

REASONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ATTENDANCE OR ABSENCE OF FANS (AS CONSUMERS) AT SOCCER STADIUMS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors which contribute to fans of a certain soccer club (as consumers and their respective behaviors) attending or not soccer matches in the state of São Paulo (Brazil). The survey follows a quantitative approach using questionnaires with the Motives

for Attendance (MAS) and Motives for Non-attendance (MNAS) scales. The questionnaires were administered in loco in all stadium sectors during matches of the top state soccer league of São Paulo in 2020, and all the respondents signed a consent form. A total of 99 people answered the questionnaire. For the team's loyal fans and those that follow it as a second team, supporting the team in the stadium and the thrills afforded by the matches are the main factors that drive attendance. For non-supporters, the reasons for attending matches are related with the socialization that occurs during the event. On another hand, the reasons that keep people away from stadiums relate to issues of comfort, infrastructure and ticket prices. In contrast to previous studies in the literature, this study shows the perspective of fans from a smaller soccer club.

Keywords: consumer; fan; soccer; stadium.

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INTRODUCTION

In Brazil, soccer is a cultural manifestation of wide appeal and connection with the population. Whether in daily conversations among family or friends, in the media in general or even in politics, soccer represents behaviors, interests and languages that are present in the country's daily life (Giglio & Proni, 2020). Mattar (2014) argues that soccer in Brazil contributes to the subjective development of individuals in society, thus relating to political, social, cultural and even consumer behavior aspects.

Watching a soccer match stirs a wide range of feelings and sensations: distress, joy, apprehension, disappointment, motivation, among others, sometimes all in the same game. For some people, defeat means dissatisfaction, while for others, simply watching a match results in satisfaction and other positive behaviors, regardless of the final score (Balzano & Silva, 2018).

Therefore, soccer fans must be viewed as consumers with respective and different behaviors, involving situations of satisfaction, loyalty and trust, all intimately linked to emotions and feelings that are generally not observed in other consumption situations and respective decision-making processes (Espartel, Müller Neto & Pompiani, 2009).

In recent decades, the culture industry has enabled multiple forms and options of entertainment. Such options, usually contextualized as events, have become one of the main forms of leisure in current society, influencing the economy and the daily life of the population (Giddens, 2005). Likewise, in this view of soccer as spectacle or entertainment, fans can be considered not only those who love it, but also those who consume it (Pitts & Stotlar, 2002; Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2008; Rocco Junior, 2012). Such findings became even clearer in Brazil, especially after the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games (Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018).

In this context, the organizations and clubs responsible for soccer should also be aligned with the expectations and wishes of fans as consumers. In sport, the ultimate desire is always for positive results. But in the sense of consumption, it is expected to deliver a more attractive and high-quality product/service, leisure, entertainment (Mattar, 2014; Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018). Thus emerge different possibilities for research on sport consumer behavior, such as the factors that contribute to fans attending or keeping away from soccer stadiums and arenas. With an overview of such factors, sports managers and organizations will be able to better understand the expectations of fans, identify positive and negative points of their services and possibly seek to improve their relationship with consumers.

The object of this study will be the supporters of a club in the state of São Paulo that has been playing in the top state soccer league, Série A1, since 2020. In a different approach, this article addresses sport consumers whose profile is closer to that of the Brazilian population in general, i.e., fans who do not live in the state capital, but who have an interest in soccer and a connection with the local club. It is noteworthy that the club is known nationally, owns a stadium that sits approximately 18,000 spectators and attracts an average attendance of 5,000 people per match (Portal GE, 2020). Like every "small size" Brazilian soccer club, it has a history of sporting achievements and production

of talent, and has lately aimed at both attaining greater prominence nationwide and maintaining its current ranking at state level.

Thus, the goal of this study is to understand the factors that contribute to the attendance or absence of fans at their club's soccer matches. This study aims to contribute to understanding the reasons that drive fans to follow their favorite team at regional level and their respective behavior as sports consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Behavior of Sport Consumers

Sport consumers are generally at odds with other types of consumers and their respective industries. They are usually individuals who have specific behavior and decision-making processes, with long-term relationships, faithful to certain concepts and brands, even when their expectations are not met due to negative (sport) results (Silva & Las Casas, 2018).

However, soccer clubs should be able to meet a number of supporter needs, as sports events are up against all other forms of entertainment and leisure (Chaves, Mazzei, & Cesar, 2016). In this sense, there are environmental and individual factors that determine the behavior of these consumers, and choices and preferences are established when individuals are still young. For Mullin et al. (2004), the behavior and preferences of individuals towards a given product or service of the sport industry are usually influenced by affective, behavioral and cognitive aspects, all of them related to the social, cultural and environmental characteristics surrounding those individuals.

Furthermore, sport consumers are a heterogeneous group, as they have different levels of involvement with the sport phenomenon (Rein et al., 2008). According to Silva and Las Casas (2018), sport consumers can be classified into two groups: spectators and fans. Spectators are those who view the sport event as a form of entertainment and leisure, appreciating cognitive aspects such as the quality of the environment and complementary services. In turn, fans are characterized by having an intense relationship with the sport organization, showing emotional enthusiasm during the event (Silva & Las Casas, 2018).

There is a wide range of scientific production aimed at understanding the reasons behind certain sport consumption behaviors (Carvalho, 2015). Several scales have been designed to measure factors that may explain the behavior of sport consumers (Chaves et al., 2016). Many of those studies were based on the "motivation" or "decision-making process" of sport consumers, involving both a peripheral and a psychological perspective (Carvalho, Boen, Sarmento, & Scheerder, 2015). The peripheral perspective focuses on factors not directly related to what can be understood as tangible and visual: stadium capacity, geographic location, historical facts, defeats and victories, etc.; the psychological perspective, in turn, examines factors related to individual perceptions, preferences and expectations and emotional memories.

Behavioral aspects of sport consumers have been identified and related to factors present in human society, such as globalization and new technologies. Kerr (2009) carried out a survey of the behavior of what he calls "satellite fans," people who support and follow clubs from other cities, states and even countries. The author identified some reasons for choosing this type of involvement: media coverage, style of play, presence of certain players (idols), team success, history of club success, playing in top leagues, stadium/arena, history of ethical behavior and match broadcasting quality (Kerr, 2009).

With regard to attending a sport event, soccer clubs can ensure the quality of tangible components that create an attractive atmosphere for consumers, despite having no control over the outcome of the match. Excellent sport facilities and provision of quality complementary services, for example, are aspects that encourage fans to attend soccer matches (Brochado, Dionísio, Leal, Bouchet, & Conceição, 2022). Furthermore, studies have found that the insecurity caused by recurrent violence among supporters in Brazil is one of the main factors responsible for the absence of fans at stadiums (Silveira, Cardoso & Quevedo-Silva, 2019). Therefore, ensuring a safe environment during the event is key to attracting not only traditional fans but also other kinds of spectators such as women, youth, older adults and families (Blumrodt, Bryson & Flanagan, 2012).

On the other hand, creating bonds between fans and club is also essential, insofar as the fans' passion for the club is one of the main drivers of their attendance at soccer stadiums (Fagundes et al., 2013). Thus, to ensure a lasting relationship with consumers, clubs must be able to offer positive experiences and a high emotional level during a sports event (Akoglu & Ozbek, 2021). Once that is assured, fans tend to be less sensitive to physical, psychological and economic costs when making the decision to watch their club play at the stadium (Karakaya, Yannopoulos & Kefalaki, 2016).

Norris, Wann and Zapalac (2015) confirmed that an individual may follow several teams and players, even simultaneously, and that within this new context they may even switch preferences if a club does not satisfactorily meet their expectations. Therefore, and contrary to what is imagined, the dynamics of the decision-making process in sport consumers may change over time and currently derives from the various opportunities and options that are available and offered.

In an increasingly competitive and globalized setting, sport organizations must urgently adapt to this reality and consider "new" ways to relate to fans or sport consumers (Norris et al., 2015). Understanding consumer behavior is the first step towards adopting distinctive and assertive marketing strategies by soccer clubs. But what would such consumption behavior be like outside state capitals or large cities, generally devoid of multipurpose stadiums and rich soccer clubs?

Fans in stadiums: a source of income for clubs

According to Fagundes et al. (2013), the fact that their club is playing is reason enough for loyal fans to attend a stadium. However, it is believed that there may be several other reasons for the presence of supporters at soccer stadiums (Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018). In a global trend, the safety, comfort and aesthetic conditions of sport facilities, added to the thrills offered by sport events, may increase the degree of involvement and satisfaction of fans (Madrigal, 2006). An example of such characteristics can be identified with the experience of watching a UEFA Champions League final in a movie theater, or taking part in a Barcelona training camp in the city of São Paulo (novelty) (Chaves, Reis, Rocco Júnior, & Mazzei, 2015).

According to the 2019 report of Pluri Consultoria (2020), obviously before the pandemic period, box office sales were the third main source of income of Brazilian soccer clubs, accounting for 16% of their total income, on average. Player sales came second, with 26%, and broadcasting and participation fees came first, with 36% of club income. That means that the presence of fans in stadiums and arenas contributes significantly to the clubs' financial health. It should be noted that this survey was carried out with elite soccer clubs in Brazil, most of them playing in the top national league. One notes the lack of information regarding the large number of Brazilian soccer clubs that do not compete in the main national league.

Internationally, different and diverse studies have focused on motivation and behavior in the decision-making process of consumption in sport events. The work by Carvalho (2015) stands out, aiming to identify the behavior of sport consumers in aspects that influence fans' attendance or absence at stadiums and arenas in Portugal and Belgium. It noteworthy that the author designed and validated scales capable of measuring the behavior and reasons that influence the presence of fans in soccer stadiums. In summary, the author identified that variables related to socio-psychological reasons, proximity to the venue, the "image" of the stadium and its services, and ticket prices influence the behavior of Portuguese fans, while in Belgium, socio-psychological reasons, the "image" of the stadium and its services, marketing actions, and the technical level of the game influence the behavior of local fans.

Particularly on the presence of fans in soccer stadiums in Brazil, there are different studies that aimed to understand the reasons that encourage or inhibit the presence of those consumers in those spaces. In their study that aimed to identify the reasons that lead fans to attend soccer stadiums in Belo Horizonte, Fagundes et al. (2013) identified a predominance of the affective aspect in the decision-making of those fans. The reasons that most influence attendance involve feelings and behaviors of attachment to their team, besides the importance of the match, socialization, accessibility to tickets and guarantee of security.

In the study by Chaves et al. (2016), security, infrastructure, low attractiveness of matches and fans' financial issues were identified as factors that inhibit the presence of fans in stadiums in São Paulo. Rocco Júnior and Mazzei (2018), in survey on the arenas and stadiums of the 2014 World Cup, highlight that in the post-event period, the main reasons for fans not attending stadiums were violence, insecurity in the environs of sport facilities/soccer gangs, in addition to insecurity inside the stadiums and arenas, expensive tickets, lack of parking space and public transport, and expensive food sold in the stadium.

Mazzei et al. (2020) report that the main factors associated with fans attending soccer matches (specifically in the city of São Paulo) are related to entertainment and the quality of the soccer involved, price, marketing actions and, lastly, the pleasure afforded by watching a soccer match at the stadium.

Silva and Campos Filho (2006) had already highlighted that the presence of fans in the stadium in matches with little appeal can bring losses to the club. Increasing ticket prices to increase box office receipts is not an effective action. The club must guarantee a sports event and services of quality for its consumer fans, which involves a welcoming environment, alternative entertainment options, comfort, safety, promotional campaigns, among other marketing strategies and actions aimed at attracting more consumers (Silva & Campos Filho, 2006).

Thus, it is worth reflecting on to what extent small soccer clubs are able to attract fans despite not playing in elite sport competitions throughout the year.

METHOD

To achieve the goal of this study, a quantitative survey was carried out, drawing on "statistical language to describe the causes of a phenomenon, the relationships between variables" (Fonseca, 2002, p. 20).

As a methodological strategy, the Motives for Attendance Scale (MAS) and Motives for Non-attendance Scale (MNAS) were used. These validated scales, including in Portuguese, have already been used in studies involving Belgian, Portuguese and Brazilian fans (Carvalho et al., 2015; Carvalho, 2015; Chaves et al, 2016; Mazzei et al., 2020b; Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018). The scales have guiding questions, respectively: "To what extent do the reasons below influence your decision to watch a soccer match at a stadium?" (for MAS); and "To what extent do the reasons below influence your decision NOT TO watch a soccer match at a stadium?" (for MNAS). MAS consists of 23 items, while MNAS has 21 items (Table 1). Each item was arranged on a 0-5 Likert scale, with 0 if the reason had little influence on the fan's decision and 5 if the reason had great influence on the fan's decision.

Table 1
Questionnaire topics

Reasons to attend stadiums	Reasons not to attend stadiums
Good atmosphere/mood in the stadium	Expensive tickets
To support my club	Beverages or food at the stadium
To go, be, do something with friends at the stadium	Lack of parking space/public transport
I like soccer for the actual game	Violence around the stadium / soccer gangs
Thrill/adrenaline rush caused by the match	Feeling of insecurity in the stadium
A special match (derby/decision/international/final)	Poor comfort conditions of the stadium
To see players in person (famous/good players)	Ugly stadium
Low ticket prices (cheaper than usual/discount)	I'm too busy
Fun/entertainment involved in the match	Lack of money
Free admission/got the ticket for free	Poor quality soccer
In-person experience/I prefer watching soccer at the stadium	Soccer nowadays is uninteresting

Good quality soccer/Attractive soccer	Bad weather conditions
Good results from my club	It's a waste of time to go to a soccer game
Special club actions (tributes/meeting players, etc.)	Nobody to go with me
Special marketing actions (free drinks or food/prizes/pre-match or half-time attractions/prizes and promotions during the match)	The match is showing on TV
To personally meet someone who plays or has played for the club/play or have played for the club	The type of people who go to soccer games
Good stadium conditions (comfortable seats in the stands/clean stands and bathrooms/no queues/good services/good sound/good visibility of the pitch)	Too much money involved / lack of fair play / corruption
Nice stadium / Nice stadium architecture	Poor performance by my club
Accessibility (sufficient parking space/public transport nearby/easy to reach the stadium)	Empty stadium
Security (inside and around the stadium/peaceful and safe/little disruption)	Match schedules
Sense of belonging (being part of something in the city/sharing the moment with people/interacting with other fans)	Lack of interest
Entertainment/leisure (to do something different/to relax/to get out of the house/to unwind/to break the routine)	
To go, be, have moments with the family at the stadium	

Source: Carvalho (2015).

Besides MAS and MNAS, profile questions were asked of respondents and other questions related to their behavior and links with the soccer club in question.

The methods employed involved administering printed questionnaires containing the profile questions and scales. The questionnaires were administered in hard copy during matches of the 2020 São Paulo Serie A1 Championship and in person. Thus, data collection occurred between January and early March 2020, before lockdowns were imposed due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. To take part in the survey, all participants signed an informed consent form. Convenience, non-probabilistic sampling was used in view of the partnership with the club.

Ninety-nine fans participated in the survey voluntarily and answered the entire questionnaire, 21 (21%) women and 78 (79%) men. The average age of respondents was 38.9 years \pm 13 (standard deviation), level of education concentrated in complete high school (28%), complete higher education with graduate degree (20%) and complete higher education (17%), and family income ranging from R\$ 1,996.00 (9%) to R\$ 19,960.00 or more (13%). Of these 99 respondents, 37 (37.4%) reported being club fans, 36 (36.4%) stated that the club is their second team and 26 (26.2%) were not supporters of the club.

Data treatment and analysis relied on descriptive statistics, which can be used to “collect, organize, describe and interpret” (Silvestre, 2007, p. 1). The data were tabulated on an Excel spreadsheet, with the answers grouped in blocks according to the connection of the consumer/fan with the club. Despite not often being appreciated, descriptive studies with descriptive statistics can be considered conclusive research, whose main goal is to describe something, usually characteristics

or functions present in a given sample universe, but which may also establish correlations to support reflections (Malhotra, 2011). At the same time, the data were organized as a validation process, in which the information was separated, verified and optimized in order to proceed and start the analysis. Exploratory analyses of the data were also performed and tables were created and visualized in order to develop efficient interpretations (Bussab & Morettin, 2011). It should be noted that responses with dubious patterns (such as all responses with the same Likert score) or with more than 30% of unanswered items were discarded.

RESULTS

After organizing the data and exploratory analyses, it was decided to present the results in three different groups: 1. "Supporters"; 2. Supporters for whom the club in question is a second option, that is, "Favorite Second Club"; and 3. "Non-supporters." Thus, below are shown the reasons why fans attend stadiums (Table 2), followed by the reasons that keep them away from stadiums (Table 3). In each table, the highest values of the three highest items in each of the groups were marked in bold.

Table 2
Reasons why supporters attend stadiums

	Supporters	Second favorite club	Non-supporters
Good atmosphere/mood in the stadium	3.92	3.46	3.80
To support my club	4.49	4.23	3.50
To go, be, do something with friends at the stadium	4.11	4.17	3.44
I like soccer for the actual game	4.11	4.03	3.96
Thrill/adrenaline rush caused by the match	4.49	4.11	3.72
A special match	4.39	4.11	3.72
To see players in person (famous/good players)	4.08	3.38	3.50
Low ticket prices	3.47	3.44	3.84
Fun/entertainment involved in the match	4.03	3.97	3.76
Free admission/got the ticket for free	3.51	3.56	3.44
In-person experience/I prefer watching soccer at the stadium	4.49	4.06	3.65
Good quality soccer/Attractive soccer	4.00	3.71	3.24
Good results from my club	4.22	3.88	2.92
Special club actions (tributes/meeting players, etc.)	3.97	3.47	3.08
Special marketing actions	3.63	3.18	3.16
To personally meet someone who plays or has played for the club/plays or have played for the club	3.68	3.26	3.20
Good stadium conditions	3.76	3.65	3.28
Nice stadium / Nice stadium architecture	3.69	3.40	2.92
Accessibility (sufficient parking space/public transport nearby/easy to reach the stadium)	3.68	3.42	3.04
Security (inside and outside the stadium/peaceful and safe / little commotion)	3.94	3.58	3.24
Sense of belonging (being part of something in the city/sharing the moment with people/interacting with other fans)	3.89	4.12	3.52
Entertainment/leisure (to do something	4.28	4.06	3.60

different/to relax/to get out of the house/to unwind/to break the routine)			
To go, be, have moments with the family at the stadium	4.35	4.15	3.69
Source: Research data.			

Table 3

Reasons why supporters do NOT attend stadium

	<i>Supporters</i>	<i>Second preference club</i>	<i>Non-supporters</i>
Expensive tickets	2.76	2.79	2.54
Beverages or food at the stadium	3.30	2.34	2.65
Lack of parking space / public transport	2.82	2.64	2.16
Violence around the stadium / soccer gangs	2.43	2.21	2.00
Feeling of insecurity in the stadium	2.31	2.09	1.96
Poor comfort conditions of the stadium	3.34	2.64	3.00
Ugly stadium	2.69	2.21	2.42
I'm too busy	2.61	2.56	2.62
Lack of money	2.29	2.13	2.69
Poor quality soccer	2.39	2.24	2.04
Soccer nowadays is uninteresting	2.23	2.09	1.96
Bad weather conditions	1.86	1.97	2.23
It's a waste of time to go to a soccer game	1.27	1.29	1.73
Nobody to go with me	1.75	1.41	1.76
The match is showing on TV	1.86	1.97	2.08
The type of people that go to soccer games	1.81	2.03	1.88
Too money involved / lack of fair play / corruption	2.36	2.03	2.12
Poor performance by my club	2.53	1.79	2.36
Empty stadium	2.19	2.06	2.19
Match schedules	2.69	1.94	2.50
Lack of interest	1.44	1.72	2.08

Source: Research data.

DISCUSSION

The survey showed that for loyal “Supporters” and those for whom the club is a “Second” choice, the fact of being able to closely support the club is one of the main factors that make them go to the stadium. Such findings are in line with Fagundes et al. (2013), who highlight the fact that being a loyal fan contributes to supporters attending the stadium, and also with Guimarães (2021), who reports that the main factors for going to the stadium are loyalty and love for and identification with the club.

Another result shown by the survey is the thrill/adrenaline caused by matches. According to the study by Rodrigues, Sousa and Fagundes (2018), the positive emotions stirred by soccer matches are linked to the satisfaction of the fan-consumer, and such satisfaction has a strong relationship with fans attending the stadium. As for the experience of watching a match in person, it is in line with what was found in the survey by Mazzei, Costa et al. (2020), who stress that the pleasure of watching a game in person is one of the factors that contribute to fans going to the soccer stadium. Prominent among

the factors that have little influence on supporters attending the stadium are ticket prices and the marketing actions developed by the club, which shows that feelings and emotions influence fans more than other aspects, whether economic or promotional, as already identified in other studies (Theobald et al., 2020).

As for fans that support the club as a second option, the factors that influence stadium attendance are more strongly linked to the possibility of socialization in the stadium, i.e., social interaction with friends, other fans and/or family members, corroborating a wide range of sports marketing literature on this subject (Funk, Mahony & Havitz, 2003; Fagundes et al., 2013; Rodrigues, Sousa & Fagundes, 2018). In turn, marketing actions, contact with famous athletes and experience with idols are among the factors that least influence the attendance of these fans. Such results can be justified by the size of the club and the tournaments in which it competes. As the club has no renowned players, the abovementioned factors have little influence on the decision of second-option fans to attend the stadium.

Concerning people who do not support the club, the reasons for going to matches relate more to the entertainment factor (even if local), a trend already pointed out by Rocco Júnior and Mazzei (2018) and Mazzei et al. (2020). The reason that least influences them is “good performance by my team,” since they do not support the club and consequently the result is indifferent to them. On the other hand, it was interesting to identify that structural issues such as easy access to the stadium and whether the stadium is nice did not have a great influence on these fans either, which goes against their interests and the search for entertainment.

As for the factors that influence non-attendance at stadiums, the three types of supporters reported comfort conditions as one of the main reasons, which is in line with the studies by Flecha and Pontello (2015) and Rocco Júnior and Mazzei (2018), which emphasize that fans desire comfort and safety. For both supporters and non-supporters, “beverages and food at the stadium” is one of the limiting factors for going to the stadium. It is understood that greater variety and quality may make supporters happier, more satisfied and more likely to decide positively on the consumption of a given service. According to Fagundes et al. (2013), a high quality of services provided to fans by the club and the stadium may influence their decision to return.

Also appearing as one of main reasons for not going to the stadium was “Lack of parking space / public transport.” Slow public transport or even lack of parking space also causes fans to feel unsafe, in addition to poor access to the stadium itself (Fagundes et al., 2013; Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018).

Thus, these factors should be taken into account by the management of the club in question and by clubs with similar characteristics. Some of the identified factors can be solved in the short term and aim at increasing attendance at matches. For greater effectiveness, communication with each kind of supporter must be taken into account (Cegalini & Rocco Júnior, 2019).

It is interesting to note that ticket prices are a discouraging factor for second-choice supporters and non-supporters, as pointed out in other studies (Chaves et al, 2016; Rocco Júnior & Mazzei, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this article was to understand the factors that contribute to the attendance or absence of soccer fans at the stadium of a club in the state of São Paulo that has been playing in the top state league since 2020.

The main factors that contribute to loyal fans going to the stadium are the desire to support the club regardless of results and wanting to watch their team play in person. Other types of supporters take into account other factors when attending the stadium, such as socializing with family, friends and other supporters. Soccer entertainment in itself. As for the reasons that contribute to fans not going to the stadium, it was identified that lack of transportation and accessibility (getting to the stadium), and the structure and quality of the services offered can influence this decision. It was also identified that ticket prices are one of the factors that discourage people from attending matches.

As practical contributions, it is understood that this study can be useful for soccer club managers, especially those who run regional clubs and generally lack more substantial human and

financial resources. Based on empirical research, these managers have evidence that cognitive aspects, such as the stadium's environment and complementary services, are attributes that inhibit the presence of supporters in the stadium. This suggests that these organizations should invest in improvements in the physical conditions of the facilities and in the quality of the services offered in the stadiums and on match days. In addition, it is also recommended to review the ticket price policy since this was also a factor that contributed to the absence of fans at sports events.

On the other hand, the factors that contribute to the attendance of fans at the stadium are linked to affective and social aspects. In this case, it is suggested that the management of these organizations offer supporters positive experiences during the matches in order to develop a lasting relationship between fans and the club. It is also recommended that clubs ensure a safe environment that enables socialization among fans during the match and the possibility of attracting other types of spectators, such as women, older adults, and children.

As theoretical implications, this study offers a view of the reasons that contribute to soccer supporters attending or not stadiums on match days, presenting the reality of a less prominent club that does not compete in the main national tournaments. This provides a different perspective, making it possible to compare the contexts of elite stadiums with those of stadiums in smaller cities. However, this characteristic also limits this study to some extent, as it is practically a case study with a specific context, thus reducing the possibility of generalizing the results.

Future studies may delve deeper into the behavior of sport consumers and the relationship of consumption at soccer matches, such as the presence or absence of supporters at stadiums and arenas on match days, and reach findings from analyses of other contexts and kinds of supporters or even a larger sample of fans, as well as compare the results of this study with other contexts, but related to consumers from other places, including the use of inferential statistics.

Research ethic statement

The authors declare that this study was not submitted for evaluation in another journal simultaneously with the CBR or previously published in another journal.

Author contribution statement

The authors contributed equally to the paper.

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