The Analysis And Plans About Space Utilization For Sport Clubs Through Photo-journaling Approach

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Aim of the project

Since Ulsan Mobis Phoebus was founded in 1997, it has been considered the most successful professional basketball franchise in Korea by winning the most cumulative championship (i.e., six championship titles and three runners-up) in the history of Korean Basketball League (KBL). However, it struggled to attract new sponsors as its sponsorship revenue was not as profitable as expected. The front office managers were desperate to find solutions to turn this over. As a first step, they wanted to know how fans consume the game at the venue, where the points of contacts (i.e., logos, banners and signage) are, and what attracts their eyes and attentions at the Ulsan Dong-Cheon Arena, the home venue of Ulsan Mobis Phoebus.

Theoretical background

This study utilized a photo-journaling approach (Choi, Stotlar, & Park, 2005; Park & Choi, 2011). Photo-journaling is described as a unique method to offer a deeper level of understanding than simply sending out survey questionnaires and listening to people's stories in interview setting (Alvesson, 2003). Furthermore, it helps researchers overcome the lack of neutrality when conducted in an ethnographic research setting by minimizing interactions with participants.

Methodology, research design, and data analysis

'Photo-journaling' for Ulsan Mobis Phoebus has been utilized for three games at its home arena. The first photo-journaling was conducted for the match with Samsung Thunders on January 25, 2017 while the second and the third photo-journaling were completed for the games with Goyang Orions on February 5, 2017 and Changwon LG on February 11, 2017, respectively. The participants were recruited a week before each of a game through an official Facebook page of Ulsan Mobis. A total of 28 participants volunteered in this current photo-journaling research (7 for the first game, 11 for the second game, and 10 for the third game). An hour prior to each game, brief orientation was given with the complimentary tickets. Each participant was told that the main goal of photo-journaling was to collect the moments of amusement and entertainment during a game whereas the main purpose of this activity was to understand the detailed process of interacting with logos, banners and signage of sponsors. The participants were then asked to send photographs they have taken before, during, and after the game with short descriptions of each picture clarifying the insights of each photograph. A total number of 535 photographs and descriptions were collected.

Results, discussion, and implications

Collected photographs were filtered through three phases. After set-up of categories, all researchers categorized each photograph with unanimous approval. The first categorization was done by locations, whether the picture was taken inside or outside of the arena. During the second categorization, the pictures were broken down into details such as seats, court, spectators, concessions, scoreboard, figures, and accessorial objects. The last categorization screened duplication of the pictures and discarded irrelevant pictures. The results from last categorization were the followings: 1.2% of F&B (7 pictures), 4.3% of Mobis-related goods (24 pictures), 17.2% of indoor facilities (96 pictures), 33.9% of the court (189 pictures), 11.1% of event and other facilities (62 pictures), 17.4% of human figures (97 pictures), and 14.7% of accessorial articles (82 pictures). After categorizations, the data sets became the key indicator of validating the home events and sponsorship effects. Processed data implied what the most attractive and impressive spots and perspectives were at the basketball venue.

Currently, general evaluation of media exposure is executed in a corporate's view. However, photo-journaling exclusively depends on the spectators' views, resulting in improving the level of fan experience. Researchers hope that the clubs and sponsor organizations can be able to actively utilize the data in terms of making decisions about the on-site promotion. As well, it helps utilize the undermined spots that are not exposed through media but can be used for sponsorship and promotions at the venue (this spot is also called 'Dead Zone'). Lastly, photo-journaling implicitly presents the hidden values inside the stadium relatively well compared to media exposure.

References

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