

Analysis of nostalgia sport tourism in football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League

Análisis del turismo deportivo de nostalgia en los aficionados de fútbol de la Copa del Golfo Pérsico

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyse nostalgia sport tourism in football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League. The sample of the study consisted of 210 football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League. The participants were selected through stratified random sampling. The Nostalgia Scale for Sport Tourism by Cho (2014) was used to collect the data. Confirmatory factor analysis of structural equations was used to analyse the hypotheses of the study. It was found that nostalgia has an effect on the behavioural intentions and attitude of football fans and that attitude has not a mediating role in the relationship between nostalgia and behavioural intentions of football fans. The nostalgia of the spectators is related to several factors, such as the sport environment and the experiences that the fans live together when they go to sport events. In conclusion, those football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League who have a positive attitude toward the football games may have better behavioural tendencies and, in the future, this can create nostalgic emotions.

Keywords: Nostalgia sport tourism; Football; Fans; Persian Gulf Pro League; Spectators; Attitude; Behaviour.

Resumen: El propósito de este estudio fue analizar el turismo deportivo de nostalgia en los aficionados de fútbol de la Copa del Golfo Pérsico. La muestra del estudio consistió en 210 aficionados de fútbol de la Copa del Golfo Pérsico. Los participantes fueron seleccionados mediante muestreo aleatorio estratificado. La escala de nostalgia para el turismo deportivo de Cho (2014) se utilizó para recopilar los datos. Las hipótesis del estudio se analizaron mediante análisis factorial confirmatorio de ecuaciones estructurales. Se encontró que la nostalgia tiene un efecto sobre las intenciones de comportamiento y la actitud de los aficionados de fútbol y que, esa actitud, no tiene un papel mediador en la relación entre la nostalgia y las intenciones de comportamiento de los aficionados de fútbol. La nostalgia de los espectadores está relacionada con varios factores, como el ambiente deportivo y las experiencias que los aficionados viven juntos cuando asisten a eventos deportivos. En conclusión, los aficionados de fútbol de la Copa del Golfo Pérsico que tienen una actitud positiva hacia los partidos de fútbol pueden tener mejores tendencias de comportamiento y, en el futuro, esto puede crear emociones nostálgicas.

Palabras clave: Turismo deportivo de nostalgia; Fútbol; Aficionados; Copa del Golfo Pérsico; Espectadores; Actitud; Comportamiento.

1. Introduction

Sports industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Desarbo & Madrigal, 2011; López et al., 2019; Sánchez, González, López, & Díaz, 2017). The behaviour of sports spectators is an important issue studied in various research areas such as sporting events management, tourism and leisure.

The need for experience and participation in sporting events is closely related to psychological, sociological and cultural needs. Travelling to sports events many sports fans fulfil the aforementioned needs by watching sports contests, meeting new friends, exploring new places, sightseeing around the host city before and after the game and visiting local tourist attractions (Alguacil, Pérez, Berenguer, & Boquera, 2016; Dixon, 2009; Murillo, Carles, Llop, Moya, & Planas, 2016; Roca, González, Porcel, & Cabello, 2019; Sánchez, Salgado, Rodríguez, & Barajas 2016).

Recent research has indicated that several factors are related to the behaviour of sports fans, including motivation

(Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, & Gladden, 2002), satisfaction (Larson & Steinman 2009) and loyalty (Wu, Tsai & Hung, 2012). Therefore, some authors have developed instruments to measure these variables in sport spectators. For example, Trail & James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC).

Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak (2002) examined these aspects in the specific case of football. Among the various reasons for participating in sporting events, it was found that watching matches together, football fans not only focus on results, but also spend time socializing with others. Football has a rich history that is constantly cultivated in society and, in consequence, nostalgia can have a major influence on the experience of football fans.

Nostalgia in football and other sports can appear because people are likely to have positive feelings and memories of past sporting events that they remember when the sporting events are finished (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007). This has provoked the appearance of “celebrity and nostalgia sport tourism”, a type of tourism that focuses on the organization of guided tours to famous sports-related attractions such as

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olympic venues, sports museums, sports halls of fame etc. A recent form of this kind of tourism consists of arranging meetings with famous sports stars in the vacation environment, for example, during a luxury cruise (Gibson et al., 2002). Also, authors like Fairley (2003) have indicated that social interaction plays an important role in the creation of nostalgia.

However, more research is needed about this topic to clarify these aspects. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyse nostalgia sport tourism in football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 210 football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League. The participants were selected through stratified random sampling.

2.2. Instrument

The Nostalgia Scale for Sport Tourism proposed by Cho (2014) was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was composed by 72 items divided in three subscales: 36 questions about nostalgia, 24 questions about attitude and 12 questions about behavioural intentions. The subscale of nostalgia focused on: nostalgia as sport team, nostalgia as sports

environment, nostalgia as socialization, nostalgia as fan identity, nostalgia as group identity. The subscale of attitude focused on: cognitive attitude, affective attitude, behavioural attitude. The subscale of behavioural intentions focused on: attendance at sporting events, word of mouth, attendance at sport related places or events, merchandise consumption). It was a Likert scale with five response options (1-5) in each item. Cho (2014) indicated that this questionnaire is valid and reliable, with the following values of Cronbach's alpha in the three subscales: nostalgia ($\alpha = 0.93$), attitude ($\alpha = 0.91$) and behavioural intentions ($\alpha = 0.89$).

2.3. Statistical analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis of structural equations was used to analyse the hypotheses of the study: Hypothesis 1. Nostalgia has an effect on the behavioural intentions of football fans. Hypothesis 2. Nostalgia has an effect on the attitude of football fans. Hypothesis 3. Attitude has a mediating role in the relationship between nostalgia and behavioural intentions of football fans.

3. Results

First of all, the assumed model of research is represented in Figure 1:

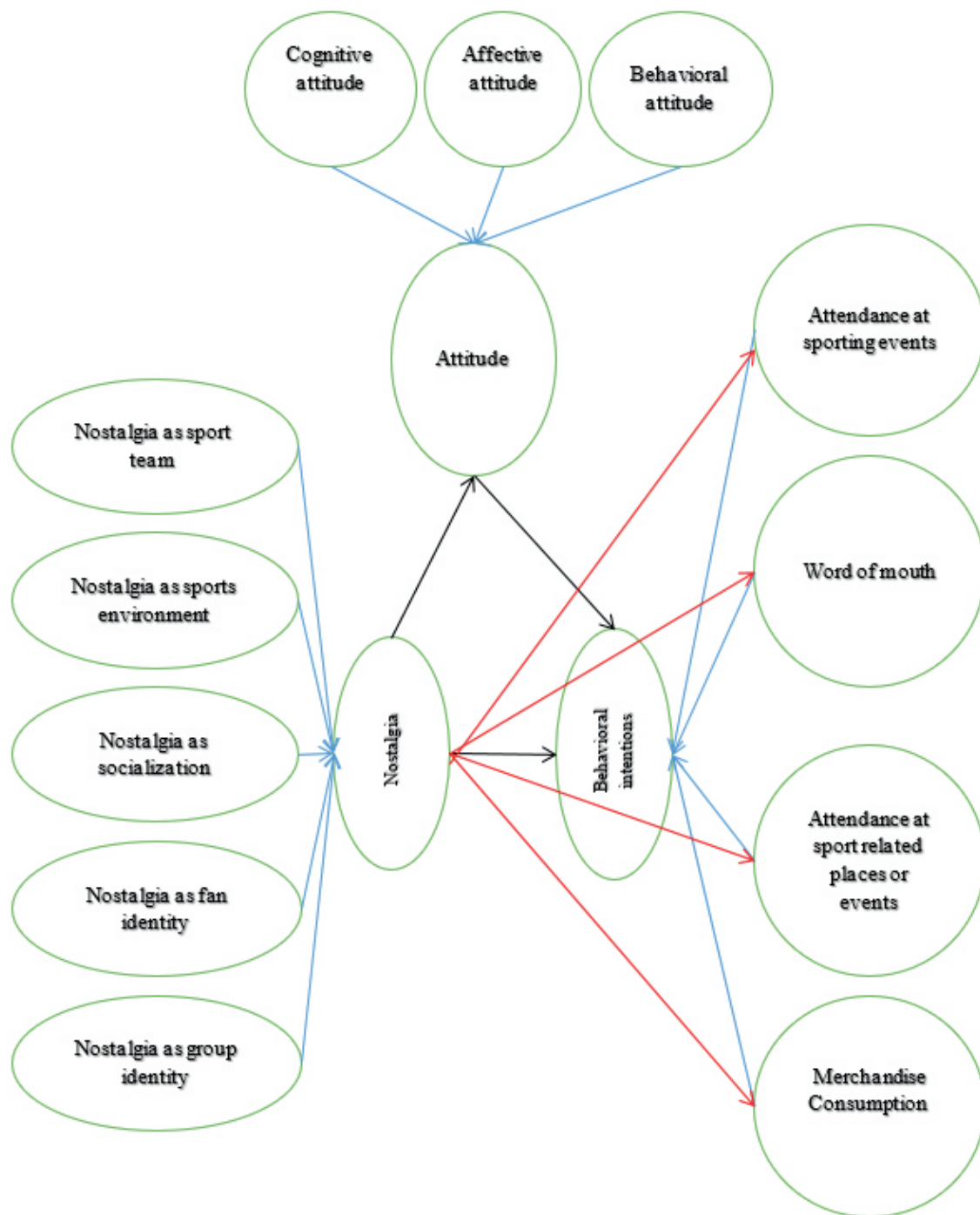


Figure 1. Assumed model of research

Goodness of fit indices are presented in Table 1 in order to interpret the model more accurately and determine the

validity of the model. According to the results obtained, the model was considered to be valid.

Table 1. Goodness of fit indices in the individual-level model.

| Model | X ² | df | df/X ² | NFI | IFI | CFI | RFI | GFI | RMSEA |
|------------------------|----------------|----|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Individual-level model | 88.9 | 48 | 0.825 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 0.040 |

A summary of the results of hypothesis testing in the individual-level model is presented in Table 2. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were confirmed ($p < 0.01$), while hypothesis 3 was not confirmed ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, it was confirmed that nostalgia has

an effect on the behavioral intentions and attitude of football fans. However, the mediating role of attitude in the relationship between nostalgia and behavioral intentions of football fans was not confirmed.

Table 2. Summary of results of hypothesis testing in the individual-level model.

| Hypotheses | B | B | e | t | P | R2 | Result |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|------|-----------|
| 1. Nostalgia has an effect on the behavioral intentions of football fans | 0.96 | 0.88 | 0.21 | 4.24 | $p < 0.01$ | 0.96 | Confirmed |
| 2. Nostalgia has an effect on the attitude of football fans | 0.094 | 0.91 | 0.049 | 3.169 | $p < 0.01$ | 0.88 | Confirmed |
| 3. Attitude has a mediating role in the relationship between nostalgia and behavioral intentions of football fans | 0.021 | 0.024 | 0.021 | 0.01 | $p > 0.05$ | 0.96 | Failed |

The final model of the research is represented in Figure 2:

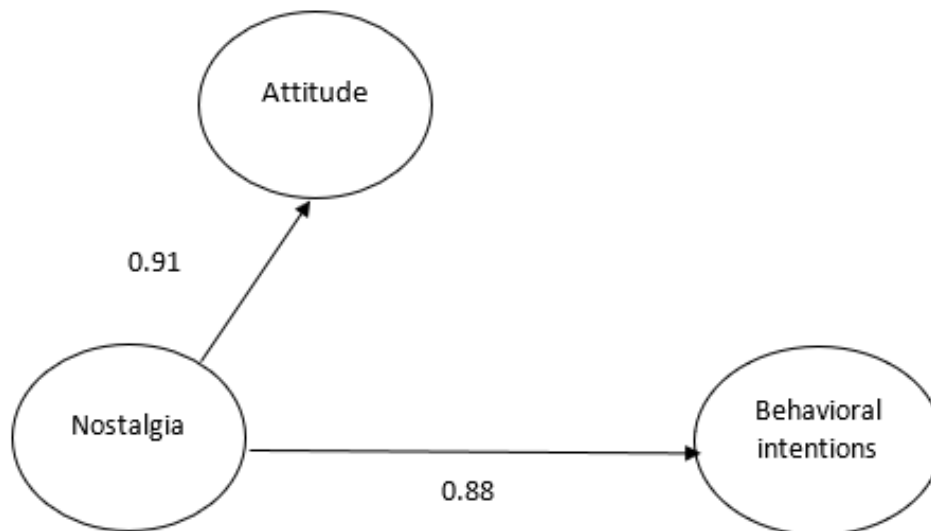


Figure 2. The final model of the research.

4. Discussion

According to our study nostalgia has a significant effect on behavioral intentions of the Persian Gulf Pro League fans. Our findings confirm the results of the earlier studies conducted by Cho (2014), Zare et al. (2014), Masumi (2015), Cho et al. (2019), Cho et al. (2014), Fathi et al. (2014) and Mahmoudi et al. (2016). Fans of the Persian Gulf Pro League feel nostalgia through past experiences such as being part of the sports environment, being part of the community of sports fans and having the same group identity, travelling to sports events and spending time with people of the same interests.

Furthermore, the results of previous studies suggest that nostalgia influence consumers' shopping behavior (Masumi, 2015) and has a significant impact on the desire to buy in football fans (Fathi et al., 2014). Nostalgia in advertising is based on the intensity of associative mental images and takes

advantage of the emotions of consumers that influence their attitudes. Mahmoudi et al. (2016) studied the dimensions of nostalgia and underlined the importance of teamwork and socialization. The tendency was to associate past good memories with the norms and rituals of the group.

Our results showed that nostalgia has a significant effect on behavioral intentions. According to Cho (2014), this could be explained because of the good memories that sport generates that are associated with a dynamic activity, attractive physical skills, spectacle and excitement. According to Ramshaw and Hinch (2006), positive good experiences related to sport in childhood can contribute to this nostalgia and provoke a continuous interest in sport during adulthood. For example, the attractive environment in sports stadiums is one of the factors that can contribute to sport nostalgia.

The sport environment has a unique atmosphere in which people are engaged in an exchange of cultures and customs, and it is a particular social experience in which individuals

are engaged, interacting with others and acquiring good memories (Alamdari, & Abdi, 2019). The group identity that fans acquire during sports events can also make a significant contribution to nostalgia in Iranian football.

Nostalgia has also a significant effect on the attitude of the Persian Gulf Pro League spectators. By enhancing the sense of nostalgia, the attitude of nostalgic sports tourists improves. This result is consistent with the findings of Cho (2014). As Cho suggested (2014), nostalgia is positively correlated with attitude and positive memories of past events or activities affect attitude positively. Cho stated that nostalgia creates thoughts of desire that directly and indirectly change negative attitudes by positive feelings and attitudes. The spectators' attitude includes cognitive attitudes, emotional attitudes and behavioral attitudes. According to our results, sports stadiums have become important urban places and cultural indicators in communities and social gathering places. Sports stadiums are potential locations for enjoyment, anger, and other emotions and experiences. In addition, sports stadiums as an urban location have the potential to create identity for members of groups, individuals, communities and cultures in the city. The sports facilities create nostalgia through the successful promotion of the past positive memories and the celebration of the historical events and moments through museums, memorials, tributes, sculptures, movies and photos. The organization of plans and festivities before or after the game can create good conditions for people to interact more with others and earn more resources to share and remember.

Attitude did not have a mediating role in the relationship

between nostalgia and behavioral intentions of football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League. This result is inconsistent with the findings of Cho et al. (2019). The results of previous studies indicate that there is a significant correlation between nostalgia and attitude and behavioral intentions (Cho, 2014). According to Krishna (2012), these results could be explained considering several aspects such as the emotional stimulus of people attending to sporting events, their attitudes, money and behavior. Usually, after attending to sporting events, individuals evaluate positive and negative experiences related to the sporting events. If spectators have positive experiences of past sporting events, they may tend to respond positively to future sporting events. Stern (1992) stressed that nostalgia can be interpreted as positive memories of the past that people associate with good experiences. Also, some previous researchers have found associations between attitudes and memories (Eagly et al., 1999).

Finally, the nostalgia of the spectators is related to several factors, such as the sport teams, the sport environment, the social groups and the experiences that the fans live together when they go to sport events. The attitudes of spectators include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attitudes. The behavioral intentions of football spectators include word-of-mouth advertising, presence in historical sites of sport and consumption of services by spectators. In conclusion, those football fans of Persian Gulf Pro League who have a positive attitude toward the football games may have better behavioral tendencies and, in the future, this can create nostalgic emotions in the spectators.

5. References

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