

An Attendance Behavior Model At Sports Events: Comparison and Constrast of Two Models

Manuel Alonso DOS SANTOS*

The purpose of this research is to improve our understanding of consumer behavior in the context of sporting events by means of the use of two models which are widely used in the marketing literature: one of them is based on the planned behavior theory, the other one is based on the expectation disconfirmation theory. Both models contribute to the research on satisfaction from a cognitive-affective point of view, integrating the study of emotions, motivations and consumer satisfaction. For the study a survey was undertaken at a stadium of a professional sporting entity. The contrast between the proposed hypotheses (n=205) was carried out using factor analysis (FA) and structural equation systems (SEM). The obtained results allow us both to recognize the discriminating and converging validity of the studied dimensions and to learn the important differences in the influence that each of them has on the intentions of future behavior.

Keywords: sports events, spectator sport, attendance, disconfirmation, emotions

Competition between sporting entities is the main reason for their existence. This competition has gone beyond game grounds, and sporting organizations compete to a large extent to attract spectators and fans. These companies fight to capture their interest, in competition with other sport and leisure entities, by means of marketing techniques to segment the market in order to apply different strategies for each segment. This way, the club becomes better known and preferred, which, among other things, translates into an attendance increase at sporting events.

* Department of Marketing and Market Research, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Granada, Spain; Department of Business Organisation, Marketing and Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Jaén, Spain..

Spectators' attendance may drop due to factors such as an increase in city teams, players trade, ticket price, and players' wages (Van Leeuwen et al., 2002). Only large clubs are in a position to focus their business on income sources such as image rights, broadcasting rights, T-shirt sales and other symbols related to the club. Small entities are forced to focus their efforts on obtaining regular income through ticket sales.

In this sense, by increasing their knowledge of sport spectators' behavior, clubs will be able to raise or, at least, stabilize their ticket sales income, retain existing members and indirectly improve their sponsorship resources and image rights. This knowledge increase will allow us them to formulate more successful marketing strategies, aimed at gaining market share, as well as generating a positive common knowledge and decrease complaints.

Previous studies on attendance behavior at sporting events (Woo et al., 2009) had focused on demographical factors such as age, education level or gender to segment the market (Kahle et al., 1996; Zhang et al., 2001; Fink et al., 2002). More recently, other authors have put forward social (Kim, S., et al., 2008) or motivational factors (Kahle et al., 1996), but few of them have gone deeper into constructing models applicable to consumer behavior at sporting events (Van Leeuwen et al., 2002; Barajas Alonso & Crolley, 2005; Woo et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, Ajzen (1992) anticipated that it would be advisable to study the consumer intentions of sport spectators from the identity theory standpoint and from a consumersatisfaction perspective. Following these suggestions, the purpose of this study is both to prove how effectively we can predict attendance behavior at sporting events using a model based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), a theory which has produced very good results in other areas (Sheppard et al., 1988), and to contrast it with a model based on the disconfirmation of expectations (DIS), widely used in leisure and tourism services (Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005).

This piece of research covers the obvious shortage of studies on attendance behavior at sporting events. On the one hand, it is the first study of these characteristics in the Spanish context; equally it is the first rapprochement to attendance behavior at sporting events from the perspective supplied by the theory of planned behavior and the expectation disconfirmation theory. On the other hand, this work is an original rapprochement to the study of the role of satisfaction in sport marketing, by evaluating the satisfaction process from an affective (emotions) and cognitive (disconfirmation) point of view, an aspect particularly relevant in most services (Szymanski, David, M., & Henard, 2001) along with the particularly interesting contribution of the direct relation that motivation has on intention.

Behavior Models in the Literature

Despite the importance involved in understanding consumer behavior at sporting events for a sport club to survive financially, there is very little literature about this particular matter (Shamir & Ruskins, 1984).

Wakefield & Blodgett (1994) were pioneers in focusing their research on attendance behavior at events. Their study had the objective of examining the hedonistic aspect of the service of sporting events, but also of amusement parks, theatres and leisure centers. They carried out two studies, and both revealed that consumer satisfaction was directly linked to both the quality of the facilities, and to emotion. As far as emotion was concerned, it was indirectly related to consumer satisfaction, as well as to crowding and involvement duration.

In his model (DEM) Madrigal (1995) suggests that consumer satisfaction at sporting events is based on cognitive and affective factors. His model includes six variables, three of them are cognitive, two are affective and one of them is directly related to consumer satisfaction. Madrigal focused his research on the service component. He found that the affective components of reflected glory (Sloan, 1989) and enjoyment of the game were directly related to consumer satisfaction. These variables also affected the cognitive components of disconfirmation of expectations, identification with the team and opponents status.

Kahle et al. (1996) developed a model based on Kelman's theory (Kelman, 1958), which describes the motivational process in three stages: compliance, identification and internalization, and found a direct relation between attendance and internalization, camaraderie and self-expression.

Leeuwen et al. (Van Leeuwen et al., 2002) developed the sport spectator satisfaction model (SSSM). They based their model on DEM (Madrigal, 1995), to which they added the intrinsic features of sport. It was developed on the basis of theories of disconfirmation of expectations of consumer behavior, sport marketing, social identity and marketing of services. However, this model had no empirical verification.

Laverie & Arnett (2000) examined the relationship between identity and satisfaction from the social identity theory viewpoint, thus continuing with Madrigal's work (1995). Her research, undertaken among university students, posits that enduring involvement, attachment and situational involvement all have a positive effect on identity and satisfaction.

Trail et al. (Trail, G. T., et al., 2003a) put forward a model with six factors accounting for behavior: motives, level of identification, expectations, confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations, self-esteem and affective state of the individual. He hypothesizes that each factor has an effect on the next one in a sequential manner, either directly or indirectly. The study was carried out in two interuniversity basketball games and the results were not satisfactory. Although the model has good internal consistency and construct validity, 89.4% variance of future consumer behavior could not be accounted for using the model variables.

Finally, Caro & García (2007) focused their research on measuring consumer loyalty at a specific sporting event. Their results show that the emotional factor is responsible for satisfaction with the sporting event, while the pleasure factor is not.

Proposal for an Attendance Behavior Model at Sport Events Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) is a development of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and it has its origin in the field of social psychology. It has three basic components: attitude, subjective norm and perceived control, all of which determine intention, and the latter, in turn, determines behavior. Attitude is the result of the evaluation of a behavior or conduct. Subjective norms are defined as the pressure on an individual to act in a particular way. Perceived control refers to the factors that facilitate or hamper carrying out an activity (Ajzen, 1991). This theoretical approach has been used for over 30 years and its predictive capability has been proved in a wide number of studies on a large variety of behavioral types (Sheppard et al., 1988). Therefore, it is an appropriate theoretical scheme to study human behavior in general (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006) and the field of leisure activities in particular (Ajzen & Driver, 1992).

The following hypotheses are formulated on the generic basis of the TPB:

H1: Subjective norms have a positive influence on the intention of attending the game again.

H2: Attitude has a positive influence on the intention of attending the game again.

H3: Control has a positive influence on the intention of attending the game again.

Individuals attend games for different reasons, so that this behavior is due to one reason or a combination of reasons (Trail, G. T., et al., 2000b). In several studies it has been proved that most motivations are correlated, which leads to the conclusion of the existence of a second order construct called individual motives (Wann, 1995; Trail & James, 2001). A direct, positive relation has been demonstrated between consumers' motives and their behavior (Hsieh, 2003). Therefore the following hypothesis is put forward:

H4: Individual motives have a positive influence on intention.

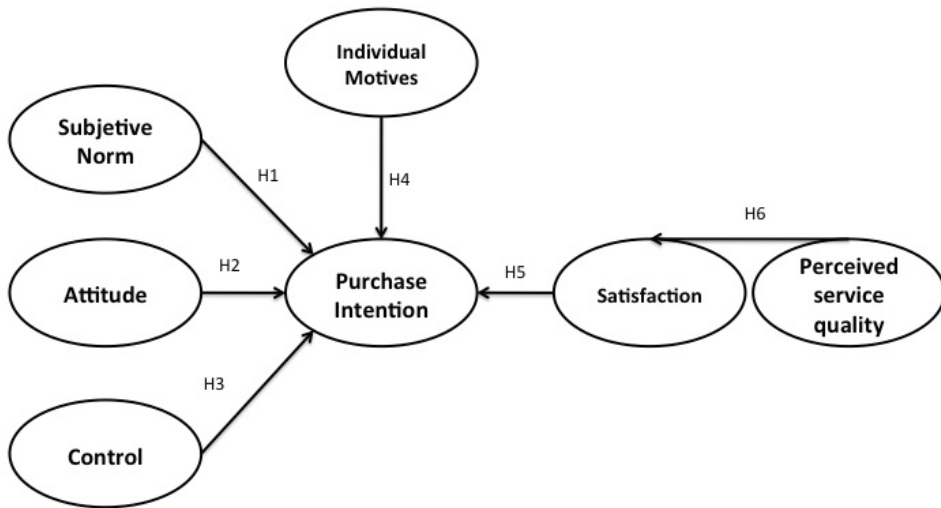
From the late 1960s marketing and consumer behavior researchers have been interested in the concept of satisfaction (Alvarado Herrera & Beltrán Gallego, 2008), however there is no consensus nowadays about its definition or nature (Bigné & Andreu, 2004). In the last few years, some researchers (Yu & Dean, 2001) suggest that a more appropriate measure will be obtained if we understand satisfaction as an emotional, cognitive process. Even the researchers who advocate the disconfirmation paradigm as the explanatory core of satisfaction (Alvarado Herrera & Beltrán Gallego, 2008) uphold the need to consider new perspectives (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Mano & Oliver, 1993), which is highly relevant even in the particular case of sporting events (Caro & García, 2007). In the literature we can observe a trend of authors who defend that a better measure of satisfaction would be obtained if the latter is regarded as a double process of a cognitive and affective nature (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Cronin et al., 2000). Some papers already agree that satisfaction is an affective response that comes from a cognitive judgment (Yu & Dean, 2001), consequently it is accepted that global satisfaction is formed by two dimensions: evaluative satisfaction and emotional satisfaction. Herrera & Beltrán Gallego (2008) cites the pieces of research that recognize the positive influence of satisfaction on intention (Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Price & Arnould, 1999; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2007). Some of them focus specifically on the area of sporting events (Price & Arnould, 1999; Cronin, J. J., et al., 2000). Therefore:

H5: Satisfaction has a positive influence on intention.

The specialized literature pays great attention to the relation between satisfaction and service quality, and to a discussion about the management of the relation between both dimensions (Civera Satorres, 2008). According to some authors, satisfaction is a precedent to the perceived quality of service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), whereas others take the opposite stand (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). Others have empirically contrasted that service quality can be considered as a precedent to and a consequence of satisfaction (McAlexander, Kaldenburg, & Koenig, 1994). Subsequently, this relation has

been examined; reaching the conclusion that the only possible relation is that quality is a precedent to satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). This last stand is the one taken in this paper.

H6: Perceived quality has a positive influence on satisfaction.



Proposal for a Behavior Model Based on the Disconfirmation Paradigm

There is a large debate in the marketing literature about the definition of satisfaction and the various theoretical approaches to tackle it. Among these approaches, we can mention (Bigné & Andreu, 2004) the equity theory (Oliver & Swan, 1989), the affective approach (Oliver, 1993), perceived result (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982), norms in consumer satisfaction (Cadotte & Cols, 1987), based on attribution (Folkes, 1988), based on a multiple process (Tse & Wilton, 1988) or disconfirmation of expectations (R. L. Oliver, 1980). This model is framed within the affective-cognitive theory with the aim of contrasting the trend in the specialized literature that insists on the need to view the consumer satisfaction process from an affective approach with cognitive influence (Wirtz & Bateson, 1999; Bigné & Andreu, 2004).

Disconfirmation is the result of comparing the obtained result to what the consumer expected after a purchasing decision. It can be positive or negative (Oliver, R. L., 1997). It has been the structure on which the models that evaluate consumer experience have been upheld, confirming the direct causal relation between disconfirmation and satisfaction (Oliver, R. L., & DeSarbo, 1988; Szymanski, David M., & Henard, 2001). The following hypothesis is based on this relation:

H7: Disconfirmation has a positive influence on consumer satisfaction.

Sporting events spectators interact with the service and as a consequence they generate emotions. The relation between disconfirmation and emotions has been contrasted in the literature (Wirtz & Bateson, 1999; Menon & Dube, 2000; Bigné & Andreu, 2004) and the direct positive relation between the disconfirmation value and the emotion intensity has been confirmed to explain consumer satisfaction (Woodruff, Cadotte, & Jenkins, 1983). The following hypotheses are formulated taking into account previous pieces of research which reveal that a negative disconfirmation causes displeasure, whereas a result exceeding expectations causes pleasure, so that a positive disconfirmation produces activation (Wirtz & Bateson, 1999):

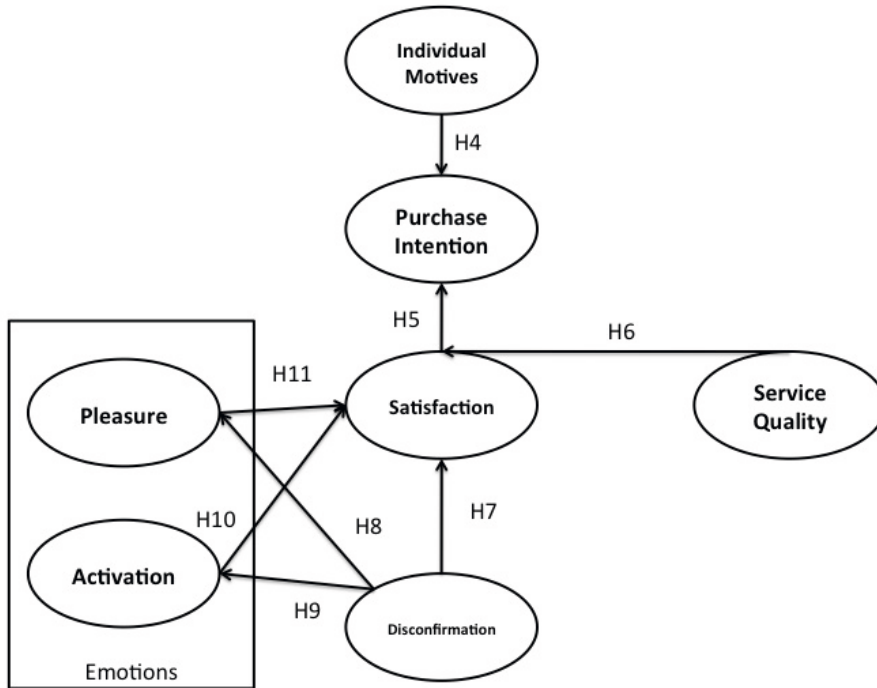
H8: Disconfirmation has a positive influence on the pleasure dimension.

H9: Disconfirmation has a positive influence on the activation dimension.

H10: The Pleasure dimension has a positive influence on satisfaction.

H11: The Activation dimension has a positive influence on satisfaction.

Figure 2. Model Based on the Expectation Disconfirmation Theory



Research Methodology

Study Preparation. The scales and items included in the questionnaire have been adapted from first level specialized magazines which provides content validity. An attendance motivations scale (AMS) (Alonso Dos Santos, 2010) was used in order to measure consumer motivations.

Data Collection. The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of five people in the inside of a football stadium of a third level professional team of a Spanish city 60 minutes before the start of the game and during half time. Surveys and pencils were given out to a total of 230 spectators located in different areas of the stadium, taking into account the percentage of members, attendance on the day of the game, areas and their characteristics. The answering rate was 90%.

The final sample was made up by 95% males, 53% of the total were under 35 years old and 77% had secondary or college education. Out of the sample

total, 67% were club members, 41% attended the stadium at least twice a month and 34% usually travelled to support the club.

Scales Validation. First of all an individual analysis was undertaken to subsequently carry out a joint analysis to check the reliability and validity of the scales.

The two-dimensionality and reliability of the Emotions concept, as well as the convergent validity of both dimensions ($\alpha = 0.89$; $VE = 0.58$), was verified by means of a confirmatory factor analysis of second order carried out using the computer program SPSS 17.

As for global Satisfaction, its content validity and exploratory reliability ($\alpha = 0.94$), its concept, one-dimensional and convergent validity ($S-\chi^2 = 34.56$; $gl = 5$; $p = 0.00$; $AGFI = 0.81$ $GFI = 0.934$ $RMSEA = 0.076$) were confirmed.

The AMS scale (Alonso Dos Santos, 2010) shows good internal consistency, exploratory and individual reliability, as well as convergent validity ($S-\chi^2 = 189.56$; $gl = 73$; $p = 0.00$; $AGFI = 0.83$ $GFI = 0.882$ $RMSEA = 0.068$), which mean that it is a good measurement instrument (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 1 shows the reliability analysis, internal consistency and convergent validity of the items of both models. The dimensions Intention, Norms, Control, Quality and Promotion show a value for Extracted Variance, Compound Reliability and/or Cronbach's Alpha under the recommended value although they are relatively acceptable (Churchill, 1979; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). After the study of exploratory reliability items CAL3 and PRO1 were eliminated in order to improve the Cronbach's Alpha index.

Table 1. Standardized Estimated Coefficients (λ), Cronbach's Alpha (α), Extracted Variance (EV) and Compound Reliability (CR)

	λ	α	EV	CR
<i>Intention</i>		0.61	0.31	0.57
INT1	0.37			
INT2	0.46			
INT3	0.74			
<i>Pleasure</i>		0.87	0.69	0.87
PLE1	0.7			
PLE2	0.88			
PLE3	0.91			
<i>Activation</i>		0.76	0.68	0.73
ACT1	0.84			
ACT2	0.64			
ACT3	0.66			
<i>Norms</i>		0.51	0.18	0.34
NOR1	0.47			
NOR2	0.1			
NOR3	0.63			
<i>Attitude</i>		0.73	0.5	0.74
ATD1	0.7			
ATD2	0.81			
ATD3	0.59			
<i>Control</i>		0.57	0.22	0.41
CON1	0.4			
CON2	0.61			
CON3	0.58			
<i>Satisfaction</i>		0.94	0.74	0.94
EMS1	0.9			
EMS2	0.94			
EMS3	0.86			

Tabel 1. (continuare)

EMS4	0.73			
EVA1	0.85			
Quality		0.73	0.33	0.73
QUA1	0.65			
QUA2	0.76			
QUA4	0.55			
QUA5	0.52			
QUA6	0.54			
Disconfirmation				
DIS1	0.3			
DIS2	0.15			

Analysis of the Model Causal Relations. Once the reliability and validity of the employed scales were checked, an analysis of the model causal relations was carried out (Kaplan, 2000).

Table 2 shows the formulated hypotheses along with the structural relation presented and their result. Version 16 of the computer program AMOS was used to carry out that contrast. Among the various estimation methods, Bootstrap was used with 1000 replicas.

As for the hypotheses presented in the TPB model, the standardized weights proved both significant and in the expected theoretical sense [H1 ($p < 0.05$), H3 ($p < 0.05$)], which means that it is not possible to reject them, inasmuch as it is necessary to reject hypothesis H2 regarding the direct weight of attitude on intention, which contradicts a priori previous research finds (Ajzen & Driver, 1992). Hypotheses H5 ($p > 0.05$) are also rejected in both models.

Table 2. SEM Results for TPB and Disconfirmation Models

Hypothesis	Structural Relation presented	TPB Model Result	DIS Model Result
H1	INT<---NOR	Accepted	
H2	INT<---ATA	Not accepted	
H3	INT<---CON	Accepted	
H4	INT<---MOT	Accepted	Accepted
H5	INT<---SAT	Not accepted	Not accepted
H6	SAT<---QUA	Accepted	Accepted
H7	SAT<---DIS		Accepted
H8	PLE<---DIS		Accepted
H9	ACT<---DIS		Accepted
H10	SAT<---ACT		Accepted
H11	SAT<---PLE		Accepted

Model Adjustment. Table 3 shows the comparison of absolute, incremental and parsimonious goodness-of-fit indices. As for goodness of fit, both the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) and the RMSR (Root Mean Square Residual) indices were used, whose values were 0.075 and 0.39 respectively for the DIS model, and 0.08 and 0.434 for the TPB model. Based on the data, it can be stated that the DIS model presents a better absolute fit index, although both models have a RMSEA value lower than recommended (Hu & Bentler, 1999). As for the incremental fit index IFI (Incremental Fit Index) and CFI (Comparative Fit Index), both models show values close to 1. Lastly, in reference to the parsimonious fit, indexes PGFI (Parsimonious Goodness of Fit Index) and PNFI (Parsimonious Normed Fit Index) were used. These indices reveal that the DIS model is more parsimonious.

Table 3. Absolute, Incremental and Parsimonious Goodness-of-Fit Indices

	RMSEA	RMR	IFI	PNFI	PGFI	CFI
DIS Model	0.075	0.39	0.811	0.619	0.623	0.808
TCP Model	0.08	0.434	0.749	0.585	0.626	0.745

Discussion

In this paper two models, widely used in the marketing literature, have been put forward to model consumer behavior, one of them is based on the theory of planned behavior and the other one on the disconfirmation of expectations. Both models contribute to the research on satisfaction from a cognitive-affective point of view, integrating the study of both emotions and consumer satisfaction. For the research, a survey was conducted at a professional sporting entity stadium of a Spanish city (n=205). For this study scales based on papers widely accepted in the marketing literature were used, which grants it content validity.

For the study of motivations the attendance motivation scale (Alonso Dos Santos, 2010) was used.

To validate the scales, the extracted variance, compound reliability indices were used, as well as Cronbach's alpha and the study of standardized coefficients. The scale items show good internal consistency and convergent validity except for dimensions intention, norms, control and quality, which present values lower than recommended although acceptable.

As for comparing both models, indices RMSEA, RMR, IFI, PNFI and CFI show that the model based on the disconfirmation of expectations has a better global fit than the model based on the TPB, although both show RMSEA values under the recommendation (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

From the study of the model causal relations, the non-significant relation of Attitude on Intention stands out. Social psychologists have long been interested in understanding the conditions of this relation and its influence on intention and behavior (Millar, M.G., 1989).

Other authors have studied the moderation of other dimensions on the attitude-intention relation (Costarelli, S., & Colloca, P., 2007) and they have found moderators such as direct experience, affective-cognitive consistency, stability, accessibility, use of students in the sample, etc. (Kraus, S. J., 1995). Zhou et al. (2009) object that the evaluative, affective and cognitive components of attitude can moderate the attitude-intention-behavior relation. As Zhou et al. (2009) quote, various studies have corroborated this effect: Franc (1999) Norman (1975).

Bagozzi (1992) argues that attitudes and subjective norms are not sufficient factors to determine intention and that attitude can have a direct influence on behavior. Attitudes can sometimes stimulate an action as it is the case of impulse

buying, a routine response behavior, or purchases made in answer to emotional pressures. However, in these conditions, it could be stated that conduct is not completely under volitive control (Bagozzi et al., 1989). It is for these reasons that it is reasonable to think that there is a moderating dimension not taken into account in this study affecting the attitude-intention relation or that the situation of sport success may have influenced the results by encouraging impulse buying, emotional or affective factors.

As for the relation of satisfaction on intention, five items, four emotional and one evaluative, have been used to measure satisfaction. As it is measured by emotional factors, it is possible that the audience only attend what they consider important games. Similar results have been obtained previously (Alvarado Herrera & Beltrán Gallego, 2008).

Conclusions

The results imply important recommendations for management, since this study will allow them to learn about the consumer satisfaction process and the consumer's willingness to attend events. Its study and practical application will increase market share, it will generate a word-of-mouth effect and it will diminish complaints. Clubs rely on loyal fans, but not all spectators match that profile. Spectators' attendance may drop due to factors such as the increase of teams in the city, the trade of players, ticket prices and players wages (Van Leeuwen et al., 2002). Exceptionally, an entity may sell their image rights, small clubs have ticket sales as their main income source.

This research has put forward an integrative model of satisfaction to measure its background and its consequences. It also contributes to the research of satisfaction from a cognitive-affective approach, which is applicable to services that generate emotions, hence the reason for applying it to this field, generator of emotions in the consumer.

Although the emotional aspect of the concept of satisfaction has only recently begun to be studied (Yu and Dean, 2001), it concludes that both cognitive and affective factors have an important role in determining customer satisfaction (Bigné & Andreu, 2004).

Emotions act together with disconfirmation directly on satisfaction; also, cognitive assessments (disconfirmation) significantly influence emotions, which carry important implications for communication strategies of sporting organizations. Communication campaigns influence consumer expectations, focusing on the disconfirmation of expectations and, in turn, on the generation

of emotions. That is, the cognitive evaluation of the consumer between what is expected and what is received during the service development positively affects their emotions and satisfaction, indicating that consumers experience pleasure and activation during the development of the service when they perceive a positive disconfirmation. Therefore, factors that enhance the consumer's affective state during the development of the service indirectly increase satisfaction.

Due to the increasing competition in the sector of leisure and tourism services sporting organizations should focus on analyzing and developing customer loyalty strategies. The atmosphere in the stadium is essential to generate positive emotions that affect satisfaction. It will therefore be essential to develop strategies for managing services (pricing, communication, product design and creation of an interactive environment with customers).

Therefore the emotions involved in the customer experience are important for management.

All factors that may affect emotions should be studied by sporting bodies. Therefore, organizations should provide the consumer with positive emotions to generate favorable behavior toward products and services of the organization (loyalty and recommendation).

First of all, it is recommended to have a bearing on spectators' emotions so that consumers participate and enjoy the service. For managers this implies that not only do they have to make an effort to offer a quality service, but they must also encourage consumers' emotions to satisfy them and, indirectly, to improve attendance, since emotions have important implications in the communication strategies of service organizations. The expectations are influenced by clubs' communication campaigns, which has an effect on the disconfirmation of expectations and, in turn, on emotions. As it has been proved, the cognitive evaluation of consumers, between what they expect and what they receive during the development of the event, has a positive influence on their emotions and satisfaction. This implies that consumers experience pleasure and activation during the service development when they perceive a positive disconfirmation.

This work is a first rapprochement to the study of satisfaction and its direct influence on the intention of sporting events spectators, particularly of soccer spectators. It contributes to the marketing literature of sporting events by means of an empirical contrast of the emotion, motivation and satisfaction relations involved in the intention to attend sporting events from an affective-cognitive point of view.

Limitations and Future Research Lines. This piece of research must be viewed as a first rapprochement to the study of sports audience behavior. It aims to cast light on this field, so that it can be subsequently refuted using wider and more representative samples of the Spanish population. It is necessary to employ samples from different clubs and to carry out the research at the beginning of the season to avoid the possible influence of extreme results on the research, although the fact is that these factors are part of the event. The results could not be generalized without losing sight of the athletic performance of organizations. It is important to analyze the relations arising from other hedonic services. Also, under a methodological perspective, it is suggested that emotions are measured using non-verbal methodologies (facial measurement systems).

Nevertheless, this study fills a gap in the marketing literature, by contributing to the study of consumer behavior at sporting events with new perspectives on the influence of satisfaction, emotions and motivation.

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Manuel ALONSO DOS SANTOS, Ph.D., is a lecturer within the Department of Marketing and Market Research, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Granada. Also, he is lecturing at the Department of Business Organisation, Marketing and Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, University of Jaen, Spain. His main research interests are: spectator consumer behavior, sport marketing, fan behavior in professional sport, use of internet marketing by sport organisations and consumer satisfaction. E-mail address: manuelalonso@ugr.es
