or PHD – 43% finished high school – maturation or OKJ and 7% claims to have basic education – elementary school or vocational training.

As it can be concluded from the qualification facts, the majority, over 50% do white collar job and 27% still study either in public schools or at universities.

As for their financial status is concerned, people from the sample almost equally claimed, worse than average 33%, average 32% and better than average 35%.

2.2.3. The applied statistical methods.

Survey data was processed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 program. I carried out frequency dissipation, descriptive statistical indicators (average and scatter) and crosstabs analysis at first. During crosstab analysis, a Pearson's Chi-squared test was carried out in order to determine the correlation among the variables and consequently a Cramer associational coefficient test were carried out to determine the strength of the connections. To precisely reveal the deviation among variables I carried out a corrected remainder value analysis.

After crosstab analysis, I carried out the reliability check on both the motivational and constraints scales. The Cronbach-alfa indicator was applied. At the Cronbach indicator, a 0.6 threshold limit was applied as determined by TRAIL and JAMES (2001) and KIM and TRAIL (2010).

After finishing with the reliability tests, I also investigated, whether the number of variables in connection with both the motivational and constraints scales can be decreased. I used principal component analysis during data reduction process. Prior to testing, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test was implemented.

3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

In order to achieve my goals, to try to formulate a complex, coherent picture on factors influencing passive sport consumption, processed relevant professional literature was processed and a thorough, primer study was conducted.

The main findings of my dissertation are to be introduced alongside my hypotheses.

The basic hypothesis of my dissertation is that, football fans stay away from stadiums in Hungary not only because of economical but socio cultural reasons as well.

In connection with my aims and hypotheses I formulated the following conclusions:

H1: *The interest of football fans is not only influenced by economic but also socio cultural factors as well.*

A complex model could be established, in which the factors, influencing passive sport consuming, are taken into account, and in which, alongside classic economical factors, socio cultural factors also appear. In the case of motivator factors among fans, a reliability test on both the internal and external factors was carried out, at which the Cronbach-alpha indicator was applied. As the threshold of reliability testing, a value of 0,6 was set, that indicator was not successfully met 1-1 factors of both the internal and external motivator factors. The Cronbach-alpha for sport fan is 0,44 whereas the indicator for sport federal measures is 0,53. As a result, both of these parameters were left out of my study. In case of the other parameters, the Cronbach-alpha value exceeded 0,7 value (Table 3.).

Table 3. The result of the reliability test of the fan motivation scale

Internal motivator factors	α	External motivator factors	α
Success	.76	Spectacle	.78
Sport fan	.44	Drama	.73
Local patriotism	.87	Good atmosphere	.79
Loyalty	.92	Infrastructure	.79
Identification with the team	.91	Advertisements	.89
Entertainment	.83	Sport Federal measures	.53
Attachment to the community	.90		

Source: Own research, own editing

Following reliability testing a KMO and Barlett test necessitated, with regards to the fact, that the KMO index is the most significant indicator in deciding whether the variables are suitable for factor analysis. In carrying out the data reduction I applied principal component analysis, during which I tested internal and external motivators. a minimum of 0,5 value in the case of the charge indicator, was decided to be used. The KMO value, in both cases, exceeded the 0,5 minimum threshold limit, established by UNGHVÁRY and colleagues (2018) and respectively KISS and colleagues (2020).

In the case of the internal motivators the KMO index is 0,88. As a result of the principal component analysis, the 6 factors that passed the reliability test were reduced to 4. Of the separate factors loyalty to and identification with the team and attachment to the community and entertainment were united to form one factor. The further two factors are local patriotism and success.

The first factor was named *loyalty and identification with the team* that consists of statements, referring to the close relationship with the team and deep commitment, independently from success or the lack of it.

The second factor was named *community entertainment* with regard to the fact, that this factor contains parameters that represent on one hand, attachment to the community, on the other hand, emphasize need and desire to be entertained.

The third factor is *local patriotism*, where factors were organized based on the original factor structure. These factors represent the importance of belonging to a local community and its values, that can influence the interest directed towards passive sport consumption. A team can become the symbol of local patriotism in case it is an organic part of the life of the city and is deeply rooted in the local community. Attendance and cheering for the team can become a manifestation of local patriotism.

The fourth factor is *success*. The successes and fails of the club can be totally identified with by match attendees, such as the nature of fanship. Obviously, success will positively influence interest and since fans can identify with it, and if a team performs well, fans feel proud.

Following internal motivator analysis, the principle component analysis with regard to external motivators was carried out, since KMO-value came to 0,83. As a result of principle component analysis the original 5 factors were reduced to 4.

The first factor is „*advertisements and facility*”. Out of the factors advertising and facility were grouped together due to their similar instrumental nature. The facility and its quality or the advertisements, let they be either ATL or BTL, obviously are instrumental.

The second factor is „*spectacle*”. that refers to the original beauty of sport on one hand and the quality of the matches on the other.

The outcome uncertainty factor was named „*drama*” since I beleive it better describes and summarize statements belonging to this factor.

The fourth factor was named „*good atmosphere*”. In the case of this factor one of the statements, namely the one that goes as euforic feeling experinced in the events of goal or at other moments was left out ot the principle component analysis, since it’s charge value did not reach the aformentioned 0,5 charge level. As a consequence of this, two statements were included in this factor, one of which is supporters1 chants the other is different fans1 choreographies, those contribute to the atmosphere of the match and due to their spectacularity provide positive experience.

After carrying out principal component analysis both on internal and external motivators, the order of the different factors based on how heavily each influence supporters interest, was examined. Based on this order it was determined that fans valued the most the factor of loyalty and identification with the favoured team (6.57). Trailed by, with only a 0.4 margin, attraction and success and community entertainment those of whose mathematical averages show only a 0,176 difference compared to each other. The next block contains good atmosphere and drama both of which factors lag considerably behind that of the top factor loyalty and idnetification with the favourite team. The order is closed by the factor of local patriotism and advertisements and facility, both of which failed to reach the 5,5 average. (Figure 1.)

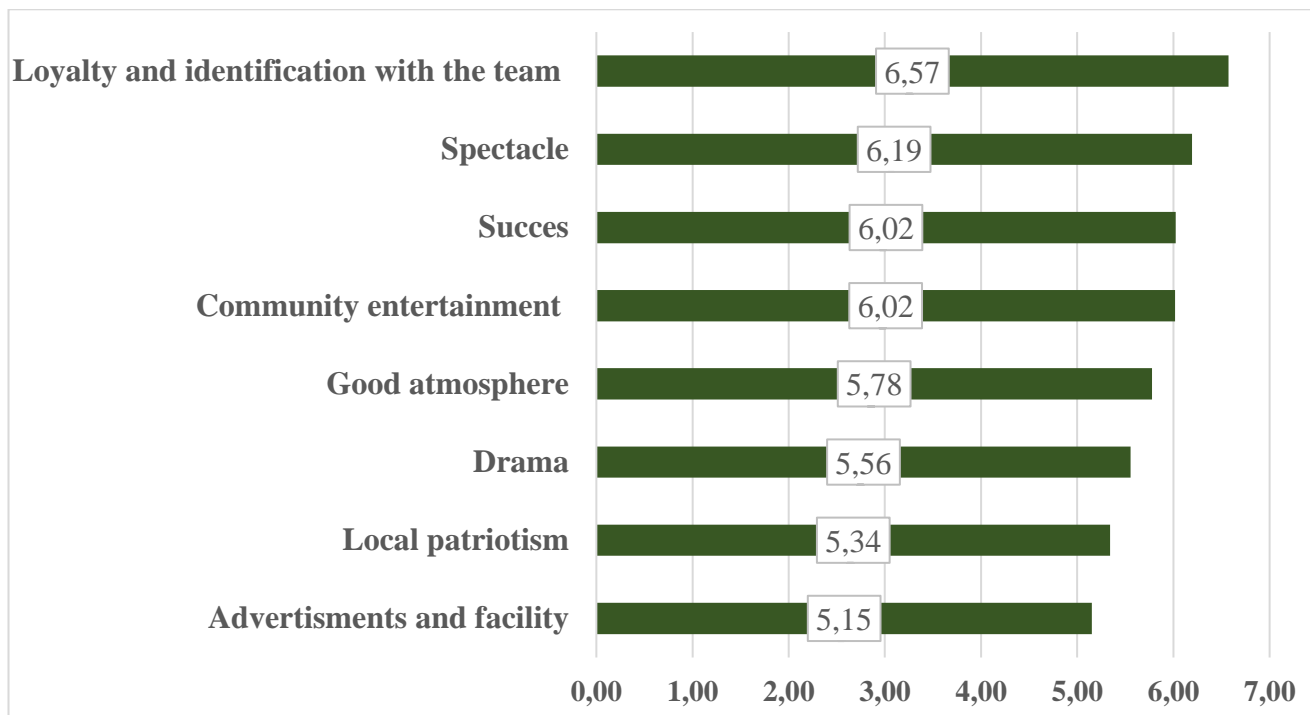


Figure 1. Ranking of fan motivational factors in the sample

Source: Own research, own editing (N = 1 967)

Paralelly with factor analysis, an order of the individual statements was also established, since this might give a more accurate picture of factors influencing fans interest. Out of the first 5 statements all 3, regarding loyalty, are present and furthermore all of the 6 statements of the loyalty and identification with the team are among the first 10 statements. The remaining four spots were shared among community entertainment, represented by 2 items and success and attraction, both represented by 1-1 item. It is essential to note, that the two statements, regarding community entertainment belonged to the „original’ entertainment, consequently neither attraction nor success are among the first three influencing factors. ***We can conclude, that fans go to matches mostly because of loyalty and identification with their teams and the desire to be entertained.*** The findings of my study coincides with those of KOMÁROMI and BÁCSNÉ (2020), by establishing that players performance at matches do not significantly correlate with fan’s interest.

My hypothesis was proven by the results both of my primer and secunder studies.

H2: *Low attendance at football matches is not only the result of poor quality play and general lack of success, but also effected by socio cultural factors, such as altered free-time spending habits.*

In the case of constraint factors with regard to sport consumption, both internal and external factors – similarly to those of motivators – were reliability tested by applying Cronbach-alpha indicator. The reliability test threshold was established at 0,6 value, that was not met by one factor out of the internal constraints and by two factors out of the external constraints. The „*No interest from others*” and „*Broadcasting*” factors scored 0,59, while „*Lack of experience*” scored 0,43, thus all three factors were excluded from further studies (Table 4).

Table 4. Result of a reliability test of the Constraints on Sport Consumption Scale

Internal constraint factors	α	External constraint factors	α
I am not a sports fan	.72	Costs	.74
No Interest from Others	.59	Other leisure programs	.78
Lack of Someone to Attend with	.80	Weekly commitments	.87
Lack of Success	.95	Media	.89
The lack of identification with the team *	.81	Broadcasting	.59
		Lack of spectacle	.78
		State measures	.69
		Lack of Experience	.43

Source: Own research, own editing

In terms of the internal constraints factors, the KMO value scored a 0,78. As the result of the Principal Component Analysis, the four factor and their associated statements – which passed the reliability test – have not shown any changes. Moreover, each and every statement exceeded the 0,5 level of acceptance.

Regarding the labels of the factors, I have not made any changes. The “*Lack of Success*” factor consisted of statements such as the poor performance of a team, and as a consequence unsuccessfulness as well. I have to point out however, that in this context, *the lack of success* is not interpreted to a bad result of one or two games, but to a poor performance, the absence of winning and different successes related to winning, over an extended period of time

The second factor, conveying the „*I am not a sports fan*” sentiment consisted of three statements as well. The first indicating that the absentee is not interested to take part in a sports event passively, the second, that generally speaking sport is not part of their life, while

the third statement echoing that out of different type of sports, they don't particularly like and or follow football.

The third factor is the "*Lack of Someone to Attend with*". Out of the three items, two were assigned to a specific person (friend or significant other), who – probably because of the lack of interest – refuses to accompany the absentee, while the third item expresses a more general view, meaning that there is no one in their close proximity, with whom one can attend a football game.

The last internal constraints factor is "*The lack of identification with the team*". This factor is the opposite of two fan motivation factors, namely the identification with the team, and the local patriotism. In other words, on one hand this means, – as the label itself suggests – the absentee cannot identify with the team, on the other hand it conveys that the team is not embedded in the local community, and as a result they can not generate interest from local people.

The KMO value of the external constraints factors is 0,85. Based on the results of the Principal Component Analysis, regarding the number of factors, there weren't any change, however one statement was reclassified to another factor, and one item were left out, because of its low charge indicator (below 0,5).

The „*Other leisure programs*” factor consisted of four statements instead of the previously planned three, as the "*I spend my freely disposable income on other things*" statement was reclassified here. As its name suggests the factor consisted of statements conveying that the absentee choses alternative leisure programs (cinema, theatre, concert etc.) instead of football games.

The second factor, the "*Media*" embody news about the Hungarian Football as a whole, as well as news about any given teams, and news about the athletes playing for given teams.

The third factor, the "*Weekly commitments*" as a constraints factor collected statements regarding work-, school-, friends- or family commitments. This factor means that the absentee has no time to attend football games.

The fourth factor mirrors the statement of the public about the "*lack of spectacle*". The lack of spectacle regarding first and foremost the low quality of the games. Besides the poor

game quality, the lamentably uninteresting supplementary programmes pose as a disheartening item as well.

The fifth factor, named as the “*Costs*”, consist only of two items because, as I have mentioned it before, the freely disposable income statement was reclassified to the “*Other leisure programs*” factor. The former of the two is the high ticket- and season ticket prices, the latter is regarding the high collateral costs (e.g.: travel, food, etc.).

The sixth factor – previously consisting of the Sport Federal- and State measures introduced by the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) and by the State – was re-named. This is because the measure of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) namely the „*introduction of the mandatory fan card*”, did not reach the 0,5 level of acceptance, thus only the measures of the State were left. As mentioned, because of this reason the sixth factor was re-named to “*State measures*”. In this factor two statements were listed, that are critical of the (sport)politics of the Government and appear frequently in the media of the opposition. One is related to the prioritised State support of football, and the other is regarding the stadium investment projects, stating that those disagreeing won’t attend football games.

Based on the answers of the absentees we can conclude, that the “*State measures*” are the main reasons why people won’t attend football games. “*Other leisure programs*” scored the second highest. This means that while planning their leisure time programs people tend to compare football games with other alternatives such as cinema, theatre or a concert, and data shows that most people prefer these alternatives over football. On the third place of the Constraints on Passive Sport Consumption Scale is the “*Lack of Spectacle*”. This suggests that improving the quality of play can result in higher spectator interest, however this alone cannot solve the problem. It is interesting to see, that “*Unsuccessfulness*” scored barely above the neutral value 4 (4,10), and that it is passed by the “*The lack of identification with the team*” as well (Figure 2.).

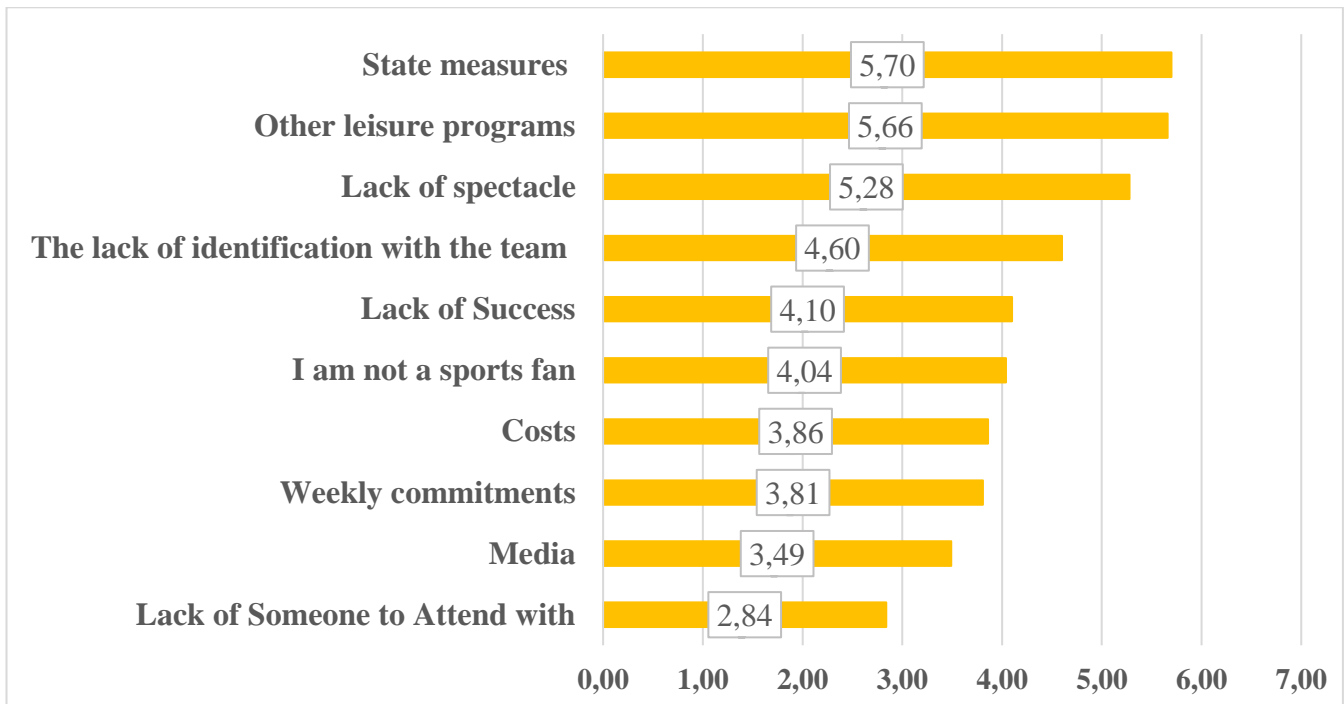


Figure 2. Ranking of constraint factors in the sample

Source: Own research, own editing (N = 1 064)

Based on the results of my Constraints Sample I can conclude that my Hypotheses have been proven.

H3: *As a result of change in the way people spend their free time, they have distanced themselves from their teams, so, younger generation has no first hand connection to clubs, identification with the club has become non-existent.*

Neither the Kruskal-Wallis test of the fans, nor the Mann-Whitney test of the absentees showed significant differences regarding factors of the identification with the team or the lack of it in different age groups (Table 5.).

Table 5. Age differences for group identification or lack of factors

	Age	Mean Rank	Significance
Loyalty and identification with the team	younger generation	982,43	0,38
	middle-aged	989,59	
	senior	894,73	
The lack of identification with the team	younger generation	510,68	0,53
	middle-aged	522,97	

Source: Own research, own editing

Based on this we cannot clearly specify whether the younger generation has no connection with Hungarian Football Clubs, or that in their case the identification with their team is

absent. The results showed that not only in younger generation is this identification lost but in every age group as well. In my opinion significant differences were not found, because younger fans feel attached to and identify with their favourite teams the same way as older generations do. This is reflected in FÖLDESINÉ (1995) and KASSAY (2012) findings as well, as they clearly state, that the process during which one becomes a fan is a process passed down from parents to children. After the end of the communist regime however, the turn-away from football became so drastic, that its effects were felt all across the generations of fan supplies. Nowadays this gap between the teams and the general public became so big in size, that there is no substantial difference between different age group, or in terms of their own gameday attendance or someone in their close proximity. This means moreover, that currently there is no difference between a middle-aged man – whose parents attended football games or they took him in the past as well – and between a younger man – who has already socialized in such a way that Hungarian football is not part of his family life – regarding their lack of identification with their respective teams.

Taking all this into consideration it was inevitable, for the average number of spectators of Hungarian football matches to decrease.

Based on my results I have rejected my hypotheses.

H4: *Media news about Hungarian football, effect negatively the interest in passive sport consumption.*

Based on my results I have rejected my hypothesis. On the Constraints on Passive Sport Consumption Scale “*Media*” scored the second lowest with a 3,49 mean. Thus, we can conclude that news of the media have little to no impact on constraints (Figure 2.).

Based on my results I have rejected my hypothesis.

H5: *Sport federal measures, that have been introduced since 2010, has a negative, while government interventions, such as subsidies flowing into Hungarian football and the development of sport infrastructure, have a positive effect on the interest of sport consumers.*

Based on my result, my hypothesis has not been proven. On the impact of the Sports Federation no conclusive findings could be made, because the value of Cronbach's alpha regarding the factor have not reached the minimum acceptable value, thus it was left out

from the statistical analysis. Against my previous expectations, State measures – introduced since 2010 – have a negative effect on the interest of the sample. As mentioned in the conclusion of my second aim, out of the Constraints factors, with a 5,70 mean “*State measures*” scored the highest. Based on this I have concluded that the highly prioritised State support, and infrastructural development have a contra productive effect. Against the previous expectations, State measures could not coax new spectators in the stadiums (as shown on Figure 2).

H6: Against the trend of turning towards globalization, as in the case of the West, here, in the Central European region, the strengthening of local values can result in the filling of the stadium stands.

I consider my hypothesis to be proven by my results.

As I have already mentioned in the conclusion reflecting to my first hypothesis, fans attend football games first and foremost because of their identification with the teams and the entertainment aspects of the games as well.

Out of the different types of fans – explored with the help of the Cluster Analysis – loyal local patriots showed the highest intensity of identification with their team. Their commitment to their favourite team is unquestionable, considering the fact that they have started to attend football games more than 5 years prior, moreover besides the home games – through sacrificing their time and money – they like to attend away games as well. Regarding the factors, the most important for us is *local patriotism* and *the loyalty to and identification with the team*. External motivator factors, such as spectacle, ads or the stadiums have no effect on their interest. The frequency of their gameday attendance is not affected by unsuccessfulness (see: commitment to their favourite team), nor the spectacle or the lack of it. However, the community, entertainment and the good atmosphere is important to them, thus we can conclude that gameday attendance is considered as a mean of escape from their everyday life, as well as an opportunity for entertainment, where they can live out their local patriotism (Figure 3.)

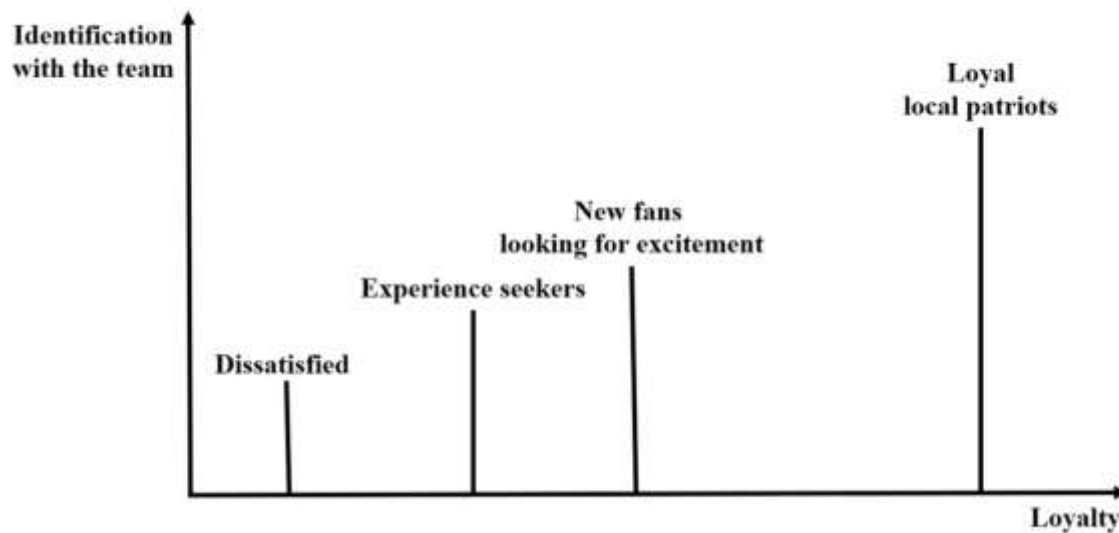


Figure 3. Fan types based on cluster analysis in the sample

Source: Own research, own editing (N = 1 967)

Both the results of my fan sample, and the results of the absentee sample prove my hypotheses right. *The main sentiment of the absentees show that they do not see Hungarian Football Clubs as integral parts of the local community, thus they cannot identify with them.* This lack of local embeddedness- and the lack of identification with the team can enhance the disagreement with the State measures, as well as the critiques of the game quality.

4. NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION

The majority of the studies targeting the consumer market of professional football, concentrate on rational sport consumer and mostly employ classical economic factors to study attendees motivators. I believe the novelty of my study lies in its main supposition is – deriving from the „human picture” of behavioural economy - that sport consumers are irrational beings, whose interest is influenced by socio cultural factors as well. Another novelty that I wish to highlight with regard to my dissertation is, that the consumer market is tried to be studied in its complexity, including both the supporter and the non goer side as well.

I consider the results of my dissertation the following

1. Establishing a complex model of factors influencing consumer interest with regard to football matches, by implementing SMSC and CSCS modelling.
2. It is not the quality of matches, nor the lack of success that are primarily responsible for low spectator interest towards Hungarian football, it is more likely to be influenced by different socio cultural factors, such as other leisure programs and also the contraproductiv effect of state measures.
3. It is neither the attraction nor the success that influence fans interest and non goers constraints. In contrast with former studies, whose findings established attraction and success as the primary motivators for matchday attendees, my study proves, that these motivators are more likely the loyalty and identification with the team and the desire to be entertained.
4. Using cluster analysis, different groups of fans have been identified, such as: *dissatisfied*, *new fans looking for excitement*, *loyal local patriots* and *experience seekers*. These types have been characterized by sex, age, financial status, length of match attendance and the frequency of match attendance.
5. The process of becoming a fan is not shaped by economical factors but rather develops as a result of a socialization process, conducted mostly by parents and the dominant factor in its shaping, is the loyalty to and identification with the team. The role of the

socialization process is strengthened by the fact that no significant difference can be found among generations in their loyalty to and identification with the team.

I consider the following the novel findings of my dissertation

1. A significant correlation between the frequency of fans' attendance and demographical variables, such as sex, age, residence and marital status, was established. It was also pointed out, that women tend to attend matches together, either with their parents, siblings, husbands or partners, whereas men more likely to go to matches either with distant relatives, friend or alone.
2. A significant correlation between women, youngsters, capital or city residents and those having worse than average financial status and non attendance was established.
3. It was revealed with regard to constraint factors of sport consumption, that significant differences can be found among demographic variables (sex, age, place of residence, qualification, financial status) and passive sport consumption factors (has he ever been to matches, when did he last attend a match, has anybody around him ever been to matches). Non attendance is more typical among women, people with worse than average financial status, people who has never been to matches and people who last attended a match more than 5 years before. In case of men, they are more likely to be kept from attendance by the lack of identification with Hungarian teams. The poor quality of play influence men, middle age, people whose residence is in county capitals, ununiversity or college graduates, people with better than average financial status and people who have already been to football matches, more. State measures are agreed with less among women, people who have never attended a match and people who last attended a match more than 5 years before.

5. THE PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE RESULTS

Why, despite the sport infrastructural development, is the level of interest towards football matches in Hungary low as a consequence of which, utilization of the new stadiums is poor as well? This is the question I aimed to find an answer for in my dissertation. I have carefully chosen a topic for my dissertation, that could bear a practical value either for a Hungarian National Football Association or for the Hungarian football clubs in general.

The results of my primary and secondary studies provide an opportunity for all interested parties of Hungarian professional football, to utilize them.

In the conclusions and recommendations section of my dissertation, a number of recommendations, based on my study findings and the relevant conclusions stem in them, have been formulated in order to address the low attendance issue.

Based on my findings, it is my sincere conviction, that to achieve a rise in attendees interest, football clubs must be steered towards business based operation, parallelly decreasing the level of state subsidies. The latter is of key importance, since it is clearly proved in the case of non attendees, that the discriminatively high subsidization of the professional football has a contraproductiv effect on formulating and/or maintaining consumer interest.

It can also be declared with high probability, that besides shifting towards business based operation, the creation and strengthening of both passive sport consumption and the incorporation of clubs into the local community, can be a probable solution to the problem. The social nature of football matches has largely disappeared since the transition into a democratic state in Hungary and this trend could have not been broken by the measures that have been introduced since 2010, since these measures do not treat the core problem. It is neither the poor quality of the matches, the bad overall state of the stadiums nor the lack of success that can be made responsible for the low attendee interest, it more lies in the fact, that football matches are not considered a potential leisure program compared to other free time opportunities and also the lack of identification with local football clubs. There is a correlation between these two factors, as a consequence of which, in case the incorporation of teams to the local community could be formulated or strengthened, people would feel the club their own and attendance would become the manifestation of local identity, that would result in the creation of the culture of sport consumption. The creation or strengthening

of local incorporation can be achieved through community organizing and nurturing activities, in which CSR programs have a key importance. It is the shared responsibility of the MLSZ and the clubs, since, in contrast with international examples – for example major American leagues – the OTP Bank League and the teams participating do not operate nationwide known, high attention attracting CSR programs. It would be appropriate to create a central, society responsibility taking program by MLSZ, into which local clubs can be incorporated by local level initiatives. The general discretion of the Hungarian football can be bettered by tematizing and embracing programs that deals with socially and environmentally essential issues and also programs aiming to aid socially handicapped people.

Community formation, that involves marketing activities' of the clubs, is of the same importance. Although the organizational structure of Hungarian football companies and that of the west-European clubs, is practically identical, at the same time there is a significant difference in their human resource management, BÁCSNÉ (2016). It means, that though many of the essential organizational units – take for example marketing – are present at the Hungarian clubs as well, but due to the lack of professionals, the given unit exist in theory only but operate or function in a very limited manner. There is no society building without well planned, marketing campaigns, which can not be carried out without market research based on which the MLSZ and the clubs can create their marketing strategies. Attracting people to stadiums require the image correction and the image formulation on both national and local part. The MLSZ has been working on stadium safety since 2010 and we can honestly declare that by now, both the built environment and the atmosphere of the matches are family friendly. In contrast to this, based on my results and empirical experiences, Hungarian football fans and attendees are still, predominantly men. Therefore football clubs must pay attention to addressing women and families, when planning their marketing strategy. The development of women football, where MLSZ has reached significant results lately, increasing the 2000 registered women fottballer in 2010 to 50000 in 2020 (JANCSÓ, 2021), can play an important role in attracting women to stadiums. Addressing families can be achieved through children, although it must be mentioned, that the employed methods should be more creative than school visits only. A good example of this is the „Neonati Atalantini” program, respectively the „Newborns of Atalanta” program, that has been

practiced since 2010 by the Atalanta football club and through which, all babies born in either Bergamo city or county, are presented by an Atalanta football shirt right at the hospital. According to Antonio Percassi, president of Atalanta football club, the love and passion towards the club must be born and be nurtured together with the baby (ATALANTA.IT).

In order to fill either their CSR or marketing activity with creative content, the MLSZ, by regulating the operation of the clubs, part of the subsidies should be allocated directly addressed to the development of these areas.

My recommendations in a nutshell:

1. Football clubs must shift towards business based operation.
2. Clubs, in co-operation with MLSZ, should create the culture of passive sport consumption, that can be achieved by the incorporation of the team into the local community.
3. To achieve the above, well planned and meticulously implemented, creative CSR programs and society building is needed.
4. The addressing of women, families and youngsters, must be a top priority at the planning of the clubs marketing activity.
5. The development of women football is inevitable in addressing women, attracting families can be done through children, while attracting youngsters can be achieved through community building.
6. MLSZ must separately subsidize the development and operation of these fields.

6. PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION

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1. **BALOGH R., BÁCSNÉ BÁBA É.** (2020): Analysis of Consumer Market in Central European Football. *Annals of the University of Oradea Economic Science*. 2020(1), pp. 317-328.
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Scientific journal in hungarian journal in hungarian

3. **BALOGH R., BÁCSNÉ BÁBA É.** (2020): A passzív sportfogyasztás komplex elemzése. *Jelenkori Társadalmi és Gazdasági Folyamatok*. 15(1-2), pp. 37-52.
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List of publications related to the dissertation

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