Exposé
Master Thesis

The impact of gaming on business related outcomes
The case study of football fantasy

EMBS13

Aitor MIRANTES GUTIERREZ

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Abstract

Title: The impact of gaming on business related outcomes: The case study of football fantasy.

Background: Fantasy football is a popular game where users manage their own team. In this context, it seems essential to explore how game elements could influence to fantasy football users' perception towards football players and the purchase intentions of brand-related players.

Purpose: The aim of this study is to explore the impact of games design on purchase intention of related football player's brands, within the fantasy football context.

Methodology: A quantitative research will be conducted through a self-administered online questionnaire. This study will target the whole Spanish population. Potential sample of 350 participants.

Keywords: Spain, games, football fantasy, brand attitude, purchase intention.

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1. Introduction

Over the last forty years games have been progressively gaining in popularity until becoming, nowadays, a popular entertainment activity (Elsayeh, 2020). In the sports industry games are gaining increasingly presence since they allow fans to play a role in the sport environment through virtual platforms that simulate the real world (McCarthy, 2012; Oates, 2009).

Football manager simulated games such as fantasy football allow game users to manage their own football team. Normally, they manage around 15 players on their own team (Dwyer, 2011). Each week during the regular season, participants customize their team in order to compete against other fantasy football teams. As a result, participants are attracted to the performance of their team's players and they are also aware of the performance of players on their opponent's team (Drayer et al., 2010; Dwyer & Drayer, 2010), because the key to success in this game is identifying those football players that potentially perform well at a low price. According to Dixon (2012) people may develop an emotional bond with an athlete by playing these games making possible an interaction point between a consumer and an athlete (Kim et al., 2008).

Fantasy football is focus on football players, as a result many fantasy football user pay only attention on the performance of players during a match regardless of the outcome of the match. Football fantasy has the ability to interact with fans from a coach's point of view. This game modality approach, where players are the main focus, could be used in the entrepreneurial world to use football players as a way to boost the visibility of their products through this platform. For this reason, this study aims to address how game tools influence football fantasy participants' perceptions towards football players and player-related brand's purchase intention.

Previous studies have already addressed fantasy participation motives (Meeds, 2007; Dwyer & Kim, 2011; Haridakis, 2008), fantasy sport impact in sport consumption on television, internet, and cell phones (Dwyer, 2010; Dwyer, 2011) and fantasy sport impact on sport events attendance (Nesbit & King, 2010). However, there is still a gap related to the understanding of football fantasy game elements' effect on business-

related outcomes regarding to the brand attitude towards players and purchase intention towards brand-related players.

This study will be carried out in Spain since it is well known of the popularity of football in this country, besides, around 5% of the population played football fantasy in 2019 (Dorda, 2019). Therefore, the Spanish market can be a profitable for sport business matters.

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of games design on purchase intention of related football player's brands, within the fantasy football context.

2. Theoretical Framing and Hypotheses

2.1. Purchase intention

Purchase intention is the propensity of people to purchase certain products or services (Yoo & Donthu, 2000). According to Diallo (2012) there are four elements to measure purchase intention: plan to buy, have money to buy, time, willingness and chance. Purchase intention could be explained through the theory of Planned Behaviour proposed by Ajzen (1991) which explains that purchase intention is influenced by three factors; determined attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control and those factors predict intention and, eventually, behaviour.

In the context of football players, fans are more likely to identify themselves with those athletes that are successful (Kaynak et al., 2007). Moreover, when there is a feeling of an attachment between an individual and an athlete often the purchase intention of player-related brand increase (Carlson and Donavan, 2013; Hasaan et al., 2018; Thomson, 2006).

Therefore, purchase intention in this study is defined as the likehood of users of football fantasy to purchase products related to a football player.

2.2. Brand attitude

In the literature there many theories that explain the attitude formation phenomenal. The main ones are the Learning theory proposed by Hovland et al., (1953) which states that people's attitudes are a result of associations over time, and Functional theory proposed by Katz (1960) states that attitudes exist as a response to specific people's needs.

Athlete brand is defined "as a brand consisting of people's opinions about a particular athlete" A. Hasaan et al., (2018) . According to Carlson and Donavan (2013) athletes are seen as a human brands. This fact can be explained through the Social identity theory proposed by Oakes and Turner (1986) which explains that people would be willing to associate themselves with identities that will boost their own identity. In line with this theory, people can be attracted by a particular brand personalities because of the psychological perks behind this link (Carlson & Donavan, 2013). Hence, this study

will consider players as a brand. In football fantasy context, game's users may develop a positive attitude toward a player or number of players.

Previous studies reveal that attitudes towards the brand have an impact on purchase intention (Mitchell and Olson, 1981; Lutz et al., 1983; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1986). Therefore, a change on attitude towards the brand may be a driver of a behavioral purchase change (Morris et al., 2002). Vanwesenbeeck et al., (2017) proved that in the gaming context favorable attitudes lead to behavioral intentions.

Regarding the effect that positive attitude toward a player could bring, both Arai et al. (2013) and Dees et al., (2008) claim that those people who develop a positive attitude towards an athlete will develop a favorable purchase intention regarding athlete-related brands.

Based on the evidence, this study hypothesizes that:
H1. Brand attitude has a positive impact on football players-related brand purchase intention.

2.3. Flow

The origin of The Flow theory is found in Csikezentmihalyi's attempt to explain why people enjoyed activities that apparently offered no reward (Catalán et al., 2019, p. 511). These types of activities are characterized by the fact that they are able to get people fully involved because they manage to create in the person a state of pleasure and enjoyment called "Flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Playing is the experience with an individual can most feel the flow, therefore, this fact turns games into ideal activities to achieve the Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Affect transfer theory is another theory to take into account when explaining the importance of Flow in this study. This theory explains that the feelings provoked by a certain stimulus directly influence the attitude towards another stimulus (Waiguny et al., 2012). In the context of Football manager simulated games, the enjoyment experienced by playing this game may be reflected to the brand athlete.

Football manager simulated games can be labelled as advergames, in particular, LaLiga Fantasy is a football manager simulated game focus on the Spanish football league. According to previous studies, those players who managed to feel a state of flow through advergames develop positive attitudes towards the brand (Ham et al., 2016; Hernández, 2011) and they would be more willing to share the experience with people (Gurau, 2008).

In line with previous studies, which have verified the fact that brand attitude is driven by the flow experienced while playing games (Gurau, 2008; Ham et al., 2016; Steffen et al., 2013; Waiguny et al., 2012), the second hypothesis of this study will be:
H2. Flow has a positive influence on brand athlete attitude.

2.4. Social influence

According to the theory of social influence (Kelman, 1958) the attitudes, beliefs and subsequent actions or behavior of an individual are influenced by others through three different steps: compliance, internalization and identification. In the context of games, this theory is the most suitable to explain a change in players' attitudes since people usually interpret messages in alignment with the ideas of important groups and close people (Yang et al., 2017). In the field of Marketing, several sociocultural factors drive the process of customer's socialization such as relatives, peers, educational institutions, shopping habits and communication channels (Gunter & Furnham, 1998). Based on Kamaruddin and Mokhlis (2003) research, social influence is especially important to explain brand attitudes and purchase intention of youngsters.

The fact that in the game environment people interact with each other (by competing or cooperating) may makes people be affected by social influence (Yang et al., 2017). Therefore, in the gaming context perceived social influence is a facilitator to influence people brand's attitude. Hence, this study hypothesizes that:

H3. Perceived social influence will have a positive effect on customers' brand athlete attitude.

2.5. Perceived ease of use

Technology Acceptance Model (Davis et al., 1989) is a reliable model to explain technology acceptance. Within this model, perceived ease of use in one of the main factors on which TAM relies to explain the acceptance of new technologies. According to (Charness & Boot, 2016, p. 404) perceived ease of use would be specially appreciate by older adults since those who perceive digital games as tough to play and understand, they would be less likely to adopt technology. Therefore, perceived ease of use is that the adoption of a new technology would be perceived as effortless (Davis et al., 1989).

Perceived ease of use influences people's attitude (Yang et al., 2017) and it is one of the crucial factors that helps to predict user acceptance (Huang et al., 2007). In accordance to previous studies the most important characteristic of perceived ease of use is "simplicity" in terms of comprehension, interactivity, accessibility or operation (Ndubisi & Jantan, 2003; Rogers, 1995).

In the fantasy football context, if the feature simplicity is perceived while people use the platform, a positive impression would be develop towards this platform. Hence, if people have a good impression it has been shown that they will develop a more positive brand attitude towards the advertised product (Owolabi & Oluwabi, 2009). Moreover, ease of use influence satisfaction, and satisfaction impact on brand attitude. Therefore this study hyphotezyses that:

H4. Perceived ease of use will have a positive effect on user's brand athlete attitude.

2.6. Model

The model proposed for this study is the result of merging two different framework models previously proposed by Y. Yang et al., (2017) and Catalán et al., (2019). The purpose in this study is testing the validity of a model with game elements and business related outcomes elements.

Figure 1 : Model
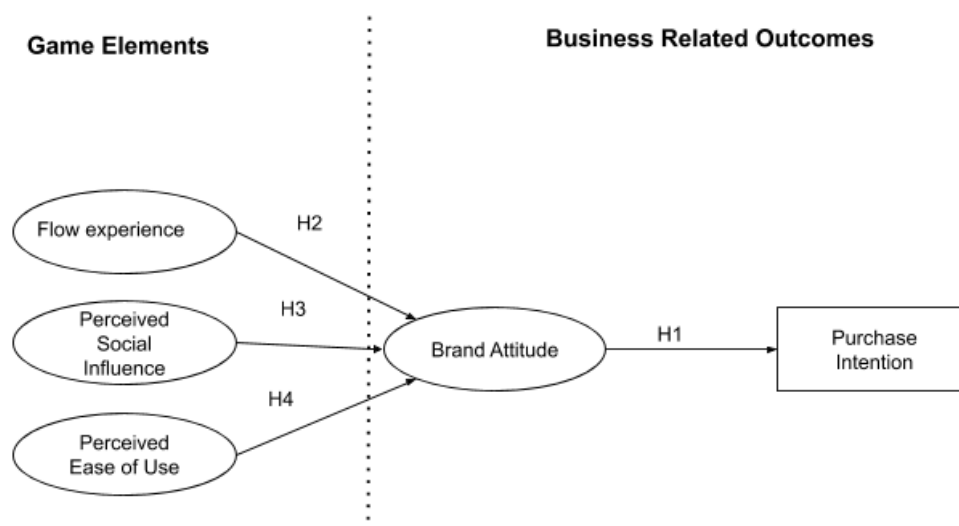
This study will test the following hypotheses:

Table 1 : Summary of hypotheses

H1	Brand athlete attitude has a positive impact on football players-related brand purchase intention.
H2	Flow has a positive influence on user's brand athlete attitude.
H3	Perceived social influence will have a positive effect on user's brand athlete attitude
H4	Perceived ease of use will have a positive effect on user's brand athlete attitude.

3. Literature review table

Table 2 : Literature review

TITLE	SOURCE	CONTRIBUTION
"Exploring fantasy baseball consumer behavior: Examining the relationship between identification, fantasy participation, and consumption"	Dwyer and Shapiro, 2014	Better understanding of the role that identification plays in the consumptive habits of the fantasy sport participants.
"The effects of fantasy football participation in NFL consumption: A qualitative analysis"	Drayer et al., 2010	Identification of most used media sources that fantasy football utilized and creation of a framework for quantitative studies.
"Divided Loyalty? An Analysis of Fantasy Football Involvement and Fan loyalty to individual National Football League (NFL) teams"	Dwyer, 2011	Findings regarding relationships between fantasy football involvement and traditional NFL fan loyalty
"Measuring Fantasy Team and Favorite Team Interactivity Trough Implicit Association"	Dwyer et al., 2018	Investigation of the relationship between football fantasy and traditional fandom.
"A conceptual framework to understand the creation of athlete brand and its implications"	A. Hasaan et al., 2018	Better understanding of the component that influence in the establishment of athletes as a brand

"Human Brands in sport: Athlete Brand Personality and Identification"	Carlson and Donavan, 2013	Better understanding of how perceptions of human brands affect consumer's level of cognitive indentification by the integration of identity theory and brand personality
"Examining the impact of gamification on intention of engagement and brand attide in the marketing context"	Y. Yang et al., 2017	Better understanding of the game tools' impact on customers' perception towards the brand
"Analysing mobile advergaming affectiveness: the role of flow, game repetition and brand familiary"	Catalán et al., 2019	Theoretical framework that enable to link game tools, brand attitude and purchase intention
"Advertising in Digital Games: A Bibliometric Review"	Yoon, 2019	Better understanding of the evolution of gaming for promoting brands over years.
"Enhancing User Engagement through Gamification"	A. Suh et al., 2016	Insights about how games design encourage user engagement

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

Methodology for this study will be based on a quantitative study. This method will let to generalize the research findings in a large population because in quantitative studies statistical generalizations are possible. Furthermore, data collection is reliable since data is collected following a specific procedures and results can be comparable to other studies (Ugalde and Balbastre, 2013).

4.2. Research context and sample description

According to Raosoft, a sample size calculation software, for a 5% margin-error the optimal sample would be around 350 responses in order to target the whole Spanish population. Taking into consideration that the response rate is 10-20 %, at least 1500 people should be reached.

The strategy to reach such number of people will be the use of social media. The survey will be posted in different fantasy football fans forums such as comuniazo.es and on Facebook groups created by football fantasy fans. Apart from this, followers of fantasy football accounts on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter will be randomly targeted. In addition, I will use my own network to spread the survey through my Social Media accounts.

4.3. Data collection procedures

For the purpose of the research, a self-admistered questionnaries will be designed through Sphinx software. Using an online survey allows to take advantage of cost-saving and time effectiveness factors. Moreover, online surveys permit to eliminate the interviewer effect and variability (Bryman et al., 2011). In addition to these advantages, it is easy to spread it over different geographic areas if needed.

The questionnaire will be designed according to the different variables of the model since there are a specific number of Items per each variable. The questionnaire will be translated in Spanish and English.

4.4. Data analysis procedures

Data will be analyzed through SmartPLS to interpret the results and obtain conclusions of the study.

5. Expected Contributions

This study attempts to contribute to sport marketing literature by giving some insights about the impact of football manager simulated games on the attitude towards specific athletes. So far, the literature has addressed how games impact on brand attitude and purchase intention of big commercial brands such as Oreo (Catalán et al., 2019). Therefore, literature have already contribute to understand how making games to

promote specific brands impact on brand perception and purchase intention. However, this study wants to go further and attempts to enrich the sport Marketing literature by addressing how impact on the brand image of athletes games. This is study is going to be pioneer because of the fact that is going to be focus on personalities instead of traditional brands in how football fantasy user are attracted to certain players and its implications.

From the point of view of player, this study could be useful to understand better how to market themselves among the football fantasy users and bring financial benefit for them.

From a business point of view, this study could help companies to sponsor their brands through football players more effectively since many brands make their sponsorships through players who are known worldwide and have a high brand awareness, regardless the performance. For example, if a company wants to target football fantasy users, perhaps the most effective and cheapest way to do it is to try to predict which player will perform best during the regular season, because those players who perform well during the regular season will be the most appreciated by the fantasy football community users.

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7. Workplan

Table 3 : Plan of work

Dates	Objectives	Stage of completion
1/9 - 30/9	Exposé	Completed
1/10 - 13/10	Questionnaire design	To follow
14/10 - 27/10	Launching questionnaire	To follow
28/10 - 10/11	Experiment	To follow
11/11 - 24/11	Data analysis	To follow
25/11 – 15/01	Thesis writing	To follow

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