

# **SPECTATORS' DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY, INVOLVEMENT, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS AT PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL GAMES IN KOREA**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sport marketing and customer satisfaction have been stressed to achieve a competitive advantage in sport businesses (Funk & Jame, 2006). Spectators' evaluation of professional sport services is argued to be more complex and difficult than that of goods. It has been reported that a sport service business must deliver want-satisfying services that customers perceive to be of value and that improving quality of services requires identifying the specific reasons of each gap and then developing strategies to close them. There has been increasing research attention given to the issues of involvement, service quality, loyalty, and behavioral intention. It is critical to understand the expectations of customers and to offer quality service, resulting in high levels of involvement and behavioral intentions. No research appears to have conceptually examined the attributes of professional basketball games that might be expected to influence customers' involvement, service quality, and behavioral intention in of professional basketball games in Korea. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between service quality, involvement, and behavioral intention in the context of professional basketball games in Korea.

## **METHODS**

The spectators attending a game of a professional basketball team participated in this study. This study utilized a purposive sampling technique. Respondents (n=258) were intercepted on site as they arrived at Jamsil Student stadium in Korea. Some of the measures have been adapted to fit the context of the study. Involvement was measured using an adaptation of Zaichkowsky's (1985) semantic differential style Personal Involvement Profile. The spectators's' behavioral intentions were assessed using a scale representing three dimensions of behavioral intentions: word of mouth, purchase intentions, and complaining behavior. Parasuraman et al.'s (1985) SERVQUAL instrument was used They identified five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. All tests of significance were set at an alpha level of .05. The data were recorded and analyzed using the SPSSx statistical computer package.

## **RESULTS**

As seen in Table 1, regression analyses were performed to predict behavioral intentions from the service quality dimensions. The first set of multiple regression indicated that only the Personnel dimensions contributed significantly to the prediction of complaining behavior ( $t=4.2$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The second regression model considered the word of mouth to be the dependent variable, finding that the five service quality dimensions predicted 35% of the variance of the word of mouth. Only the Personnel dimension contributed significantly to the prediction of word of mouth ( $t=2.8$ ,  $p<.05$ ). When purchase intention was considered to be the dependent variable, the dimension of Tangible ( $t=2.7$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and Personnel dimensions ( $t=3.7$ ,  $p<.01$ ) contributed significantly to the prediction of purchase intention.

Table 1. Regression Analysis for the Prediction of the Behavioral Intentions.

	Complaining Behavior			Word of Mouth			Purchase Intension		
	B	B	t	B	b	t	B	b	t
Tangible	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.	.25	-.44	2.7*
Personnel	.32	.15	4.2*	.37	.27	2.8*	.41	.39	3.7**
Access	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.
Outcome	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.
Reliability	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.	-	-	n.s.
	F=4.3* R Square=.45			F=5.1* R Square=.35			F=6.3** R Square=.27		

Note. \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

## DISCUSSION

Spectators' purchasing process in the professional basketball games may be more extensive than the conventional product marketing. Managers of professional basketball games should be noted that their task is to balance customer expectation and perceptions and to close any gap between the two. It was found that the personnel dimension seems to predict complaining behavior, purchase intentions, and word-of-mouth. Findings suggest that service quality dimensions impact customers' behavioral intentions, and is a critical factor in customer satisfaction and ultimately behavioral intentions in the professional basketball games. Managers in the professional basketball games must know the importance of quality of services if they are to maximize customer satisfaction and to build loyalty. Especially, the personnel factor should be critically considered to develop marketing programs.

## REFERENCES

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