

## The Influence of Spectator Sport Service Satisfaction and Team Identification on Fans' Re-Spectating Intention in Korean Basketball League

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According to Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Korean sport industry has grown quickly. Specifically, Korean professional sports have always been one of the fast-growing markets in the Korean sport industry. For example, in 2005, both Korean Professional Soccer League and Baseball League drew more than three million spectators, respectively. Similarly, over one million spectators attended Korean Professional Basketball League in the same year (MCST, 2006). While the number of attendance has increased, the Korean professional sports now confront some latent threats such as chronic financial deficits and strong competitors (i.e., various leisure activities). Therefore, it would be necessary for both researchers and practitioners to focus on the development of a new business strategy in order to survive against strong competitions in the market.

A number of fan behavioral studies have examined individual, psychological, social, and other factors influencing sport spectators' consumptive patterns in order to better understand various sport fan behaviors (Park, Andrew, & Mahony, 2008). Among these numerous studies, team identification has been regarded as one of the important factors influencing sport fan behaviors. Team identification generally refers to psychological and behavioral attachment to a certain team or organization. A number of studies on team identification have consistently indicated that team identification positively influences individuals' attitudes toward a team and their consumptions of sporting goods and services provided by the team (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996; Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Kwon, Tail, & James, 2007; Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003). Especially, Fink, Trail, and Anderson (2002) and Odgen and Hilt (2003) examined team identification plays an important role in anticipating consumption behavior such as sport spectatorship. While many researchers have examined the impact of team identification on various sport fan behaviors, they did not regard sport game as a service product.

According to Yi (2005), a service product generally contains four main characteristics such as intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. Given that any sport-derived product has similar characteristics to the concept of the service product, it would be deemed appropriate to consider that the sport game and service product have somewhat similar characteristics in common. With regard to this perspective, Kim and Kang (2005) viewed a sport game as the service product and examined the moderating effects of team loyalty on the spectators' satisfaction between the core service (i.e., game quality) and the peripheral service (i.e., fan service). Even though their study yielded meaningful implications for both researchers and practitioners, the team identification approach to the sport service products is still under researched. In other words, prior studies have rarely focused on the customer satisfaction with core and the peripheral services of sport games. Since the team identification is regarded as one of the meaningful factors in sport fan consumption behaviors, it would be also plausible to assume that team identification may have some relationships with the customer's satisfaction with core and the peripheral services of sport games.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among team identification, core/peripheral service satisfactions, and re-spectating intention. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the authors hypothesized as follows: 1) Team identification will positively influence spectators' re-spectating intention. 2) Team identification will positively influence spectators' core and peripheral services satisfaction. 3) Spectators' core and peripheral services satisfaction will positively influence their re-spectating intention.

For this study a total of 205 spectators were recruited as the participants from Korean Professional Basketball League regular season game. For sampling, randomized sampling was applied at the stadium which is located one of the largest city in Korea. The participants consisted of 138 males (61.6%) and 86 females (38.4%). Based on the expert discussion for the content validity of the items, the authors selected five items from the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) by Wann and Branscombe (1993) in order to measure the participants' team identification. In order to measure the participants' satisfactions with both core and peripheral services of the sport games, additionally, they used a total of six items from the work by Kim and Kang (2005). In order to measure the participants' intention of re-spectating, three items were also selected from the research by Greenwell (2001). All items adopted were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much). Descriptive analysis and correlation analysis were performed for the demographic variables. To measure the validity of the model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also employed. The results showed good model fits, chi-square/df = 1.409,  $p < .01$ , CFI

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= .983, NNFI = .978, SRMR = .049, RMSEA = .045. The overall results indicated that all model fit indices were adequate. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS 7.0 was also used to examine the hypotheses, and the results also showed acceptable model fits, chi-square/df = 1.762,  $p < .01$ , CFI = .967, NNFI = .958, SRMR = .097, RMSEA = .061. Finally, the authors performed Chi-square difference tests in order to identify the most suitable model between originally suggested model and nested models.

The results indicated that team identification had direct effects on the re-spectating intention and core and peripheral services. Core and peripheral services, as mediators, showed indirect effects on the re-spectating as well. Therefore, all hypotheses were supported. The current study has meaningful implications for sport marketers. First, since team identification elicits the frequency of spectatorship over time, sport marketers need to develop marketing strategies that facilitate spectators' team identification. For example, sport marketers could focus on how to increase the frequency of contact between players and fans in order to maximize their team identification because the frequency of contact is strongly related to the formation of identification (Battacharya et al., 1995; Dutton et al., 1994). Holding events for fans such as basketball camp, fan meeting, or community service by players or team would be useful to enhance fans' team identification. Second, the sport marketers also need to improve the quality of sport event in order to allow spectators to have satisfaction with the game. For example, due to the difficulty of controlling the core service (i.e., quality of game), they could strategically focus on the peripheral service (i.e., fan service) regardless of the results. Well-organized promotion events that stimulate identification will be efficient to strengthen both team identification and peripheral service satisfaction.