

Segmentation of Ticket Holders in Minor League North American Professional

Norm O'Reilly University of Maine **David Finch** Mount Royal University **Gashaw Abeza** Towson University **Nadege Lavallet** University of Maine

John Nadeau
Nipissing University

David Legg
Mount Royal University

Bill Foster
University of Alberta

ABSTRACT

Minor professional sport in North America includes the many leagues which are not part of the 'Big Five'. For these leagues, ticket sales, especially season ticket sales, are one of the major sources of club revenue. Segmenting customers into homogenous groups is well established as an effective means to render efficient marketing. In addition, market segmentation has been well researched in a variety of contexts; however, further research in the area of minor professional sport in North America will advance our knowledge and offer practical value to practitioners. Therefore, this research, in collaboration with a minor league professional sport club, provides a framework for season ticket holder segmentation application by minor professional sport leagues and clubs and practical recommendations to reach niche markets.

METHODOLOGY



LITERATURE REVIEW
TO IDENTIFY 8 SCALES



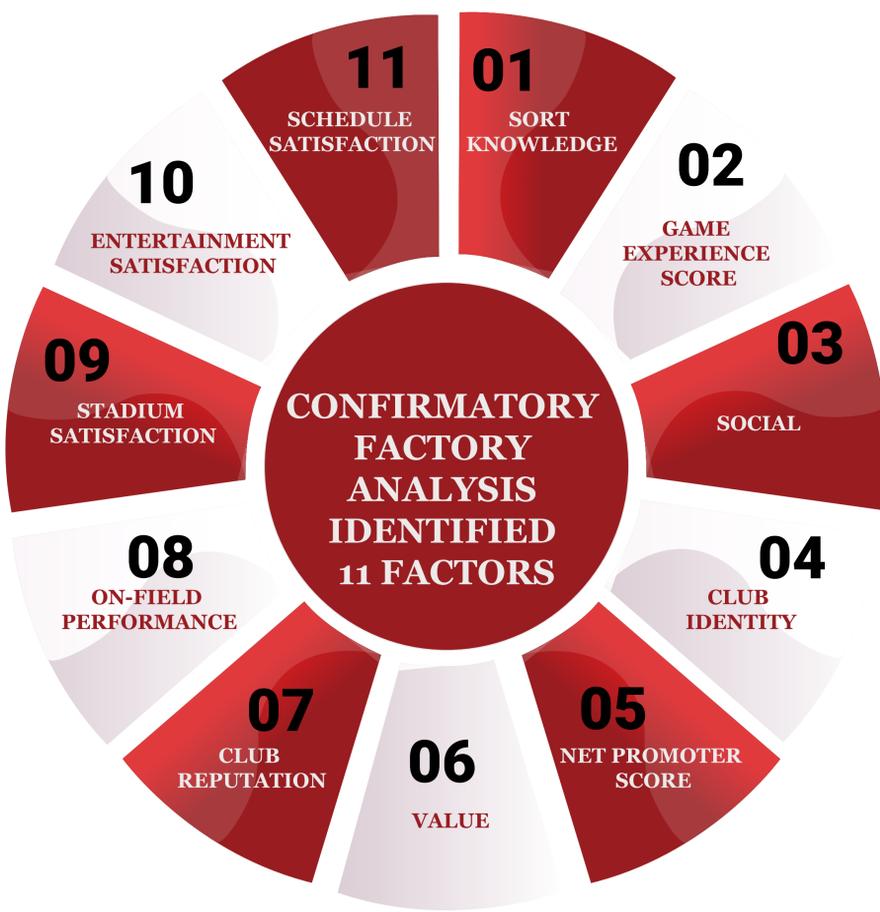
FOCUS GROUPS



REFINE
QUESTIONS



ONLINE SURVEY
COMPLETED BY
1,282 FANS



SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES SIGNIFICANT IN REGRESSION MODELING



ENGAGEMENT VARIABLES



RESULTS: 9 SEASON TICKET HOLDER SEGMENTS



GROUP	DESCRIPTION	DEMOGRAPHICS	PERCENT
Local Market Club Promoters	Season ticket holders are strong advocates for the club. Demonstrate highest social media use out of any group	Average age of 44 73% Male	49%
Original Fans	Long-time fans of the sport (not the club), oldest segment	Average age of 62 92% Male	42%
Value Seekers	Season ticket holders who have an affinity to the club and are interested in discounts and good prices.	Avg age of 53 75% Male	3%
Loyal, Long-term Advocates	Passionate representatives of the club and sport on and off the field. Highly influenced by the club's success.	Avg age of 55 63% Male	1%
Devoted Boomers	Older segment of fans who hold season tickets and attend every game. Watch every away game on television.	76% Male	1%
Early Stage Season Ticket Holders	Recent purchasers of season tickets who attend most games Similar to Devoted Boomers in viewership habits. However, this group is more likely to be female and are newer season ticket holders (avg of 2 seasons).	61% Male (39% Female) Avg age - 47	1%
Professional Sports Super Fans	Season ticket holders who are ticket holders for many local sport clubs	82% Male	1%
Connected Fans	Season ticket holders who share tickets and have dependents. Higher levels of social media use.	40% Female	1%
Place To Be Seekers	Holdings with low affinity to club but high interest in schedule and stadium		1%

CONCLUSION

Nine segments were identified as key sources of season ticket holders for minor professional sport clubs, with two segments representing 90% of the studied population. The remaining seven clusters, although small, should be viewed, practically, as sources of season ticket holders for the club. Understanding the behaviors and motivations of these segments allow sales and marketing teams to better understand who they are targeting and be more effective in their communications. For example, a minor league baseball club could plot its ticket holder database against the segments, prioritize the most important, and build specific marketing plans for each priority segment. This club should pick certain segments to focus on if it has particular marketing objectives or season ticket holder sales needs.