Do Nostalgic Messages Attract Sport Fans to Their Favorite Sport Team’s Hometown?

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Sport tourism studies have examined what makes sport fans visit host cities (Gibson, 1998; Robinson & Gammon, 2004). Among various strategies, studies have argued that nostalgic campaigns can be so powerful that consumers’ intention to purchase can be encouraged (Ju, Kim, Chang, & Bluck, 2016). In detail, nostalgic messages may encourage consumers’ continuous feelings, termed “self-continuity.” Self-continuity is defined as feelings of connectedness between the past and present self (Ju et al., 2016; Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Routledge, 2008). Previous research supports the idea that nostalgic feelings have a positive impact on psychological well-being (Sedikides et al., 2016). Among various constructs, the current study investigated how nostalgic messages influence sport fans’ pride because pride has been addressed as one of the most frequent positive emotions that can be found in the sport management context (Chang, Kang, Ko, & Connaughton, 2017). The aim of the current study was to examine the use of a nostalgic campaign designed to attract sport fans to visit their favorite team’s hometown. The current study also examined the moderating role of length of time as a sport fan on each relationship. Finally, the current study suggests a theoretical model among nostalgic messages, self-continuity, pride, and intention to visit fans’ hometowns.

The current study provided a short video clip invoking nostalgic feelings and asked 200 respondents to answer questions regarding constructs and demographics. Descriptive statistics and a confirmatory factor analysis were performed, and structural equation modeling (SEM) and a multi group SEM were used to test the following hypotheses:

H2. Nostalgia positively impacts pride.
H3. Nostalgia positively impacts intention to visit a sport team’s hometown.
H4. Self-continuity positively impacts pride.
H5. Self-continuity positively impacts intention to visit a team’s hometown.
H6. Pride positively impacts intention to visit a sport team’s hometown.
H7. The effect of nostalgia in relation to self-continuity is stronger in the long-term fan group than in the new fan group.

The results suggested significant relationships between (a) nostalgia and self-continuity, (b) nostalgia and pride, (c) self-continuity and pride, and (d) pride and intention to visit a hometown. Multigroup SEM results of the length of time as a sport fan indicated a significant impact on the relationship between nostalgia and self-continuity. Specifically, the results suggest that the relationship is stronger for new fans. This suggests, in a practical sense, that it may be important to provide continuous feelings to new fans in order to make them proud of their favorite team and encourage them to visit the hometown of their favorite sport team. Thus, the current study contributes to the body of nostalgia-related research in the sport management context.