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Are we in Europe or Africa? Understanding the Drivers of 'Virtual Stadium' Viewership of English Premier League Matches

Chibueze Emmanuel Ogbunankwor
Department of Business Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria.

Adeola A. Ayodele
Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria:

Humphrey Ikenna Madumere
Department of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Justina Ekom Ekong
Department of Marketing, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, Nigeria:

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Abstract: *Previous research on spectator patronage of football viewing centres in the Nigerian context focused mainly on qualitative research thereby overlooking the objective analysis, and broad generalizability that quantitative research offers. In consequence, a survey of Nigerian football fans was conducted during the second stanza of the 2025/2026 English Premier League season to test three adapted blanket factors that include viewing centre special attraction, specific English Premier League (EPL) club consideration, and local league apathy distilled by Onyebueke (2019) in a mainly qualitative and ethnographic study to predict viewer patronage of football viewing centres. A multiple regression analysis was employed to test the formulated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS Version 20.0 software at 5% level of significance on surveyed data from a convenience sample of 246 football enthusiasts in Awka metropolis, South-East, Nigeria. Results indicate that the three drivers examined individually influence viewer patronage of football viewing centres. More importantly, local league apathy has the most dominant effect on patronage of football viewing centres followed by specific EPL club consideration, and viewing centre special attraction in that order. Overall, implications for Nigerian and global sports bar operators are discussed.*

Keywords: Virtual stadium, English Premier League, viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration, local league apathy.

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INTRODUCTION

The ubiquity of football viewing centres otherwise known as 'virtual stadiums' patronized by football fans to watch live foreign football matches has become the cultural norm in contemporary Nigeria. Of course, the patrons of these football viewing centres flock to these leisure centres mostly during weekends to watch live foreign football matches especially involving their favourite clubs. Interestingly, the English Premier League (EPL) remains the most widely watched major football league in Nigeria and is religiously followed by crowds of football fans at viewing centres to the extent that those who can afford televised football at home prefer watching these live EPL matches in these public screening venues. The main reason for this patronage is because viewing centres offer them the opportunity to interact with other spectators amongst other advantages.

Certainly, these viewers watch every major action on the field of play and as such can understand and discuss the actions just like fans present at the stadiums where these matches are being played. In consequence, the ability to assimilate every detail involving the game nearly makes some viewers contemplate whether they are in England or Nigeria, and by extension, in Europe or Africa, at the very moment the game is being played. Moreover, some of the EPL clubs have huge fan base in Nigeria. For example, the English Premier League clubs with a broad base of support in Nigeria include Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester United and Manchester City. Therefore, it is common for fans of these clubs to enjoy exchanging banters with each other and also exchange information on player performance, player transfers, latest and previous results, fixtures for up-coming matches, league standings, recently employed or sacked coaches, and controversial referee and Video Assistant Referee (VAR) decisions amongst others. Nevertheless, these aforementioned activities continue to add flavour to fan devotion to the beautiful game and has led to statistics that are favourable to the industry.

Of course, football is the world's most popular sport, with an estimated 3.5 billion fans globally (ZipDo, 2025; Limelight Digital, 2025). Moreover, the data of dedicated football viewing centres is typically integrated within the broader global spectator sport market and show that the broader global spectator sports market was an estimated $178.74 billion in 2024, and is projected to grow to $329.71 billion by 2033 with revenue streams dominated by massive broadcasting deals, sponsorships, and merchandise sales (Research and Market Report, 2025). To be more precise, the Global Media Report 2024 show that global sports-rights costs exceeded $60 billion in 2024, showing the high demand for live programming, a primary driver for viewing centres (SportBusiness, 2025).

Interestingly, with around 82 million fans, or 40 percent of the population, football is the most popular sport in Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2025). As a result, viewing centres are prevalent in both urban and rural areas across Nigeria, serving as "virtual stadiums" for a massive football-mad population and a typical regular-sized viewing centre can seat between 50 and 100 people, with some having

a capacity of up to 230 (Omoniyi 2024). Nevertheless, the monthly income (pre-2024) of some viewing centre businesses ranged between ₦150,000 to ₦ 180,000, but this has drastically dropped due to economic challenges (Omoniyi, 2024). Therefore, the aforementioned statistics not only at the global but also at the Nigerian context suggest a very hopeful future for the football viewing centre industry.

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, some football viewing centres in Nigeria are not near to viewers in distance. This scenario gets worse when live matches are viewed at odd times of the day. On the other hand, watching matches at football viewing centres may not be an exciting experience as some of these centres are mere shanties. This infrastructural deficiency may cause some ugly incidents. For instance, incidents like the electrocution of ecstatic soccer buffs at a viewing centre in Calabar, South-South, Nigeria which reports put casualties at 30 dead with about 50 injured, as double explosions from a nearby transformer caused the high tension wire to drop on the zinc of a makeshift viewing hall (Vanguard, 2017) make viewing centre patronage unattractive. Likewise, conflict and violence fueld by intense rivalries and aggression (Bobmanuel, Umunnah & Ochia, 2023); societal issues like noise pollution (Abulude, Dare, Akinnusotu & Damodharan, 2021) and increased gambling (Ifeduba, Itetegbe, Atunrase & Ogbuehi, 2020); and inadequate infrastructure such as power outages and poor facilities (Ezea, 2017) are some of the unattractive aspects of the football viewing centre experience in the Nigerian context.

Apart from the aforementioned, there is the problem of specific English club considerations. To begin with, these include that viewers will likely not support English clubs that they do not like their playing style; that lack quality players; that do not hire Nigerian and African players; and that do not offer them winning streak or betting opportunity. Nevertheless, local league apathy is part of the problems facing the football viewing centre industry in Nigeria and this is caused by some obvious reasons. First, there is superiority of European leagues as a result of higher-quality broadcasts, better marketing, and the presence of global superstars (Oparaugo, 2021). Second, local league issues like the lower quality of the Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL), issues with corruption, violence, lack of modern management practices in the NPFL, lack of fan engagement in the local league, and poor conditions of many stadiums in Nigeria contribute to local league apathy (HTTAcademy, 2024). Nevertheless, it is not empirically established in solely quantitative research if viewing centre special attraction, specific English Premier League (EPL) club consideration, and local league apathy influence viewer patronage of football viewing centres in the Nigerian setting.

Indeed, an avalanche of studies have been conducted in different countries of the world to understand the determinants of audience patronage of televised football in domestic football leagues (e.g., Forrest, Simmons & Buraimo, 2005; Buraimo & Simmons, 2009; Alavy, Gaskell, Leach & Szymanski, 2010; Cox, 2018; Caruso, Addesa & Di Domizio, 2019). On the other hand, studies have been executed to understand the factors influencing audience demand for television

broadcasts for foreign football league matches within a domestic market (e.g., Schreyer, Schmidt & Torgler, 2016; Nalbantis & Pawlowski, 2018) and even involving national teams' tournaments (e.g., Feddersen & Rott, 2011; Van Reeth & Osokin, 2020; Wang, Su, Agudamu, Gong, Bu & Zhang, 2024). In addition, studies on factors influencing viewer demand for television broadcasts for club-based continental tournaments (e.g., Wills, Tacon & Addesa, 2022) and comparison between determinants of television audience for foreign football matches with domestic ones (e.g., Gasparetto, Abgaryan & Batargaleev, 2024) also exist. Equally important, a plethora of studies have been conducted in the Nigerian context on televised football (e.g., Bantole, Olaniyan, Babatunde & Nghargbu, 2012; Adesina, Obalanlege & Togunwa, 2017; Adebayo, Falase & Akintunde, 2017; Alao, 2018; Dogari, Apuke & Idi, 2018; Onyebueke, 2019; Akpan, 2020; Igwe, Akinsola- Obatolu, Nwajiuba, Egbo, Ogunnaike & Nwekpa, 2021; Ogunseye, Olowosegun, Kadiri & Salisu, 2022; Bobmanuel et al., 2023). Unfortunately, thus far, the gap in the literature is that only a few Nigerian scholars have published empirical studies on the determinants of audience patronage of football viewing centres to guide Nigeria's and global leisure, entertainment and recreation industry (e.g., Adebayo et al., 2017; Onyebueke, 2019; Ogunseye et al., 2022). Only one of these Nigerian studies (i.e., Onyebueke, 2019) focused on blanket factors influencing viewer patronage of football viewing centres. In fact, these blanket factors include special attraction to particular viewing centres, reasons for supporting specific European clubs, and reasons for lack of interest in the Nigerian league/clubs (Onyebueke, 2019). Unfortunately, another gap in the literature is that the aforesaid study adopted mainly a qualitative and ethnographic method. Therefore, this study attempts to bridge this methodological gap in extant literature by adopting solely the quantitative method.

Objectives of the Study

The principal objective of this study is to establish a schema of the factors that influence viewer patronage of football viewing centres in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. In consequence, this objective can be broken down into the following specific objectives:

- To determine the extent to which viewing centre special attraction predicts viewer patronage of football viewing centres.
- To ascertain the level to which specific EPL club consideration contributes to viewer patronage of football viewing centres.
- To examine the extent to which local league apathy contributes to viewer patronage of football viewing centres.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to the different stakeholders in the football viewing center industry. First, it will enable sports rights agencies that sell broadcasting rights for English Premier League (EPL) matches to identify and secure lucrative deals. Second, media planners for EPL matches will use the insights from the study to ensure that advertising efforts are targeted and impactful. Third, it will allow television broadcasters make rational decisions in securing rights to broadcast

football matches that attract high viewership. Fourth, it will enable advertisers know the type of football matches to air their commercials that can reach millions of viewers. Fifth, the study will enable football viewing center operators gain insights on how to better serve their customers to generate additional revenue. Sixth, the regulatory authority in the industry, the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) will equally benefit from the results of this study, hence they will regulate better on betting and gaming activities at the centres. Finally, the study will add to the stock of existing knowledge and provide a base for further research in this area of entertainment and leisure research.

Scope of the Study

The present piece of research is domiciled within the domain of consumer behaviour. On the other hand, in terms of geographical scope, the study covers Awka metropolis. This is because Awka is the administrative capital of Anambra State, Nigeria with a high population density and wide followership of the English Premier League that favours the establishment of viewing centres. Moreover, the major entity that is being analyzed in this study is viewers at football viewing centres who mostly cannot afford or do not have access to home subscriptions for satellite TV channels broadcasting English Premier League football matches.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework: Arousal Theory

The theoretical framework of the present study is developed based on the adaptation of the Arousal Theory otherwise known as Arousal Theory of Motivation. To begin with, Murray (1938) first proposed the Arousal Theory of Motivation primarily from physiological psychology although it is a significant area of study in environmental psychology. The basic premise underlying the Arousal Theory is that it incorporates the concept of “needs” (internal psychological desires like achievement, power, and affiliation) and “presses” (external environmental factors that influence those needs) (Murray, 1938). According to Murray (1938), individuals have an optimal level of arousal that varies from person to person and when arousal is too low (e.g., boredom, fatigue), individuals seek stimulation to increase it. On the other hand, when arousal is too high (e.g; stress, anciety), individuals engage in activities to decrease it. In other words, the Arousal Theory of Motivation suggests that people are driven towards situations and activities that will maintain an optimum level of arousal, such as alertness, interest, and energy (Cherry, 2023). More importantly, optimal arousal is linked to peak performance and motivation while extremes of arousal can hinder these (Murray, 1938). That is to say, our levels of arousal can influence our performance (Cherry, 2023). This concept is commonly referred to as the Yerkes–Dodson Law (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908) and shown in Figure 1.

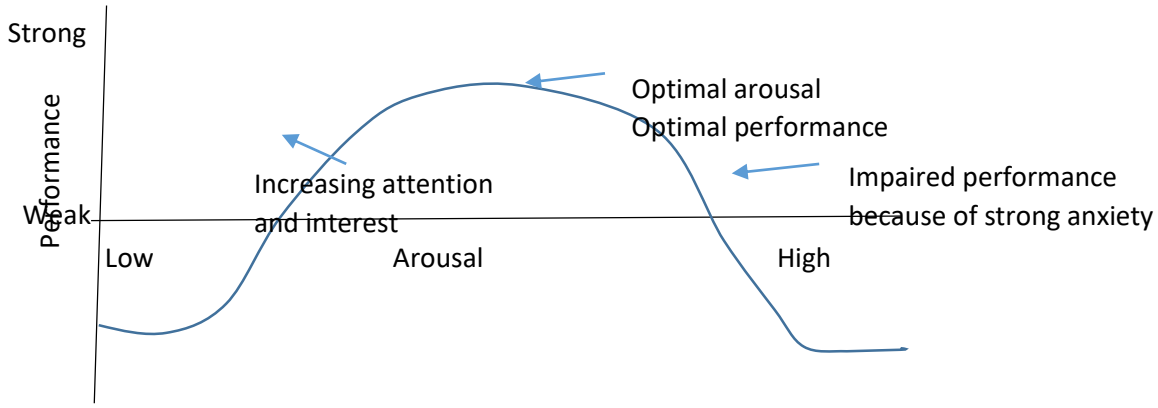

Fig. 1 Original Yerkes–Dodson Law (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908)

Moreover, the Arousal Theory has been expanded upon or further developed by other psychologists. For instance, Atkinson (1957) suggested that people have different arousal thresholds, meaning that some people require more stimulation than others to reach their optimum level. Similarly, Zajonc (1965) proposed that there is an optimal level of arousal for task performance and that individuals will seek out stimulation when they are below this optimum level.

Interestingly, several studies have explored the nuances and applications of the Arousal Theory. Some of these studies explored how individual differences in optimal arousal levels influence preferences for activities as risk-taking behaviour (Xie, 2016; Galentino, Bonini & Savadori, 2017). Also, studies have examined how Arousal Theory applies to learning (Storbeck & Clore, 2008; Rosegard & Wilson, 2013; Brown, Van Steenbargen, Kedar & Nieuwenhuis, 2014; Cudo, Francuz, Augustynowicz & Strozak, 2018), work performance (Mathews & Amelang, 1993; Zsido, 2024) and even sustainable behaviour (Yan & Murray, 2023). More importantly, studies have examined how Arousal Theory applies to tourism (e.g., Khan, Bashir, Alshiha, Alnasser, Alkhozaim & Alshiha, 2025). Nevertheless, studies are lacking that examined how Arousal Theory applies to televised football particularly in football viewing centre context.

For the purpose of the present study, the application of the Arousal Theory is as follows: firstly, the "presses or external environmental factors" are represented by the, viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration and local league apathy variables. Secondly, the "task or situation or activity" is represented by patronage of football viewing centres. Nevertheless, this study did not introduce "needs" as the internal psychological desires intervening between the presses and the situation or activity as obtained in the Arousal Theory system because these internal psychological desires are unseen.

Assuredly, the Arousal Theory is arguably one of the notable theories of motivation used to understand the buying behaviour of consumers. It provides specific suggestions on what motivates

viewers in football viewing centre patronage. Of course, this theoretical framework explores the complex inter-relationships and interconnectedness of consumer behaviour, hospitality management, sport management, small business management, entrepreneurial studies, and digital media management at a homogeneous group level.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The main thrust of this section is to review empirical studies conducted in the area of audience demand for televised football. Since a plethora of studies have been conducted in different countries of the world, especially in domestic football leagues, and even national team's tournaments, there is every need to review these studies.

Previous Studies on Audience Patronage of Televised Football

An avalanche of studies have been conducted in different climes to understand the determinants of audience patronage of televised football in domestic football leagues. For instance, one of the earliest studies in this category by Kuypers (1997), investigated the reasons why people watch live and televised football matches in the English Premier League and found that quality factors, outcome uncertainty, and supporter loyalty are all important determinants of football attendance but that televising a match on BSkyB does not significantly affect audiences. Similarly, Forrest et al. (2005), examined the link between outcome uncertainty and demand in the television market for English Premier League football, and, from their results, both the broadcaster and the audience appear interested in competitive balance. In the same way, Johnsen & Solvoil (2008), examined how factors specific to television on the one hand, and factors specific to the football game on the other hand, influence the viewing figures of televised football in the Norwegian and Danish top division and found that the viewer ratings of televised football are dependent on factors related to scheduling than by football interests among the audience. A fourth study in this category by Buraimo and Simmons (2009), tested for the impact of match outcome uncertainty on two types of audience for Spanish football, fans at the stadium and television viewers, and found that fans inside the stadium prefer games that are less and not more likely to finish with a close score whereas television viewers prefer close contexts to more predictable contexts.

Another study (Alavy et al., 2010), examined the relationship between the demand for English football on television and outcome uncertainty and found that although uncertainty matters, it is the progression of the match which drives viewership, and as a draw looks increasingly likely, viewers are likely to switch channels. Moreover, games that end in victories have a higher average viewership than games that end in stalemates (Alavy et al., 2010). A sixth study, Di Domizio (2013), investigated the relationship between football and TV audience in Italian Serie A and found that closer contexts are important from the Italian TV audience perspective, but they are not crucial. Nevertheless, if the set of explanatory variables includes both the uncertainty of outcome and the teams' probabilities of winning, a negative relationship between the closeness of the match and TV audience emerges (Di Domizio, 2013). The study by Perez, Puente and Rodriguez (2015)

executed in Spanish First Division, concluded that a nationwide "general interest" in free-to-air broadcasting of soccer matches, which would support Spanish law, does not exist, with the exception of matches played by Real Madrid Club de Fútbol, Fútbol Club Barcelona, and local teams. A fourth English Premier League study in this category by Buraimo and Simmons (2015), found that uncertainty of outcome does not have the hypothesised effect on television audience demand whereas television audiences have evolved to exhibit preferences for star quality. Similarly, a fifth English Premier League study by Scelles (2017), indicated a significant positive impact of star quality but also championship and Champions League intensity and no significant impact of Europa League and relegation intensity. Also, an English Premier League football study executed by Cox (2018), showed that more certain matches are preferred by spectators at the stadium yet more uncertain matches are preferred by TV spectators. In addition, Gasparetto and Barajas (2018), investigated broadcast demand in Brazil's two largest markets, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and found that while both markets value derby matches and prefer weekday games, Rio de Janeiro fans show loss aversion, whereas São Paulo supporters favour more certain outcomes. A twelfth study in this category by Sung, Mills and Mondello (2018), analyzed Major League Soccer (MLS) in the United States, discovering that while local viewership is influenced by team quality and visiting superstars, it is less sensitive to outcome uncertainty. Finally, Caruso et al. (2019), investigated the determinants of the TV audience for Italian soccer in seven Serie A seasons and found that Italian viewers have committed behaviour and that outcome uncertainty does not have an impact on the TV audience. According to Caruso et al. (2019), Italian consumers are attracted by both the aggregate quantity of talents and the matches involving teams at the top of the table.

Nevertheless, studies have also been carried out to understand the factors influencing viewer demand for television broadcasts for foreign football matches within a domestic market. Firstly, Schreyer et al. (2016), analyzed English Premier League (EPL) games broadcast in Germany in order to explore whether TV demand for transnational football games is affected by game outcome uncertainty (GOU) and found a significant and positive relation between German EPL demand and GOU. Secondly, Nalbantis and Pawlowski (2018), tested game outcome uncertainty preferences in a between-country setting and found that United States consumers do not value game uncertainty when watching European soccer, contrary to within-country evidence suggesting a preference for tighter games. Thirdly and finally, Nalbantis, Pawlowski and Schreyer (2022), explored U.S. audience data for German Bundesliga matches and identified significant substitution effects with Premier League broadcasts, indicating competition for viewers among different European leagues.

Moreover, studies to understand the factors influencing audience demand for television broadcasts can also involve national football teams' tournaments. To begin with, Nuesch and Franck (2009), analyzed the Swiss TV audience at 2 World Cups and 2 European Football Championships and found strong evidence that TV ratings are highly affected by the sizes of the groups of foreign residents affiliated with the teams playing on the field. At the same time, Feddersen and Roth

(2011), analyzed broadcasts of the German national football team to identify which factors ensure the success of televised sport broadcasts and found that the demand depends mostly on the type of match and its importance in a tournament context. More importantly, viewers prefer a national team with established star players and high-quality opponents and factors unrelated to the sport, such as the kick-off time or weather, have some influence, but coaches and holidays are insignificant (Feddersen & Roth, 2011). Later, Van Reeth and Osokin (2020), explored Russian TV viewership for football games at seven international football tournaments and revealed that the TV metrics of audience size and reach are partially driven by two types of viewers: seasoned football fans and occasional watchers of football games. Also, Uribe, Buzeta, Manzur and Alvarez (2021), examined the effect of the national team participation and other variables as predictors of football matches audience size in the setting of four FIFA World Cups and found that when the national team qualifies and participates in a tournament, the home team effect represents the most relevant predictor of audience size, followed by match quality and scheduling variables. Nevertheless, when the national team fails to qualify for the tournament, different predictors of audience behaviour are detected (Uribe et al., 2021). Finally, Wang et al. (2024), quantified the dynamics of viewership ratings for the FIFA World Cup 2022 in mainland China and found that the viewership rating dynamics were driven by the match kick-off time. The study also found that factors such as the tournament stage, the team's status as the champion of the FIFA World Cup or UEFA Euro Cup, being in top 4 in FIFA 2018, and the FIFA World ranking, which are often seen as indicators of match quality, did not have an impact on the viewership ratings (Wang et al., 2024). Likewise, the team market value, which is determined by the team's star supremacy, does not have any impact (Wang et al., 2024).

Studies on determinants of audience choice of televised football are not only restricted to domestic football leagues, foreign football matches within a domestic market and national teams' tournaments. Interestingly, club-based continental tournaments also exist in this domain. For example, Wills et al. (2022), examined what drives TV audience demand for the UEFA Champions League (UCL) in six major European markets namely, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom, and found that uncertainty of outcome is not significantly associated with the size of TV audience for the UCL, but both the presence of star players and team quality are.

More importantly, comparative studies also exist in the context of audience choice of televised football. For instance, a Russian study by Gasparetto, Abgaryan & Batargaleev (2024), aimed to reveal the determinants of audience for foreign football matches and compare them with domestic ones, and found that derbies and high-quality matches increase the broadcast demand for both domestic and foreign matches. However, scheduling elements and the uncertainty of outcome have a different impact on domestic and international matches in the same setting (Gasparetto & Batargaleev, 2024). Nevertheless, it would be recalled that studies specifically on football viewing centres are lacking as showcased in the foregoing review.

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Existing Studies on Televised Football in Nigeria

Of course, Nigerian scholars have executed researches on televised football since the beginning of the last decade. The earliest of such studies carried out by Bankole et al. (2012), estimated Nigeria's audiovisual services import demand using foreign football transmitted through digital satellite television (DSTV) as a case study and found that the demand for foreign football via cross-border satellite transmission is a statistically significant function of taste of foreign football, quality, and entertainment. The study also found that while respondents prefer foreign football, the demand for foreign football broadcast service imports has not replaced demand for domestic football as an entertaining sport (Bankole et al., 2012). A second study by Adesina et al. (2017), investigated the influence of foreign football and its digital coverage among youths in Abeokuta. The main findings recognises that Nigerian youths' interest in European football was motivated by good organization, adequate and quality facilities, and good football on the field of play; hence Nigerian youths abandoned Nigerian football due to poor management, inadequate and poor facilities, and insecurity at match venues, among other factors (Adesina et al., 2017). Another study (Adebayo et al., 2017), explored the context and processes in the transformation of age social relations in Ibadan, South-Western Nigeria, and found the soccer viewing centre as a constructed space with conflicting meanings, attitudes and practices, which inadvertently feature and render fluid the expectations of norms of age social relations. Furthermore, Alao (2018), juxtaposed foreign and domestic soccer narratives in the media to determine the level of influence each exerts on Nigerian fans. Findings show the dominance of foreign content; jointly influenced by both the media and audience as most fans preferred foreign content (Alao, 2018). A fifth study, Dogari et al. (2018), revealed that European football has the ability to break religious, language, ethnic and political barriers prevalent among Nigerians and bring people together, but it could also lead to argument and conflicts if not properly managed.

Moreover, Onyebueke (2019), explored football viewing centres (FVCs) as 'spatial coordinates' of globalization, and unpacking its geospatial, socio-demographic and land use change attributes in Enugu, Nigeria, and revealed significant clustering around the central areas with orientation in the direction of the major transportation corridors. Nevertheless, cardinal enquiries of the study include special attraction to particular viewing centres, reasons for supporting specific European club and reasons for lack of interest in the Nigerian league/clubs (Onyebueke, 2019). In addition, Akpan (2020), investigated the perceptions about transnational broadcast of European football leagues to local audience and found that the heavy dose infiltration of transnational broadcast of European football leagues in the African continent weakens the marketability of African local leagues. An eighth study, Igwe et al. (2021), examined the globalization and glocalization of football and its influence on culture and society, and found the connection of football with booming hospitality and a culture which has positive and troubling relationships. To be more precise, there is fan faithfulness, devotion and allegiance that creates a culture of identity, religion, and sense of belonging, and at the same time, there are negative impacts such as a betting culture and online gambling which has devastating effects, especially on young people (Igwe et al., 2021). A ninth study by Ogunseye et al. (2022), examined viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics of

football viewing centres (FVCs) in Agege, Lagos Megacity, and revealed that the factors attributed to patronage include excitement and other social opportunities, with some perspectives of leisure and microeconomic vitality benefits. Another study, Bobmanuel et al. (2023), examined television viewership of English Premier League and social bonding patterns among football fans in Portharcourt metropolis and found that English Premier League viewers are predominantly males, who enjoy a high degree of excitement and grief associated with a club's victory or loss of any match. According to Bobmanuel et al. (2023), television remains the tool for social mobilization and audience inclusion. Finally, Ezike and Okon (2025), examined Port-Harcourt city viewership of EPL and found that the residents prefer the EPL to the NPFL and that Nigerians derive certain benefits by watching the EPL.

From the foregoing, the literature showcases that the few Nigerian studies that explored the determinants of audience patronage of televised football (e.g., Bankole et al., 2012; Adesina et al., 2017; Onyebueke, 2019; Ogunseye et al., 2022) did not explore such relevant factors in other climes like outcome uncertainty, match quality, star quality, scheduling, team quality, kick-off time, and derbies. Nevertheless, such factors as social attractions, viewing centre special attraction, entertainment, specific European club consideration, and local league apathy are factors worth investigating in the Nigerian context as revealed by extant literature on audience patronage of football viewing centres. Therefore, there is the need to bridge these significant gaps in literature and provide new insights into the evolving preferences of football fans that previous research has overlooked using solely quantitative research. As has been said previously, viewing centre special attraction, specific European club consideration, and local league apathy were originally distilled by Onyebueke (2019) as cardinal enquiries of his study. More importantly, these blanket factors are suitable for helping us provide an empirically uncontroversial evidence of what works in Nigeria in respect to football viewing centre audience patronage.

Hypotheses Development

The hypotheses postulated for this study are as follows:

Viewing Centre Special Attraction

Several empirical studies and academic articles show that factors beyond just watching a football match at a viewing centre, such as the social and psychological benefits (Dogari et al., 2018; Ogunseye et al., 2022), the atmosphere and shared experience (Kim et al., 2016; Onyebueke, 2019), the microeconomic and social vitality (Dogari et al., 2018; Ogunseye et al., 2022), the comfort and escapism (Dogari et al, 2018) and the availability of food and drinks (Dogari et al., 2018) act as special attractions that draw and influence audiences to football viewing centres (FVCs). Conversely, there is a lack of empirical studies showing that special attractions do not influence football viewing centre audiences. Accordingly, we formulate the first hypothesis:

H_1: H_{o1}: Viewing centre special attraction does not significantly influence football viewing centre audience patronage.

H_{A1}: Viewing centre special attraction significantly influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Specific EPL Club Consideration

Empirical studies demonstrate that specific foreign club considerations significantly influence televised football audiences in different countries of the world, driven by player quality (Sung et al., 2018; Caruso et al., 2019; Wills et al., 2022) and team quality (Sung et al., 2018; Wills et al., 2022). Moreover, such specific club considerations such as coaches are found to be insignificant (Feddersen & Roth, 2011). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of significant evidence or widespread focus on research demonstrating that a specific foreign club's consideration does not influence the audience in viewing centres. Therefore, we posit the second hypothesis:

H_2: Ho_2: Specific EPL club consideration does not influence football viewing centre audience patronage.

H_{A2}: Specific EPL club consideration influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Local League Apathy

Studies indicate that the infiltration of transnational foreign football broadcasting significantly weakens the marketability of local African leagues and reduces viewership for local teams in viewing centres. For instance, several researches in Nigeria show fans are more engaged with European leagues, leading to declining interest and attendance for local matches (e.g., Dogari et al., 2018; Onyebueke, 2019; Akpan, 2020; Oparaugo, 2021). Despite, there is limited academic literature directly showing local league apathy does not influence football viewing centre audience patronage. In consequence, we put forward the third hypothesis:

H_3: Ho_3: Local league apathy does not influence football viewing centre audience patronage.

H_{A3}: Local league apathy influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Research Model

Following the foregoing review of literature, this study proposes a model that establishes the relationship between the three factors, that is, viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration, local league apathy and viewer patronage of football viewing centres. As a result, a conceptual model is developed as shown in Figure 1.

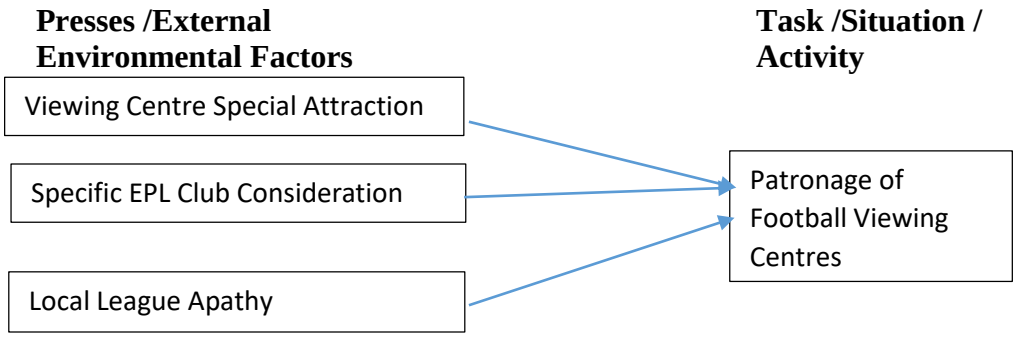

Fig. 2 Proposed Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is quantitative survey research design otherwise known as descriptive research design. Indeed, it is a research design procedure for collecting large amounts of raw data from a large number of respondents using questionnaires to provide a detailed snapshot of a situation. Accordingly, the specific facts and estimates from the large, representative sample of respondents, aid researchers to make accurate predictions concerning relationships involving dependent and independent variables with respect to consumer behaviour.

Area of Study

The specific physical location for this study is Awka metropolis. Of course, Awka metropolis is the capital city of Anambra State, Nigeria located in southeastern Nigeria. Interestingly, this metropolitan area covers parts of the Awka North and Awka South Local Government Areas with a metropolitan population estimated to run into several millions. In consequence, football viewing centres where people gather to watch live football matches prosper there.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises viewers who patronize football viewing centres to watch live EPL matches in Awka metropolis, South-East, Nigeria. Unfortunately, there is no accurate statistics on the number of viewers who go to football viewing centres in Awka metropolis to watch the EPL at any given time. As a result, the population is not known.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The sample size was determined by estimating the sample based on a proportion as there is no accurate statistics on the population of the study. According to Rose, Spinks and Canhoto (2014), the sample size estimate can be obtained by the formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \ pq}{d^2}$$

Where n = sample size
d = degree of precision or the margin of the error that is acceptable.
p = proportion of the population having the characteristic.
q = proportion of the population not having the characteristic.

Furthermore, because the population is not known, then for a degree of precision (d) of 5%, a proportion of the population having the characteristic (p) of 80%, and a proportion of the population not having the characteristic (q) of 20%, the sample size required for the study is calculated as:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \ (0.80) \ (0.20)}{0.5^2} = 245.86 \text{ respondents}$$

In fact, the sample size here is 245.86, rounded up to 246 respondents since population is a discrete variable.

Consequently, viewers at three football viewing centres in Awka metropolis namely, Udoka Bet Shop & Viewing Centre, Ifeadigo's Lounge Bar & Viewing Centre, and Stamford Viewing Centre were judgmentally selected for the study during the second stanza of the 2025/2026 EPL season. Indeed, these viewing centres were judgmentally sampled because of the high volume of business they enjoy. Notwithstanding, convenience sampling technique was used to administer the survey instrument to viewers who patronize these viewing centres especially during weekends.

Instrument of Data Collection

Based on the proposed research model, a questionnaire also called a survey instrument was developed specifically to generate primary raw data for this study. The survey instrument consisted of a four-part questionnaire. For example, the first part of the questionnaire was formed from the introductory or covering letter and instruction for completing the questionnaire. Nonetheless, the second part of the questionnaire was designed to capture demographic information about the respondents and employed dichotomous, multiple choice and closed-ended questions. In addition, the third part comprised the independent variables of interest in the study and used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree, in addition to 3 – neither agree nor disagree. Similarly, the fourth part comprised the dependent variable of interest and employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree, in addition to 3 – neither agree nor disagree. To be more precise, the third and fourth parts consisted of 14 and 4 questions respectively concerning viewer perceptions in viewing centre patronage. More importantly, the third and fourth parts of the questionnaire contain the core subject-matter sections and were developed based on the proposed research model (See Figure 2). In other words, these parts of the questionnaire contain questions to enable the researcher meet the objectives of the study, and also test the formulated hypotheses. Below, see Table 1 for the constructs, their sources, and corresponding adapted survey questions.

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Table 1: The Development of Survey Instrument

Construct	Source(s)	Adapted Item
Viewing Centre Special Attraction	Onyebueke (2019)	1. Proximity to my residence makes me want to watch EPL matches at football viewing centres. (X_1) 2. It is more exciting to watch EPL matches at football viewing centres than at home. (X_2) 3. I enjoy watching EPL matches at football viewing centres because I discuss, argue and learn from fellow spectators. (X_3) 4. I prefer watching EPL matches at football viewing centres because they have generators in case of power outage or failure. (X_4)
Specific EPL Club Consideration	Onyebueke (2019)	1. I like supporting a particular EPL club because of their playing style and teamwork. (X_5) 2. I like supporting a particular EPL club because of the quality of their players. (X_6) 3. I like supporting a particular EPL club because of winning streak/betting opportunity they offer. (X_7) 4. I like supporting a particular EPL club because they hire Nigerian and African players. (X_8) 5. I like supporting a particular EPL club because of the style / image of the coach. (X_9)
Local League Apathy	Onyebueke (2019)	1. I do not have interest in the Nigerian league/clubs because of unexciting and lower quality of football. (X_{10}) 2. I do not have interest in the Nigerian league/clubs because of referee corruption ("home-win-away-lose"). (X_{11}) 3. I do not have interest in the Nigerian league/clubs because of corruption in football management. (X_{12}) 4. I do not have interest in the Nigerian league/clubs because of lack of television coverage. (X_{13}) 5. I do not have interest in the Nigerian league/clubs because of failing stadium infrastructure. (X_{14})
Patronage of Football Viewing Centres	Clemes et al. (2009)	1. I will patronize a football viewing centre if viewers say positive things about the viewing centre to other people. (Y_1) 2. I will patronize a football viewing centre if there is likelihood of my coming back to the viewing centre again. (Y_2) 3. I will patronize a football viewing centre if I consider the viewing centre as first one on the list when searching for entertainment and recreation. (Y_3) 4. I will patronize a football viewing centre if I can recommend the viewing centre to other people. (Y_4)

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Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The face validity method otherwise known as content validity was used to validate the instrument by employing a panel involving four experts: two from the football viewing centre industry and two from the academia. That is to say, their expert opinion helped judge how well the constructs' measurable components represent the constructs.

To examine the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha on all the variables in the study was computed to ascertain the internal consistency of the research instrument in a pilot study involving 30 respondents. Consequently, the computed Cronbach's coefficient alphas are greater than the 0.7 benchmark recommended by Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins and Kuppelwieser (2014). Specifically, as presented in Table 2, the internal consistency reliability for viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration, local league apathy, and audience patronage of football viewing centres are 0.891, 0.882, 0.994, and 0.893 respectively. To be more precise, Cronbach's alpha measures how closely related a group of items are a single unit when testing an unobservable (latent) construct.

Table 2: Internal Consistency Reliability Test

Variable	**Cronbach's Alpha Value**
Viewing Centre Special Attractions	0.891
Specific EPL Club Consideration	0.882
Local League Apathy	0.994
Audience Patronage of Football Viewing Centres	0.893

Instrument Administration and Collection

The copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers themselves with the help of other research assistants mostly managers of the football viewing centres. To ensure that the distribution and collection processes were systematic and objective, the drop-off survey method (Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2000) was adopted in administering the copies of questionnaire. This enabled the screening of potential respondents and spurring interest in completing the questionnaire. In fact, the number of copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents reflects the already determined sample size of the study. Table 3 below depicts the distribution and collection statistics of the research instrument.

Table 3: Distribution and Collection of Copies of Questionnaire

Returned and Usable Copies Analysis			**Copies Usable to Total Copies Produced**	
Copies produced and distributed	**Copies returned and usable**	**Copies not returned, not collected and unusable**	**Copies usable to total copies produced**	**Percentage of copies usable to copies produced**
246 (100%)	205 (83.3%)	41 (16.7%)	205/246	83.3%

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

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Table 3 above is divided into two major parts. The first part, ***Returned and Usable Copies Analysis***, shows that the total copies of the questionnaire produced and distributed to the respondents in accordance with the sample size were 246, which is 100%. Out of this figure, 205 were returned and usable representing an 83.3% response rate. In contrast, copies of the questionnaire not returned and unusable were 41, which represent 16.7% of the total copies produced and distributed. As a result, following the 70% minimum return rate for quantitative questionnaire-based studies suggested by scholars like Kothari (2011), the 83.3% response rate in this study is considered sufficiently high.

Moreover, the second part of Table 3 which is the ***Copies/Rate Usable to Total Copies Produced*** compares the usable copies with the total copies produced. As shown, the 205 returned usable copies represent 83.3% of the 246 total copies of the questionnaire produced and distributed. As has been said previously, this rate is considered high enough to proceed with the study.

Data Presentation

In this section, the data is presented using a frequency table and simple percentages.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of the sampled respondents which is validly 205 patrons of football viewing centres. This is shown below.

Table 4: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Items	Categories	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	164	80.0%
	Female	41	20.0%
Age	18–29	99	48.3%
	30–39	67	32.7%
	40–49	30	14.6%
	50–59	9	4.4%
	Above 60	0	0.0%
Occupation	Civil/Public Servant	34	16.6%
	Student	84	41.0%
	Business / Trading	53	25.8%
	Others	34	16.6%
Income Per Month	Below ₦70,000	109	53.2%
	₦70,000 – ₦100,000	34	16.6%
	₦100,001 – ₦130,000	30	14.6%
	₦130,001 and above	32	15.6%
Educational Attainment	Non-formal/Primary	3	1.4%
	Secondary	57	27.8%

	Tertiary	109	53.2%
	Postgraduate	36	17.6%
Favourite EPL Club	Arsenal	43	21.0%
	Chelsea	61	29.7%
	Liverpool	28	13.6%
	Manchester United	44	21.5%
	Manchester City	18	8.8%
	Others	11	5.4%
How Many Times Respondents Watched EPL in FVCs in The Past Three Months	1–3 Times	27	13.2%
	4–6 Times	59	28.8%
	7–9 Times	27	13.2%
	10–12 Times	23	11.2%
	Above 12 Times	69	33.6%
How Long Respondents Have Watched EPL	Less than 5 Years	46	22.4%
	5–8 Years	52	25.4%
	9–12 Years	27	13.2%
	13–16 Years	21	10.2%
	17 Years and above	59	28.8%

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Method of Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS Version 20.0 software at 5% (0.05) level of significance. That is to say, we tested the formulated hypotheses by testing the significant effect and the relationship between the dependent variable (or sometimes, the outcome, target or criterion variable) and the independent variables (or sometimes, the predictor, explanatory or regressor variables). Assuredly, the decision rule for the tested hypotheses is to accept the alternative hypotheses if the p-value (the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis) of the test statistic is less than or equal to the alpha (α) at 5% (0.05) and to reject the alternative hypothesis if the p-value of the test statistic is greater than the significance level (α) at 5% (0.05) significance level. To be more precise, all the items in the dimensions of each variable were used to test each hypothesis.

Data Analysis

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PFVC	5	2.00	204.00	80.8000	81.95853
VCSA	5	2.00	201.00	80.8000	86.81417
SECC	5	.00	239.00	101.0000	102.69615
LLA	5	.00	256.00	100.6000	107.09715

Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the dependent variable (patronage of football viewing centres) and the independent variables (viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration, and local league apathy) were represented in Table 5. To begin with, the mean is used to establish a baseline. At the same time, the minimum and maximum numbers, on the other hand, aid in the detection of data problems. The variation from the mean is represented by the standard deviation. It is a risk indicator; the greater the standard deviation, the greater the risk. Moreover, the standard deviation is a metric that expresses how much each item in a dataset deviates from the mean. It is the most reliable and extensively used metric. To be more precise, the standard deviations in the football viewing centres are 81.959, 86.814, 102.696, and 107.097 for PFVC, VCSA, SECC and LLA respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

In this section, the formulated hypotheses were tested one after the other. In consequence, data from Table 5 were subjected to regression analysis using SPSS Version 20.0 software.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Variable	RSquared	Adjusted RSquared	Coefficients	T	p-value
VCSA	0.944	0.925	0.971	7.095	0.006
SECC	0.971	0.962	0.986	10.069	0.002
LLA	0.993	0.990	0.996	20.349	0.000

Hypothesis One

H_1: Ho_1: Viewing centre special attraction does not significantly influence football viewing centre audience patronage.

H_{A1}: Viewing centre special attraction significantly influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

In Table 6, a regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of viewing centre special attraction on audience patronage. Adjusted RSquared is coefficient of determination which provides the distinction in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From

the findings in Table 6, the value of Adjusted RSquared shows a value of 0.925 indicating that there was variation of 92.5% on audience patronage due to changes in viewing centre special attraction. This implies that 92.5% changes in audience patronage could be accounted for by viewing centre special attraction, while 7.5% could be explained by unknown variables that were not included in the model.

Yet, Table 6 revealed that the p-value is 0.006 which shows that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value (0.006 < 0.05). In fact, in Table 6, the regressed result shows that an evaluation of audience patronage as the explanatory variable indicates positive statistically significant relationship, hence coefficient value = 0.971 and t-statistics is = 7.095, showing that viewing centre special attraction is positively statistically significant on audience patronage at 5% level of significance.

Decision:
Since p-value of the test statistic is less than or equal to alpha, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternative hypothesis which states that viewing centre special attraction significantly influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Hypothesis Two

H_2: Ho_2: Specific EPL club consideration does not influence football viewing centre audience patronage.

H_{A2}: Specific EPL club consideration influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

In Table 6, a regression analysis was conducted to test the influence of specific EPL club consideration on audience patronage of football viewing centres. Adjusted RSquared is coefficient of determination which provides the distinction in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings in Table 6, the value of Adjusted RSquared shows a value of 0.962 indicating that there was variation of 96.2% on audience patronage due to changes in Specific EPL club consideration. This implies that 96.2% changes in audience patronage of football viewing centres could be accounted for by specific EPL club consideration, while 3.8% could be explained by unknown variables that were not included in the model.

In contrast, Table 6 revealed that the p-value is 0.002 which shows that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value (0.002 < 0.05). Of course, in Table 6, the regressed result shows that an evaluation of audience patronage as the explanatory variable indicates positive statistically significant relationship, hence coefficient value = 0.986 and t-statistics is = 10.069, showing that specific EPL club consideration is positively statistically significant on audience patronage of football viewing centres at 5% level of significance.

Decision:
Since p-value of the test statistic is less than or equal to alpha, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis which states that specific EPL club consideration influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Hypothesis Three
H_3: Ho_3: Local league apathy does not influence football viewing centre audience patronage.
H_{A3}: Local league apathy influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

In Table 6, a regression analysis was conducted to test the impact of local league apathy on audience patronage of football viewing centres. Adjusted RSquared is coefficient of determination which provides the distinction in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings in Table 6, the value of Adjusted RSquared shows a value of 0.990 indicating that there was variation of 99.0% on audience patronage due to changes in local league apathy. This implies that 99.0% changes in audience patronage could be accounted for by local league apathy.

On the one hand, Table 6 revealed that the p-value is 0.000 which shows that the hypothesis is statistically significant at level of significance (5%); hence p-value of the test statistic is less than alpha value (0.000 < 0.05). Truly, in Table 6, the regressed result shows that an evaluation of audience patronage as the explanatory variable shows positive statistically significant relationship, hence coefficient value = 0.996 and t-statistics is = 20.349, showing that local league apathy is positively statistically significant on audience patronage at 5% level of significance.

Decision:
Since p-value of the test statistic is less than or equal to alpha, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and endorse the alternative hypothesis which states that local league apathy influences football viewing centre audience patronage.

Table 7: Results from Testing Influence of Independent Variables on Patronage of Football Viewing Centres (FVCs)

Hypotheses	**Variables Involved**	**t-statistics**	**ANOVA p-value**	**Remark**
H_1	Viewing Centre Special Attraction Vs Patronage of FVCs	7.095	0.006	Significant Relationship
H_2	Specific EPL Club Consideration Vs Patronage of FVCs	10.069	0.002	Significant Relationship
H_3	Local League Apathy Vs Patronage of FVCs	20.349	0.000	Significant Relationship

Table 7 shows the result of the analysis including the variables involved, the estimated parameters, their t-statistics, ANOVA p-values and a comment/remark concerning each hypothesis. Moreover, as shown in Table 7, the three hypothesized relationships (the relationship between patronage of football viewing centres and viewing centre special attraction, patronage of football viewing centres and specific EPL club consideration, patronage of football viewing centres and local league apathy) in the research model are statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Of course, the results indicate that local league apathy has the most dominant effect on patronage of football viewing centres followed by specific EPL club consideration, and viewing centre special attraction in that order with t-values of approximately 20.35%, 10.07% and 7.10% respectively.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The present study focused on blanket factors influencing viewer patronage of football viewing centres and adapted constructs from a mainly qualitative and ethnographic study by Nigerian scholar (Onyebueke, 2019) to examine the determinants of audience patronage of football viewing centres to guide Nigeria's and global leisure, entertainment and recreation industries. Based on our findings from a quantitative study, it is now possible to construct a definite model to predict factors that influence viewer patronage of football viewing centres in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, viewing centre special attraction, specific EPL club consideration and local league apathy are important predictors of Nigerian audience patronage of football viewing centres.

We have discovered that local league apathy is the most important driver of Nigerian football fans patronage of football viewing centres, which is consistent with Nigerian studies that show fans are more engaged with European leagues, leading to declining interest and attendance for local matches (e.g., Dogari et al., 2018; Onyebueke, 2019; Akpan, 2020; Oparaugo, 2021). That is to say, most Nigerian football fans do not have interest in the Nigerian league because of unexciting or lower quality of football, referee corruption, corruption in football management, lack of television coverage, and failing stadium infrastructure. In other words, Nigerian football followers are more likely to continue to patronize viewing centres if issues like lower quality of the NPFL, issues with corruption, violence, lack of modern management practices in the NPFL, lack of fan engagement with the local league, and poor conditions of many stadiums in the country persist. In this sense, Nigerian match broadcasters will benefit greatly from airing football matches of European leagues because of higher quality broadcasts, better marketing and the presence of global superstars. Nevertheless, this study supported the Arousal Theory in which the presses/external environmental factors (e.g., local league apathy) influence the task/situation/activity (e.g., audience patronage of football viewing centres).

Clearly, we found a positive path from specific EPL club consideration to audience patronage of football viewing centres. Indeed, regression analysis showed that specific EPL club consideration is a significant predictor (coefficient value = 0.986, t-statistics = 10.069, p-value = 0.002) of audience patronage of football viewing centres. Nigerian football fans support an English club

because of their playing style and teamwork, quality of their players, winning streak/betting opportunity, hiring of Nigerian and African players, and style or image of the coach. Moreover, this is also consistent with previous studies in other countries in which player quality (Sung et al., 2018; Caruso et al., 2019; Wills et al., 2022) and team quality (Sung et al., 2018; Wills et al., 2022) are important factors for televised football viewership. The implication is that Nigerian football viewing centre operators should view matches involving clubs with the aforementioned considerations. Obviously, broadcasting matches that lack these considerations would deter soccer buffs from watching the EPL in match screening venues.

Our study also could not support that Nigerian football followers viewing centre special attraction is negatively correlated to their patronage of football viewing centres. Instead, we found that viewing centre special attraction was a positive predictor of their patronage of viewing centres. Although this finding seems somewhat consistent with Dogari et al.'s (2018), Onyebueke's (2019), and Ogunseye et al.'s (2022) findings in Nigeria and Kim et al.'s (2016) finding in South Korea, there is a lack of empirical studies showing that special attractions in football viewing centre contexts do not influence television audiences. In a usual manner, this finding has supported Murray's (1938) Arousal Theory of motivation in which external environmental factors influence tasks or situations. This finding has significant implications for the Nigerian football viewing centre industry. In consequence, there is every need for Nigerian viewing centre operators to provide their services close to fans' homes, provide generators in case of power outage or failure, and make football viewing an exciting experience where football followers can discuss, argue and learn from fellow spectators. Otherwise, watching the EPL in viewing centres will not be a worthwhile experience.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our study has tested the blanket factors believed to influence audience patronage of football viewing centres as distilled by Onyebueke (2019) in a mainly qualitative and ethnographic study and found that the proposed model achieved an acceptable fit to our data. Also, we have provided empirical support for applying Murray's Arousal Theory of Motivation to football viewing centre research in Nigeria as we found that Nigerian football enthusiasts' local league apathy, specific English Premier League consideration and viewing centre special attraction significantly affected the spectators' patronage of football viewing centres.

Indeed, operators should integrate special attractions in football viewing centres such as high-definition giant screens, stable backup power, chilled drinks, gaming setups, and vibrant community banter that can directly drive higher audience patronage by transforming basic match-watching into an immersive social event. In addition, as the consideration of specific EPL clubs can directly dictate the financial viability and customer foot traffic of football viewing centres, operators should therefore view mainly live matches involving clubs with massive established global fanbases such as Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea, and the like as opposed to televising

live matches involving mid-table or newly promoted English clubs that struggle to attract crowds. Equally important, Nigerian viewing centre operators are strongly advised to offer hybrid screening packages like discounted entry fee or promotional drinks during local derbies to slowly re-introduce the domestic game to the fans. Moreover, there should be community partnerships whereby operators will partner with local fan clubs or digital creators covering the domestic league to host specific local match days. Finally, Nigerian regulators like the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) that regulates the football viewing centre business, particularly concerning betting and gaming activities within these centres, need to take immediate action to set specific rules for sports hubs so that Nigerian consumers' rights can be properly protected.

Limitations and Future Research

Firstly, the present study is imbued with sample size limitations. That is to say, the sample size, although comparable with many other similar studies, is considered small and as such an obvious limitation. Future research with larger samples are likely to enrich extant literature. Secondly, it will be meaningful for international marketing scholars to conduct similar studies in a cultural context different from Nigeria. Thirdly, our study examined only three blanket factors highlighted to influence audience patronage of football viewing centres. Future studies should test the importance of additional highlighted specific factors influencing televised football such as uncertainty of outcome (Forrest et al., 2005; Alavy et al., 2010; Schreyer et al., 2016; Cox, 2018), match quality (Feddersen & Roth, 2011; Bankole et al., 2012; Caruso et al., 2019; Uribe et al., 2021; Gasparetto et al., 2024), star quality (Feddersen & Roth, 2011; Buraimo & Simmons, 2015; Scelles, 2017; Sung et al., 2018; Caruso et al., 2019; Wills et al., 2022), team quality (Sung et al., 2018; Wills et al., 2022), scheduling (Johnsen & Solvoil, 2008; Uribe et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2024), kick-off time (Feddersen & Roth, 2011; Wang et al., 2024), derbies (Gasparetto & Barajas, 2018; Gasparetto et al., 2024), social attractions (Ogunseye et al., 2022), and entertainment (Bankole et al., 2012; Caruso et al., 2019) in viewing centre contexts. Finally, future researchers should employ the structural equation modeling approach to test the formulated hypotheses as encapsulated in the present study's proposed research schema.

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