

Mangeloja, E., & Szerovay, M. (2022). Football match attendance in Finland. In Book of Abstracts : 1st Nordic Football Conference : The Game Through Many Lenses, 11-12 May 2022, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (pp. 43). Jyväskylän yliopisto. <https://www.jyu.fi/en/congress/nordic-football-conference/book-of-abstracts/abstraktikirja-v05.pdf>

Football match attendance in Finland

Esa Mangeloja, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

Football fans prefer to see their favourite team win in close matches. Compared to other forms of entertainment, the outcome of sport game is unknown beforehand. Opera audience knows the plot in advance, but in football the winner is revealed only after 90 minutes. The scientific literature of modern sport economics demand theory implies that successful leagues must be based on relatively even competition. This degree of parity within a league is labelled as competitive balance. Sport leagues usually claim that outcome uncertainty is necessary to maintain interest among fans. In this paper, uncertainty of outcome hypothesis is tested applying football data from the highest tier in Finnish men's football, currently known as Veikkausliiga. We apply modern statistical and econometric time-series methods for data to reveal inference between the chosen variables. The time period covers 1947–2020. Empirical results show that Finnish football attendance is positively related to competitive balance between the rivalling teams. Increased alcohol consumption in the society is not related to football attendance, but we found that the number of games played during the season is positively related to ticket sales. Number of teams in the league seems to be negatively related to attendance. In the future, the football leagues need more relevant information on the fan behaviour and scientific analysis for optimizing the box office revenue. Regarding future research avenues, the time of the year, the condition of the stadium and the ticket pricing could be investigated to see whether there is a correlation with on-site attendance.

Keywords: sport economics, competitive balance, uncertainty of outcome hypothesis, demand of sport, alcohol consumption