

Impact of Mega Sport Events Service Quality on Spectator Satisfaction, Revisit Intention and Referral Intention

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Service quality is the key determinant of the success for sporting events (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1994). It is the predictor of spectator satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Ko & Pastore, 2004) which affects spectator revisit intention and referral intention (Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Kwon, Trail & Anderson, 2005). Understanding these constructs is critical for the host destination and event marketers as it directly and closely connects to the event's profit generation from spectator sport consumption (Yoshida & James, 2010). Many studies exist on this relationship but sport events in different context need variations in measuring and operationalizing service quality (Crompton, MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1991). Especially, the need of studies on short-term one-time but high profiled mega sport events are emphasized as they are substantial opportunities to lure new spectators and develop sports-oriented consumers (Singh & Hu, 2008), and there is deficiency in studies on the IAAF World Athletics Championships in spite its prestige and magnitude (Jin, Lee & Lee, 2012). Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between mega sport events service quality, spectator satisfaction, and sport consumption behavioral intentions (i.e., revisit intention and referral intention) with the case of 2011 IAAF World Athletics Championships Daegu. This study will provide empirical basis and will establish marketing strategies for successful mega sport events.

Service quality is "the difference between what is expected from each of the service dimensions and what a consumer perceives he or she receives from them" (MacKay & Crompton, 1988, p.49), and is identified as the antecedent of consumer satisfaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). Theoretically based on expectancy disconfirmation theory, consumer satisfaction is defined as 'a pleasurable fulfillment response toward a good, service, benefit, or reward' (Oliver, 1997), and leads to repurchase intentions (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). This positive relation also applies in the sport context among sport events service quality, spectator satisfaction, revisit intention and referral intention (Evangelopoulos, 1993; Green, 1995; James, 1997). Since spectator satisfaction and sport consumer behavioral intentions are difficult to measure and anticipate, sport event service quality can be used as the good indicator and reference for effective sport event management (Koo, 1998). In this research, the following hypothesis will be tested to re-verify the relationship among the constructs of interest and to identify the influential service quality dimensions.

H1. Service quality (i.e., convenience, facility, service-pricing, game-content, promotion, and kindness) has positive effect on spectator satisfaction.

H2. Spectator satisfaction has positive effect on revisit intention and referral intention.

To test the hypothesis, a non-experimental research was conducted with the target population on the spectators at the 2011 IAAF World Athletics Championships Daegu. A survey on sport events service quality, spectator satisfaction, revisit intention and referral intention was conducted. Revising the scale developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), twenty-four questions to measure the six dimensions of service quality (i.e., convenience, facility, service-pricing, game-content, promotion, and kindness) was used. Seven questions for spectator satisfaction based on the scale used in Lee (1999) and Shin's (2005) research was employed. Three questions each for revisit intention and referral intention was also included in the survey. Three experts in the field of sports management and one in sport psychology verified the content validity of the questionnaire prior to distribution. Through non-probability judgment sampling and self-administration method, total 300 data were collected and analyzed after eliminating twenty incomplete questionnaires. The sample consists of 188 males and 112 females which were identical to the population with the average age of 37.5. Most spectators were accompanied by families (42.5%), followed by friends (28.6%), colleagues (16.4%), date (9.4%), or alone (3.1%). The SmartPLS 2.0 program was used to check the overall model fit of the PLS path modeling. The eta square was .701, the communality was .793, and the [eta square*communality] was .555. The three values are considered a good-fit if greater than .360. This PLS path model was satisfactory and demonstrated a good fit to this data. Reliability was verified where Cronbach's α ranged

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from .884 to .957. No severe multicollinearity was found as all dimensions had the inter-factor correlation less than .80.

Correlation between the dimensions of service quality and spectator satisfaction was analyzed. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Correlation coefficient were significant on convenience ($t=3.466, p<.001$), game-content ($t=6.798, p<.001$), promotion ($t=3.444, p<.001$), and kindness ($t=3.330, p<.001$) while facility ($t=.865$) and service-pricing ($t=.373$) were insignificant. Hypothesis 2 was supported as a positive effect of spectator satisfaction on revisit intention ($t=37.729, p<.001$) and referral intention ($t=42.188, p<.001$) were found.

The overall results indicated that mega sport events service quality (i.e., convenience in services, good quality of the game content, effective promotion, and kindness of stadium employees) was a strong predictor of spectator satisfaction. Furthermore, spectator satisfaction had a significant impact on both revisit and referral intentions. Theoretically, this study adds empirical base on the positive and significant relation among the constructs on interest. Service-pricing was insignificant despite the high price comparing to lower profiled sport events. This insinuates the willingness of the customers to pay higher price for high-quality sport events, and the significance of games-content aligns with this supposition. Practically, the findings can be applied for marketing strategies of the host destination and event marketers. Game-content was identified the most influential factor for spectator satisfaction which aligns with Yoshida and James's research (2010). Other than the games content which is hard to control, the perceptual dimensions such as convenience, promotion and kindness were identified more important than physical dimensions such as facility and service-pricing. These four dimensions heavily rely on the games operations and the marketer's management capability, and the organizers should target these factors as they are effective and controllable. The organizer should prioritize the improvements on these dimensions of service quality for efficient resource allocation. Systematic and thorough strategy targeting higher spectator-perceived service quality should be established from the planning to the operation stage of the sport event, and constant investigations to evaluate the service quality are in need (Koo, 1998). Based on the large population attending the event with family members, developing family-oriented activities or programs can be effective.