A Receptor Based Perspective on 'Spectator-Less' Games Followed by The New Normal Era

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This study focuses on Korea baseball to cope with pandemic issue followed by the COVID-19. Because of the COVID-19, all the sporting events are now limiting spectators on the venue. The 'spectator-less’ sporting events could be the best solution temporarily since no one knows when this pandemic is going to be over. After the first opening match on May 5TH, the audience rating was above the average rating. This was predictable because Korea baseball sold broadcasting right to ESPN and all the spectators must watch the game only through streaming(Kim, 2020). Moreover, there are limited studies about the reaction during ‘spectator-less’ circumstance since it is the new challenge sports face. The strategic plan should be made for ‘spectator-less’ sporting events to prevent the fans from losing interest or to make the fans more immersed.

The 'spectator-less' match can give changes verbally and visually to the audience. Verbalization is the concept that the subject takes the things they conceptualize verbally. In the case of the match without spectators, the absence of the spectators chanting and the commentary could lead the decrease of the interest(Kwon & Ha, 2019). Visualization is the concept the subject takes the things visually. While the subjects watch the game, they focus on the vivid reaction from the fans on the venue. Previously, many studies have done focusing on consumer behavior and it is proven that the role of visualization and verbalization is important. This was proven by specialization of right and left hemi-sphere of brain(Hansen, 1981), the importance of the difference of individuals between visualization and verbalization(Childers, Houston, and Ruekert 1983), the psychobiological concomitants of curious sorts of information processing activity(Kroeber-Riel 1979). According to these studies, reaction from audience will be different compare to the game with the spectators. This difference could lead to ‘dissolution behaviors’, if the subject takes it negatively.

This study will examine the recognized satisfaction of Korea baseball fans divided by visualization and verbalization tendency and see how it affects ‘dissolution behaviors’ of fans. By dividing into two groups, the study tries to understand negative or positive reaction of the fans watching ‘spectator-less’ match and see how the negative reaction could lead to ‘dissolution behaviors’.

The subjects of this study were 140 people with the experience of watching 2020 Korea Baseball League. First all the participants have gone through demographic survey and Visualization and Verbalization Questionnaire. Next, participants were asked to watch two games, one with the fans and one without the fans on the venue. Two games were held in similar season and had same opponent. After watching two games, questionnaire about satisfaction was given.

H1: Video quality depended on existence of spectator will have positive effect on audience satisfaction.
H2: Audience satisfaction will have negative effect on Dissolution Behaviors
H3: The correlation between tendency of the visual and auditory senses and video quality depended on existence of spectator will have negative effect on audience satisfaction.