



# Spectator emotions: Effects on quality, satisfaction, value, and future intentions<sup>☆</sup>



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## ABSTRACT

There is a great interest from the academic and professional fields to know the performance of sports enterprises from the point of view of the user and the sport spectators. This study analyzes relationships between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, future intentions, and emotions of spectators of a professional basketball competition. A self-report survey yields data for 493 spectators. After confirming reliability and validity of the data collection measures, an application of structural equation modeling to empirical data tests the model. Results show that (1) service quality predicts spectators' satisfaction and perceived value, and that perceived value and satisfaction are strong predictors of future intentions. (2) A high level of emotion is the best predictor of service performance. (3) Emotions (arousal and pleasure) act as moderators in predicting quality's effect on spectators' perceived value.

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## 1. Introduction

Spectators' importance in a sport context is analogous to consumers' importance in retailing. Spectator value is crucial to the sustainability of professional sports teams. This principle is especially true of satisfied spectators because satisfaction is a key element in retention strategies and customer loyalty (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). Satisfaction is therefore a focal point for sport management and research because satisfaction is a consequence of service quality, which is a manageable antecedent of future intentions.

The relationships between service quality, satisfaction, perceived value, and future intentions are a current issue in the professional sport sector (Theodorakis, Alexandris, Tsigilis, & Karvounis, 2013). Recent research focuses chiefly on analyzing quality, satisfaction, and perceived value as predictors of spectators' future intentions. Quality, satisfaction, and perceived value can also serve to segment spectators (Burillo, Sánchez-Fernández, Dorado, & Gallardo, 2012) and prompt

management actions. Few studies, however, relate these variables to the emotions of sport event spectators.

The consumption of sport events is a hedonistic activity, and little research approaches the study of sport events from a consumer satisfaction angle. This shortage of research is surprising because of the obvious effect of emotions on the everyday management of a sport event. Mattila (2001, p. 75) notes that, "emotionally bonded customers tend to invest more in their relationships than do customers lacking affective commitment."

Studies into professional sports teams tend to omit emotions from the model when examining the links between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and future intentions. This study therefore presents an analysis of the relationships between these variables and their capability to predict the future intentions of spectators. Specifically, this study determines the role of emotions on future intentions, perceived value, and spectators' satisfaction in relation to professional sport events. The major value of this research lies in its analysis of the relationships between these variables, and in the introduction of emotions as a moderator in these relationships.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

Customer satisfaction is a pleasurable fulfillment response toward a good, service, benefit, or reward (Oliver, 1997), or an emotional state that occurs in response to the evaluation of a service (Westbrook, 1981). Service quality is the customer's impression of the relative superiority of a service provider and its services, and reflects the customer's overall attitude toward the company (Bitner, 1990; Zeithaml, 1988).

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Brady, Cronin, and Brand (2002) identify service quality as an antecedent of satisfaction. Many subsequent studies in the marketing literature—and recently in the sport management field, too—support this assertion.

Several studies in sport contexts report that service quality is a predictor of satisfaction (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; Tsuji, Bennett, & Zhang, 2007). For instance, Theodorakis, Kambitsis, and Laios (2001) analyze the perceived quality of basketball spectators and reveal that the key dimensions of quality for predicting spectators' satisfaction are reliability and tangibles. Similarly, Greenwell et al. (2002) find that tangibles affect hockey spectators' satisfaction.

**H1.** A direct, positive relationship exists between service quality and spectator satisfaction.

Zeithaml (1988, p. 14) defines perceived value as “the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on the perception of what is received and what is given.” In the same vein, Chen and Dubinsky (2003, p. 326) state that perceived value is the “consumer's perception of the net benefits gained in exchange for the costs incurred in obtaining the desired benefits.”

Empirical evidence supports the view that quality relates positively to perceived value as an antecedent (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003). A small number of sport research papers also report this relationship (Cronin et al., 2000; Murray & Howat, 2002), although research into this relationship in the professional sport context is scarce.

**H2.** A direct, positive relationship exists between service quality and spectators' perceived value.

The quality–value–satisfaction–intention chain receives much attention in the management field. In a literature review study, Sánchez and Iniesta (2006) state that many studies consider satisfaction a consequence of perceived value (McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Parasuraman, 1997; Setijono & Dahlgaard, 2007). Within the sport management field, some researches find that perceived value predicts consumer satisfaction (Calabuig, Núñez-Pomar, Prado-Gascó, & Añó, 2014; Cronin et al., 2000; Hightower, Brady, & Baker, 2002). Calabuig et al. (2014) find that perceived value is a predictor of users' satisfaction in a public sport service, but they assume that value refers to cost value. Findings from Hightower et al. (2002) in baseball games, also support this relationship but the concept and measurement of value is more holistic (i.e., not only as cost value).

**H3.** A direct, positive relationship exists between spectators' perceived value and overall satisfaction.

Several studies suggest that perceived value is one of the most relevant determinants of repurchase intentions (Bojanic, 1996; Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In sport management, Calabuig et al. (2014) and Clemen, Brush, and Collins (2011) are notable exponents of this view. These studies confirm the relationship between perceived value and future intentions.

Olsen (2002) finds that satisfaction directly affects consumer loyalty. Numerous empirical studies show that satisfaction positively effects intention (Caruana, 2002; Cronin & Taylor, 1992), with some of these studies focusing specifically on sport events (Alvarado & Beltrán, 2008; Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011; Cronin et al., 2000; Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005).

**H4.** A direct, positive relationship exists between spectators' perceived value and future intentions of sport event spectators.

**H5.** A direct, positive relationship exists between satisfaction and the future intentions of sport event spectators.

Research on emotions often follows one of two approaches: the dimensional model or the discrete model (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986). Havlena and Holbrook (1986) compare Mehrabian and Russell's (1974)

dimensional model with Plutchik's (1980) discrete model, concluding that the PAD (pleasure, arousal, dominance) dimensions of Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) model constitute the best framework for analyzing emotions during consumption experiences. Nevertheless, Russell (1980) recommends a two-dimensional version of the PAD model because this model tends to be less stable across different samples and contexts.

Dubé and Menon (2000) focus on the subjective-experiential cognitive component to discover what consumers feel about service. This research adopts the same approach, while also drawing on the two-dimensional model (pleasure and arousal) because of its advantages in leisure contexts (Jiang & Wang, 2006).

Fournier (1998) states that consumers' emotional bonding with a service provider has a stronger link to future purchase intentions than does the cognitive component of satisfaction. This statement reveals the importance of considering the study of consumer emotions in hedonic contexts, and relates emotions to service evaluations such as satisfaction, perceived value, and future intentions.

In the sport context, Sumino and Harada (2004) observe that excitement is a predictor of intentions to attend future sport fixtures. Negative emotions, in contrast, induce unfavorable behavioral intentions (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003). Additionally, Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Maroco, and Ross (2012) find that only one specific emotion, namely joy, predicts spectators' future intentions and satisfaction. Thus, previous studies in management and sport management suggest a lack of consensus regarding how emotions relate to consumer assessments of hedonic services and, by extension, sport events. Exploring the role of emotions in sport spectators' assessments is therefore necessary.

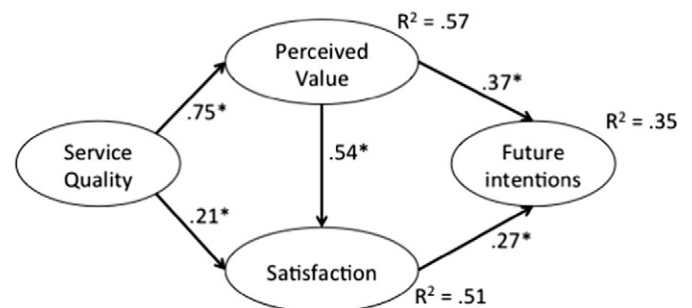
**H6.** Spectators' emotions have a moderating effect on predicting perceived value, satisfaction, and future intentions.

In summary, the research model tests the effects of three constructs: service quality on satisfaction and perceived value; perceived value on satisfaction and future intentions; and spectator satisfaction on future intentions (Fig. 1). Finally, the model tests the moderating effect of spectators' emotions on these relationships.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants and sampling

The sample for this study is a convenience sample of spectators who attended basketball matches of a first division club throughout the regular season 2012–2013. The initial sample size was 497. After eliminating questionnaires from respondents under 18 years old and those who responded with more than 80% item non-response, the final sample comprises 493 spectators. Ages range from 18 to 76 (average age = 36.6 ± 12.2). Table 1 shows sample characteristics. The gender distribution is 68.1% men and 31.9% women. Most participants have attained a



**Fig. 1.** Service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and future intentions model for basketball spectators. \* $p < 0.05$ . Model fit:  $\chi^2(df) = 378.92(130)$ ; S-B  $\chi^2(df) = 253.85(130)$ ; NNFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06.

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