

Effects of Customer Productivity Using Technology-Based Self-Services on Customer Value among Screen Golf Center Users in Korea

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Advances in technology coupled with increasing labor costs have caused service firms to explore self-service delivery options. Service companies increasingly involve active participation by customers in the service process (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003) and new technologies are radically changing the way services are organized and delivered (Meuter et al., 2005). The two trends together result in service providers increasingly employing new technologies to encourage consumers to perform services by themselves (Dabholkar, 2000). Therefore, traditional full services have been increasingly replaced with technology-based self-service (TBSS), sometimes with no other option for service delivery.

TBSS in sport service, such as information kiosks at ski resort and screen golf machine in golf centers as well as off-site options such as web site of sports club and shopping, essentially replaces the interaction between employees and customers, and it allows companies to save costs, increase productivity, and create a more homogeneous service environment (Curran, Meuter, & Surprenant, 2003; Dabholkar, 1996). The indoor screen golf center that use TBSS to provide sport services has become very popular in Korea. Recent study shows that the screen golf center has increased by 15 percent and also the number of users increased from 260,000 to 960,000 for the past three years in Korea.

Although some studies have focused on self-service and use of technology in service delivery, few in sport management literature have explored the role of TBSS in delivering sport services. This study considers customer productivity from the customer's perspective in TBSS settings. Parasuraman (2001, p.7) defines customer productivity from a customer's perspective as "the ratio of the service outputs experienced by a customer to the inputs provided by that customer as a participant in service production". The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate the effect of TBSS on customer productivity and customer value among customers in screen golf centers. 268 customers from 5 screen golf center participated in this study. Participants responded to Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002)'s scale measuring ease of use (4 items), usefulness (3 items), and fun (4 items). Customer's productivity was measured by Anitsal (2005)'s 4 items. Customer value was measured by Bhattacharjee (2001)'s 3 items. Structural equation modeling using LISREL 8.5 showed that all three determinants of TBSS (i.e., ease of use, usefulness, and fun) showed positive impacts on customer productivity ($\beta=.35$, $\beta=.28$, $\beta=.40$, respectively). In addition, customer productivity showed positive impact on customer value ($\beta=.76$).

Our findings suggest that promoting ease of use, usefulness, and fun of their TBSS are critical if marketers want to develop successful TBSS settings in sport service through leading customers to co-producers. This is because customer's perspective on productivity as a participant in service production can increase when they are satisfied with TBSS setting in sport service with technological interface by ease of use, usefulness, and fun.