

Characteristics of spectators of newly formed professional sports teams

-based on the push-pull factors-

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1. Preface, Aim of abstract

The sport of professional baseball has long been the mainstay and the most popular of professional sports among fans in Japan. However in line with the launch of Japan's professional soccer league, J League in 1992 and the professional basketball league, bj League in 2005, Japan has seen a rise in new professional sporting teams across the country.

It is extremely important for newly formed sporting teams to be accepted by the local community and gather a strong fan base and for this reason, it is equally important to understand the characteristics of the hometown spectators. The objective of this study is to analyze and categorize the characteristics of spectators of newly formed professional basketball teams and to establish marketing strategies in line with the characteristics of each group or category.

In order to achieve these objectives, in this study we categorized spectators using the Push-Pull factors set out by Yoon & Uysal (2005). Push-Pull factors are generally used to identify the characteristics of tourists. In order to analyze the Push factors for the purpose of this study, we used the 5 elements which make up the points of attachment index outlined by Robinson (2005); social interaction, achievement, drama, escape and skill. In order to analyze the Pull factors, we employed the 3 factors used to measure service quality set out by Brady & Cronin (2001) and Ferreira & Armstrong (2004); atmosphere, player performance and large crowd numbers. Therefore this research focused on the first game, this study added the measure "The first game" to the pull factor.

2. Method

Subjects of this study were spectators at a pre-season Match (held on August 13, 2011) played by the Hyogo Storks, a new team entering the JBL (Japan Basketball League). The number of valid responses totaled 302 for a response rate of 97.4%.

Firstly, the reliability of the Push-Pull factor was assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Secondly, t-test conducted between residents in Hyogo and others based on Push-Pull

factor. Thirdly, hierarchical and non-hierarchical cluster analyses were conducted by basing on clarified Push-Pull factor. Finally, t-test conducted to confirm the reliability of the segmentation and chi-square test conducted on sex, age, residence, fun type, and the experience of playing basketball to each cluster.

3. Results

Of the Push factors, achievement (sense of pride when their team wins) was the highest rated factor. While large crowd numbers rated highest among the Pull factors.

Results of the cluster analysis revealed that the spectators could be categorized into the following four clusters; spectators who had come to enjoy the game, spectators who were interested in watching the Stork's first game, spectators who had a secondary motivation to see the game and Hyogo Storks fans.

Results of a comparison of the variance between the clusters using a one-way analysis of variance revealed a significant variance between each of the Push-Pull factors. We also did a cross tabulation of sex, age, address, who they supported and basketball experience. Although results of the chi-square test did not reveal a significant variation in sex and age, a significant variation was noted for the other attributes including address, who they supported and basketball experience.

In regards to the individual group clusters, it was revealed that it is possible to increase spectator satisfaction by providing more attractions for a fun day out with respect to spectators who had come to enjoy the game and by creating appeal for enjoying a new experience for spectators who were interested in watching the Stork's first game and Storks fans. It also revealed that spectator satisfaction could be increased by providing more attractions for the children of spectators who had a secondary motivation to see the game.

4. References

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