The Relationship Among Service Quality, Satisfaction, and Future Intentions of Users at Main Media Center (MMC): Case of Guangzhou Asian Games

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Sports are, to a great extent, reliant on the media for their exciting functions. They entertain audiences in ways that are quite different from conventional entertainment content. The media has transformed much of the environment in which sports are played and conducted. Sports broadcasting serves secondary roles other than delivering sports experience: namely, communicating the social values, thinking patterns, trends, fashion, lifestyles, aesthetic elements, and consumer products related to broadcast sports to audiences (Leonard, 1980). While the spontaneous nature of sports provides excitement, passion, and thrill as its main source of entertainment (Wenner & Gantz, 1989), in order to maintain loyalty, audiences’ expectations must not only be satisfied, but also surpassed (Wann, Royalty & Roche, 2000). In order to maintain audiences’ satisfaction with and willingness to watch broadcast sports, it is crucial to provide lively, vivid broadcasting coverage of events. Media members involved in such coverage include the camera crew, reporters, broadcasters, editors, transmitters, etc. of different disciplines and tasks. The Asian Games covered in this study fully perceives the vital function of the media in sporting events. Therefore, Guangzhou the main media center to provide an optimal environment for the media to fulfill these functions. According to Rogengren and Windahl (1972), audiences access media to satisfy their desires. Members of the media and the MMC satisfy the worldwide audience’s desire to experience the thrill of sports at the Asian Games.

The concept of “service quality” at the heart of this study refers to the quality of services provided by the main media center for media members present at the 2010 Asian Games. Services often increase users’ satisfaction rates and their willingness to recommend and continue using the service provider. Although sports games serve the core production function of a professional team, another function is game support programs (Brooks, 1994; Buell, 1984; Stotlar, 1989). Several investigations have concluded that spectator satisfaction comes, in part, from these support programs (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Murray & Howat, 2002, Schofield, 1983). In order to satisfy the user or customer needs of a media center, it is crucial to ensure that satisfactory services are provided as part of the marketing strategy (Murry & Howat, 2002). A good working environment will improve satisfaction rates and, in turn, contribute to higher quality media content. No study thus far has examined the relationship between media-related facilities and service quality at the media center for mega-sporting events. The relative importance of the operational environments of media-related facilities have previously been neglected. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship among service quality, satisfaction, and the future intentions of users at the Main Media Center for Asian Games. Therefore, this study intends to provide useful information on how to improve the professionalism and quality of services provided by media facilities at sporting events by surveying users’ satisfaction with the quality of services provided by media centers.

The data were collected through surveys from users of the media center during the Asian Games, including reporters, broadcasters, broadcasting technicians, producers, and other media members authorized access as members of participating countries. Two hundred and ninety-five surveys were collected using convenience sampling. Of the 295 respondents, 67.8% (N = 200) were male and 32.2% (N = 95) were female. Respondents were between 20 and 30 years old (45.1%). Approximately 122 (42%) respondents had international working experience on more than two occasions and came from 24 different countries. The questionnaire consisted of service quality, four overall satisfaction items from Oliver’s study (1997), and three recommendation items from Howat et al.’s study (1999). To measure the service quality of the main media center (25 items), the scale was recently modified by SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which is a generic scale that can be applied to a wide spectrum of settings. A 5-point Likert scale was adopted for all items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Descriptive statistics and internal consistency measures (Cronbach’s alpha) were obtained using SPSS 19.0. In addition, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in order to evaluate the measurement model, and the proposed model was developed and tested using a structural equation modeling (SEM) with MPLUS 5.21 program.
A two-step analytical approach was carried out for data analyses, including a CFA and a SEM. CFA for the measurement model of service quality, overall satisfaction, and recommendation yielded as a satisfactory model fit (S-B χ²/df (357/194) = 1.84, p < .01; RMSEA = .053; CFI = .951; SRMR = .045). Conducting a SEM analysis, the fit indices revealed that S-B χ²/df (370/198) = 1.86, p < .01; RMSEA = .054; CFI = .949; SRMR = .047. All service quality had a positive effect on overall satisfaction. Convenience factor (β = .33, p < .01), information factor (β = .34, p < .01), and volunteer factor (β = .29, p < .01) had a positive effect on overall satisfaction; however, the facility factor (β = .73, p > .05) was not statistically significant. In addition, overall satisfaction had positive effects on the recommendation factor (β = .83, p < .01).

These findings indicate that the necessity and value of studying how media centers and related services operate can be found in the effects they have on inducing worldwide consumption of sporting events. Broadcasting is an indispensable medium of sports consumption and a channel of information. In other words, broadcasting publicizes sports, promotes interest in game attendance, socializes people into the role of spectators, nurtures interest in game attendance, and serves as a vehicle through which people obtain the information needed to identify with athletes and teams and, subsequently, become committed fans (Coakley, 2005; Greendorfer, 1981; Lever and Wheeler, 1984; Zhang, Pease and Smith, 1998; Zhang and Smith, 1997). In particular, the MMC at the 2010 Asian Games served the additional role of increasing interest in what have traditionally been non-popular sports.

The findings of this study contributed to the field of sport media and event management by developing a better understanding of sport media users or customers. From a theoretical standpoint, we found that the key variables in user behavior (i.e., convenience, information, and volunteer factors) play an important role in quality perceptions of MMC. It is important to efficiently identify the needs and expectations of users or customers and to formulate strategies of satisfaction in order to improve their work quality and productivity (Brooks, 1994; Buell, 1984; Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton, 2000; Stotlar, 1989). Therefore, further studies investigating these users’ or customers’ satisfaction levels are required so as to improve the quality of services provided by media-related facilities. In other words, media management at sporting events requires a marketing, strategy-concerned approach. Thus, information on how media facilities are operated can help by providing basic information for improving the overall quality of the Asian Games and related experiences.