

The Influence of Perceived Cause-Related Marketing on Response of Professional Sport Fans

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Marketing

Abstract 2009-091

May 29, 2009

10:45 AM

25 minute oral

(Lexington A)

Corporate expenditures for cause-related marketing(CRM) programs have increased dramatically in the past decade as firms have searched for opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to social issues (Roy & Graeff, 2003). In addition to corporate interest, CRM has recently received considerable attention in various literatures (e.g., Agle & Kelley, 2001; Marconi, 2002; McGlone & Martin, 2006). A series of studies indicated that companies have the desire to exploit the positive opinions associated with CRM and anticipate receiving the positive effects of the association. These positive effects relate to the phenomenon known as the 'halo effect', in which the positive emotion generated by a cause gets transferred to the sponsor's brand, ultimately increasing sales (Madrigal, 2003). Thus, a substantial body of research has emerged investigating the effects of CRM on a variety of factors, including brand loyalty (Brink, Schroder, & Pauwels, 2006), consumer choice (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor, 2000; Pracejus & Olsen, 2004), consumer purchase decisions (Webb & Mohr, 1998), consumer attitudes towards CRM itself (Barnes, 1992), attitudes toward charitable organizations (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001), brand perceptions (Ross, Patterson, & Stutts, 1992), and product evaluations (Brown & Dacin, 1997). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze structural relationships among perceived cause-related marketing, attitude toward the team, team image, and re-spectating intention. Furthermore, the moderating effect of perceived purity of CRM on decision-making processes for re-spectating sport events will be investigated.

The data for this study were collected from spectators of the professional baseball league of Korea. A total of 326 cases were collected by convenience sampling method, and 313 cases were analyzed. The instrument included five scales: perceived CRM, attitude toward the team, team image, purity of CRM, and re-attend intention. A descriptive analysis was conducted for screening data. After the screening data, reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were performed to confirm the usefulness of the instrument. Finally structural equation modeling was used to develop the model. Specifically a multi-group analysis was performed to test the moderating effects of purity of club's CRM. Cronbach's alpha of the variance ranged from .85 to .92. Overall, all the variances were shown to be reliable. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for the purpose of evaluating the appropriateness of the factors of the original scale with the data collected in this study. CFA for the measurement model yielded a satisfactory fit, ($\chi^2(84) = 232.936, p < .01, RMR = .041, RMSEA = .075, CFI = .959, TLI = .949, AIC = 304.936, ECVI = .977$). Thus the overall fit of the CFA model was acceptable. Also, the overall model fit indices ($\chi^2 = 234.417, p < .01, SRMR = .042, RMSEA = .074, CFI = .959, TLI = .950, AIC = 302.417, ECVI = .969$) were satisfactory as well. The results indicated that the impact of perceived CRM on team image is significant. Also, team image had a significant influence on attitude and repurchase intention. Attitude showed the significant impact on repurchase intention. The moderating roles of purity of CRM activities were tested between the high and the low perception groups. The chi-square difference between the two models was .238 with one degree of freedom, which is not significant at the .05 level ($p < .05$). This suggests that the influence of perceived CRM on team image is not different between the two groups. Likewise, the other paths were tested. The results showed that the moderating effects of purity of CRM activities are not significant in all paths. Implications and future directions are provided.