

**Customer Engagement in Extra-Role Behavior: Empirical Evidence from Spectator Sport**

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**Marketing**

**Thursday, May 30, 2013**

**20-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)  
(Room 412)**

**Abstract 2013-005**

**8:30 AM**

The literature suggests that loyal sport fans will engage in a number of extra-role behaviors that are discretionary activities such as word-of-mouth activity, recommendations, collaboration with other fans, blogging, and writing reviews (Funk & James, 2001; Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; MSI, 2010; Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003). In order to explain sport fans' loyalty to sport teams, many useful constructs have been developed in the sport marketing literature including team identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1990), psychological commitment to team (Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000), psychological connection to team (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002), and team attachment (Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, & Gladden, 2003). However, previous research has primarily focused on the attitudinal aspects of sport fans and largely ignored fans' unique behavioral responses. Specifically, non-transactional sport consumer behavior (e.g., voluntary participation in marketing programs, collaborative product customization, and social bonding with fellow brand users) has been ignored, but has become increasingly important in a networked society where sport consumers can easily interact with other consumers and sport organizations through the internet and other new media (Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). Therefore, a conceptual model and scale items for measuring sport fans' engagement behavior in extra-role behavior have yet to be developed in the sport context.

Given the limitations of previous research, the purposes of this study are to (1) validate the construct of customer engagement in extra-role behavior and develop a scale for measuring the construct and (2) assess the roles of customer engagement and a related construct in the development of consumer outcomes.

In order to capture sport consumers' engagement in extra-role behavior, our focus is primarily on non-transactional exchanges. We define customer engagement as a sport consumer's interactive, cocreative, and self-expressive behavior in non-transactional exchanges in order to achieve his/her consumption goals (MSI, 2010; Verhoef et al., 2010).

Based on the construct definition, five items were generated in order to measure customer engagement (Bettencourt, 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). The wording was modified in order to reflect the sport consumer's view and engagement behavior. This study also included additional criterion variables in order to assess nomological validity. We expect that customer engagement positively influences consumer loyalty at the cognitive, affective, and conative levels. In order to measure cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty, team identification, affective satisfaction (i.e., game satisfaction, service satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction), and behavioral intentions were selected and measured with survey items adapted from previous research (De Wulf et al., 2001; Trail & James, 2001; Yoshida & James, 2010).

Two quantitative studies (Study 1, n = 444; Study 2, n = 463) were completed in a Japanese professional soccer setting. In Study 1, through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL 8.8, we assessed the psychometric properties of the scale items. The fit indices indicate the measurement model is an acceptable fit to the data (chi-square = 734.98, df = 174; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .085; SRMR = .046). Follow-up analyses based on the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Anderson and Gerbing (1988) provided support for the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement models. With respect to nomological validity, customer engagement had positive effects on game satisfaction (gamma = .53, p < .01), service satisfaction (gamma = .59, p < .01), relationship satisfaction (gamma = .90, p < .01), and team identification (gamma = .84, p < .01). Furthermore, the effect of customer engagement on behavioral intentions was positive and significant (gamma = .35, p < .01) when the simultaneous effects of the other loyalty dimensions on behavioral intentions were included.

In Study 1, both customer engagement and team identification had significant positive effects on consumer

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

behavioral intentions. Emerging from such similarity is an important research question to explore: what differential roles do customer engagement and team identification play in consumer decision-making? In Study 2, we attempted to investigate the differential roles of customer engagement and team identification in the development of behavioral consequences: attendance frequency and the number of referrals. Assigning subjects into the low and high groups of customer engagement and into the low and high levels of team identification using a median split (Madrigal & Chen, 2008), we conducted a 2 (customer engagement) × 2 (team identification) ANOVA. The results revealed that the impact of customer engagement on attendance frequency was stronger for lowly identified consumers than for highly identified consumers ( $F(1, 413) = 7.71, p < .01$ ). Also, a two-way ANOVA conducted on the number of referrals revealed a main effect of customer engagement ( $F(1, 403) = 17.70, p < .01$ ), while the main effect of team identification on referral behavior was not significant ( $F(1, 403) = .03, n.s.$ ). The results indicate that consumer referral behavior is more impacted by customer engagement and less influenced by team identification.

The proposed customer engagement construct extends previous research that has focused primarily on transactional consumer behavior. This study explains the differential roles customer engagement and team identification play in the formation of consumer behavioral consequences. The results from this study clearly demonstrate that both consumer repurchase behavior and consumer referral behavior are impacted by non-transactional customer engagement behavior. Engaging consumers in extra-role behavior will enhance the likelihood of repeat purchasing and has a positive impact on the friend-invitation process. This is specifically salient when targeting consumers who have low levels of team identification. Providing extra-role engagement opportunities for consumers (e.g., consumer-to-consumer interactions, voluntary participation in marketing programs, solution development, collaborative product customization, and reciprocal service learning and delivery), sport marketers may be able to contribute to the achievement of satisfying consumers, reinforcing consumers' social identities, strengthening the friendship and camaraderie of fellow brand users, and eventually increasing the profitability of sport consumers. The developed measurement scale and recommendations for future research provide numerous opportunities to continue advancing our knowledge of sport consumer behavior.