THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY AND TICKET PRICING ON SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION WITHIN THE LEBANESE BASKETBALL LEAGUE

By

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this thesis to my parents Vasken Baghboudarian and Jacqueline Telesemian, my grandparents Jean Telesemian and Hripsime Yoghourtjian and my lovely fiancée Patil Bouldoukian. Thank you for believing in me, supporting me and giving me all the love needed to finish my work.

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Abstract

This study aims to assess service quality and the game components in the Lebanese Basketball context and to examine the effects of service quality and ticket pricing on the satisfaction of the fans and their behavioral intention, which is whether to attend future games and to recommend the games to other or not.

Quantitative research was used to undertake this study in the form of online survey posted on the official pages of the 10 Lebanese division 1 basketball teams, the results of which were used as statistical evidence to reach the relevant conclusions through theoretical and numerical analysis which support the methodology approach.

The 401 responses gathered from the survey were coded into the statistical software SPSS 23 to obtain results that were later used to generate the relevant data that were analyzed to make decisions regarding the main problem of the study, and possible conclusions and perspectives that could be derived from these decisions.

Several interesting results were obtained and observations were made about where the basketball industry is headed in the future. Ticket pricing, satisfaction with the services and the game components had significant effects on the fan's behavioral intention. Similarly, all the components of the game and the service environment, except the facility design, had significant effects on the fan's satisfaction. Game satisfaction played a mediating role between the components of the game characteristics and the behavioral intention, and between the service environment and the behavioral intention.

I- Introduction:

The sports industry has attracted millions of spectators from all the continents of the world throughout the centuries. The ever-growing popularity of sports has seen the sports industry develop through different phases and evolve during centuries marred with wars and economic crises. The success of any kind of sports is measured by many factors such as the number of spectators it attracts and the money it generates. However, the biggest challenge of sports clubs is not only attracting spectators, but also keeping them satisfied (Shank and Lyberger, 2014).

Previous studies (Yoshida et al., 2013; Spinda et al., 2016; Foroughi et al., 2014) have suggested that there are many factors, such as game and service characteristics, which impact the satisfaction of the fans. The focus of this paper will be the ticket pricing and the service quality which are major constituents of fan's satisfaction. The review of the literature suggests that service quality is linked to spectators' satisfaction (Kuenzel & Yassim, 2007) and behavioral intention such as the likelihood of attending future sporting events (Theodorakis & Alexandris, 2008). The ticket pricing strategy is another vital issue in spectator sports, because delivering a high quality service at a fair and acceptable price contributes to the increase in profits of an organization (Bei & Chiao, 2001). Therefore, understanding the roles of both service quality and ticket pricing on post-purchase reactions is vital for the success of sports clubs and organizations.

This research has two aims:

- To examine the simultaneous effects of service quality and ticket pricing on the fan satisfaction, and specifically Lebanese basketball fan's satisfaction, and his/her behavioral intention.
- To extend the service quality model proposed by Yoshida and James (2013) to the Lebanese basketball context.

In order to be able to reach these aims, this thesis will have the following chapters: A chapter which covers the literature review on the sports industry especially basketball in Lebanon, pricing of tickets, fan satisfaction and service quality and the behavioral intention of the fans. A chapter on theories and hypotheses with an extension of the Yoshida (2011) model, a chapter on analysis of results and a chapter on results and recommendations.

II- Literature Review:

2.1- Sports in Lebanon

The sports industry had always been evolving during the last century. Sports have become a weighty component of the national, regional and local economies. As a result, the business structure in the sports industry has changed with time. Professional clubs have become a corporate business (Desbores, 2007), economic aspects have had a bigger influence and lucrative business opportunities have emerged (Buhler, Heffernan and Hewson, 2007; Mason 1999), the competition between clubs is not restricted anymore to the sports field but to the economic and financial domain.

Sports in Lebanon do not have the stability that sports in other countries possess, but fans are very fanatic and loyal to their beloved club (Souaibi, 2016). The most popular sports in Lebanon are basketball and football. The football industry was at its peak in the second half of the 20th century, where Lebanese clubs invested heavily in foreign players and the competition between the clubs was very harsh. On the other hand,

2.1.1- Basketball in Lebanon

Basketball in Lebanon began evolving in the 1990s and has reached its climax during the past years. The basketball courts were filled with fans, popular foreign players signed for Lebanese clubs, and Lebanese clubs won the Asian basketball championship: Sagesse in 1999, 2000, 2004 and Sporting in 2011 (Abboud, 2011).

According to Asia basket (2016), the Lebanese division 1 basketball league consists of 10 teams, where each team is composed of 12 players: 3 foreigners and 9 Lebanese players. Each

team faces the other 9 twice in the regular season on the basis of home and away games. After the end of the regular season, the playoffs begin between the top 8 teams in the league after which the champion gets crowned with the league title.

Lebanese basketball has had its ups and downs. Fans were not allowed to attend some games due to security reasons, such as the game Sagesse vs Sporting in 2015 when Sagesse fans attacked the Sporting players and tried to beat them during the game (Annahar Newspaper; 2014).

2.1.2- Sponsorship and Budgeting

Simon Abi Ramia, the chairman of the sports and youth parliamentary committee, asserts that the Lebanese basketball teams do not get the financial support from the Lebanese government as other international sports teams get from their governments. This lack of support leaves the basketball clubs in need of investors and businessmen to finance their budgets (Souaiby, 2016).

The huge achievement of the Lebanese clubs in the Asian championship, alongside the qualification of the Lebanese National Basketball Team to the world cup in early 2000s, pushed the Lebanese businessmen and politicians to invest their money in the basketball teams (Souaiby, 2016). Many politicians began using the fame of Lebanese basketball to promote their political campaigns and to make a name for themselves prior to the parliamentary elections. The involvement of the politicians in supporting the basketball teams led to an increased tension between the supporters of clubs which sometimes led to

fights during the basketball games and the suspension of the league in 2013 (Souaiby, 2016).

The Lebanese basketball is seen to be a very attractive area for businessmen and politicians, because of the big number of fans attending the games and the young age of the supporters. The only aim of the businessmen and politicians is to make a name for themselves by spending millions of dollars on local and foreign players in order to strengthen the team that they are financing (Souaiby, 2016).

Some presidents of the Lebanese basketball clubs have voiced their concerns regarding the lack of support from the Lebanese federation and the Lebanese government. Hisham al Jaroudy, the president of Sporting, states that the continuous funding of the clubs is provided only by people who believe in the importance of sports and the reason for the collapse of many clubs goes back to investors and politicians who financed those clubs in order to achieve their political goals and then they stopped financing, because they reached their political goals. He suggests that the Lebanese federation must financially reward the clubs who finish at the top of the league, so that the teams have some income other than the money of the sponsors and investors. Jassem Kanso, the president of Hoops Club, claims that sports in Lebanon is an integral of politics and that businessmen invest their money in the clubs at the request of political leaders and parties. He suggests that the investment by businessmen should not exceed the 50% limit of the total budget of the clubs and the remaining 50% must be financed by the club itself through ticket and merchandise sales in order to free the decision making inside the clubs (Souaiby, 2016).

According to Souaiby (2016), the sponsoring companies (banks, telecom companies, insurance companies, car companies, etc…) cover only about 40% of the budgets

of basketball clubs, while businessmen and politicians secure the remaining amount. This percentage is true for the big clubs, but smaller clubs with a lower budget must secure their budget only through sponsors and advertisers. For example, the annual budget of Sporting Club is around 2.4 million dollars most of which is covered by BankMed. The budget of Sagesse Club is around 2 million dollars of which 400 thousand dollars are covered by Touch Telecommunication Company, 100 thousand dollars are covered by Gaby Abou Adal Company and the remaining amount is covered by Volvo Company, UFA Insurance and Total Group. The budget of Tadamon Club is around 550 thousand dollars which is completely covered by businessmen who are members in the Free Patriotic Movement political party. The budget of Champville Club is around 700 thousand dollars of which 150 thousand dollars are covered by Alfa Telecommunication Company, 150 thousand dollars are covered by IBL Bank and the remaining budget is covered by MP Ibrahim Kanaan. The budget of Byblos Club is around 1.1 million dollars covered completely by a committee, headed by Nabil Hawwat, composed of 1000 members. The budget of Hoops Club is around 400 thousand dollars of which 150 thousand dollars are covered by SGBL Bank. The budget of Homenetmen club is around 600 thousand dollars covered by the businessman Guy Manoukian, Sayfco Holding Company and BLC Bank. Finally, the budget of Mouttahed Club is around 700 thousand dollars covered completely by Al Safadi Group (Souaiby, 2016).

For the first time in the history of Lebanese Basketball, the Lebanese Basketball Federation headed by former president Walid Nassar, succeeded in securing four and a half million dollars for the next four years by raising the values of the television rights. The money received by the TV rights was distributed among the Lebanese clubs along

with the money obtained from the sponsors of the Lebanese basketball league (Richa, 2016).

2.2- Ticket Pricing

Price is one of the four key elements in the marketing mix. According to Goi (2009) and Kotler et al. (2012), pricing is a very important strategy, because it is related to direct product positioning. Pricing directly affects the other components of the marketing mix: promotion, place and product and is affected by them. Therefore, pricing an item or a service must be done carefully, because high prices can lead to decreased sales and low prices might result in missed opportunities for profit (Goi, 2009).

2.2.1- Ticket pricing in the sports industry

Sports have become an essential part in today's society. Across a wide variety of cultures, the popularity of sports is continuing to grow in terms of attending sports games and ticket purchasing expenditures (Capella, 2001, Lavanya et al., 2016). One of the biggest challenges in sports is the pricing and the availability of the tickets. Tickets, alongside funds received from sponsors and TV rights, are the primary source of revenues of sports clubs and pricing them optimally is a very sensitive issue (Kaplan, 2013).

Ticket pricing in sports looks to be a straightforward procedure by the look of it, however many factors such as strategic, financial and business objectives play a significant role in

choosing the suitable pricing strategy (Parece, 2016).According to Parece (2016), the following are examples of the mentioned objectives:

- Revenue objectives: Increasing or maximizing revenue.
- Attendance objectives: Increasing or maximizing the number of fans attending the games or meeting a minimum number of attendance levels so that the club continues to meet the broadcast thresholds.
- Investment issues: Enhancing the stadium and the services found in it and improving the quality of ticket sales services.

If the mentioned objectives are not met or are not clearly articulated throughout the sports clubs, the ticket pricing strategies of this kind of professional sports clubs often become suboptimal. In summary, defining the main pricing objectives and prioritizing one objective over the other will lead to developing an effective ticket pricing strategies (Shank and Lyberger 2014; Parece, 2016).

2.2.2- Types of tickets

There are three types of ticket purchases (Dietz, 2013):

- Season Ticket: The home games of a club are sold prior to the beginning of the season at a price assigned before the start of the season. Season ticket holders benefit from many promotions done by the club throughout the season and the teams usually have a close relationship with season ticket holders. Most of the clubs try to sell more season tickets for many reasons of which two are very significant. The first is the “The bird in the hand” : Clubs try to sell season tickets in order to avoid uncertainty at play in

sports, such as injuries, bad economy, etc.. The second reason is the customer lifetime value. It is a well-known belief that the more a fan attends a game, the more he/she is attached emotionally to the club which leads him/her into spending more money on the products of the club like tickets, merchandise, concessions and so on (Dietz,2013).

- Individual Tickets: These are the tickets offered by the club after the sale of the season tickets. The face value of the ticket is usually set before the start of the season and is usually the same for all the matches. Clubs are aware that the demand for the tickets of some games is less than others, so they try to sell the tickets through promotions. However, they have to be very careful of not offering too many promotional deals so that the season ticket holders don't feel that their purchase is devalued.
- Secondary market: These are the tickets bought and resold by companies or season ticket holders. Some people may not be able to attend the games or they try to make some profit by selling the initially purchased tickets for a higher price.

Clubs should begin digging into the data found on secondary market transactions in order to have a competitive advantage. However, many clubs fall into the trap of trying to set ticket prices to reflect the prices found in the secondary market (Parece, 2016; Drayer et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2012), which often leads to suboptimal financial results. However, if secondary market data on tickets prices are analyzed correctly, then the data can be a very hefty tool for determining better ticket prices for the upcoming games (Parece, 2016; Drayer et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2012). Usually, secondary market ticket sales demonstrate the fan's willingness to pay for a certain ticket depending on the time of the buying transaction which is typically

close to match day and when the team's records and players' injury statuses are more certain and clear (Parece, 2016; Drayer et al., 2012; Shapiro et al., 2012).

2.2.3- Pricing techniques

Pricing the sports tickets is a very tough and challenging task that most experts face (Dietz,2013). The performance of the team during any season, the opponent in a game, the day of the game and the weather affect the pricing of the tickets. Many pricing methods have been used recently to capture a greater share from the sale of tickets. These methods include the variable pricing, dynamic pricing, secondary market, real time pricing, flexible season ticket pricing, money back guarantees and web based ticketing.

2.2.3.1- Variable Pricing

Variable pricing is defined as the practice of charging different prices for the same seat, depending on the game. Those prices are set before the season. Variable pricing is setting the price of the tickets before the start of the season, whereas dynamic pricing is setting the price of the ticket before each game, depending on the demand of the game (Dietz, 2013). Most of the teams in MLB, NBA and NHL price their tickets variably in the start of the season by charging more for the games which sell out. In 2012, they even began to charge season tickets using variable pricing which saw lower prices attached to some games (King, 2012). For many teams, dynamic pricing came as an upgrade for variable pricing which had become very common. Many analytical tools allowed teams to predict the market for games at the start of the season and react optimally to shifts in demand.

All 30 NBA teams are using variable pricing and most are trying to use some kind of dynamic pricing for regular season games. Pete Guelli, the executive vice president of Charlotte Bobcats, states that both pricing techniques are efficient in different ways (King, 2012). According to Guelli, the initial step is the variable pricing and it is very critical, because it will define the general revenue streams for the year, but dynamic pricing will make sure that a fan doesn't miss any opportunity to watch a game through the fluid movement of the ticket prices (King, 2012).

2.2.3.2- Dynamic pricing

Dynamic pricing is the fluid movement of ticket prices once the season is under way, typically driven by shifts in demand, the desire to change purchase behavior, or both. A team might raise prices in response to a trade, then move back down if buyers don't respond. Sports teams are trying to maximize their revenues along with presenting good performance on the pitch. To achieve the mentioned financial goal, sports clubs are relying on dynamic pricing (Rishe,2012). Since the demand of the games is different, it makes sense to specify the optimal price of a ticket using dynamic pricing. Dynamic pricing has led to more fan acceptance, boosted the revenues of sports organizations, pushed the consumers to buy season tickets in order to have more sense of price certainty in the face of real-time pricing and helped consumers to save some money on low demand games (Rishe, 2012).

Dynamic pricing has been used for a long time in other industries such as hotels, rental cars and airlines (Rishe, 2012). It took so much time for it to enter the sports industry because of

many barriers such as the difficult process of accurately pricing tickets, changing the routine of pricing tickets 9 months prior to the games and training the employees for this new process. Dynamic pricing has been mostly used for the baseball games because of its heavy fixture list, the size of baseball stadiums and the low number of season ticket holders (Rishe, 2012).

In a study of MLB which implemented dynamic pricing throughout the whole season, the ticket pricing Software Company called Qcue discovered that the revenue of the teams increased by $900,000 by adjusting the price in each section of the stadium differently for each game. Barry Kahn, the founder and CEO of Qcue, claims that dynamic pricing in sports doesn't have a big downside. He says that once teams realized that they can generate more revenue without hurting the season ticket holders, dynamic pricing became an easy thing to accept. Sports clubs have invested around $100,000-200,000 to train their employees so that they adapt to the dynamic pricing system (King, 2012).

Howard and Crompton (2004) state that almost $12 billion a year is spent on the purchase of tickets to a sporting event and that the sales of the tickets constitute around 30% of the total income generated by the sports clubs. Ticket prices have almost doubled over the past decade because of the economic recession (Team Marketing Report, 2002; Mills and Fort, 2014). Crompton (2004) suggests that the best way to fight the inflation of the ticket prices is through adapting dynamic pricing, because dynamic pricing will provide every person with the suitable seat at a certain reference price.

2.2.3.3- Secondary market

Most of the market price information is found in the secondary markets. Some clubs have created their own ticket exchange offices in order to buy and resell tickets on the open market (Dietz, 2013).

2.2.3.4- Real-time Pricing

Using real time pricing, customers name their own price of the tickets. The tickets are offered at a certain price on a website. Customers can either buy the tickets at the current asking price or place a bid and the highest bidder gets the ticket (Axelrod, 2016).

2.2.3.5- Flexible Season Ticket Packaging

The sale of bundled games together must be introduced as a substitute to season tickets, because buying a season ticket will cost a lot of money, whereas selling a bundle of matches at a lower price will give the fan a chance of watching some games at a lower price. Full- season ticket plans are split into different types of partial plans to accommodate individuals who cannot afford the full package or are unable to attend many of the games. This approach is an example of what economists call third degree price discrimination which 'involves separating buys into groups with different elasticities of demand and selling prices so that marginal revenue equals marginal cost in each' (Loomis and Walsh, 1997).

2.2.3.6- Money-Back Guarantees

All market interactions are a process in which two parties supply each other with resources. A sports club supplies the fans with an entertainment product and the fans pay money in return. This process works only in the case where both sides of the interaction perceive that the

reciprocity in the exchange process in equitable. If either side feels that there is an imbalance in this exchange, then the relationship's stability is threatened and loyalty is undermined. Service guarantees, which are a promise to refund the purchase price in case the customer is dissatisfied, have proven effective in the sports market (Burton and Howard, 2000). Clubs have begun refunding the ticket prices to those fans that have already purchased a season ticket and they are very dissatisfied with the performance of the team and decide not to attend any more games.

2.2.3.7- Web- Based Ticketing

Sports clubs increasingly use the Internet to enhance ticket sales. Web-based ticketing is a leading component of ticket operations. Buying a ticket online has many advantages, such as seeing a map of all the seats available for purchase and picking the best seat. However, there's always the fear of buying online because of security breaches. This fear or hesitation is overcome when sports clubs begin offering discounts to all those fans who are buying the ticket online for the first or second time. Once a fan buys a ticket online, the fear of placing orders on the Internet goes away. Web-based ticketing reduces the cost associated with travel time, search time and waiting time. It also opens the door to the reselling of the tickets (at face value) already purchased by fans who cannot attend the game.

2.2.4- Pricing and Availability of Tickets in Lebanon

In Lebanon, the pricing system has changed in basketball. Till 2012, the prices of all the basketball games throughout the season and playoffs were unchanged and each ticket cost

5,000 L.L. (Richa, 2015). Jad Richa (2015), the editor in chief of Arabasket, states that in the last couple of seasons, the basketball teams began introducing new sections for the fans. The VIP section, the VVIP section and the season ticket holders sections were introduced. Each section has its own price brackets which are usually fixed. The introduction of season tickets gave the clubs an amount of income which was used to pay for the salaries of the players and staff. Some clubs, such as Sagesse and Sporting, took a different step in pricing and introduced dynamic pricing throughout the season. For instance, some games had more demand than others and those clubs raised the prices of the tickets of these games. Sagesse club was facing a financial crisis, so it decided to use its large fan base and increase the ticket prices to generate revenues from fans and not only from sponsors (Richa, 2015). Kenny Laurie (2011), a former reporter in The Daily Star, states that the increase in ticket prices was directly related to the high wage demands of the Lebanese players. He claims that the quality of players who are attracted by the wages has undoubtedly raised the standard of Lebanese basketball, but it has also brought it to its knees. Teams are forced to match those wages, through an increase in ticket prices, in order to compete. This increase in wages somehow killed the competition of the league and the league title was shared between Sagesse and Sporting. Teams like Antranik, Anibal Zahle and Blue Stars lost their star players to Sporting and Sagesse (Laurie, 2011).

2.3- Satisfaction of the sports fans

Customer satisfaction is the primary concern of firms in any industry. It is the basic factor of customer retention, positive word of mouth, improved profits and lower marketing costs

(Anderson et al., 1994; Oliver, 1999; Palmatier et al.,2006). Studies have shown that satisfied customers are bound to make repeated purchases of the same brand (Assael, 2004; Parasuraman et al., 1988) and that retaining customers is less expensive than attracting new ones (Kotler, 2012). In addition, satisfied consumers tend to become more associated with the organization, open to pay more for the benefits they receive and likely to accept price increases (Anderson et al., 1994; Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Fornell, 1992; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In this way, literature has repeatedly strengthened the link between service quality and satisfaction, and between satisfaction and the success of the organization.

2.3.1- The determinants of customer satisfaction

There are many factors which create customer satisfaction. Rizwan (2014) identifies the following as direct determinants of customer satisfaction: product and service quality (i.e. the extent to which a product or a service fulfills a consumer's needs and expectations), financial benefit (i.e. the economic benefits that a customer gets from a cost saving) and perceived value (i.e. the anticipated benefit from a consumer's perspective of a product or a service).

Models interrelating customer satisfaction with quality and value (Cronin et al., 2000; Rust and Oliver, 1994) state that the first determinant of overall customer satisfaction is perceived quality and the second determinant is perceived value. Customer satisfaction is recognizes as being highly associated with value and is based on the combination of service quality attributes with other attributes such as price.

Table 2.1 summarizes the literature which links quality, value and satisfaction to various service encounter outcomes.

Table 2.1: Summary of the literature which links quality, value and satisfaction to various service encounter outcomes.

(SQ: Service Quality; BI: Behavioral Intention; SAT: Satisfaction; SAC: Sacrifice; VAL: Value; SV: Service Value)

Source	*Relevant Constructs*	*Link(s) to Outcomes*	*Empirically Tested?*
Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988)	SQ, BI	SQ	Yes
Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1991)	SQ, BI	SQ	Yes
Anderson and Sullivan (1993)	SQ, SAT, BI	SQ, SAT	Yes
Boulding et al. (1993)	SQ, BI	SQ	Yes
Taylor and Baker (1994)	SQ, SAT, BI	SQ	Yes
Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996)	SQ, BI	SQ	Yes
Taylor (1997)	SQ, SAT, BI	SQ, SAT	Yes
Athanassopoulos (2000)	SAC, SQ, SAT, BI	SQ	Yes
Cronin and Taylor (1992)	SQ, SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Anderson and Fornell (1994)	SQ, SAT	SAT	No
Gotlieb, Grewal, and Brown (1994)	SQ, SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Ostrom and Iacobucci (1995)	SAC, SQ, SAT, VAL, BI	SAT	Yes
Fornell et al. (1996)	SQ, SAT, SV, BI	SAT	Yes
Patterson and Spreng (1997)	SAT, SV, BI	SAT	Yes
Hallowell (1996)	SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Andreassen (1998)	SQ, SAT, SV, BI	SAT	Yes
Bolton (1998)	SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Chenet, Tynan, and Money (1999)	SQ, SV, SAT, BI	SAT	No
Oliver (1999)	SAT, BI	SAT	No
Garbarino and Johnson (1999)	SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Bolton and Lemon (1999)	SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Bernhardt, Donthu, and Kennett (2000)	SAT, BI	SAT	Yes
Ennew and Binks (1999)	SQ, SV, SAT, BI	SAT, SV	Yes
Zeithaml (1988)	SAC, SQ, SV, BI	SV	No
Bolton and Drew (1991)	SQ, SAT, SV, BI	SV	No
Gale (1994)	SQ, SV, BI	SV	No
Chang and Wildt (1994)	SAC, SQ, SV, BI	SV	Yes
Hartline and Jones (1996)	SQ, SV, BI	SV	Yes
Wakefield and Barnes (1996)	SQ, SV, BI	SV	Yes
Cronin et al. (1997)	SAC, SQ, VAL, BI	SV	Yes
Sirohi, McLaughlin, and Wittink (1998)	SAC, SQ, SV, BI	SV	Yes
Sweeney, Soutar, and Johnson (1999)	SAC, SQ, SV, BI	SV	Yes

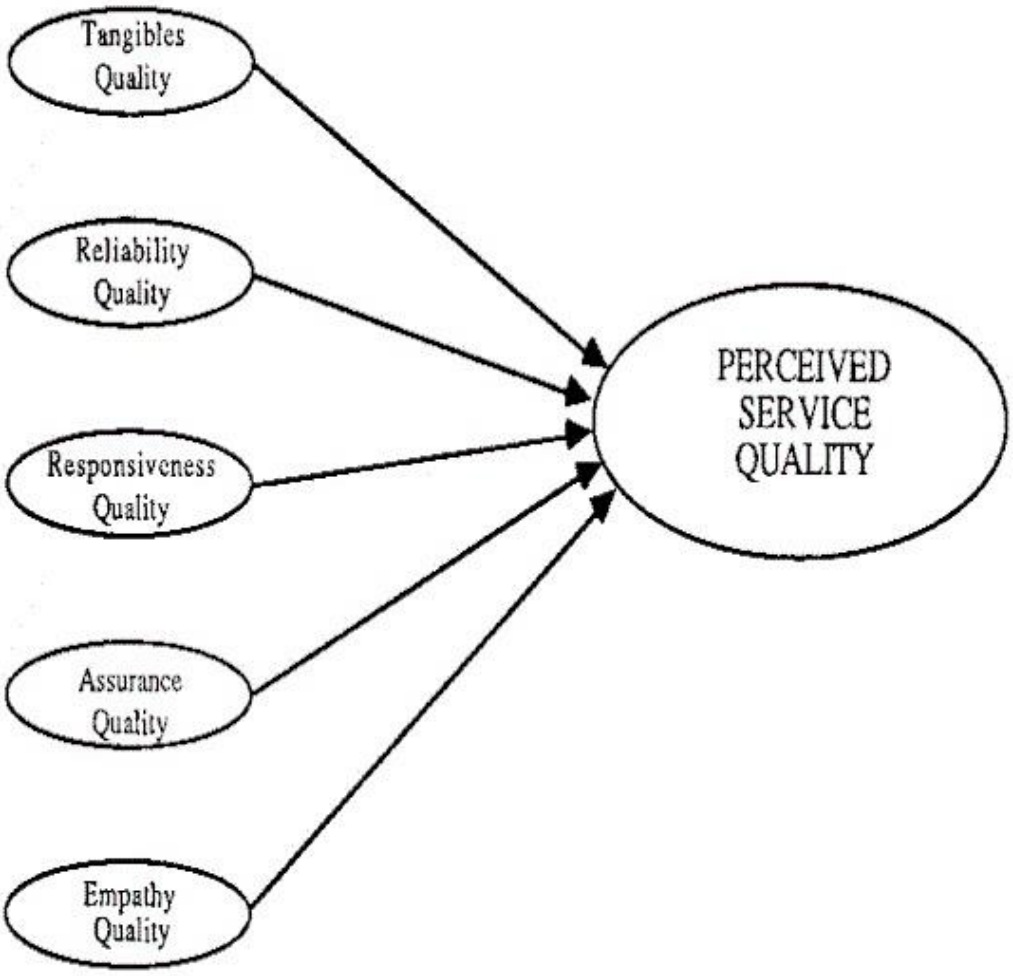
Source: Cronin, J. J., Brady, M. K., & Hult, G. T. M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environments. *Journal of retailing*, *76*(2)

2.3.2- Service Quality and the SERVQUAL Scale

The perception of high levels of service quality leads to increased consumer satisfaction, loyalty and retention which all result in potential growth in the revenue of the company or organization (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

In an attempt to enhance the examination of consumer satisfaction, Oliver (1980) came up with the "expectancy-disconfirmation" model, which suggests that the consumer satisfaction is simply the balance of his/her feeling of perceived performance of a service versus his/her expectation. If the consumer's perceived performance of a service exceeds his/her expectation, then the consumer will be satisfied. Similarly, if the consumer's expectations are not met, then he/she will be dissatisfied. Based on the "expectancy-disconfirmation" model, Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed a scale called the SERVQUAL scale which assesses consumer's perception of service quality suggests ways for organizations to improve their delivery of service quality (Appendix M).

THE PARSURAMAN, ZEITHAML, AND BERRY (1988) THEORY OF THE DETERMINANTS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY



Five dimensions were identified in the SERVQUAL scale: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

2.3.3- Service quality in the sports industry

In an effort to measure service qualities within the sports industry, McDonald et al. (1995) developed the TEAMQUAL scale, which is a scale intended to measure operations of professional sport teams. TEAMQUAL, which had been derived from the basics of SERVQUAL, has been a more relevant scale when measuring service quality of a professional sports game. Table 2.2 summarizes all the studies made regarding service quality in spectator sports.

Table 2.2: Summary of all the studies made regarding service quality in spectator sports.

AUTHORS	MODEL	CONTEXT	DIMENSIONS (SUB-DIMENSIONS)
MCDONALD ET AL (1995)	TEAMQUAL	BASKETBALL	TANGIBLES, RESPONSIVENESS, RELIABILITY, ASSURANCE, EMPATHY
WAKEFIELD ET AL (1996)	SPORTSCAPE	AMERICAN FOOTBALL	STADIUM ACCESS, FACILITY AESTHETICS, SCOREBOARD, SEATING COMFORT, LAYOUT ACCESSIBILITY, SPACE ALLOCATION, SIGNAGE
KELLEY & TURLEY (2001)	---	BASKETBALL	EMPLOYEES, PRICE, FACILITY ACCESS, CONCESSIONS, FAN COMFORT, GAME EXPERIENCE, SHOW TIME, CONVENIENCE, SMOKING
THEODORAKIS ET AL (2001)	SPORTSERV	BASKETBALL	TANGIBLES, RESPONSIVENESS, ACCESS, SECURITY, RELIABILITY
GREENWELL ET AL (2002)	---	ICE HOCKEY	PHYSICAL FACILITY (ACCESS, AESTHETICS, SCOREBOARD, COMFORT, LAYOUT), CORE PRODUCT (CORE), SERVICE PERSONNEL (STAFF)
TSUJI ET AL (2007)	SGG	ACTION SPORTS	CORE SERVICE, PERIPHERAL SERVICE
KOO ET AL (2009)	---	BASEBALL	TECHNICAL ATTRIBUTE, FUNCTIONAL ATTRIBUTE, ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTE
YOSHIDA & JAMES (2010)	---	BASEBALL	SERVICE QUALITY (STADIUM EMPLOYEES, FACILITY ACCESS, FACILITY SPACE), CORE PRODUCT (OPPONENT CHARACTERISTICS, PLAYER PERFORMANCE, GAME ATMOSPHERE)
KO ET AL (2011)	MEQSS	BASEBALL	GAME QUALITY (SKILL PERFORMANCE, OPERATING TIME, INFORMATION), AUGMENTED SERVICE QUALITY (ENTERTAINMENT, CONCESSIONS), INTERACTION QUALITY (EMPLOYEE INTERACTION, FAN INTERACTION), OUTCOME QUALITY (SOCIABILITY, VALENCE), PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (AMBIENCE, DESIGN, SIGNAGE)
YOSHIDA & JAMES (2011)	---	BASEBALL	FUNCTIONAL QUALITY (FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES, FACILITY ACCESS, SEAT SPACE), TECHNICAL QUALITY (PLAYER PERFORMANCE, OPPONENT CHARACTERISTICS), AESTHETIC QUALITY (CROWD EXPERIENCE, GAME ATMOSPHERE)

Source: Biscaia, R., Correia, A., Yoshida, M., Rosado, A., & Maroco, J. (2013). The role of service quality and ticket pricing on satisfaction and behavioural intention within professional football. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, *14*(4),

There are many factors which have different effects on customer satisfaction. Those factors are divided into two categories: quality service and quality core product (Yoshida and James, 2010). Scholars have identified the following as direct or indirect constituents of the core product: outcome valence (i.e. feelings about the outcome of the game), home team characteristics (i.e. overall standing, number of star players, team history, win/loss record), the characteristics of the opponent team (i.e. the ranking of the opponent in the league), game attributes (i.e. aggressive plays, speed of the game), sense of enjoyment and basking in reflected glory (Brady et al., 2006; Greenwell et al., 2002; Madrigal, 1995; Tsuji et al. 2007; Zhang, Pease, Smith, Lee, Lam & Jambor 1997). On the other hand, the service environment, the stadium facilities and employees form the basics of quality service (Yoshida & James, 2010).

Studies have been made in order to measure the influence of quality service and quality core product on customer satisfaction. Service quality has received some attention in the field of sports marketing as a predictor of customer satisfaction and game attendance (Greenwell et al., 2002; Hill and Green 2000; Tsuji et al., 2007; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). McDonald and Milne (1999) suggest that one of the biggest challenges of sports marketers is managing the ancillary services. The ancillary services which include stadium employees, facility layout, accessibility, seating comfort and information signs can be controlled by managerial decisions (Greenwell et al., 2002; Zhang et al., 1998; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996).

With respect to customer satisfaction, it is believed that a customer's perception of the core product dimensions influence his/her overall game satisfaction (Yoshida and James, 2010).

2.3.4- Satisfaction of the fans in the sports industry

It is of high importance that sports clubs satisfy existing customers, retain these customers, and try to gain new ones in order to have strategic competitive advantages (Gwinner and Swanson, 2003; Rust and Zahorik, 1993; Trail, Anderson and Fink, 2005; Laverie and Arnett, 2000; Madigral, 1995). The primary interest of sports clubs management must be increasing fans' satisfaction by improving the perceived service value (Gudergan and Ellis, 2007), so that those fans are willing to attend the games regularly and recommend others to attend.

Mason (1999) identifies a number of aspects which are unique to spectator sport products: the schedule of the games, special series of league games such as playoffs, uncertainty of the outcome of the game, competition and rivalry between the clubs, sense of entertainment and drama during the games. It seems logical that the dimensions of the core product, such as team characteristics and player performance, are sport-specific and are directly associated with a sense of excitement, pleasure and achievement (Madrigal 1995; Trail, Robinson, Dick and Gillentine, 2003). The fans tend to be more satisfied when they are present with other fans in the stadium who share their passion. The core product is unforeseeable and beyond the control of managers (Greenwell et al., 2002; Zhang et al., 1998; Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). Therefore, it is expected that satisfaction derived from the core product is more of an emotional construct, which is the case for all the cases where the product is the "experience" lived rather than a tangible product (Yoshida and James, 2010).

2.4- Behavioral Intention

2.4.1- The dimensions and outcomes of behavioral intention

The analysis of behavioral intention is pivotal to the success of an organization (Cronin et al., 2000). The behavioral intention is defined as a person's perceived likelihood or "subject probability" that he/she will engage in a given behavior. The resultant behavior can be either a favorable or an unfavorable outcome to a company (Zeithaml et al, 1996). According to Zeithaml et al (1996), favorable behaviors include aspects such as saying positive things about the company, recommending the product or the service to others, remaining loyal and spending more money on the products and services of the company. On the other hand, unfavorable behavioral includes aspects such as saying negative things about the company, switching to competitors, complaining to external agencies and decreasing the amount of money spent on the products and services of the company.

The concept of repurchase intention is referred to the individual's judgment about buying again a designated product or services from the same company, taking into account his or her current situation and likely circumstances (Krause, Nagel and Solchenberger, 2007). Repurchase intention depends on a customer's attitude towards a brand and on how a consumer evaluates the products/services (Lin and Lu, 2010). Customers who repurchase a company's products or services are directly contributing to the company's profits since they require less time and attention compared to the customers who will use the product or the service for the first time (Boonlertvanich, 2009). Encouraging repurchase reduces costs and increases the market share. Skillful handling of the customer's complaints increases

repurchase and simultaneously increases the positive word of mouth communication (Davidow, 2003). Greater customer satisfaction and repurchase intention can be achieved by offering high quality services and added value to customers (Ahmed et al., 2011).

Hume and Mort (2010) believe that taking into account the circumstances in which an individual finds himself/herself, repurchase intention is the most appropriate dependent variable which provides management an insight and tools in the design and implementation on strategic planning and delivery of services. However, repurchase intentions have been criticized by marketing researchers who suggest that such intentions do not reflect sufficiently the depth of a customer's commitment to re-buy preferred goods or services (Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

Zeithaml et al. (1996) indicate that behavioral is multidimensional. Zeithaml et al. (1996) identified five dimensions of behavioral intentions:

- Loyalty to company
- Propensity to switch
- Willingness to pay more
- External response to problems (Negative word of mouth)
- Internal response to problems (Complaints to employees)

2.4.2- Behavioral intention in the sports industry

Surprisingly, there is a lack of research examining the consequences of customer satisfaction in the context of sports events. Till to date, the desire to attend future sporting events is the widely-used outcome in the sport marketing literature (Trail et al., 2005; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). By adapting the conceptualization of Zeithaml et al. (1996), Cronin and his colleagues focused on the positive aspects of the behavioral intentions and identifies three indicators of behavioral intentions: repurchase intentions, positive word of mouth intentions and customer loyalty (Brady et al., 2006; Cronin et al., 2000). Based on the work of Cronin et al. (2000), behavioral intentions at sporting events are defined by a customer's intentions to (1) recommend the team to other customers, (2) attend the team's future sporting events and (3) remain supportive of the team.

Measuring future intentions of attendees is vital for the success of an event. Ajzen (1991) suggested that future intentions are directly related to future behaviors. Sports managers should create an environment which maintains this specific construct. Similarly, they should keep on investigating, evaluating and improving the fan's perception of service quality and satisfaction level (Cronin et al., 2000). Previous studies indicate that service quality influences satisfaction, which influences future behavioral intention (Cronin et al., 2000; McDougall & Levesque, 2000) and studies performed specifically in sports settings generated similar results (Murray & Howat, 2002; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996, Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Once customer satisfaction is achieved, the sports clubs will begin reaping its fruits. First, customer satisfaction will lead to customer loyalty on the long run and the fans will attend

more games and feel more attached to the club (Gustaffsson, Johnson and Roos, 2006). Second, long term customer satisfaction will induce positive word of mouth and the capture of new customers (Gustaffsson, Johnson and Roos, 2006). Finally, customers will begin buying more merchandise from the stadium while attending the games, which will increase the revenue of the club (Olenski, 2013).

III- Theoretical Framework

3.1- Conceptualization of the model

The model is composed of the components of the service quality, the components of the game characteristics, the pricing and availability of tickets, behavioral intention, and the fans satisfaction acting as a mediator between the components of service quality and behavioral intention and between the components of the game characteristics and behavioral intention.

3.1.1- Behavioral Intention

In the sports industry, the behavioral intention is defined as the fan's intention to attend future games, recommend the attendance of the games to others and remain loyal to the team. These intentions are an extension of the dimensions of the behavioral intention described by Zeithaml et al. (1996). In this study, the scales defined by Yoshida et al. (2013) will be used measure the behavioral intention of the sports fans. Those scales are "attending more games of my team", "recommending my team's games to other people", "definitely watching another game" and "willing to watch another game".

3.1.2- Fan Satisfaction

Fan satisfaction is defined as the fan's pleasurable fulfillment response resulting from the attendance of games during the season. This satisfaction is derived from the service quality and the game experience (Yoshida and James, 2010). Fan satisfaction also plays a mediating role between the components of service quality and behavioral intention and between the components of the game characteristics and behavioral intention (Yoshida et al., 2013).

3.1.3- Service Quality

The scales and components of service quality are derived from the components of the SERVQUAL model. The service quality in the sports industry represents the fans' interaction with the service environment and service personnel (Brady & Cronin, 2001). The service personnel are the ticket sellers, concession clerks, usher and merchandisers (McDonald et al, 1995). The service environment is made of the facility layout, accessibility, seating comfort and information signs (Greenwell et al, 2002).

3.1.4- Game Quality

The scales and components of the game characteristics are derived from the TEAMQUAL model. In the sports industry, technical quality represents the fans' perceptions of the core product (Kelley & Turley, 2001). Research suggests that the core product of the sports industry consists of the quality of the game (Greenwell et al, 2002), the quality of the home and opposing teams, the number of star players and the uncertainty of the outcome of the game(James & Ross, 2004) and the atmosphere created by the fans (Yoshida and James, 2011).

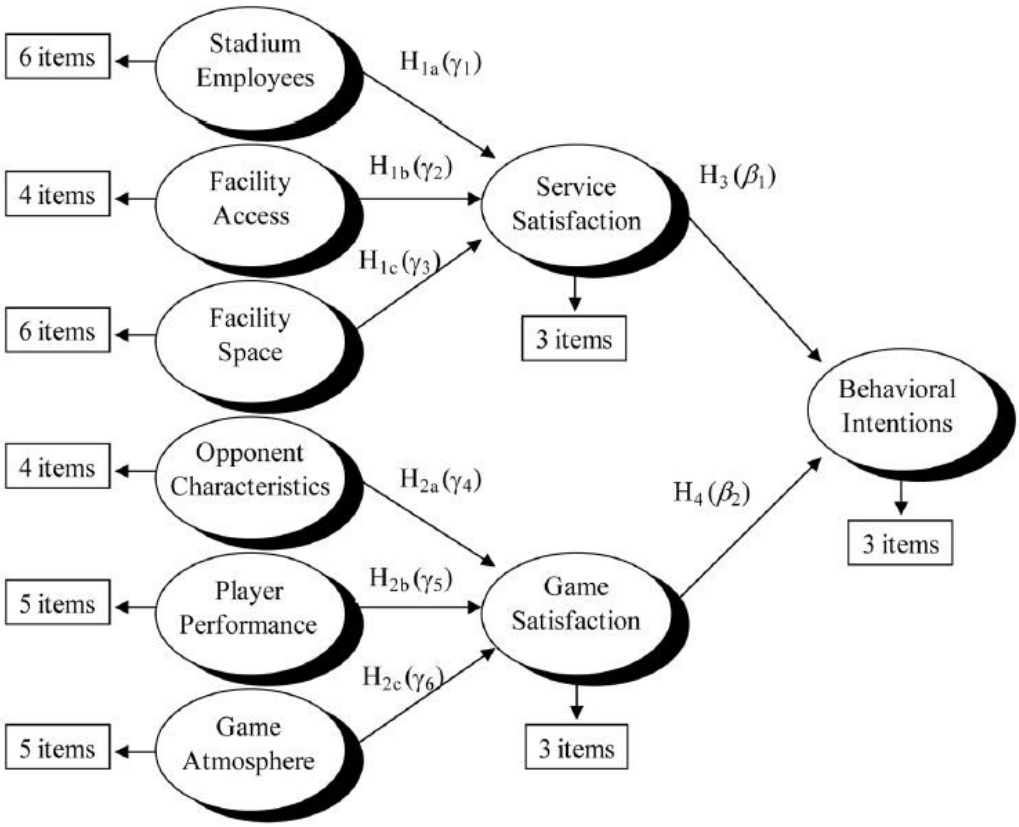
3.1.5- Ticket Pricing

Ticket pricing is a huge task in the sports industry because of its direct relationship with the club's revenues and profits (Lee & Kang, 2011). According to Howard and Crompton (2004), ticket sales form approximately one third of the income in college sports in the United States. Ticket sales have other financial repercussion on match day such as revenues generated from concessions, parking fees and merchandise sale.

3.2- Model Structure

The aim of this study is to examine the simultaneous effects of ticket pricing and service quality on sports fans' satisfaction and their behavioral intentions. Therefore, the model proposed by Yoshida and James (2011) will be extended to the Lebanese professional basketball, since the model was never empirically studied outside the context of American college football. The following model has been used by Yoshida and James (2010):

Figure 3.1: Yoshida and James Model (2010)

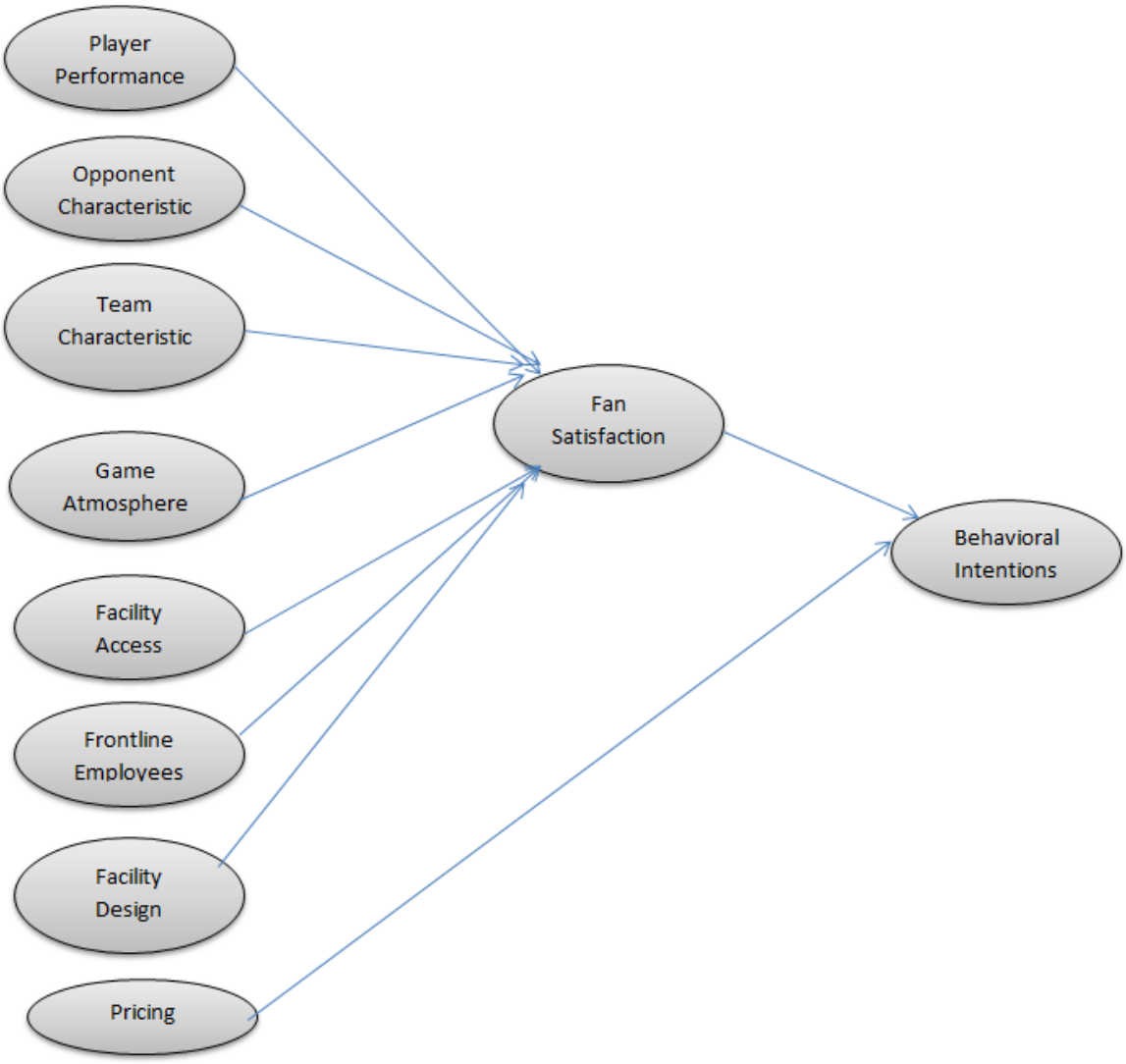


The previous model has been used to generate the following model by Yoshida et al. (2011):

Figure 3.2: Yoshida and James Model (2011)

In the model of this study, fan satisfaction is tested separately and as one component and fan satisfaction is measured as a mediator between service quality and behavioral intention, and between the components of the game characteristics and the behavioral intention of the fans. Based on the previous models, the following model has been reproduced:

Figure 3.3: The Generated Model to be Tested



3.3- Hypotheses

Knowing the role of ticket pricing and its effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention is very desirable, since the fans usually have a price of a ticket in mind called reference pricing, which they consider to be acceptable to pay to watch a basketball game (Dodds et al, 1991). When price is seen as high, expectations go higher which makes satisfaction harder to achieve. Howard and Crompton (2004) state that a good pricing strategy leads to increased attendance. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H_1: The smaller the gap between the actual price paid and the reference price, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.

H_2: Ticket pricing influences fan's behavioral intentions.

Two different factors are identified with respect to service environment:

(1) Stadium access regarding information signs and facility layout

(2) Stadium space regarding seats in the stands and space allocation in the concourse area.

These two factors are consistent with Bitner's (1992) space/function dimension of servicescape. Bitner claims that the main dimensions in the service environment are the ambient conditions, the space/functionality and the sign and symbols in that environment. He claims that people see those dimensions as a whole one unit. Given these findings, the following hypotheses are formed:

H_3: The easier the facility access, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.

H_4: The more comfortable the facility space, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.

H_5: The fan's perception of the services provided by stadium employees impacts his/her satisfaction.

The following have been identified as the major constituents of the core product: outcome valence (i.e. feelings about the outcome of the game), home team characteristics (i.e. overall standing, number of star players, team history, win/loss record), the characteristics of the opponent team (i.e. the ranking of the opponent in the league), game attributes (i.e. aggressive plays, speed of the game), sense of enjoyment and basking in reflected glory (Brady et al., 2006; Greenwell et al., 2002; Madrigal, 1995; Tsuji et al. 2007; Zhang, Pease, Smith, Lee, Lam & Jambor 1997). It is expected that satisfaction which is derived from the core product is a more emotional construct than satisfaction with ancillary services. A customer's game satisfaction is primarily derived from his/her perception of the core product. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H_6: The ranking, history and the number of star players in the opposing team impact fan's satisfaction.

H_7: The atmosphere created by the fans in the stadium impacts fan's satisfaction.

H_8: The fan's perception of the team characteristics impacts his/her satisfaction.

H_9: The fan's perception of player performance impacts his/her satisfaction.

Cronin et al. (2000) focused on the positive aspects of behavioral intentions and developed three indicators: Repurchase, positive word of mouth and customer Loyalty. Based on the theory of the quality-satisfaction-behavioral intentions chain (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), it is

hypothesized that two types of satisfaction at sporting events, service and game satisfaction, will affect behavioral intentions. Thus, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

H_{10}: Satisfaction with the services that a fan experiences during a basketball game has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions.

H_{11}: Satisfaction with the basketball game that a fan watches has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions.

Finally, studying the link between the fan's satisfaction and his/her behavioral intention is very important for sports managers, because the literature suggests that the satisfaction of the fans yields long-term benefits for the sports clubs (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993). Cronin et al (2000) postulate that understanding the motives of consumer decision making is best done by measuring the direct and indirect effects of the consumer's satisfaction on behavioral intention. Similarly, Tsuji et al (2007) claimed that satisfaction plays a mediating role between service quality components and behavioral intention. Also, Bei and Chiao (2001) noted that the perception of the fairness of the price has direct and indirect effects on behavioral intention through the satisfaction with the services. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H_{12}: Satisfaction has a mediating role between the game characteristics and behavioral intention.

H_{13}: Satisfaction has a mediating role between the service characteristics and behavioral intention.

3.4- Methodology

One of the aims of this study is to test the effect of pricing of the tickets and service quality on the sports fans' satisfaction and their behavioral intention. The study will rely on statistical procedures to test certain hypotheses and draw conclusions from the results. Hence, the study at hand requires quantitative statistical data.

3.4.1- Scope

Lebanese basketball fans who regularly attend the games were asked to input data in a questionnaire survey to determine their stance regarding their satisfaction and they had the chance to reflect their views about the value represented in the latest pricing of tickets, the availability of tickets, their satisfaction regarding service and core quality dimensions. This was later used for measurement purposes.

Since the Lebanese Basketball Federation doesn't allow away fans, who are the fans of the team playing outside their stadium, to be present during a match day, the respondents to the survey were the home fans. The researcher had access to the fans of each of the 10 clubs present in the first division of the FLB through official fan groups on Facebook. Online surveys were used to gather the data from the participants in the survey. The survey was available to the participants on the team's official Facebook page after their team played a home game.

3.4.2- Sample

The total number of basketball fans available is around 20,000 divided between holders and non-holders of season tickets. To estimate the optimal sample size for the study, the formula provided by Yamane (1967) cited in Israel (1992) is used with a 5% error margin. The formula is :

Sample size = $\frac{Population}{1+Population\ x\ error^2}$

So, if we apply the formula to a population equal to 20,000, the sample size becomes equal to 392.16 people which is estimated to be 393. 401 fans filled the survey online completely and the response rate was 401/20,000.

3.4.3- Instrument

The questionnaire is divided into three parts:

- The first part is about the date of the respondent's attendance of the last game watched from the stadium, the price paid for the ticket, the place of the purchase of the ticket and the gap between the reference price and the actual price paid. This part is composed of 4 questions.
- The second part is about the scales of service quality, service environment, pricing, satisfaction and behavioral intention which were extracted from Yoshida and James (2011). All items regarding service quality and ticket pricing were measured on a

seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 7= Strongly Agree. This part is composed of 33 questions.

- The third part is about the demographics (age-sex-employment status) of the respondent and whether he/she holds a season ticket of the club he/she supports. This part is composed of 4 questions.

The questionnaire is found on appendix L. SPSS 23 and process (Hayes) were used to perform all the tests and to obtain the results.

3.4.4 Pilot Test

An online pilot test was conducted and 10 responses were collected randomly. After collecting the results, reliability and descriptive tests were conducted to check whether the questionnaire needs any adjustments. After running the reliability tests, one adjustment was made. Question 7:" If the price of the ticket rises in the future, I will consider not attending any more game." was reverse coded.

IV- Statistical Analysis:

4.1- Descriptive Statistics

401 fans filled the survey. Most of the respondents to this survey are males (93%). They are aged between 18 and 29 years old (73.6%). They are employed (61.8%), non-season ticket holders (93%) and have attended a game a week before filling the survey (68.3%). They have purchased the ticket from the stadium (91.8%) and paid 5,000 L.L. for it (63.6%).

Please refer to Appendix A for detailed info.

4.2- Factor Analysis

Hair et al. (2006) stated, "Factor analysis is an interdependence technique whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis". Factor analysis provides the tools for analyzing the structure of the interrelationships (correlation) among a large number of independent variables by defining sets of independent variables that are highly correlated, known as factors. In other words, it identifies the broader evaluative dimensions, which are composites of specific items that are highly correlated.

In this study, exploratory factor analysis was used to test construct validity, that is, the extent to which a measure or set of measures correctly represents the concept of the study. To determine the appropriateness of factor analysis the entire correlation matrix was examined using the Barlett Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Myer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.

The Barlett Test of Sphericity tests the overall significance of all correlations within a correlation matrix. It examines the hypothesis that the variables are uncorrelated in the population, that is, the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix; each variable correlates perfectly with itself (r=1) but has no correlation with the other variables (r=0).

Kaiser-Myer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO MSA) is used to quantify the degree of inter-correlations among the variables. The KMO MSA ranges from 0 to 1 reaching 1 when each variable is perfectly predicted without error by the other variables. The researchers should always have a measure of sampling adequacy above 0.50 before proceeding with the factor analysis.

Table 4.1:

KMO and Bartlett's Test

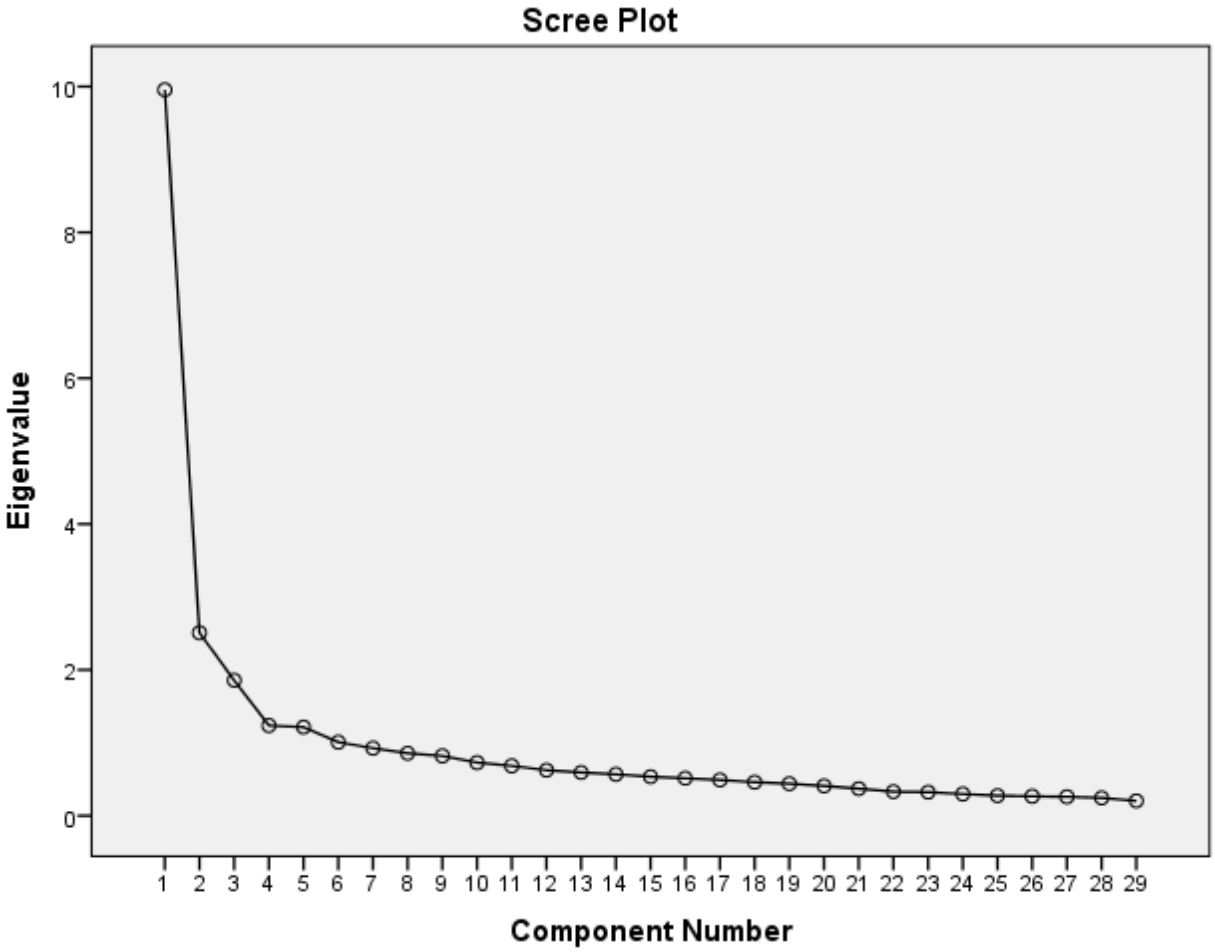
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.924
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5152.860
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

The KMO is 0.924 so it is greater than 0.5 so we can move to factor analysis and the Bartlett's Test of sphericity is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 so it is significant and we reject the null that

the variables are uncorrelated. Based on the tests' results it is satisfactory to proceed with the factor analysis.

With reference to the "Total Variance Explained" table found in Appendix N, six components are extracted accounting for 61.316% of the total variance.

Figure 4.1: Scree Plot showing the component numbers with their respective Eigenvalues.



The above Scree Plot shows as well that Eigenvalues above 1 are six factors.

The rotated component matrix makes the interpretation of the Factor Analysis easier showing the factor loadings of the variables on the extracted components. The factor loadings represent the correlation of each variable and the factor with higher loadings making the variable representative of the factor. Factor loadings interpret the role each variable plays in defining each factor. Factor loadings of 0.50 and above are necessary for practical significance. The table found on appendix O shows the six factor structure based on the rotated component matrix.

Component 1: Service Environment and availability of tickets.

- I am satisfied with the availability of tickets whenever I decide to go to a match.
- The employees at the stadium respond quickly to my needs.
- Signs at the stadium help me know where I am going.
- Signs at the stadium give clear directions of where things are located.
- The stadium layout makes it easy to get to the restrooms.
- There is a plenty of knee room in the seating area.
- There is plenty of elbow room in the seating area.
- The arrangement of the seats provides plenty of comfortable space.
- I am satisfied with the view of the court from my seat.
- I am satisfied with the services I experience at the stadium.
- I am delighted with the services I experience at the stadium.

Component 2: Opponent Characteristics and Game Atmosphere.

- In the last game, the opposing team was a high quality team.

- In the last game, the opposing team had star players.
- In the last game, the opposing team had a good history.
- There is always a good atmosphere created by the fans at the stadium.
- I enjoy the excitement surrounding the performance of the players.
- I enjoy being with other fans who are cheering, singing and supporting my team.

Component 3: Team Characteristics and Player Performance.

- My team gives 100% every game.
- Players on my team have superior skills.
- Players on my team always try to do their best.
- My expectations regarding my team are always fulfilled.
- I am satisfied with the game of my team.

Component 4: Frontline Employees and Game Satisfaction

- The employees at the stadium are friendly and have a positive attitude.
- The attitude of the employees at the stadium shows their willingness to help attendees.
- I am satisfied with the game and I'm willing to watch another game even if the price of the ticket increases.

Component 5: Pricing.

- I am satisfied with the current pricing set by my club for a basketball game.
- The tickets to my team games are reasonably priced.

- If the price of the ticket rises in the future, I will consider not attending any more games.

Component 6: Pricing

- If the price range is more to my liking, I will be interested in attending more games.

4.3- Scale Reliability

Since the questionnaire included different sets of scales, reliability analysis was performed on each set of scale. Cronbach's alpha, also known as the coefficient of reliability, was used to estimate the internal consistency of the scale since it is most commonly used when we want to determine the reliability of multiple-item-Likert-scale questions in a questionnaire that form a scale and we wish to determine if the scale is reliable. Cronbach's alpha increases as the inter-correlations among the items increase. The generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70.

The following table summarizes the results of the scale reliability of each scale, with the number of items of each case and whether Cronbach's alpha is acceptable.

Table 4.2: Summary of the reliability tests.

Scale	Number of Items	Alpha	Decision
Behavioral Intention	4	.734	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Fan Satisfaction	3	.741	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Pricing and Availability of tickets	6	.654	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Team Characteristics	2	.729	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Player Performance	2	.652	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Opponent Characteristics	3	.720	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Game Atmosphere	3	.751	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Frontline Employees	4	.881	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Facility Access	3	.859	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.
Facility Design	3	.802	All scale items were included. The average of the items was calculated.

4.4- Regression Analysis & Hypothesis Testing

Simple and multiple regressions, along with Model 4 Process (Hayes) were run to test the hypotheses.

The following are the results of the regression analysis of each hypothesis:

- ***H_1: The smaller the gap between the actual price paid and the reference price, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.***

A t-test was run to see if there is a difference between those who perceive excessive amount to be paid and those who don't. The results of the t-test, found on Appendix C, confirm that there is significant difference between them. A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between the fan satisfaction, calculated as the average between game and service satisfaction; and the gap between the actual and expected price, measured using question 4 : "**Is the price paid for the ticket above the amount you were willing to pay? If yes, by how much is it higher?"**. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 5.995 - 0.149 (Excessive Amount Paid)** was significant with p-value=0.05 and F=3.879, with an R^2= 0.01 which means that 1% of the variation in total fan satisfaction is explained by the variation in the gap of the actual price paid and the reference price. The negative coefficient of the gap shows that as the gap in the prices increases, the fan's satisfaction decreases. The detailed results are found on appendix C.

- ***H_2: Ticket pricing influences fan's behavioral intentions.***

A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between behavioral intention and the pricing of the ticket. The regression line **Behavioral Intention = 3.884 + 0.356 (Pricing of**

the ticket)was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=35.538, with an R^2= 0.086 which means that 8.6% of the variation in the fan's behavioral intention is explained by the variation in pricing of the ticket. The SPSS output is found on appendix C.

- ***H_3: The easier the facility access, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.***
- ***H_4: The more comfortable the facility space, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.***
- ***H_5: The fan's perception of the services provided by stadium employees impacts his/her satisfaction.***

A multiple linear regression was run to test the relationship between fan satisfaction and the facility access, facility design and frontline employees. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 1.893 + 0.502 (Frontline Employees) + 0.163 (Facility Design) + 0.043 (Facility Access)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=381.842, with an R^2= 0.743 which means that 74.3% of the variation in the fan's satisfaction is explained by the variation in facility access, facility design and frontline employees. The Frontline Employees (p-value=0.000) and Facility Access (p-value=0.000) were found to be significant, whereas the Facility Design (p-value=0.126) was found to be insignificant. The SPSS output is found on appendix D.

- ***H_6: The ranking, history and the number of star players in the opposing team impact fan's satisfaction.***

A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between fan satisfaction and the opponent characteristics. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 3.698 + 0.367 (Opponent Characteristics)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=93.550, with an R^2= 0.190 which

means that 19% of the variation in the fan's satisfaction is explained by the variation in the opponent characteristic. The SPSS output is found on appendix E.

- ***H_7: The atmosphere created by the fans in the stadium impacts fan's satisfaction.***

A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between fan satisfaction and the game atmosphere. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 3.455 + 0.384 (Game Atmosphere)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=54.413, with an R^2= 0.120 which means that 12% of the variation in the fan's satisfaction is explained by the variation in the game atmosphere. The SPSS output is found on appendix F.

- ***H_8: The fan's perception of the team characteristics impacts his/her satisfaction.***

A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between fan satisfaction and the team characteristics. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 2.129 + 0.624 (Team Characteristics)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=284.966, with an R^2= 0.417 which means that 41.7% of the variation in the fan's satisfaction is explained by the variation in the team characteristics. The SPSS output is found on appendix G.

- ***H_9: The fan's perception of player performance impacts his/her satisfaction.***

A simple linear regression was run to test the relationship between fan satisfaction and the player performance. The regression line **Fan Satisfaction = 3.056 + 0.457 (Player Performance)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=108.502, with an R^2= 0.214 which

means that 21.4% of the variation in the fan's satisfaction is explained by the variation in the player performance. The SPSS output is found on appendix H.

- ***H_{10}: Satisfaction with the services that a fan experiences during a basketball game has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions.***
- ***H_{11}: Satisfaction with the basketball game that a fan watches has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions***

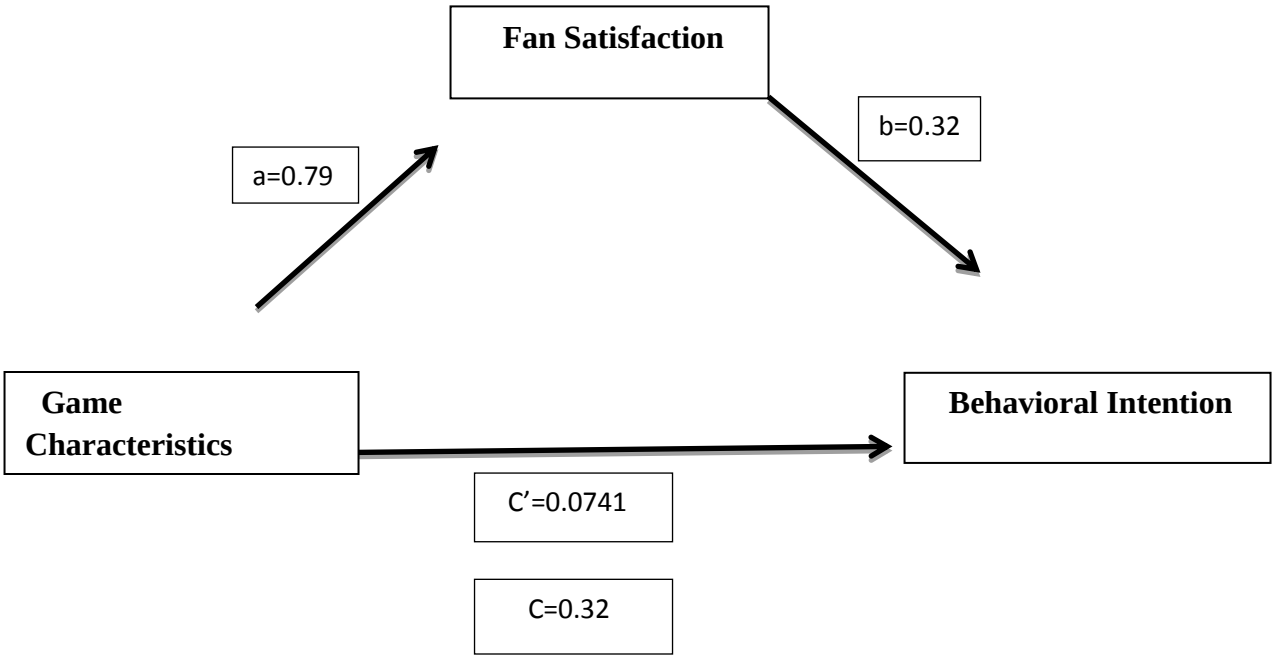
A multiple regression was run to test the relationship between the fan's behavioral intention and the game and service satisfaction. The regression line **Behavioral Intention = 3.111 + 0.300 (Game Satisfaction) + 0.129 (Service Satisfaction)** was significant with p-value=0.000 and F=44.431, with an R^2= 0.183 which means that 18.3% of the variation in the fan's behavioral intention is explained by the variation in the game and service satisfaction. The SPSS output is found on appendix I.

- ***H_{12}: Fan satisfaction has a mediating role between the game characteristics and behavioral intention.***

Process (Model 4: Simple Mediation) was used to test whether the fan's satisfaction plays a mediating between the game characteristics and the fan's behavioral intention. The relationship between the game characteristics and the fan's satisfaction is significant (p-value=0.000 with coefficient a=0.7903 as shown in figure 4.2). The relationship between the fan's satisfaction and his/her behavioral intention is also significant (p-value=0.000 with coefficient b=0.3155 as shown in figure 4.2) but the direct relationship between the game

characteristics and the fan's behavioral intention is found to be insignificant (p-value=0.3798). The confidence interval of the indirect effect of the game characteristics on the fan's behavioral intention is [0.1362; 0.3807], so we can deduce that there is a significant indirect effect of the game characteristics on the fan's behavioral intention via the fan's satisfaction. The indirect effect is found to be (0.79)(0.32)=0.25. Therefore, we can deduce that satisfaction plays a mediating role between the game characteristics and behavioral intention. The following diagram summarizes the results obtained:

Figure 4.2: Model 4 mediation of fan satisfaction between the game characteristics and behavioral intention.

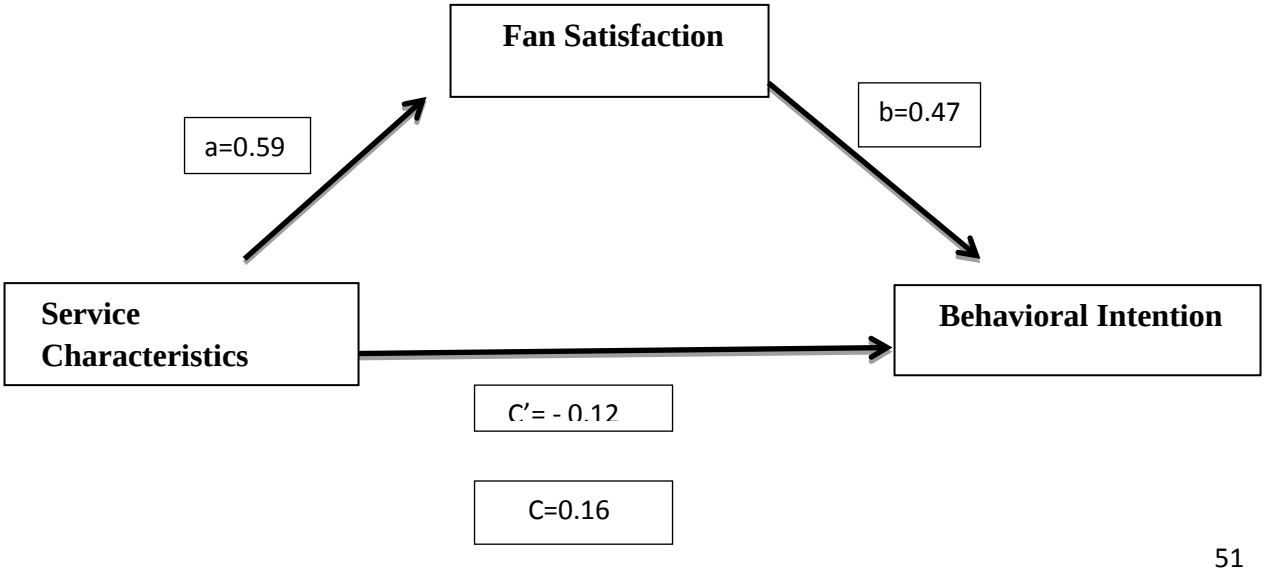


The SPSS output for Model 4 is found on appendix J.

- ***H_{13}: Fan satisfaction has a mediating role between the service characteristics and behavioral intention.***

Process (Model 4: Simple Mediation) was used to test whether the fan's satisfaction plays a mediating between the service characteristics and the fan's behavioral intention. The relationship between the service characteristics and the fan's satisfaction is significant (p-value=0.000 with coefficient a=0.5908 as shown in figure 4.3). The relationship between the fan's satisfaction and his/her behavioral intention is also significant (p-value=0.000 with coefficient b=0.4724 as shown in figure 4.3) but the direct relationship between the service characteristics and the fan's behavioral intention is found to be insignificant (p-value=0.583). The confidence interval of the indirect effect of the game characteristics on the fan's behavioral intention is [0.1636; 0.3959], so we can deduce that there is a significant indirect effect of the service characteristics on the fan's behavioral intention via the fan's satisfaction. The indirect effect is found to be (0.59)(0.47)=0.28. Therefore, we can deduce that satisfaction plays a mediating role between the service characteristics and behavioral intention. The following figure summarizes the results obtained:

Figure 4.3: Model 4 mediation of fan satisfaction between the service characteristics and behavioral intention.



The SPSS output for Model 4 is found on appendix K.

The following table summarizes the results of all hypotheses tests:

Table 4.5: Summary of the results of all the hypotheses tests.

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H_1: The smaller the gap between the actual price paid and the reference price, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_1 is supported
H_2: Ticket pricing influences fan's behavioral intentions.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_2 is supported
H_3: The easier the facility access, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.	Multiple Linear Regression	Significant	H_3 is supported
H_4: The more comfortable the facility space, the higher is the fan's satisfaction.	Multiple Linear Regression	Not Significant	H_4 is not supported
H_5: The fan's perception of the services provided by stadium employees impacts his/her satisfaction.	Multiple Linear Regression	Significant	H_5 is supported
H_6: The ranking, history and the number of star players in the opposing team impact fan's satisfaction.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_6 is supported
H_7: The atmosphere created by the fans in the stadium impacts fan's satisfaction.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_7 is supported
H_8: The fan's perception of the team characteristics impacts his/her satisfaction.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_8 is supported
H_9: The fan's perception of player performance impacts his/her satisfaction.	Simple Linear Regression	Significant	H_9 is supported
H_{10}: Satisfaction with the services that a fan experiences during a basketball game has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions.	Multiple Regression	Significant	H_{10} is supported
H_{11}: Satisfaction with the basketball game that a fan watches has a positive impact on his/her behavioral intentions	Multiple Regression	Significant	H_{11} is supported
H_{12}: Satisfaction has a mediating role between the game characteristics and behavioral intention.	Process Model 4	Significant	H_{12} is supported
H_{13}: Satisfaction has a mediating role between the service characteristics and behavioral intention.	Process Model 4	Significant	H_{13} is supported

V- Findings and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between behavioral intention and perception of service and core quality on one hand, on another hand to depict the relationship between service and core quality with game and service satisfaction; and to explore the mediating role of fan satisfaction between service quality and behavioral intention. This study extended the literature by: (1) applying a service quality model generated in the United States spectator sports to the Lebanese Basketball context, (2) examining the simultaneous effects of ticket pricing and service quality on the fans' satisfaction and behavioral intention and (3) examining the effect of the gap between the actual price paid for a ticket and the reference price on the fans' satisfaction.

This study makes a remarkable contribution to the literature, because very little effort has been made to pinpoint the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction in sporting events. First, the study contributes to the literature by pointing out the effects of core quality and service quality on fans' satisfaction and behavioral intention. The basic assumption of the quality-satisfaction-behavioral intention chains is that firms will be able to satisfy and retain their customers by providing high quality goods and services (Cronin & Taylor,1992 ; Dabholkar et al., 2000).

In this study, the most important theoretical evidence discovered was associated with team characteristics. The relationship between team characteristics, satisfaction and behavioral intention was statistically strong and significant. This significance of the team characteristics, along with player performance, indicates that the core aspect of the game, such as the quality of the players and the team's effort during the game, play a decisive role in increasing the

satisfaction of the games(Ko et al., 2009; Tsuji et al., 2007). The study shows that 41.7% of the variation in the satisfaction of the fans is explained by the team characteristics and 21.4% of the variations of the satisfaction of the fans is explained by player performance. Although the result of a game is usually unpredictable and beyond the control of the managers (Theodorakis and Alexandris, 2008), clubs must imprint in the minds of the players the sense of honoring the club's shirt and motivate them to give their all in every game they play (USA Today, 2010). Clubs must build a strong scouting network so that they improve the team by acquiring new talented players through which they will be contributing directly to the improvement of the fans' satisfaction and positively influence the likelihood of returning for future sporting events.

Game atmosphere was another strong predictor of the fans' satisfaction. The results suggest that the game atmosphere plays a small role in developing satisfaction during the games, which is obvious from the low percentage of variance (12%) predicted by the game atmosphere. This result means that the clubs can create an attractive game atmosphere (Yoshida and James, 2010), organize special events prior to the game (Kuenzel and Yassim, 2007) and yet those factors might not raise the satisfaction level of the fans if the players are not performing well and giving good results.

Another contribution the study makes is the exploration of the effects of the frontline employees and the service environment on the fans' satisfaction. Frontline employees and facility access were found to be the major predictors of the fans' satisfaction, whereas the facility design was found to be insignificant in affecting the satisfaction of the fans. This leads us to conclude that the satisfaction of the fans with the services experienced during the

basketball games is based in part on the attitudes and behaviors of the numerous frontline employees, therefore employees should be trained to have a positive attitude towards the fans and to be helpful to the fans during the game. In addition to this, the relationship studied by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) between facility access- service satisfaction is consistent with the result of this study. Hence, the model of this study helps us understand that the felt convenience and ease of facility access, comprised of facility layout and information signs, will improve the satisfaction of the fans.

The fan's perception of the reasonability of ticket pricing showed a significant positive effect on his/her behavioral intention. This indicates that a fan's satisfaction is related to the monetary sacrifice needed to purchase a ticket, where the pleasurable response is mostly determined by the player performance and team characteristics. This result contradicts with the one found by Yoshida et al. (2013), but it is consistent with the finding of Cohen (1988) and Maroco (2010). Lee and Kang (2011) claimed that the pricing of the tickets must be based on user perspectives, since customers place different valuations of the same product. With the same argument, Howard and Crompton (2004) indicate that dynamic pricing should be implemented along with variable pricing and that pricing should be done according to the location of the seats, the timing of the game and the quality of the opposing team. It is recommended that clubs begin providing flexible ticket packages as a replacement to full-time season tickets (Howard and Crompton, 2004). Purchase of the game tickets on the official websites of the clubs must also be implemented where each official member gets access to a certain amount of tickets for a specific game, so that the fans don't rely solely on the availability of tickets on match day or pay huge amount of money to get a ticket from a

secondary market, because paying excessive money affects negatively on the satisfaction of the fans as this study has confirmed.

Finally, a significant relationship has been found between the satisfaction (game and service) and the behavioral intention of the fans and the fan satisfaction was found to be a mediator between service satisfaction and behavioral intention and between the components of the game characteristics and the behavioral intention. This means that a good perception of the player performance, team performance and game atmosphere will have a positive effect on the behavioral intention through the fan satisfaction mediation. Similarly, the good quality of the services provided by the frontline employees and facility access will favor positive behavioral intention through the fan satisfaction mediation. These results are consistent with the previous literature which indicates that fans who are satisfied are likely to attend future games and recommend others to attend (Kuenzel and Yassim, 2007; Yoshida and James, 2010, Yoshida et al., 2013). Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) claim that satisfaction depends directly on the moment of its assessment and it may change by time, therefore clubs should be careful and keep on assessing the level of satisfaction level of the fans regularly in order to improve service quality and reap its benefits in the long run.

VI- Limitations:

The following limitations of the study must be acknowledged:

- The Lebanese Basketball Federation prevents the fans of the away teams from attending their teams' games whenever they play away from home. Therefore, the respondents of the questions were only the home fans and the away fans had no input whatsoever. In all cases the usual attendance is 90-10 ratio, so there won't be major expected changes in the results.
- This study is based on a sample of Lebanese basketball fans of division 1 and, thus, the finding cannot be generalized to other basketball leagues.
- The ticket pricing measure is limited to the monetary cost of the ticket and it doesn't include the non-monetary costs such as time and effort needed to attend a game.
- This study does not include different ancillary entertainment activities which might affect satisfaction such as cheerleaders and half time shows. Those activities (cheerleaders and half time shows) are not included, because the model is based on the traditional definition of service quality which is a customer's perception of the quality of the customer-service environment interaction and the customer-frontline employees interaction.
- The lack of literature in the sports marketing regarding fan satisfaction and behavioral intention especially in the Lebanese basketball context.

VII- Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the study confirm that fan satisfaction is significantly affected by the components of the game characteristics comprised of team characteristics, player performance, game atmosphere and the opponent characteristics. The results also showed that fan satisfaction is affected significantly by two components of the service environment: frontline employees and facility access. The facility design, which was the third component of the service environment, had no significant effect on the fan satisfaction. Behavioral intention is negatively affected by the excessive amount of money paid by the fan to watch a basketball game. The fan satisfaction played a mediating role between the components of service quality and behavioral intention and between the components of the game characteristics and behavioral intention.

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Appendix A : Questionnaire

Questionnaire:

1- **When was the last time you watched a game?**
   a- Last week
   b- Within the last month
   c- Within the last 2 months
   d- More than 2 months ago

2- **Did you purchase the ticket from the stadium?**
   a- Yes
   b- No

3- **How much money did you pay for the ticket?**
   a- 5,000 L.L.
   b- Between 6,000 L.L. to 10,000 L.L.
   c- Between 11,000 L.L. to 15,000 L.L.
   d- More than 15,000 L.L.

4- **Is the price paid for the ticket above the amount you were willing to pay? If yes, by how much is it higher?**
   a- No
   b- Yes. By :
      i- 5,000 L.L.
      ii- 6,000 L.L.- 10,000 L.L.
      iii- 11,000 L.L. – 15,000 L.L.
      iv- Above 15,000 L.L.

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the statements below. Be sure to answer each question.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I will attend more games of my team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I will recommend my team's games to other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I enjoyed the game a lot and I definitely watch another game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I am satisfied with the current pricing set by my club for a basketball game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I am satisfied with the availability of tickets whenever I decide to go to a match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	If the price range is more to my liking, I will be interested in attending more games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	If the price of the ticket rises in the future, I will consider not attending any more game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	There is a range of affordable prices for tickets	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	The tickets to my team games are reasonably priced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	My team gives 100% every game	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Players on my team have superior skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Players on my team always try to do their best	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13	In this game, the opposing team was a high quality team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	In this game, the opposing team had star players	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	In this game, the opposing team had a good history	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	The employees at the stadium respond quickly to my needs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	The employees at the stadium are friendly and have a positive attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	The attitude of the employees at the stadium shows their willingness to help attendees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	Signs at the stadium help me know where I am going	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	Signs at the stadium give clear directions of where things are located	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	The stadium layout makes it easy to get to the restrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	There is a plenty of knee room in the seating area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	There is plenty of elbow room in the seating area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	The arrangement of the seats provides plenty of comfortable space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	I am satisfied with the view of the court from	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	my seat							
26	There is always a good atmosphere created by the fans at the stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	I enjoy the excitement surrounding the performance of the players	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	I enjoy being with other fans who are cheering, singing and supporting my team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	I am delighted with the gameplay of my team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	My expectations regarding my team are always fulfilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	I am satisfied with the services I experience at the stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	I am delighted with the services I experience at the stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	I am satisfied with the game and I'm willing to watch another game even if the price of the ticket increases	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5- What is your gender?

a- Male

b- Female

6- What is your age?

a- Below 18 years old

b- 18- 29 years old

c- 30-49 years old

d- 50-64 years old

e- Above 64 years old

7- What is your employment status?

a- Employed

b- Unemployed

c- Student

d- Retired

8- Are you a season ticket holder in the club you support?

a- Yes

b- No

Appendix B: Descriptive Statistics

What is your gender?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Male	77.6%	311
Female	22.4%	90

From the 401 respondents to the survey, 311 (77.6%) were males and 90 (22.4%) were females.

What is your age?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Below 18 years old	14.2%	57
18- 29 years old	73.6%	295
30-49 years old	11.5%	46
50-64 years old	0.5%	2
Above 64 years old	0.2%	1

Regarding the age, 57 respondents (14.2%) were below 18 years old, 295 (73.6%) were between 18 and 29 years old, 46 (11.5%) were between 30 and 49 years old, 2 (0.5%) were between 50 and 64 years old and finally 1 (0.2%) was above 64 years old.

What is your employment status?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Employed	61.8%	248
Unemployed	5.0%	20
Student	32.7%	131
Retired	0.5%	2

Regarding the employment status, 248 respondents (61.8%) were employed, 20 (5 %) were unemployed, 131 (32.7%) were students and 2 (0.5%) were retired.

Are you a season ticket holder in the club you support?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	7.0%	28
No	93.0%	373

Out of the 401 respondents, only 28 (7%) were season ticket holders, whereas the number of season ticket holders was 373 (93%).

When was the last time you watched a basketball game in the stadium?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Last week	68.3%	274
Last month	16.2%	65
Within the last 2 months	6.5%	26
More than 2 months ago	9.0%	36

274 respondents (68.3%) watched a basketball game during the past week of taking the survey, 65 (16.2%) watched it within the past month, 26 (6.5%) watched it within the last 2 months and 36 (9%) watched a game more than 2 months ago.

Did you purchase the ticket from the stadium?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
Yes	91.8%	368
No	8.2%	33

How much money did you pay for the ticket?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
5,000 L.L.	63.6%	255
Between 6,000 L.L. to 10,000 L.L.	31.9%	128
Between 11,000 L.L. to 15,000 L.L.	2.2%	9
More than 15,000 L.L.	2.2%	9

255 people (63.6%) paid 5,000 L.L. to watch a basketball game, 128 (31.9%) people paid between 6000 L.L. and 10,000 L.L., 9 (2.2%) paid between 11,000 L.L. and 15,000 L.L. and 9 (2.2%) also paid more than 15,000 L.L.

Is the price paid for the ticket above the amount you were willing to pay? If yes, by how much is it higher?		
Answer Options	**Response Percent**	**Response Count**
No	84.3%	338
Yes, by: 5,000 L.L.	12.0%	48
Yes, by: 6,000 L.L.- 10,000 L.L.	2.7%	11
Yes, by : 11,000 L.L. – 15,000 L.L.	0.2%	1
Yes, by: Above 15,000 L.L.	0.7%	3

Out of the 401 respondents, 338 (84.3%) thought that they haven't paid an amount more than what they were willing to pay, 48 people (12%) thought that they paid 5,000 L.L. more than what they were willing to pay, 11 (2.7%) thought that they paid between 6,000 L.L. and 10,000 L.L. more than what they were willing to pay, 1 (0.2%) person thought that he paid between 11,000 L.L. and 15,000 L.L. more than what he was willing to pay, and finally 3 (0.7%) people thought that they paid above 15,000 L.L. than what they were willing to pay.

Appendix C: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 1

	excessorno	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
FanSatisfactionMean	1.00	338	5.8690	.82263	.04475
	2.00	63	5.5183	1.04697	.13191
GameSatisfactionMean	1.00	337	5.9837	.81679	.04449
	2.00	63	5.6111	1.18948	.14986
ServiceSatisfactionMean	1.00	338	5.7924	1.03199	.05613
	2.00	63	5.4550	1.11571	.14057
MeanBehavioralIntention	1.00	338	5.8891	.94648	.05148
	2.00	63	5.6429	.97003	.12221

Group Statistics

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
FanSatisfactionMean	Equal variances assumed	6.474	.011	2.968	399	.003	.35078	.11820	.11841	.58315
	Equal variances not assumed			2.518	76.902	.014	.35078	.13929	.07341	.62814
GameSatisfactionMean	Equal variances assumed	24.088	.000	3.066	398	.002	.37257	.12151	.13369	.61144
	Equal variances not assumed			2.383	73.307	.020	.37257	.15633	.06103	.68410
ServiceSatisfactionMean	Equal variances assumed	.959	.328	2.352	399	.019	.33738	.14346	.05534	.61942
	Equal variances not assumed			2.229	82.962	.029	.33738	.15136	.03633	.63843
MeanBehavioralIntention	Equal	.000	.993	1.888	399	.060	.24620	.13039	-.01014	.50254

	variances assumed								
	Equal variances not assumed			1.857	85.461	.067	.24620	.13261	-.01745	.50985

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Excessive Amount Paid[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfaction

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.098[a]	.010	.007	.86658

a. Predictors: (Constant), Excessive Amount Paid

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.913	1	2.913	3.879	.050[b]
	Residual	299.636	399	.751		
	Total	302.549	400			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Excessive Amount Paid

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.995	.101		59.084	.000
	Excessive Amount Paid	-.149	.076	-.098	-1.970	.050

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfaction

Appendix D: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 2

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanPricing[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: MeanBehavioralIntention

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.294[a]	.086	.084	.91184

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanPricing

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.211	1	31.211	37.538	.000[b]
	Residual	330.917	398	.831		
	Total	362.128	399			

a. Dependent Variable: MeanBehavioralIntention

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanPricing

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.884	.324		12.003	.000
	MeanPricing	.356	.058	.294	6.127	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MeanBehavioralIntention

Appendix E: Regression Testing for Hypotheses 3-4-5

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanFacilityDesign, MeanFrontlineEmployees, MeanFacilityAccess[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862[a]	.743	.741	.44299

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanFacilityDesign, MeanFrontlineEmployees, MeanFacilityAccess

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	224.802	3	74.934	381.842	.000[b]
	Residual	77.712	396	.196		
	Total	302.514	399			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanFacilityDesign, MeanFrontlineEmployees, MeanFacilityAccess

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.893	.119		15.947	.000
	MeanFrontlineEmployees	.502	.034	.635	14.932	.000
	MeanFacilityAccess	.043	.028	.065	1.531	.126
	MeanFacilityDesign	.163	.029	.222	5.560	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

Appendix F: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 6

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanOpponent Characteristic[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.436[a]	.190	.188	.78374

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanOpponentCharacteristic

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	57.463	1	57.463	93.550	.000[b]
	Residual	245.086	399	.614		
	Total	302.549	400			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanOpponentCharacteristic

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.698	.222		16.640	.000
	MeanOpponentCharacteristic	.367	.038	.436	9.672	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

Appendix G: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 7

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanGameAtmosphere[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.346[a]	.120	.118	.98748

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanGameAtmosphere

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.059	1	53.059	54.413	.000[b]
	Residual	389.070	399	.975		
	Total	442.129	400			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanGameAtmosphere

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.455	.314		11.021	.000
	MeanGameAtmosphere	.384	.052	.346	7.377	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

Appendix H: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 8

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanTeamCharacteristics[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.646[a]	.417	.416	.66554

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanTeamCharacteristics

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.223	1	126.223	284.966	.000[b]
	Residual	176.291	398	.443		
	Total	302.514	399			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanTeamCharacteristics

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.129	.221		9.641	.000
	MeanTeamCharacteristics	.624	.037	.646	16.881	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

Appendix I: Regression Testing for Hypothesis 9

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	MeanPlayerPerformance[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.462[a]	.214	.212	.77211

a. Predictors: (Constant), MeanPlayerPerformance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.684	1	64.684	108.502	.000[b]
	Residual	237.865	399	.596		
	Total	302.549	400			

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), MeanPlayerPerformance

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.056	.268		11.420	.000
	MeanPlayerPerformance	.457	.044	.462	10.416	.000

a. Dependent Variable: FanSatisfactionMean

Appendix J: Regression Testing for Hypotheses 10-11

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	GameSatisfactionMean, ServiceSatisfactionMean[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: BehavioralIntentionMean

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.428[a]	.183	.179	.75963

a. Predictors: (Constant), GameSatisfactionMean, ServiceSatisfactionMean

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.276	2	25.638	44.431	.000[b]
	Residual	228.507	396	.577		
	Total	279.784	398			

a. Dependent Variable: NewBehavioralIntentionMean

b. Predictors: (Constant), GameSatisfactionMean, ServiceSatisfactionMean

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.

		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.111	.270		11.517	.000
	ServiceSatisfactionMean	.129	.042	.162	3.048	.002
	GameSatisfactionMean	.300	.050	.321	6.040	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BehavioralIntentionMean

Appendix K: Results of the Process used to test H_{12}

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

************* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Beta Release 210112 *************

        Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.   http://www.afhayes.com

**************************************************************************
Model = 4
    Y = MeanBeha
    X = meangame
    M = FanSatis

Sample size
        401

**************************************************************************
Outcome: FanSatis

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .6240      .3894   254.4783     1.0000   399.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     1.1564      .2939     3.9341      .0001
meangame      .7903      .0495    15.9524      .0000

**************************************************************************
Outcome: MeanBeha

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .3238      .1049    23.3109     2.0000   398.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     3.5798      .3981     8.9927      .0000
FanSatis      .3155      .0665     4.7422      .0000
meangame      .0741      .0842      .8793      .3798

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ****************************
Outcome: MeanBeha

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .2330      .0543    22.8996     1.0000   399.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     3.9445      .4010     9.8380      .0000
meangame      .3234      .0676     4.7854      .0000
```

```
****************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS ********************

Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         SE          t          p


  .3234      .0676     4.7854      .0000

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         SE          t          p
      .0741      .0842      .8793      .3798

Indirect effect of X on Y
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .2493      .0587      .1395      .3655

Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .2615      .0603      .1487      .3851

Completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .1796      .0422      .0988      .2655

Ratio of indirect to total effect of X on Y
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .7709      .2765      .3773     1.4787

Ratio of indirect to direct effect of X on Y
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis     3.3656   646.1068    -2.8775   462.2821

R-squared mediation effect size (R-sq_med)
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .0525      .0222      .0170      .1071

Preacher and Kelley (2011) Kappa-squared
            Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .1449      .0344      .0797      .2103

Normal theory tests for indirect effect
     Effect         se          Z          p
      .2493      .0549     4.5375      .0000

******************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND WARNINGS *************************

Number of bootstrap samples for bias corrected bootstrap confidence
intervals:
```

```
     1000

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
    95.00
------ END MATRIX -----
```

Appendix L: Results of the Process used to test H_{13}

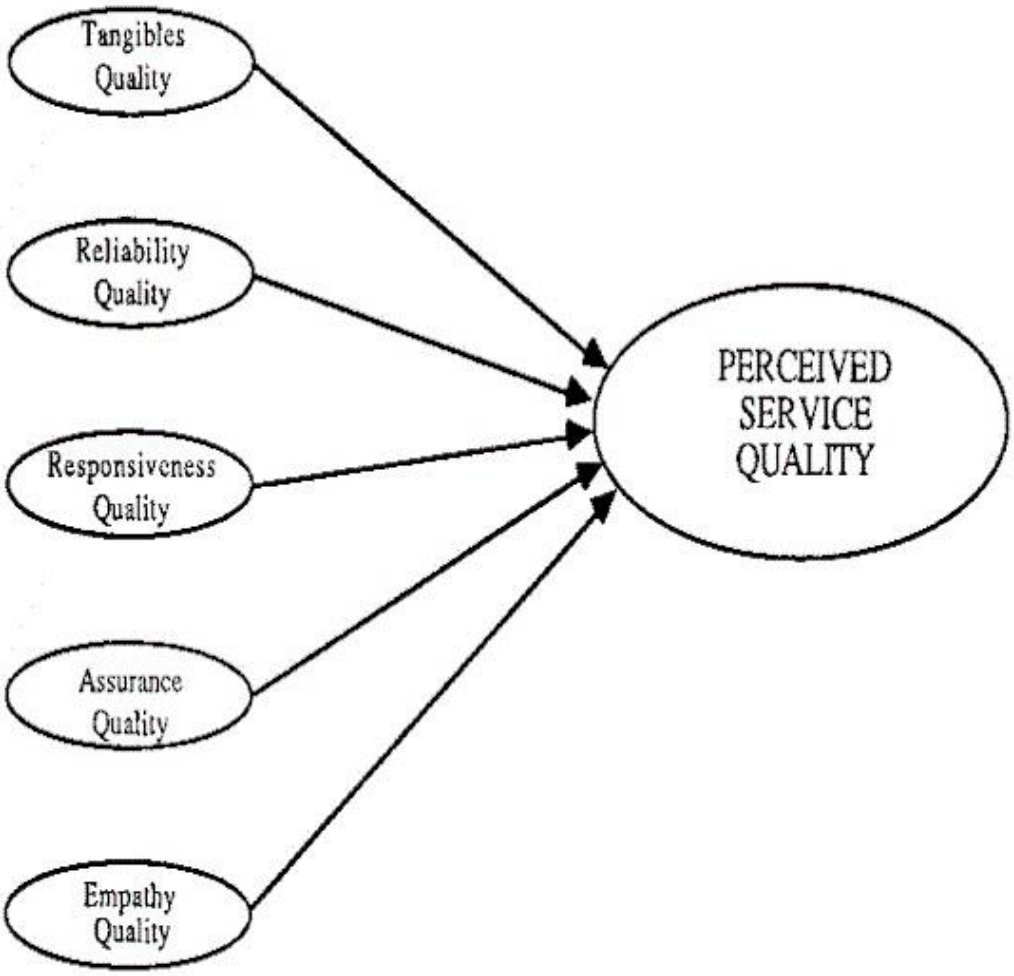
```
Run MATRIX procedure:

************* PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Beta Release 210112 *************

        Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.   http://www.afhayes.com

**************************************************************************
Model = 4
    Y = MeanBeha
    X = meanserv
    M = FanSatis

Sample size
        401

**************************************************************************
Outcome: FanSatis

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .7746      .6000   598.4629     1.0000   399.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     2.6448      .1324    19.9711      .0000
meanserv      .5908      .0241    24.4635      .0000

**************************************************************************
Outcome: MeanBeha

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .3334      .1112    24.8899     2.0000   398.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     3.7400      .3063    12.2086      .0000
FanSatis      .4724      .0819     5.7685      .0000
meanserv     -.1186      .0625    -1.8988      .0583

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ****************************
Outcome: MeanBeha

Model Summary
          R       R-sq          F        df1        df2          p
      .1920      .0369    15.2688     1.0000   399.0000      .0001

Model
              coeff         se          t          p
constant     4.9895      .2252    22.1528      .0000
```

```
meanserv      .1605      .0411     3.9075      .0001



***************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS ********************

Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         SE          t          p
      .1605      .0411     3.9075      .0001

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         SE          t          p
     -.1186      .0625    -1.8988      .0583

Indirect effect of X on Y
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .2791      .0605      .1645      .4076

Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .2928      .0601      .1729      .4199

Completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .3339      .0697      .1942      .4833

Ratio of indirect to total effect of X on Y
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis     1.7390     1.1298      .8917     3.5258

Ratio of indirect to direct effect of X on Y
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis    -2.3532    61.0087   -74.1545    -1.3124

R-squared mediation effect size (R-sq_med)
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .0288      .0262     -.0193      .0843

Preacher and Kelley (2011) Kappa-squared
             Effect    Boot SE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
FanSatis      .2171      .0441      .1258      .3063

Normal theory tests for indirect effect
     Effect         se          Z          p
      .2791      .0497     5.6101      .0000

******************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND WARNINGS ************************

Number of bootstrap samples for bias corrected bootstrap confidence
intervals:
     1000
```

```
Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
    95.00

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Appendix M: The SERVQUAL Scale

THE PARSURAMAN, ZEITHAML, AND BERRY (1988) THEORY OF THE DETERMINANTS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY



Appendix N: SPSS Output for Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.955	34.329	34.329	9.955	34.329	34.329	5.929	20.444	20.444
2	2.509	8.653	42.981	2.509	8.653	42.981	3.313	11.426	31.870
3	1.857	6.403	49.384	1.857	6.403	49.384	3.204	11.050	42.919
4	1.237	4.267	53.651	1.237	4.267	53.651	2.439	8.411	51.330
5	1.215	4.190	57.841	1.215	4.190	57.841	1.796	6.192	57.522
6	1.008	3.475	61.316	1.008	3.475	61.316	1.100	3.794	61.316
7	.927	3.196	64.512						
8	.857	2.955	67.467						
9	.820	2.829	70.296						
10	.729	2.512	72.808						
11	.684	2.358	75.166						
12	.624	2.153	77.319						
13	.592	2.042	79.361						
14	.567	1.955	81.316						
15	.535	1.844	83.159						
16	.513	1.770	84.929						
17	.490	1.689	86.619						
18	.460	1.585	88.204						
19	.439	1.513	89.717						
20	.408	1.409	91.126						
21	.372	1.282	92.408						
22	.331	1.140	93.548						
23	.323	1.114	94.663						
24	.297	1.024	95.686						
25	.276	.952	96.638						
26	.267	.921	97.559						
27	.260	.897	98.457						
28	.244	.841	99.298						
29	.204	.702	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix O: SPSS Output for Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied with the availability of tickets whenever I decide to go to a match.	.670	.139	.068	.063	.219	.169
If the price range is more to my liking, I will be interested in attending more games.	.128	.094	.182	.028	.064	.802
There is a range of affordable prices for tickets.	.399	.105	-.115	.003	.505	.254
The tickets to my team games are reasonably priced.	.099	.017	.155	.187	.747	.123
My team gives 100% every game.	.342	.067	.711	-.001	.148	.035
Players on my team have superior skills.	.232	.059	.754	.042	-.004	-.067
Players on my team always try to do their best.	.089	.052	.742	.087	.035	.020
In the last game, the opposing team was a high quality team.	.153	.639	.013	.025	.323	-.044
In the last game, the opposing team had star players.	.246	.691	.041	-.116	.226	.013
In the last game, the opposing team had a good history.	.317	.641	.207	-.036	.138	.162
The employees at the stadium respond quickly to my needs.	.589	.197	.211	.443	.058	-.011
The employees at the stadium are friendly and have a positive attitude.	.446	.121	.147	.659	.144	.042
The attitude of the employees at the stadium shows their willingness to help attendees.	.407	.190	.065	.672	.094	.115
Signs at the stadium help me know where I am going.	.708	.115	.145	.372	.101	-.043
Signs at the stadium give clear directions of where things are located.	.681	.143	.183	.323	.165	-.063

The stadium layout makes it easy to get to the restrooms.	.721	.122	.218	.182	.074	-.032
There is a plenty of knee room in the seating area.	.728	.154	.197	.053	.090	.054
There is plenty of elbow room in the seating area.	.777	.122	.129	.156	.060	.140
The arrangement of the seats provides plenty of comfortable space.	.782	.172	.160	.099	.044	-.070
I am satisfied with the view of the court from my seat.	.412	.171	.229	-.075	.239	-.305
There is always a good atmosphere created by the fans at the stadium.	.080	.690	.054	.341	-.077	-.030
I enjoy the excitement surrounding the performance of the players.	.074	.778	.038	.205	-.046	-.070
I enjoy being with other fans who are cheering, singing and supporting my team.	.114	.730	-.037	.141	-.076	.095
I am satisfied with the game of my team.	.131	.012	.716	.041	.125	.110
My expectations regarding my team are always fulfilled.	.121	.011	.668	.313	.058	.053
I am satisfied with the services I experience at the stadium.	.587	.191	.207	.481	.126	.081
I am delighted with the services I experience at the stadium.	.579	.130	.230	.451	.187	.005
I am satisfied with the game and I'm willing to watch another game even if the price of the ticket increases.	.215	.222	.181	.490	.356	-.234
Reverse Coding of PR3	.197	.126	.245	.152	.614	-.283

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.