

INFLUENCE OF SERVICESCAPE OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL ON AFFECT, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

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Abstract

Success or failure of professional sports depends on whether they are equipped with attractive elements enough to draw sports consumers into a stadium, so a sport event or game that fails to arouse their interest will be ignored by spectators. In other words, how to lure sports consumers is the key to the success of professional sports. However, in recent times, with the personal and social consciousness of professional sports getting higher, sports consumers' consumption behavior is becoming complicated and diverse. Moreover, under the circumstance where competition is becoming ever fiercer day by day and the sports market is in proximity to saturation, the weight of the existing consumers is becoming greater.

Therefore, in order to make the professional baseball grow and continue to exist, it's necessary to increase the loyalty toward professional baseball by grasping the characteristic of sports consumers and their sports consumption behavior and developing the sports marketing equivalent to consumers' needs, desires and values for professional baseball. Thus, professional baseball teams and its federation are supposed to do their best for setting up the strategy to attract a lot more spectators into the stadium. In short, it's an urgent problem for professional baseball circles not only to set up continuous relations with spectators for professional baseball by raising their positive sentiment and level of satisfaction through the analysis of servicescape but also to induce their re-spectating.

Servicescape, defined as the physical service environment in which service is created and a business-to-consumer interaction takes place, can be called artificially constructed service facilities as a tangible material that

facilitates service performance and consumption(Bitner, 1992). Bitner(1992) argued in his definition of servicescape that the less interaction between a customer and employee there exists, the bigger the influence of servicescape could be, which is because a clue of employees is excluded from several clues that make it possible for a customer to evaluate service. Professional baseball is also the environment where a direct interaction between a customer and employee doesn't occur frequently, and, for this reason, servicescape is also considerably important in watching professional baseball games; therefore, a customer's attitude, satisfaction, and behavior may vary depending on how to suggest the servicescape(Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996).

Accordingly, this research is aimed at empirically inquiring into the relations between the servicescape of professional baseball and affect, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. This research did sampling of 380 copies of questionnaires through convenient sampling method targeting the home spectators for 4 clubs in the 2010 Season Professional Baseball as its research subjects. Then, this research selected final valid samples among the collected samples except for those which were considered to be inappropriate for research.

This research conducted frequency analysis of these data using SPSSWIN Ver. 15.0, and also conducted confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 7.0, confirming suitability on the whole with the analysis results: AGFI=.922; RMR=.045; NFI=.934 and NNFI=.923. This research verified the fitness of research model through structural equation model analysis after doing confirmatory factor analysis. The verification result of model fitness were as follows:

$\chi^2=456.175$; GFI=.906; AGFI=.930; NFI=.922, and NNFI=.920. Based on these findings and procedure, the following findings were obtained.

This research drew the results as follow through such a research method and process.

First, servicescape had significant influence on affect. Second, servicescape had significant influence on customer satisfaction. Third, affect had significant influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Fourth, customer satisfaction had significant influence loyalty.

Consequently, the service in professional baseball environment is characterized by intangibility, but in order to arouse a customer's positive behavior, it's really important to strategize on tangible clues like a physical environment (Wall & Berry, 2007; Zemke & Shoemaker, 2008). Accordingly, it is necessary for a marketing manager to have to use a physical environment as a differentiation strategy to materialize the intangible elements in service..

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