



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Destination Marketing &amp; Management

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jdmm](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jdmm)

## Research Paper

## The antecedents and consequences of golf tournament spectators' memorable brand experiences

Jinsoo Hwang<sup>a</sup>, Kwang-Woo Lee<sup>b,\*</sup><sup>a</sup> College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Sejong University, 98 Gunja-Dong, Gwanjin-Gu, Seoul 143-747, Republic of Korea<sup>b</sup> Department of Tourism Management, College of Economics and Business Administration, Daegu University, 201, Daegudae-ro, Gyeongsan-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do 712-714, Republic of Korea

## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Memorable brand experience  
Core products  
Peripheral services  
PGA/LPGA  
Brand attachment

## ABSTRACT

This study proposed a theoretical model explaining the antecedents and consequences of golf tournament spectators' memorable brand experience. Structural equation modeling was used with data collected from 240 spectators who had attended a golf tournament operated by the PGA/LPGA Tour in the United States. The study results showed that the four attributes of affection to player, the game of golf, course setting, and hospitality and service management, but not the fifth attribute of accessibility, have significant effects on golf tournament spectators' memorable brand experiences, which in turn positively affects brand attachment and revisit intentions. Lastly, this study found that PGA/LPGA involvement plays a key moderating function in the relationship between brand attachment and revisit intentions.

## 1. Introduction

Sports today has evolved into not only competitive tournaments for professional or amateur athletes but also into physical activities for people trying to stay in shape or just enjoy a special and fun experience with family and friends where they can socialize. 'Sports tourism' is a phrase coined in the early 1990s, when people first perceived the interrelatedness of sports and tourism, and the potential that these two had together (Standeven & DeKnop, 1999). This new phenomenon of sports and tourism has become a new global trend, which, according to the tourism industry, has become the largest and fastest growing segment (Hritz & Ross, 2010), and is looked upon as the most attractive leisure experience a person can have (Ritchie & Adair, 2004).

The hospitality and sporting industries carry many similar facets: perishability, simultaneous production and consumption (Milne & McDonald, 1999). That is, when the event ends, sports spectators will have nothing but memories of their experience. Tourism studies have shown that past experience is the leading indicator drawn upon by the spectator when making a biased choice. Often before choosing or searching for an area of destination, spectators usually first recall their past experiences (Kerstetter & Cho, 2004). Wirtz, Kruger, Scollon, and Diener (2003) found that when trying to compare what influences the predicted outcomes of a person's desire, the best indicator was past memorable experiences. Therefore, it is important that businesses provide their customers with uplifting memorable experiences

(Poulsen & Kale, 2004). However, without knowing what will make an experience memorable for customers, the competency of their planning is debatable. Hence, understanding customer perception as to what is memorable is crucial. When customers become spectators at a game, the environment (i.e. the event coordinators who are providing the core products and other peripheral services) may play just as big a role in determining how much they enjoy their experience as the actual game itself. However, little research has been done in way of using large groups of sport spectators to determine which strategies are most effective and therefore should be adopted in order to attract and retain large numbers of spectators at any given event.

In the context of professional golf, studies have only focused on providing insight into the variables that affect professional golf attendance but there have never been any market demand studies done even though golf itself has unique attributes as a professional sport. Accordingly, the research attempts to identify reasons why spectators attend professional golf events, and to identify the spectator viewpoints of these events. The main aim of this research was to investigate the connections between perceived values of core products, peripheral services, memorable brand experience, brand attachment, and revisit intentions among the spectators. Essentially, this study is to investigate which factors most influence golf spectators' memorable brand experience at professional golf tournaments in the US. More specifically, this paper examines the effects of a diverse assortment of factors at professional golf tournament events (core products; affection to player,

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [jhwang@sejong.ac.kr](mailto:jhwang@sejong.ac.kr) (J. Hwang), [kw.lee@daegu.ac.kr](mailto:kw.lee@daegu.ac.kr) (K.-W. Lee).<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2017.09.001>Received 16 May 2016; Received in revised form 17 July 2017; Accepted 12 September 2017  
2212-571X/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

game of golf, and course setting, peripheral services; hospitality and service management, and accessibility), which are expected to have a direct effect on spectators' memorable brand experience at a professional golf tournament. This study was designed to provide golf-gallery profiles and marketing information. Those in charge of golf tournaments can use the study outcomes to develop a systematic marketing plan that effectively meets the needs and desires of the target markets. In addition, considering these outcomes will suggest new discernment and knowledge in order to improve sporting event marketing practices. The expanded knowledge arising from this study will enable golf event managers to build more effective marketing strategies to draw golfers' attention.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Memorable brand experience

Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2015) defines experience as 'something that happens to you that affects how you feel', suggesting that it concerns emotional reactions to an event. Experience is having a comparably high level of knowledge in a particular subject area, which is gathered by having some level of exposure to it (Braunsberger & Munch, 1998). According to Alloza (2008), brand experience is the perception that the consumers have, at every moment of exposure, with the brand. The reason brand experience is more memorable is because that experience bolsters a better memory since the attributes of each experience are more dramatic and solid (Paivio, 1971). Brand experiences do not only develop after utilization but can also transpire whenever there is a direct or indirect interaction with the brand (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zhang, 2008). Pine and Gilmore (1998, p. 12) believe that a rich experience is one that 'a customer finds unique, memorable and sustainable over time' and is characterized by having a 'sweet spot' or elements of active and passive customer participation.

The consumer gains an experience from his/her senses, meaning he/she creates memorable experiences through sight, sound, touch, taste and smell associated with the experience (Schmitt, 2009). Even if every spectator stated that they had a wonderful experience, it does not necessarily indicate that they all had the same actual and memorable experience (Ooi, 2005). Nevertheless, a successful experience will have entertained (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) and created a sense of enjoyment. In tourism today, there is a greater focus on the spectator experience and marketing messages based on experiences that will have an increased importance in travel decisions in the future (Williams, 2006).

A business' capacity to produce revenue is precisely driven by the quality experience that is provided to the consumers (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). However, what are the components that mark a memorable tourism experience? Current tourism literature has lent limited explanations of these determinants. Customer experiences with a focus on memory need to be further researched because memory is the mediator for behavior intentions (Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Wirtz et al., 2003).

Memories are the greatest source of information for people when deciding whether or not to revisit a location; thus, in tourism literature, researchers continually reiterate the necessity of furnishing memorable experiences (Lehto et al., 2004; Wirtz et al., 2003). Researchers also continually emphasize that memorable experiences must be provided in the experience-based marketplace (Lehto et al., 2004; Wirtz et al., 2003).

Memories can be seen as a filtering system that connects the experience to the emotional and perceptual results of an event (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Hence, it is crucial to understand what customers perceive as memorable. For this reason, it is important for service-oriented businesses to facilitate conditions that positively realize memorable tourism experiences in order to influence customers' behavioral intention to revisit them. In spite of the gravity and necessity of

memorable experiences, comparatively scant studies have delved into the components of the experience from which spectators' memories are most likely to be recalled from.

### 2.2. Core products

#### 2.2.1. Affection to player

There are many reasons why a sports spectator may attend and watch games, but one main factor seems to be their interest in a particular player (e.g. Mahony & Moorman, 2000), which can impact a spectator's behavior (Mahony & Moorman, 2000). This player factor was researched by (Zhang et al., 1997; Zhang, Lam, & Connaughton, 2003; Zhang, Lam, Connaughton, Bennett, & Smith, 2005; Zhang, Pease, Hui, & Michaud, 1995), who reported similar findings such that the player factor is the most influential ingredient for a spectator whether or not to watch a particular game.

Hansen and Gauthier (1993, 1994) suggested that spectators are influenced to attend tournaments with the main purpose of cheering on the players at the event. Zhang et al., (1995, 1997) also suggested that another influence on spectators attending is the personal characteristics of the players themselves, such as their charisma or charm. Another influence (Zhang et al., 1995, 1997) that has been researched is the other variables that affect a spectator's decision on whether or not they will attend a tournament such as a player's skill level, performance of the players and many famous players' participation at the event (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; Zhang et al., 1997). Wakefield and Sloan (1995) found a positively significant correlation between spectators' affection for a player and their attitude to stay at a sporting event. Hansen and Gauthier (1993, 1994) revealed that the core product for any spectator at a professional golfing tournament is for them to be able to watch the players closely, intently, and silently during play. According to Zhang et al. (2005), the proximity to the players created the greatest influence upon the characteristics of any tournament.

A previous study that supports the star player hypothesis surveyed spectators attending Senior PGA events (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007; Watanabe, Matsumoto, & Nogawa, 2013). Those spectators, compared to the galleries of both PGA and LPGA, placed significantly more importance on the personality of golfers and the participation of top golfers (big names) in the event, which plays an important role in the formation of fond memories (Han & Hwang, 2014; Han, Hwang, & Woods, 2014). While at the PGA and LPGA events, the spectators cited fitness benefits from walking the course, shot-making, adversity, excitement and seeing the best performance live as their reasons to attend (Hansen & Gauthier, 1993, 1994; Hwang & Lyu, 2015). Therefore, we can presume that one of their areas of interests that create a memorable experience for a spectator is their affection to their favorite players. The following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1.** Affection to a player has a positive impact on memorable brand experience.

#### 2.2.2. Game of golf

According to Mullin et al. (2007), the core product for the spectators consists of the game itself and the spectator's favorite players. Zhang et al. (2003, 2005) reported that the players or 'charm of the game' influenced spectators' participation at an event and that fan, who showed love of a sport, had as one indication, a commitment level to the sport. McDonald, Miline, and Hong (2002) confirm that in the case of golfing events, the spectators often visit tournaments in order to improve their own skills. Golfers attempt to find that the various aspects of their performance and skills that are associated more with their feelings of pleasure, excitement and achievement (Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003). Thus, the game of golf can be defined as being close to the professional golfers, spectators can enjoy watching and learning golf skills in the study based on the previous researches

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7419269>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7419269>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)