

The Impact of Turnover on Team Performance within Major League Soccer Teams

-A Concomitant Time Series Approach-

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to extend literature on team performance within sports, but more specifically, soccer. Up to this point, there has been a vast amount of studies attempting to explain additional variance in performance in hopes of providing consultants with means for advising teams.

One factor that has been in the discussion, but not necessarily examined within the sports industry, specifically soccer, is player turnover. There have been however several studies that investigated managerial. Seeing as how player turnover is much more common, one would think it also influences performance outcomes. The researchers will attempt to explain variance within performance for Major League Soccer teams through examining the impact of player turnover.

BACKGROUND

The concept of team members leaving an organization is seemingly simplistic. However, turnover across industries looks different (Morgan et al., 2004). Whereas turnover can produce positive effects in some organizations and/or industries, it may produce negative consequences in others (Levine & Choi, 2004). For example, Turnover can disrupt cohesiveness, collective efficacy, and shared mental models which then negatively impacts team performance (Spink et al., 2015; Filho et al. 2015).

Furthermore, the probability of turnover may increase or decrease depending on contextual variables within the environment.

Turnover in soccer has historically been considered as a solution to improve performance (Balduck et al., 2010; Madum, 2016). However, this study will provide insight into the true relationship that exists between turnover and team performance.

INTRODUCTION

- Major League Soccer
 - The most prestigious league for professional soccer in the U.S.
 - Includes players drafted, or acquired, from within and outside of the U.S.
- Team Performance
 - Defined by whether a team can meet their goals and objectives (Bell, 2007)
 - The definition and how it is measured depends on many factors such as the industry being examined and the internal and external environment in which the organization occupies
- Turnover
 - Turnover is formally defined as any type of membership change (Levine & Choi, 2004)
 - Levine & Choi (2004) claim that turnover is inevitable and will occur to every team at some point
 - Includes both voluntary and involuntary
 - Voluntary: Players willingly leaving the team and/or requesting to be traded
 - Involuntary: Players traded or cut from the team unexpectedly
- Hypotheses
 - High player turnover will negatively impact team performance; thus, a stable player team composition will have a positive relationship with team performance

METHOD

- Concomitant time series analysis
 - Due to the natural occurring manipulation of the independent variable, a concomitant time series analysis was chosen to determine the short-term and long-term effects of turnover on team performance
- Participants
 - Ten Major League Soccer teams from 2009 until 2019
 - Teams were chosen by random selection
 - Participants outside of those teams were included so long as they were acquired by one of the ten teams included in the study
- Measures
 - Team Performance
 - Broken down to game-level data
 - Focused on end-game result data
 - Coded as: 3=win, 1=tie, 0=loss
 - Player Turnover
 - Includes in-season and preseason player trades
 - Coded by game-level
 - Analyzed in three-game blocks
 - This measure also included team loans regardless of the total loan time

ANTICIPATED RESULTS

- It is hypothesized that a high volume of player turnover will negatively impact team performance when a history of high performance is present. However, if team performance is low, it is anticipated that turnover will improve team performance in a curvilinear fashion
- The concomitant time series analysis will reveal that player turnover impacts team performance gradually
- As the amount of years of data increase, so will the likelihood of finding statistically significant results

DISCUSSION

- Implications
 - Increase the effectiveness of personnel selection and retention decisions of players across teams in the MLS
- Limitations
 - Archival data presented several unique challenges such as access to information
 - Potential for inaccurate data collection
 - Concomitant time-series analysis limitations: analysis of data were done in three-game blocks
- Future Directions
 - Examine managerial turnover
 - Investigate if including additional teams from different leagues changes the results obtained
 - Investigate managerial turnover data
 - Analyze data at the game-level
- Conclusion
 - A multitude of factors attempt to explain variance within team performance, yet no literature exists on turnover in soccer
 - Expand literature and explain variance

