

Blinded by the sand of its burrowing? Examining fans' intentions to follow one-day cricket on TV with a moderating effect of social influence

Fans' intentions to follow one-day cricket

81

Received 25 August 2017
Revised 3 February 2018
17 May 2018
Accepted 25 June 2018

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effect of patriotism, nostalgia, drama and excitement of the game, and interest in star players to predict fans' intentions to follow one-day cricket in near future. Furthermore, social influence is positioned as a moderator to enrich the understanding of fans' motives to follow one-day cricket.

Design/methodology/approach – The data are collected by means of a cross-sectional survey conducted among 609 university students enrolled in Pakistani and Sri Lankan universities. The collected data are analysed by employing a structural equation modelling procedure to reach meaningful conclusions.

Findings – The variables of patriotism, nostalgic associations, excitement and drama of the game, and interest in star players are found to positively relate to the fans' intentions to follow one-day cricket in near future. However, the moderating effects of social influence only moderated with interest in star players, which has practical and theoretical implications.

Originality/value – The study is an original contribution to the field of sports marketing. The proposed relationships are based on social identity theory paradigm. Furthermore, the moderating effects of social influence and a multi-country data are unique to this study. Finally, in previous studies, football fans' motivation and test-match cricket fans' motivations are studied, hence one-day cricket as a context is also unique to this study.

Keywords Nostalgia, Social identity theory, Asia, Cricket, Patriotism, Drama and excitement

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Playing and following cricket is a source of national identity for nations (Wagg, 2005). With the significant socio-political changes affecting societies, a plethora of research is published to advocate cricket as a sport to ensure societal well-being – a mindset whereby cricket is regarded more than a sport – a symbol representing lifestyle (Bairner, 2015). At one side spectators follow cricket as a sport while on the other side, it can be regarded as a bridge to bring nations together. This has brought cricket to the global scene – a sport which is now considered as an activity to bring peace between arch rivals, i.e. India and Pakistan is just one example (Shahid, 2015). Considering the importance of cricket to societal and political well-being, efforts are being made to recognise cricket as a global sport (Johnstone *et al.*, 2014; Rumford and Wagg, 2010; Rowe and Gilmour, 2009; Rumford, 2007; Gupta, 2004). On the contrary, cricket is continuously playing a key role in globalisation of different Asian markets (Halder, 2014) – an unsung reality of the twenty-first century.

