

Sportscape Variables and Spectator Satisfaction Towards Willingness to Return to Designated Professional Women's Soccer Events

Abstract

Peace Nhlawutelo MABASA 
Department Marketing Retail Business
and Sports, Vaal University of
Technology, Email, peace@vut.ac.za

Lehlohonolo Amos MASITENYANE 
Department of Marketing, School of
Consumer Behaviour and Information
Systems, University of Johannesburg,
Email, lmasitenyane@uj.ac.za
Corresponding author

Women's sports research has experienced growing interest from sports marketers to better understand how and why individuals visit stadiums to support their teams. The stadium's physical environment which is regarded as the "sportscape", purported to have a significant influence on spectator revisit behaviour has also been greatly researched in developed markets. This study examines the spectator's perceptions of distinctive variables of designated South African professional women's soccer stadium sportscape and their satisfaction leading to willingness to return for future matches, based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework from an emerging markets' perspective. A quantitative research approach was employed using an online self-administered structured questionnaire, applying a non-probability sampling technique with study participants from Gauteng province. Regression analysis revealed significant predictive associations between stadium sportscape attributes (seat comfort, stadium accessibility, facility aesthetics) and spectator satisfaction towards their willingness to return to the stadiums. Results also suggest that the respondent's propensity to return is heightened when their expectations are satisfactorily met. The study contributes useful insights to sports marketing literature and educates sports and stadium facility managers about the importance of spectator perceptions on sportscape attributes that tend to influence their facility revisitation behaviour.

Keywords: Satisfaction, Soccer spectators, Sportscape, Willingness to return

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Introduction

Women's sports research has experienced growing interest from sports marketers to better understand how and why individuals visit stadiums to support their teams (Biscaia, 2016). Professional women's soccer sport has seen remarkable growth in the past decade and developed to occupy an essential space in the leisure, pleasure and sports service milieu (Thomson et al., 2022). This growth in recognition and popularity can be attributed to several factors, one of them being the stadium sportscape attributes (Bakirtzoglou & Ioannou, 2017). For consistency purposes, this inquiry utilises the phrase "sportscape" adapted from Bitner's (1992) and Wakefield et al.'s (1996) work. Sportscape can be explained as the facility's physical environment that has a material influence on the degree to which those who attend a sporting event can return to the facility when they conceive that their expectations are satisfactorily met (Shin & Lyu, 2018). Fittingly, the sportscape can be regarded as one significant factor that impacts spectator gratification and attendance echelons (Bitner, 1992; Wakefield et al., 1996). In general, inferior perceptions about sportscape elements tends to play an influential role on spectator satisfaction levels, which may impact their resultant behavioural courses such as attendance patterns (Douvis, 2014). While on the other hand, superior spectator perceptions about the stadium sportscape elements, could heighten their satisfaction and future revisit or patronage behaviour (Jang et al., 2019), more specifically, if their perceptions about the environment positively influences their emotional state or preferences (Jang et al., 2020) and imminent behavioural intents (Avan et al., 2019). Therefore, the stadium sportscape attributes serve as an imperative measure of spectator preference and a decisive factor of their return visit behaviour (Foroughi et al., 2019). For that reason, by providing a more comfortable in-stadium experience, service providers view sportscape components as vital ingredients that can ignite spectator revisitation patterns affected by improved inclination to return to the facility (Tokuyama et al., 2023). Shin & Lyu (2018) assert that this is very imperative for sport stadium managers because spectator encounters have a substantial influence on their future revisit behaviour and hence, they ought to adapt their service attributes to provide competitively gratifying visitor experiences. Since competition among various sports segments is growing at a rapid pace (Zhang et al., 2018), regular investigations of sports spectator perceptions and experiences are important to enhance one's competitive advantages (Wiśniewski, 2020). Providing a satisfying stadium atmosphere as a means of differentiation for heightened spectator experience has become one competitive strategy that can increase spectator attendance, especially in the women's soccer sporting environment (Magaz-González et al., 2020).

As women soccer sport is one common recreational activity where people spend time in the physical surroundings of the arena to enjoy matches. Sports federations and stadium facility managers should realise the need to continuously improve their facilities to influence spectator revisit behaviour. The sport marketing literature has sufficient reports from studies on various stadium sportscape components and spectator behavioural intentions to attest to this assertion. Most studies focused mainly on stadium facilities which hosts sporting codes such as hockey, swimming, cricket, and rugby stadium facilities (Maxton, 2019; Mogajane et al., 2018; Quansah, 2022). The main contributions of these studies relate to the spectator's viewpoints on numerous stadium sportscape elements, wherein the researchers have largely ignored comparative effects among several sportscape attributes (Lyu & Han, 2017), towards spectator satisfaction leading to willingness to return. Accordingly, very few empirical investigations were undertaken on the consumption of sports in developing markets of sub-Saharan African market (Horrrillo et al., 2018), particularly on the sportscape attributes that vary greatly in emerging markets. Despite the academic progress that has expedited a better understanding of women's soccer sport consumption, one area that has not been extensively explored has

to do with spectator perceptions about specific stadium sportscape attributes and their influence on spectator satisfaction leading to willingness to return to the facilities. No known study, especially, in South Africa investigated the proposed study variables on designated professional women soccer sports and its effect on spectator satisfaction and willingness to return to the stadiums. Subsequently, since there is no sufficient data to make informed convictions about the association between South Africa's professional women soccer designated stadium sportscape elements, the researchers in this study saw the need to undertake such a study in Gauteng province as the primary goal of this inquiry.

The main objective of the study is to fill the research gap in the literature by (a) conceptualising variables that include seat comfort, stadium accessibility, facility aesthetics in the context of professional women soccer stadium attendance and (b) examine the existing interrelations between these variables and spectator satisfaction and their willingness to return to designated professional women soccer stadiums. The conceptual model was proposed to explicate the effects of stadium sportscape elements, relative to the spectator's affective responses and behavioural patterns. This is important because a deeper understanding of spectator preferences for different sportscape components can assist sport marketers and facility managers to endorse facilities that truly satisfy customer needs and attract more of repeat visitation acts (Taber, 2018). Hence, this study pursues the establishment of new insights on how designated professional women soccer stadiums are perceived and if they do satisfy the spectators to return for future events. Sport marketers and facility management will thus, gain a better understanding of the importance of leisure-sport facility designs and which sportscape attributes are most favoured by the customers.

Literature review

Stimulus organism response

The stimulus-organism response (SOR) framework was coined by Mehrabian & Russell (1974) and founded on individual responses (such as approach or avoidance) that were interceded by affective responses that embrace emotions. Appropriately, the physical environment stimuli are a source of an emotional state, which impacts an individual's behavioural responses. SOR has been recognised by several researchers as one of the leading theoretical bases for servicescape (Bitner, 1992) as well as sportscape (Jang et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019; Wakefield et al., 1996) studies. Literature review discloses that in sport management investigations the SOR framework has been adopted by numerous academics as the leading theoretical background in their studies. For example, Jensen et al. (2016) found that emotion (spectator satisfaction) is an important moderator in clarifying the association between stimuli (sportscape) and response (behavioural intentions). In addition, Foroughi et al. (2019) and Jang et al. (2020) made use of social and physical variables (stimuli), emotion (affective response), and behavioural responses such as attendance frequency. These scholars found there is a beneficial connection that exist between environmental variables, feelings and behavioural responses, which confirmed the consistency of the SOR model that also underpins this study. Fittingly, this study advocates that when the spectators are satisfied by what is on offer, they tend to have the propensity to repatronise the service provider in future or upcoming events.

Servicescape and sportscares

Over the years, servicescape and sportscape have been used interchangeably in sport consumption literature (Stander & Van Zyl, 2016). Various researchers have conceived the servicescape in distinctive ways such as the design components, ambient elements and social interaction factors (Yazawa, 2021). Kim et al. (2016) postulate that servicescape is every tangible feature of a service business that impacts customer perceptions or behavioural intentions depending on the target service environment. Lately, in the sports management context, the operationalisation of the servicescape generally incorporates convenience, spatial layout, ambiance, aesthetics and safety elements (Siguaw et al., 2019). Convenience relates the degree to which customers can simply use the facility and spatial layouts, as well as to access the physical environment's apparatus for their leisure and pleasure (Baena-Arroyo, 2020). Ambiance denotes attributes of the facility that arouses spectators' sense of enjoyment; for example, parking spaces, seating comfort, temperature, air conditioning, music and lighting (Yazawa, 2021). Aesthetics represents the décor and interior design that expresses the attraction of the surrounding service facility (Phonthanukitithaworn & Sellitto, 2018). Finally, safety relates to perceptions of potential hazards with regards to the facility and space (Siguaw et al., 2019). All these components of the servicescape plays a critical role to customer's experiences and behavioural patterns relative to the stadium's environmental factors that could effectively measure the spectators' perceptions.

Consistent with the idea that the servicescape leads to cognitive and affective customer reactions, this study advocates that parking space is the spectator's cognitive dimension following their servicescape perceptions and emotional experiences as an affective dimension (Jeon et al., 2021). Firstly, the emotional experience is identified as a positively charged feeling of pleasure, fun and enjoyment felt from consuming a service (Dedeoglu et al., 2018). Preceding investigations reveal that the sensory cues of the servicescape lead to affirmative emotional encounters (Chang et al., 2014). Furthermore, the physical environment is found to be a stimulant of the visitors' sense of pleasure-seeking in the service environment setting. Therefore, servicescape in this study is considered one main determining factor of emotional encounters in the sporting milieu. Hence, the crux of this inquiry is to assess customer perceptions on the sportscape attributes and their effects towards their satisfaction and will to return to designated professional women soccer stadiums.

In a study of the Greek Soccer Super League, it was discovered that aspects including stadium accessibility, seating comfort, and facility aesthetics were the most important variables impacting spectator satisfaction. Also, Siguaw et al. (2019) found that other aspects of the sportscape such as, seating arrangements and concessions, were significantly associated with spectators' willingness to remain inside the stadium. Further, a study conducted in the Belgian soccer industry revealed that the spectators who felt less devoted to their team were those who saw the stadium sportscape as a bigger barrier to their attendance (de Carvalho et al., 2015). Moreover, sportscape elements such as stadium signboards and television scoreboards were found

to be significant in prompting spectator satisfaction and inclination to revisit the stadium in a Malaysia Soccer Cup study (Pilus et al., 2010; Sarstedt et al., 2009). Therefore, the term sportscape which outlines the physical environment of a sporting facility that the spectators can enjoy, is espoused for this study (Palmero & Price, 2021). Against this backdrop, the stadium sportscape and its impact on spectator experiences, the study's conceptual framework and related hypotheses are developed as follows.

Conceptual framework and hypothesis development

As the physical environment of stadiums are the least investigated premises in sports research (Faskunger & Sjöblom, (2017), this study is interested in the adverse impact that failure to better understand how the sportscape, particularly of designated professional women soccer sport are perceived. Faskunger & Sjöblom (2017) argue that the absence of establishing exact causality and only counting on estimations about the influence of an environment could render arguments about the importance of the physical environment irrelevant. Figure 1.1 illustrates the conceptual study framework. The association between stadium sportscape attributes (accessibility, seating comfort and facility aesthetics) with spectator satisfaction and willingness to return to the arena are presented. The sportscape attributes form the predictor variables with spectator satisfaction acting as the mediator and willingness to return to the stadium as the resultant envisaged outcome.

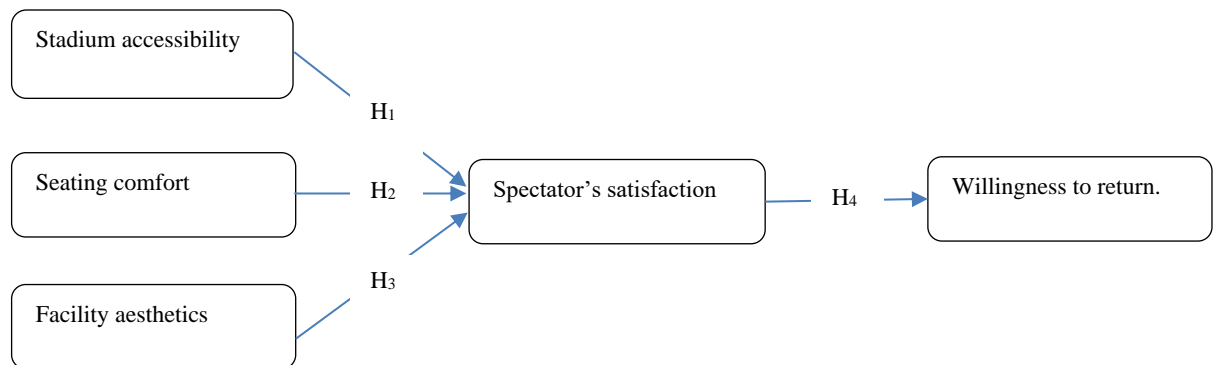


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Stadium accessibility and spectator satisfaction

Stadium accessibility refers to how simple it is for customers to enter and leave the facility with no discontent or trouble (Yazigi et al., 2015). In many of the designated professional women soccer stadiums in South Africa, stadium accessibility and finding a user-friendly staff member in and around the surrounding environment, it is not like a walk in the park experience. Hallmann et al. (2021) mention that from the spectators' point of view, anything that would speed up the process of entering and exiting the stadium safely, should be viewed as a vital attribute that can positively influence the spectator's satisfaction and likelihood to return for future events. In numerous occasions, soccer lovers arrive early at the stadiums to avoid missing the anthems and pre-match activities, however, due to the unavailability of adequate parking space they take long walks from the parking zone towards the arena (Ioannou & Bakirtzoglou, 2016). In most cases, by the time when they arrive at their seat, the match has already started (Sing et al., 2023). Such encounters tend to annoy the visitors and negatively impact their revisiting behaviour. Hence, making sure that access to the stadium is a seamless exercise and that sufficient parking spaces available in and around the stadium are easily accessible. Literature review reveals that there is a significant relationship between stadium sportscape attributes and spectator satisfaction during soccer matches (Bakirtzoglou & Ioannou, 2017; Dedeoglu, 2018; Foroughi, 2019). Jang et al. (2020), established that issues that concern stadium ease of access are very important elements that can positively impact the spectator's satisfaction. Dhurup et al. (2010) also found that the stadium's physical environment is a significant factor that is associated with the visitor's pleasure and willingness to continue patronising the facility. Against this backdrop, it is evident that soccer spectators who are more attached to the stadium sportscape attributes that offer convenience and ease of use will be more likely satisfied and perhaps return to the facility for future upcoming events (Duan et al., 2018). Accordingly, it is hypothesised that:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between stadium accessibility and spectator satisfaction.

Seating comfort and spectator's satisfaction

Since satisfaction is sturdily affected by positive customer experiences that are usually determined by the disconfirmation between actual performance and performance expectation of a certain product/service (Shukla et al., 2023). This perspective is useful in understanding and predicting spectator behaviours where tangible features and serviceable performance functions are key determinants of value to the customers (Jones et al., 2023). The term "seating comfort" describes both the perceived comfort of the stadium seats and how far apart they are from one another (Roux et al., 2023). The sense of sitting in a soccer match experience can be understood by anyone who has been bound to seat among 10 000 and 100 000 spectators at a time (Shafie et al., 2023). Sport consumers who have had the good fortune to enjoy a match from a treat box are cognisant of the burden that seating pleasure has on the outcome of the match (Mafoka, 2012). The stadium club seats are the newest seating improvements in modern stadiums. According to Cumming et al. (2022), these seats often provide expanded seat comforts of an isolated box without the privacy and climate-controlled lounges, numerous screen collections, quick access to food and drink, parking space

advantages, and additional room between rows of seats are all regular features of sport club level seats (Pifer et al., 2018). For the spectators that must seat for several hours to enjoy or take part in some type of entertainment, seating comfort to them is likely to be an important issue (Cumming et al., 2022). Due to their design or state (new versus deteriorating, padded versus non-padded, bench seats versus seats with backs), some seats may be more comfortable than others. The space provided for food and restrooms, configuration of the seats and the width of the walkways and passageways should be adequate to support social interaction and enhance the satisfaction of the game (Pifer et al., 2018). At times, spectators at the stadium are often compelled to stand up or move their seats to allow others to move around as rows are too close to each other. This may be one of the reasons that makes the spectators leave early and be hesitant to revisit the facility in the future (Quansah, 2022; Wakefield & Blogett, 1996). Accordingly, the sport facility's physical environment is an important factor in satisfying the spectators and inspire their positive return visit behaviour (Shin & Lyu, 2019). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H₂: Seating comfort have a significant relationship with spectator satisfaction.

Facility aesthetics and spectator satisfaction

Facility aesthetics represent the internal and external appearance and décor of the stadium that contribute to its attractiveness (Kim et al., 2021). According to Quansah (2022) and Cumming et al. (2022), the traditional architectural designs in stadiums inspire the spectators to show up for matches. The interior of the stadium has elements that include for example, building facades, colour on the walls, branding and historical team emblems (Shafie et al., 2023). The spectators may evaluate these sportscape attributes as they approach or enter the stadium and thus, the facility's aesthetics contributes to the overall attractiveness of the stadium (Hallmann et al., 2021). If they take note of a little litter at the facility or the stadium is in a state of being repaired, they might develop positive or negative thoughts about the facility and decide to either return or not to return, either because they feel contentment or discontentment about what they have experienced (Biscaia et al., 2023). Thus, facility aesthetics are equally important components that can either increase or decrease spectator satisfaction levels (Biscaia et al., 2023; Phonthanukitthaworn & Sellitto, 2018), fortifying the element of elegance as a critical constituent of a stadium sportscape that enhance spectator experiences (Silveira et al., 2019). Thus, Kim et al. (2021), Quansah (2022) including Wulandari et al. (2023), posit that facility aesthetics have a positive relationship with the spectator's satisfaction and along these lines, it is hypothesised in this study that:

H₃: Facility aesthetics have a significant relationship with spectator satisfaction.

Spectator satisfaction and willingness to return

Barros-Filho et al. (2021) confirm that satisfaction is a point when the spectator's assessment of the facility's services meets their envisioned expectations. Other studies measured the spectators' satisfaction through a single or "transaction-specific satisfaction" encounters, however, this approach falls short to fully explain spectator's satisfaction, because not every interaction will necessarily lead to full gratification with a sport event (Park et al., 2019; Suchánek & Králová, 2018). Because such measures are stronger predictors of future behaviour, this study applied a measure of cumulative satisfaction which considers a number of encounters with a service to be completely explaining satisfaction (Barros-Filho, 2021). In addition, because sport consumption is influenced by both the cognitive and affective aspects of the consumers' satisfaction phenomena, this study seeks to confirm these from a designated soccer stadium facility's context. Since the propensity to return to designated women soccer stadiums is how the spectators fill to revisit the facility in the future. Researchers such as Barros-Filho et al. (2021) as well as Jang et al. (2020) reiterate that it is important for sports and facility managers to establish their customer's willingness to repatronise service providers, because it can help them plan better and make informed decisions about how to allocate their scarce marketing resources (Biscaia 2016). Xiao et al. (2019) state that when the spectators are satisfied, they tend to be more inclined to come back and recommend the facility to others. Duan et al. (2020), Hahm et al. (2016) as well as Park et al. (2019) also found spectator satisfaction to be having a positive relationship with willingness to return to for forthcoming events when their expectations are satisfactorily met. Accordingly, this study hypothesises that:

H₄: Spectator satisfaction has a significant relationship with spectator willingness to return to professional women soccer designated stadiums.

Methodology

Research design and sampling method

This study employed quantitative research approach using non-probability procedure to South African Gauteng province-based study participants in the quest to examine the proposed study hypotheses (Malhotra, 2021). A convenience sampling method was used for sample selection as it allows for many respondents to be included in the study conducted within a relative short period of time and less costly (Malhotra, 2021). A systematic random sampling procedure was followed. A list of designated professional women soccer stadiums was obtained from the South African Football Association (SAFA) Gauteng regional offices. The study's target population was males and females who attended women Hollywood Soccer League matches at Lucas Moripe Stadium (Mamelodi), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Stadium (Pretoria), University of Johannesburg (UJ) Stadium (Soweto) and Wits University Stadium (Johannesburg). All these stadiums were selected as the only designated stadiums to host professional women soccer matches in Gauteng province and provides a 'rich' platform for further comparative

studies on the impact of stadium sportscares on spectator attendance behaviour. A sample size (n= 250) was chosen based on historical studies (Malhotra, 2021; Taber, 2018).

All study constructs were evaluated using multiple items adopted from the existing literature, and the adopted items were revised to fit the research context. A questionnaire with five sections was designed to collect data. The study instrument consisted of a brief explanation of the research purpose, the procedure, instructions for survey completion and an informed consent form. Section A of the questionnaire elicited the biographical data of the respondents. Section B solicited the frequency of attendance using both multiple choice and dichotomous questions. Section C, divided into three sub-sections, comprised stadium sportscape factor questions on (stadium accessibility, seating comfort and facility aesthetics), adapted from a study by Mafoka (2012). The five items in Section D, measured the spectator’s satisfaction construct, with items adapted from a study by Park et al. (2019). Finally, Section E measured the spectator’s willingness to return to the stadium using a five-item scale adapted from Jensen et al.’s (2016). All construct items under investigation were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), with larger values representing more favourable or stronger perceptions of each construct. A cross-sectional field survey with the aid of a self-administered online structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data.

The data were captured and analysed by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 28.0. Descriptive analysis, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis and linear regression were employed to process data. An analysis of the demographic profile of respondents shows that most respondents (61.7%; n=113) were males and the rest (38.3%; n=70) were females. Pertaining to age groups which took part, most of the respondents were between 30-99 years of age (n=73; 39.9%), followed by those who were under 18-29 years of age (n=54; 29.5%), those between 40-49 years of age (n=42; 23%), and respondents who were above 50 years of age (n=14; 7.6%). In terms of race, most of the respondents were Black-Africans (n=110; 60.1%) followed by Coloureds (n=33; 18%), Whites constituted 17.5 percent (n=17) and Indians constituted 4.4 percent (n=8). Most of the participants (n=82; 44.8%) attend professional women’s soccer stadiums weekly, followed by those who attend monthly (n=72; 39.3%) and respondents who attend quarterly (n=29; 15.9%). Most of the participants attended at Lucas Moripe Stadium (n=57; 31.2%), followed by those who attended at TUT stadium (n=46; 25.1), UJ Soweto Campus stadium (44; n=24%) and those who attended in Wits University Stadium (n=36; 19.7%). All the participants attended professional women’s soccer stadiums between February 2022 and February 2023.

Reliability and validity

The Cronbach α for the individual factors ranged from 0.820 to 0.846. The reliabilities for the spectator’s satisfaction and willingness to return scales were 0.751 and 0.870, respectively. All the factors were above the acceptable benchmark levels of 0.70 (Malhotra, 2021). Construct validity of the scale was assessed by the computation of the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale which was acceptable and an indirect indicator of construct validity (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The internal consistency of the dimensions is reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and validity

Dimensions description	Number of items	Cronbach alpha α
Stadium accessibility	3	.824
Seating comfort	5	.820
Facility aesthetics	4	.846
Spectator’s satisfaction	5	.751
Willingness to return	4	.870

Source: Researcher’s own compilation

Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was undertaken to examine the relationship between the identified variables. The Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to analyse the bi-variate relationship between the three dimensions with the spectator’s satisfaction and willingness to return. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficients revealed that statistically significant positive correlations existed between all three stadium sportscape dimensions and spectator’s satisfaction with the facility and willingness to return. The correlations for the three sportscape dimensions and spectator’s satisfaction within the stadium ranged from $r=0.403$ to $r= 0.496$ ($p<0.01$) indicating that high presence of stadium sportscares play a significant role in the satisfaction among spectators within the facility. Aspects such as the quality of scoreboards to enhance the atmospherics of a facility, space utilisation and accessibility to essential facilities without discomfort seem to be related to the spectator’s satisfaction. The correlations between spectator’s satisfaction and willingness to return also reported strong positive linear relationships $r=0.503$ ($p<0.01$) indicating that the satisfied spectators within a stadium influences spectators’ willingness to return to a facility. Based on the results of the positive correlations evidence is found in support of H1, H2, H3 and H4. These results are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlations between three sportscape dimensions with spectator’s satisfaction and willingness to return.

Factors	Factor 1 Stadium accessibility	Factor 2 Seating comfort	Factor 3 Facility aesthetics	Factor 4 Spectator’s satisfaction	Factor 5 Willingness to return
Factor 1 Stadium accessibility	1	.416**	.439**	.403**	.372**
Factor 2 Seating comfort		1	.466**	.411**	.488**
Factor 3 Facility aesthetics			1	.496**	.462**
Factor 4 Spectator’s satisfaction				1	.503**

Factor 5 Willingness to return					1
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** Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis

Regression analysis was undertaken to examine the predictive relationship between the sportscape dimensions, desire to stay and future attendance to the facility. This was necessary to overcome the limitations of correlation analysis which only show a linear relationship. The regression analysis was conducted to obtain the entirety of effects between the sportscape variables with satisfaction and willingness to attend. Of interest was the relationship between the three sportscape factors and desire to stay whereby regression models were computed to examine the strength of the relationships. In addition, since desire to stay within a stadium yielded strong correlations with future attendance, regression models were also computed to establish the predictive relationships. The results of the regression models are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Results of regression analysis

Spectator's satisfaction				Willingness to return			
Variables enter	Beta	t	sig	Variable enter	Beta	t	sig
Factor 1 Stadium accessibility	.182	2.544	.012	Factor 4: Spectator's satisfaction	.503	7.829	.001
Factor 2 Seat comfort	.181	2.492	.014	R = 0.503; R ² = 0.253 R ² = 0.249 (adjusted)			
Factor 3 Facility aesthetics	.332	4.516	.001	R = 0.559; R ² = 0.313 R ² = 0.301 (adjusted)			

Discussion of results

Regression analysis in Table 3 shows significant predictive relationships between the stadium sportscape and the spectator's satisfaction with the stadia ($R^2 = 0.301$), and a significant predictive relationship between the spectator's satisfaction and willingness to return at soccer stadiums is recorded as ($R^2 = 0.249$). Results show that three possible linear relationships, stadium accessibility, seat comfort and facility aesthetics dimensions were found to be significantly related to the spectator's satisfaction. The linear association between the spectator's satisfaction and willingness to return is reflected as ($R^2 = 0.249$). The results show an R^2 of 0.313, which suggests that 31% of the variation of spectators' satisfaction can be explained by the influence of three stadium sportscares. The beta coefficients in Table 3 show that three independent variables, namely, stadium accessibility ($\beta = 0.182$), seat comfort ($\beta = 0.181$), and facility aesthetics ($\beta = 0.332$) contribute positively to the prediction of spectator's satisfaction. Facility aesthetics, followed by stadium accessibility made the largest contributions to the prediction of spectators being satisfied. Moreover, the regression results analysis displays an R^2 of 0.253, which advocates that 25% of the variation of spectators' willingness to return at soccer stadium can be explained by spectators' satisfaction. The beta coefficients in Table 3 show that spectators' satisfaction ($\beta = 0.503$) contributes positively to the prediction of willingness to return at soccer stadiums.

The first issue that worries a spectator approaching the sports arena is stadium accessibility. The ease of access, closeness, and admittance to a stadium parking lot can either improve or decrease spectators' satisfaction of the sporting environment (Trongjitpituk, 2020). The accessibility of stadiums is vital to the satisfaction of spectators. Spectators are more likely to have a good time and return for more soccer events when they can simply find the stadium, find their seats, and navigate the concourses. On the other hand, insufficient accessibility may cause viewers to become frustrated, miss events, and eventually become less satisfied. Poorly planned stadiums and space distribution can lead to accessibility issues, particularly when the service areas are buried behind enormous concrete walls that may create the appearance that they are impossible to access. Obeidat et al. (2022) signifies that an evaluation of the physical experience confirm that comfortable seating arrangement is crucial when attendees are settled in a venue on the "same seat for extended periods of time." Most spectators at soccer matches may have the desire "good crowd," but they do not want to feel cramped or uncomfortable, due to being overly close spaced, settled on narrow seats or because the facility is not appropriately built to accommodate large number of crowds (Hallmann et al., 2021; Hamadziripi & Daniels, 2023). Therefore, the internal layout of a stadium may either be easily accessed or restrict movement, thereby evoking a sense of spaciousness (Logan & Gosseye, 2019). Accordingly, spectator satisfaction greatly depends on how comfortable the seats are and allows for improved event experience that satisfies the spectators (Berridge, 2015). The architectural style and interior design of a facility have an impact on its *aesthetics*, and they enhance the attraction of sports environments (Obeidat et al., 2022). As a result, when spectators visit a stadium, they are likely to assess its aesthetic value either consciously or unconsciously, which could enhance or decrease the aesthetic attributes' beneficial or negative effects. According to Peng et al. (2017), tangible signals that are associated with aesthetic appeal serve as implicit communicators of the setting in which a service is provided. These cues help to create and communicate a certain atmosphere or perception of the service environment. Environmental psychology research confirms that social intimacy is influenced by the arrangement and functionality, as well as by the entrances, exits, and internal and external design elements. These factors offer inherent clues that help establish beliefs about an. In summary, the regression models depict that stadium accessibility, seat comfort and facility aesthetics greatest made the greatest impact on spectators' satisfaction within a sportscares, and spectators' satisfaction significantly contributes to willingness to return intentions.

Theoretical contributions and managerial implications

This study's focal contribution is to widen research insights on sports customer behaviour to South Africa's football federations from an emerging market's perspective. Notwithstanding the wealth of sports marketing and management research found in the literature, very limited enquiries have examined the designated professional women soccer stadium sportscape and its effect towards spectator demands in developing markets. This study adds new insights to the existing body of knowledge by revealing

that stadium accessibility, seating comfort and facility aesthetics as sportscape attributes influences spectator satisfaction with the stadium and influences their inclination and willingness to re-patronise the facilities. From a sports and facility management standpoint, the study findings provide a greater understanding of the impact of the stadium facility relative to the proposed variables towards spectator needs requirements. Even though some of the elements that influence spectator willingness to return to the stadium in industrialised markets are also applicable to emerging markets such as South Africa, other elements do not. Accordingly, the South African Football Association (SAFA) as a football governing federation and soccer clubs ought not to situate their plans for stadium and infrastructure only on developed market experiences.

The four designated professional women soccer stadiums assessed in this inquiry are the distinguishing commercial factors. In this regard, a fascinating question that comes up is whether the spectator behaviour in other provinces of the country who find themselves in comparable economic developmental stages display similar behaviour towards how the designated stadium facility associated features impact their professional women soccer match satisfaction and will to return to the facilities in other provinces of South Africa. Hence, it is important for future studies to make a comparison between all the designated stadiums to establish if the situation is the same. It is therefore important for sport and facility management to keep a close eye on the distinctive conditions of individual stadiums and investigate spectator satisfaction about the facilities and their willingness to return before selecting the stadiums. By only focusing on the economic parities between the stadiums in the various provinces across the country might lead to mistaken assumptions. Although there are approximate conventional denominators among the stadiums in this study. SAFA and football sport managers including stadium facility administrators, need to pay more attention to sportscape attributes with particular attention to seating comfort, concession stands and facility aesthetics to ensure that the spectator's expectations are satisfied and not discouraged to revisit the stadium in the future. In addition, the stadium facility managers must take note that the increasing soccer match spectator demands measures ought to in place to ensure spectator comfort and satisfaction. Once these measures are applied, they need to be highly advertised for everyone to be aware of the new developments. Accordingly, sports managers and facility administrator must consider the spectators' needs and wants when putting plans in place of different market segments. They can fortify the spectators' identification with their teams and stadiums by providing improved services cost effectively and ensure that the facility provides enough vehicle parking space, seat comfortability, sufficient protection and good-quality nourishments. Therefore, satisfaction with the stadium sportscape attributes is one important factor that encourages spectator willingness to revisit the facility.

Conclusion

The complex combination of the physical environmental elements that make up the stadium's sportscape may have an impact on the spectators' satisfaction and future behavioural intentions. According to environmental psychologists, people react to their surroundings in a holistic way, because their perceptions shape how they react in the end. This study demonstrates a theory-driven framework that was created from sport marketing literature, encompassing environmental psychology, customer behaviour and sport servicescape to simulate the function of the stadium sportscape in service settings. The study also supports earlier research streams that showed the importance of prominent sportscape dimensions and customers' inclination to return to the facilities by showing re-patronage intents in the leisure service settings. Accordingly, this study concludes by advocating that other stadium sportscape attributes must be thoroughly investigated in future empirical research studies in the quest to create a pleasant soccer environment and increase spectators' positive responses. Despite the limitations characterised in this inquiry, the study findings underscored several essential and important insights that future studies in the emerging South Africa sport market can use. Firstly, the study findings were limited to responses from the study respondents with focus on only four South African Gauteng province-based designated professional women soccer stadiums that were identified accordingly. Secondly, the study accounted for three sportscape attributes (stadium accessibility, seating comfortability and facility aesthetics variables) and did not investigate a number of other elements that could be intervening variables that influence women soccer spectator satisfaction and revisit behaviour. Our comprehension of key sportscape characteristics may be improved by including more variables in the equation. Hence, it is necessary for future studies to investigate different sportscape attributes owing to the everchanging spectator needs and preferences. Thirdly, other designated professional women soccer stadiums in other provinces of the country were not included in this study. Accordingly, caution should be exercised to not generalise this study's findings and not disregard the opportunity of the applicability and usability of the study results to other stadiums in other provinces as they provide various essential options for all sports and facility managers to establish pleasing and welcoming stadium environments that entice continued soccer spectator support. It is for this reason that, an examination of other designated professional women soccer stadiums in other provinces of the country is warranted.

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