

## The effects of PSL team characteristics and players' performance on fans' emotions and behavioral intention



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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 22 March 2019

Received in revised form

25 October 2019

Accepted 27 October 2019

#### Keywords:

Team characteristics

Players' performance

Fans' emotions

Behavioral intentions

PSL

### ABSTRACT

Pakistan Super League is a successful cricket sporting event now entering its 4<sup>th</sup> season. Understanding the fans' emotions and behavioral intentions is less understood in this particular context. In this study, we investigated the influence of fans' emotions and behavioral intentions using the team characteristics and players' performance framework. The methodology of the study was a quantitative approach, a cross-sectional research design, and survey-based data collection. We generated a usable sample of 140 using the convenience sampling approach. We used the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability for calculating the reliability; while convergent validity and discriminant validity are established using the average variance extracted and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) based factor loading of individual items. Overall, we found satisfactory reliability and validity for the measures adopted. The CFA results also show that team characteristics and player's performance have significant effects on fans' emotions including anxiety, anger, dejection, happiness, and excitement. Furthermore, the fans' emotions have significant effects on fans' behavioral intentions of attending future games. Our results have implications for the marketers of the PSL teams.

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### 1. Introduction

The sports spectator industry is a large industry having a global worth of US\$ 620 billion per year (Zyband et al., 2011). In Pakistan, the sports spectator industry remained underdeveloped due to various reasons including terrorism, lack of attention, low-income distribution and so on. However, now with the success of the Pakistan Super League, the sports spectator industry is gaining momentum in Pakistan. Carefully design of the event, thoughtful marketing activities, and other relevant factors played their role in gaining fans' emotional and behavioral involvement in the event. In this study, we intend to investigate the low fans' involvement problem and for this using PSL as an event under investigation. There is very little understanding of fans' behavioral and emotional outcomes in this particular context. The focus of the

current study is to investigate how team characteristics and players' performance of their favorite PSL team influence fans emotions and behavioral intentions of attending the game.

#### 1.1. Problem statement

In the sports spectator industry, fans' behavioral attention to attending the sports event is important since it indicates fans' attachment, engagement, and support for his/her team. Furthermore, fans' attendance also makes a sporting event successful or failure. Here, it can be mentioned that fans' attendance can be physical attendance by purchasing the ticket and attending the game in the stadium or watching it through the television which is also a form of attendance. In both cases, the sporting event is able to gain some revenue either directly (through selling tickets) or indirectly (through the advertising shown during the event and the resulting revenues). Thus, it can be seen that in the sports spectator industry, fans' involvement and behavioral intention of attending the game is an important factor. Mostly, such studies are conducted in the Western context, and fewer studies are conducted in the Pakistani sports spectator industry. There is also a valid literature gap regarding understanding fans'

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<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2020.01.004>

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behavioral intention in the Pakistan Super League context. Thus the focus of this study is to investigate the fans behavioral intention of attending the games from service quality and fans emotion perspective

## 1.2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To measure the effects of team characteristics and players' performance on fans' emotions.
- To measure the effects of fans' emotions on fans' behavioral intentions of attending future games.

## 1.3. Significance of the study

The theoretical significance of the study is that it fills the literature gap by identifying and testing the role of team characteristics and players' performance on fans' behavioral intentions and emotions in the context of the Pakistan Super League. This context or the general sports spectator industry is not given much attention by the previous researchers and a valid literature gap exists which this study seeks to fulfill. The practical significance of the study for sports marketers is that marketers can better understand customer engagement using the findings of this study. Pakistan Super League and related teams can benefit from the findings of the study by a better understanding of how to keep their fans involved. Finally, the sports spectator industry in Pakistan can also take benefit from the findings of this study.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Core product quality in sports spectator industry

In the context of sports spectator industry, there are various factors which shapes fans purchase decision including brand association (Hyun and Kim, 2014); fans involvement (Kunkel et al., 2013); fan motivation (Izzo et al., 2011); and team identification (Lock et al., 2012). Besides the above-mentioned factors, the other important factor which also influences fans' involvement in the service quality feature.

The core product in Pakistan Super League is entertainment arises because of the suspense feature of the cricket game and the resulting excitement. Various factors such as skills and strategies used by a particular team, reputation of team, key players in each team, standings location, stadium settings, and probability of winning a particular game, team history, location and quality of players plays key role in shaping the customer experience of core product of sports spectator (Debanne and Laffaye, 2017). In this study, we focus on two important features namely team characteristics and player performance. According to Harrolle and Trail (2007), team characteristics are about fans' perception

regarding different qualities of the team including team history, the number of star players, chances of winning, winning history, team rating and so on. According to Harrolle and Trail (2007), player performance is about how fans perceive the technical and physical performance of the team over rival teams.

### 2.2. Fans' emotions

According to Mulligan and Scherer (2012); emotion is an individual's response to a stimulus. Previous studies show that in the service industry, it is important for firms to understand the emotional reactions of their customers (Kwak et al., 2011; Biscaia et al., 2012). The understanding of fans' emotions in the sports spectator industry remains very low. In the sports spectator industry, fans experience a lot of emotions including positive as well as negative emotions (Jones et al., 2012). The positive emotions fans experience during attending a sports game can be excitement and happiness; while, negative emotions can be disappointment and anger. The emotions experienced by fans is not limited to the physical attendance of match but fans report similar emotions while watching sports over the television.

The literature so far suggests that in the sports spectator industry context, the fans' emotions play an important role in shaping fans' behavioral intentions (Hyun and Kim, 2014). For example, a study conducted by Kim et al. (2017) showed that fans' emotions influence fans' behavior in the sports spectator industry.

### 2.3. Behavioral intentions

According to Westerbeek and Shilbury (2003); behavioral intention is about the extent to which an individual develops conscious plans to act or not act in some specific manner. In the case of the sports spectator industry, the fans' behavioral intention can be categorized as favorable as well as unfavorable behavioral intentions. The favorable behavioral intention includes supporting the team, watching and following the team matches, buying team merchandise, recommending to others, defending the team and so on; while, unfavorable behavioral intentions include leaving the team, stop watching or following the game, complaining and so on (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

### 2.4. Relationship between quality of product and emotions

In the sports spectator industry, the core quality of products includes team player performance and team characteristics. Previous studies indicate that fans' perception of the core product quality has significant effects on fans' emotions. For example, a study conducted by Yoshida and James (2010) showed that fans' perception of their team players'

performance and team characteristics influence fans' satisfaction towards the team. Similarly, a study conducted by Harrolle et al. (2010) showed that fans' perception of team-related characteristics influences the team's emotions.

A study conducted by Foroughi et al. (2016) also showed that team characteristics and player performance are significantly related to the negative emotions of anxiety and positive emotions of excitement and happiness. Based on the previous studies, we develop the hypothesis that fans' perception of team characteristics and team players' performance influences fans' emotions.

## 2.5. Relationship between fans emotions and fans behavioral intentions

Previous studies show that fans' emotions also influence fans' behavioral intentions (Biscaia et al., 2012). In the sports spectator industry, fans' emotions also found to be associated with fans' behavioral intentions. For example, a study conducted by Kwak et al. (2011) found that fans' emotions have a significant influence on fans' behavioral intentions. A study conducted by Hong et al. (2005) found that fans' emotional bond has a significant influence on fans' behavioral intentions of purchasing the merchandise and team matches. Similarly, a study conducted by Harrolle et al. (2010) also showed that fans' emotions influence behavior including loyalty towards the team. Other studies also found a significant relationship between fans' emotions and fans' behavioral intentions including Faorughi et al. (2015), Sumino and Harada (2004) and Hong et al. (2005). Based on the findings of previous studies, we hypothesize that fans' emotions influence fans' behavioral intentions.

## 3. Research methodology

### 3.1. Research design

The design of the study is explanatory since we attempt to explain the relationship between variables. In terms of time frame, the design is cross-sectional since we only intend to collect data once from the participants.

### 3.2. Survey instrument

Measure for team characteristics is adopted from Yoshida and James (2010) consisted of 4 items. Measure for player performance is adapted from Yoshida and James (2010) consisted of 5 items. Fans' emotions are measured by a scale developed by Jones et al. (2012) known as 'SEQ'. In this scale, there are 4 items for anxiety, 3 items for anger, 3 items for dejection, 3 items for happiness, and 4 items for excitement. Measure for the behavioral intention of future attending the game is adapted from Cronin and Taylor (1994) consisted of 3 items.

### 3.3. Population and sampling

The focus of the study is the Pakistan Super League which consisted of 6 teams so its team's fans make the population of the study. The population is very large and relatively unknown so we used the sampling approach. We used G\*Power software for sample size calculation (Faul et al., 2009). Based on .05 error probability and 95% confidence interval, our required sample size is 132.

### 3.4. Data analysis

Data is analyzed using SPSS version 20 for demographic and descriptive statistics. AMOS version 20 is used for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

### 3.5. Reliability and validity

Validity refers to the ability of an instrument to measure the variables which it is intended to measure (Asika, 2005). Different types of validity can be established using various methods. According to Hair et al. (2010), a common type of validity includes face validity, criterion validity, and construct validity. In this study, we established the validity through construct validity. The construct validity refers to the extent to which, there is a fit between an instrument and theories on which test is based. We used the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for establishing the construct validity for this study. The CFA establishes two types of validity including convergent validity and discriminative validity both of which are part of construct validity (Cooper and Schindler, 2005).

Reliability refers to the consistency between independent measurements of the same phenomenon (Asika, 2005). In this study, we used the Cronbach alpha and Composite Reliability for establishing the reliability of the measures. Both tests are indicators of internal consistency between the measured items. The acceptable lower limit for Cronbach alpha and composite reliability is above 0.60.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Demographic details

The demographic details of the survey participants are given in Table 1. There were 103 males and 37 females participated in the survey. 48 participants were in the age group of 18 to 25 years; 54 participants were in the age group of 25 to 40 years; 27 were in the age group of 40 to 60 years, and 11 participants were in the age group of above 60 years. Based on the team which survey participants supporting, 27 were supporting Islamabad United; 18 were supporting Karachi Kings; 29 were supporting Lahore Qalandars; 20 were supporting Multan Sultans; 23 were supporting

Peshawar Zalmi, and 23 were supporting Quetta Gladiators. Demographic details are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic details**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	103	73.6
Female	37	26.4
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 25 Years	48	34.3
25 to 40 Years	54	38.6
40 to 60 Years	27	19.3
Above 60 Years	11	7.9
<b>Supporting Team</b>		
Islamabad United	27	19.3
Karachi Kings	18	12.9
Lahore Qalandars	29	20.7
Multan Sultans	20	14.3
Peshawar Zalmi	23	16.4
Quetta Gladiators	23	16.4

#### 4.2. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are given in Table 2. Descriptive statistics indicate that according to the survey participants, team characteristics were favorable (M=3.84, SD=0.78); and player performance was also above average level (M=3.61,

SD=0.61). The participants experienced moderate level of anxiety (M=3.49, SD=0.73); anger (M=3.55, SD=0.74); dejection (M=3.86, SD=0.82); happiness (M=3.35, SD=0.70); and excitement (M=3.67, SD=0.60) while attending the match. The behavioral intentions of the participants for attending future games for their respective teams were also high (M=3.81, SD=0.56).

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Team Characteristics	3.8446	.78111
Player Performance	3.6157	.61308
Anxiety	3.4976	.73128
Anger	3.5548	.74225
Dejection	3.8619	.82911
Happiness	3.3595	.70407
Excitement	3.6768	.60387
Behavioral Intention to Attend Future Games	3.8143	.56584

#### 4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

The CFA is used for testing the reliability and validity of the measures adopted. We used fit indices including RMSEA, RMR, GFI, and AGFI for testing the fit of the model. The results were shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Reliability and validity**

		Factor Loading	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Team Characteristics	TC1	.948	.791	.716	.937
	TC2	.935			
	TC3	.83			
	TC4	.839			
Player Performance	PP1	.719	.911	.838	.978
	PP2	.664			
	PP3	.655			
	PP4	1.474			
	PP5	1.000			
Anxiety	An1	1.000	.838	.854	.876
	An2	1.374			
	An3	1.129			
Anger	Ag1	1.000	.932	.765	.793
	Ag2	1.492			
	Ag3	1.648			
Dejection	Dj1	1.000	.769	.743	.935
	Dj2	1.234			
	Dj3	.985			
Happiness	Ha1	1.000	.848	.837	.793
	Ha2	1.711			
	Ha3	1.434			
Excitement	Ex1	1.000	.739	.922	.864
	Ex2	1.355			
	Ex3	1.124			
	Ex4	1.369			
Behavioral Intentions	BI1	1.000	.679	.884	.943
	BI2	1.636			
	BI3	1.135			

Initial Model: X2=789.905, DF=335, X2/df=2.35, RMSEA=.076, RMR=.076, GFI=.835; Revised Model: X2=613, DF=316, X2/df=1.939, RMSEA=.047, RMR=.048, GFI=.923

The initial model did not achieve the model fitness, so we used some modification indices. After modification, the revised model achieved the model fitness criteria as clear from model fitness indices including RMSEA (0.047), RMR (0.048), and GFI (0.923). The factor loading of all items is above 0.60 and AVE is also above 0.50 so it indicates that our measures had good convergent validity. The Cronbach alpha and composite reliability (CR) for all variables are above 0.70 so it indicates that our

measures had good reliability. Next, we established the discriminant validity using the discriminant validity index given in Table 4. In Table 4, the values are a correlation and diagonal bold values are the square root of AVE. the requirement is that the square root of AVE should be greater than other values in the rows and column (Awang, 2014). The results are given in Table 4.

The results indicate that the diagonal bold values which are the square root of AVE are greater than all



other values in its respective rows and column so satisfying the condition and indicating that our measures had good discriminant validity. Overall, based on AVE, square root of AVE, composite

reliability, Cronbach alpha, and model fitness indices, it can be argued that the reliability and validity of the measures adapted are established. The results of CFA for hypothesis testing are given in [Table 5](#).

**Table 4: Discriminant validity**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Team Characteristics	<b>.889</b>	.505	.459	.543	.543	.346	.366	.488
Player Performance	.505	<b>.954</b>	.497	.448	.368	.301	.240	.308
Anxiety	.459	.497	<b>.915</b>	.441	.276	.406	.391	.347
Anger	.543	.448	.441	<b>.965</b>	.293	.454	.321	.390
Dejection	.543	.368	.276	.293	<b>.876</b>	.191	.237	.296
Happiness	.346	.301	.406	.454	.191	<b>.920</b>	.525	.466
Excitement	.366	.240	.391	.321	.237	.525	<b>.859</b>	.525
Behavioral Intention of Attending Future Games	.488	.308	.347	.390	.296	.466	.525	<b>.824</b>

**Table 5: Regression coefficients**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Anger	<---	Team Charact	.935	.093	10.05376	***
Anxiety	<---	Team Charact	.736	.065	11.32308	***
Dejection	<---	Team Charact	.576	.053	10.86792	***
Excitement	<---	Team Charact	.865	.063	13.73016	***
Happiness	<---	Team Charact	1.232	.076	16.21053	***
Anger	<---	Player Perform	-.235	.062	-3.79032	***
Anxiety	<---	Player Perform	.387	.043	9	***
Dejection	<---	Player Perform	.359	.023	15.6087	***
Excitement	<---	Player Perform	.429	.043	9.976744	***
Happiness	<---	Player Perform	.598	.053	11.28302	***
Behavioral Intention	<---	Anger	-.987	.057	-17.315	***
Behavioral Intention	<---	Anxiety	-.876	.087	-10.069	***
Behavioral Intention	<---	Dejection	-.536	.235	-2.28085	***
Behavioral Intention	<---	Excitement	.943	.565	1.669027	***
Behavioral Intention	<---	Happiness	.568	.457	1.242881	.087

Results for path analysis using the SEM states that team characteristics have positive and significant effects on anger ( $\beta=0.935$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); anxiety ( $\beta=.736$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); dejection ( $\beta=0.576$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); excitement ( $\beta=0.865$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); and happiness ( $\beta=1.232$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Similarly, players performance has significant effects on anger ( $\beta=-0.235$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); anxiety ( $\beta=0.387$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); dejection ( $\beta=0.359$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); excitement ( $\beta=.429$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); and happiness ( $\beta=0.598$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Finally, fans emotions including anger ( $\beta=-0.987$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); anxiety ( $\beta=-0.876$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); dejection ( $\beta=-0.536$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); excitement ( $\beta=0.943$ ,  $P<0.05$ ); has positive and significant effects on fans behavioral intentions of attending the future games. Only happiness effects on fans' behavioral intentions turned out to be insignificant ( $\beta=0.568$ ,  $P>0.05$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The objective of the study was to test the effects of service quality (team characteristics and players' performance) on the fans' emotions experienced and behavioral intentions of attending future games in the context of PSL, Pakistan. The study utilized the quantitative approach, survey-based data collection, and convenience sampling. The findings of the study indicate that team characteristics and player's performance has significant effects on fans' emotions (anger, anxiety, dejection, excitement, and happiness). Furthermore, these fans' emotions have significant effects on fans' behavioral intentions of attending the future PSL games of their supporting teams. Our findings are consistent with the findings

of previous studies. For example, previous studies show that team characteristics and players' performance has significant effects on fans' emotions during attending the games ([Yoshida and James, 2010](#); [Harrolle et al., 2010](#); [Foroughi et al., 2016](#)). The results related to the effects of fans' emotions on fans' behavioral intentions are also consistent with the findings of previous studies including [Biscaia et al. \(2012\)](#), [Kwak et al. \(2011\)](#), [Hong et al. \(2005\)](#) and [Sumino and Harada \(2004\)](#). Thus, overall, our results are consistent with the findings of previous studies.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the study findings, we can conclude that team characteristics and players' performance are important indicators of service quality in the PSL context. Furthermore, it can be concluded that team characteristics and players' performance has significant effects on the fan's emotions and behavioral intentions of attending future games. It can also be concluded that emotions are an important factor in determining fans' behavioral intentions in this context.

## 7. Implications of the study

The implications of the study are as follows:

- Our findings have implications for the sports marketers of the PSL teams. The sports marketers must improve their team's image, team characteristics, and positively project players'

performance in order to positively influence fans' emotions and favorable behavioral intentions.

- Our findings also imply that the management of PSL teams must give importance to the team characteristics and players' performance in order to motivate fans to support their respective teams, develop positive emotions, and influence fans' behavioral intentions.
- Our findings also have implications for the sports spectator industry. The management of the sports spectators industry must give importance to fans' emotions and integrate marketing efforts in such a manner that positive fans' emotions are developed among the fans.

## Acknowledgment

We are thankful to the management of Iqra National University, Peshawar, Pakistan and Kardan University, Kabul, Afghanistan for providing technical support for conducting this study. We are also thankful to the respondents for participating in our survey and making this work possible.

## Compliance with ethical standards

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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