The Roles of Cognitive and Emotional Constructs in the Value-Attitude-Behavior Relationships at Sporting Events

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In relationship marketing research, numerous attitudinal constructs have been studied as predictors of behavioral consequences. Scholars to date have attempted to connect consumers' quality and value perceptions (Bolton & Drew, 1991), customer satisfaction (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000), commitment (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), trust (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schröder, & Iacobucci, 2001), group identification (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005), and brand equity (Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber, 2005) to behavioral consequences. A large body of research studying service quality and customer satisfaction, for example, views customer satisfaction as an emotional construct in order to differentiate this factor from cognitive service quality perceptions. The results indicate that emotion-based customer satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality and behavioral intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Dabholkar et al., 2000). The literature suggests that emotion-based assessments play a mediating role in the relationships between cognition-based assessments and behavioral intentions, indicating an emotion-based attitudinal construct is a better predictor of behavioral intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Dabholkar, Shepherd, & Thorpe, 2000).

Even though the cognition-emotion-behavior chain is logically sound, it is possible the antecedents of emotion-based attitudinal constructs are also emotional (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003). For example, the study of Voss and colleagues (2003) indicates that utilitarian attitudes are more strongly influenced by cognitive involvement than by affective involvement, whereas hedonic attitudes are more strongly influenced by affective involvement. Their analysis further verifies that consumers' purchase intentions are more strongly affected by hedonic attitudes than by utilitarian attitudes in the context of consumer products (i.e., batteries, CD players, chocolates, and cigarettes) (Voss et al., 2003). In a similar philosophy, Homburg, Koschate, and Hoyer (2006) found that the relationship between consumers' cognitive evaluations (i.e., confirmation/disconfirmation) and satisfaction were more stable but weaker than the relationship between their affective reactions (i.e., elation, delight, and joy) and satisfaction. Indeed, consumers' cognitive and emotional assessments have different roles in their decision making processes. However, only a few recent studies explain a small fraction of this issue, view cognitive and emotional attitudes as coexisting predictors of behavioral consequences, and identify the respective antecedents of these attitudinal constructs simultaneously (Homburg et al., 2005; Voss et al., 2003). Furthermore, there is a surprising lack of research examining such relationships in hedonic-value dominant services, such as spectator sports.

The major purposes of the current study were to (1) identify the antecedents of cognition and emotion-based attitudinal constructs and (2) examine the relative effects of the identified antecedents on attitudinal constructs and eventually on behavioral intentions in a spectator sport context. Building from the literature on customer retention (Cronin et al., 2000; Johnson et al., 2005; Rust et al., 2004), affective customer satisfaction was selected as an emotion-based attitudinal construct, whereas brand equity was chosen as a cognition-based attitudinal construct. As antecedents of the two attitudinal constructs, two respective value dimensions (hedonic and symbolic value) were identified based on the consumption value literature (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Keller, 1993).

In this study, hedonic value was measured with a six-item scale adopted from the study of Wang and colleagues (2007). With respect to symbolic value, we focused on Keller's (1993) conceptualization of symbolic benefit composed of social approval, personal expression, and self-esteem. To measure these components, a six-item scale was adopted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) and Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Affective customer satisfaction was measured with a three-item scale adopted from Brady and Cronin (2008). For a cognition-based attitudinal construct, brand equity was selected and measured with a five-item scale adopted from Brady and Cronin (2008). Finally, behavioral intentions were measured with a four-item scale tapping repeat purchase intentions, word-of-mouth intentions, and share of wallet, adopted from Cronin et al. (2000) and Sirdeshmukh and colleagues (2002).

Data were collected from sport spectators attending a professional soccer game in the western Osaka metropolitan area. Questionnaires were distributed in the stands before the start of the game. From the 350 questionnaires distributed, 342 were returned for a response rate of 98.0%. Of these, 17 responses were rejected because items were left blank, yielding a final usable response rate of 92.9% (325 usable responses). Of the total sample, 62.3% of the respondents were male. Age was measured through a categorical variable with grouping; more than one-third of the subjects were in the 30-39 age range (37.8%), 29.4% were between 20 and 29 years old, and 22.0% were between 40 and 49 years old.
In order to improve potentially problematic scale items, we assessed the Cronbach's alpha coefficients, item-to-total correlations, and standardized residuals of the multiple-item scales (Churchill, 1979; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2005). After eliminating items with small item-to-total correlations (< .50, Zaichkowsky, 1985) and large standardized residuals (> 4.0, Hair et al, 2005), the Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .79 to .96, indicating the proposed constructs were internally consistent (Nunnally, 1978). Employing a confirmatory factor analysis, average variance extracted was computed for each construct: the scores ranged from .51 to .88, indicating there was evidence of convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

After assessing the measurement models of the proposed constructs, we investigated the structural model using LISREL 8.52. The results indicated the proposed model was an acceptable fit to the data (chi-square[df] = 422.32 [142], p < .01; the comparative fit index [CFI] = .97; the non-normed fit index [NNFI] = .97; the adjusted goodness of fit index [AGFI] = .84; the root-mean-square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .078). An examination of the hypothesized relationships revealed that, as we expected, symbolic value had a positive effect only on brand equity (gamma = .41, p < .01). Hedonic value, on the other hand, demonstrated positive effects on both customers satisfaction (gamma = .31, p < .01) and brand equity (gamma = .45, p < .01). Furthermore, research evidence indicated that brand equity had a positive effect on customer satisfaction (gamma = .40, p < .01). With respect to customer outcomes, the results verified that the two attitudinal constructs had positive effects on behavioral intentions (customer satisfaction, gamma = .36, p < .01; brand equity, gamma = .47, p < .01), whereas there was no significant direct effect of hedonic and symbolic value on behavioral intentions. The proposed model explained 74% of the variance in behavioral intentions. Based on the differential effects of cognitive and emotional constructs on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, implications were drawn, concerning the drivers of customer retention.