

Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction among Participants in Charity Sporting Events

Meungguk Park, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Taeho Yoh, Southern Illinois University Carbondale

David Shonk, James Madison University

**Marketing
Abstract 2013-237**

**Saturday, June 1, 2013
9:20 AM**

**Poster
(Ballroom)**

Charity sporting events (CSEs) have become popular fundraising programs for non-profit organizations (NPOs) over the years. Sport managers in charge of CSEs, however, are facing major challenges in their fundraising efforts due to the increase of competition among charitable organizations, the decrease of governmental support, and the economic downturn (Foundation Center, 2009; Gladden, Mahony, & Apostolopoulou, 2005). In responding to these challenges, CSE managers need to develop more sophisticated and effective fundraising programs. In developing more effective programs, it is critical for CSE managers to understand participant levels of satisfaction as research suggests that satisfaction is a key element of customer intent to return within the service industry (Heitman, Lehmann & Herrman, 2007; Oliver, 2010; Sargeant & Woollifee, 2007). For example, Sargeant and Woodlifee (2007) pointed out that donor satisfaction and retention are critical to the success of fundraising programs, given the fact that many NPOs lose approximately 60% of their donors after their first donation. Thus, in order to develop effective donor retention strategies, it is essential for sport managers in charge of CSEs to understand factors that impact the satisfaction and loyalty of CSE participants.

In response to the popularity and enhanced awareness of CSEs, a growing number of research studies have focused on CSEs (e.g., Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2009; Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin, & Ali-Choudhury, 2007; Scott & Solomon, 2003). While a majority of those studies have examined motivational factors among CSE participants, there has been a lack of empirical studies on CSE participant satisfaction.

The purpose of this study is to propose a theoretical model which identifies the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction among CSE participants and to investigate the relationships between the proposed constructs. The researchers identified six antecedent variables and two consequences of CSE satisfaction based on a comprehensive review of the literature on consumer satisfaction, service quality, donor satisfaction, and donor loyalty (e.g., Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008; Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Sargeant & Woodlifee, 2007). Interviews with 14 event and marketing coordinators working for CSEs were conducted. A panel of five experts thoroughly reviewed the content of the survey instrument in order to establish face validity. In addition, a confirmative factor analysis was employed to verify the measurement. The six antecedents included Sense of Accomplishment, Event Venue, Entertainment Value, Event Quality, Social interaction, and Trust, while the two consequences included Loyalty and Future Participant Intent.

Data were collected from 238 participants from four 2012 Relay-For-Life events in a Midwestern state. Permission to conduct a survey of event participants was granted by the Vice President and Director of the American Cancer Society regional office. Participants were 66 percent (n = 156) female and 34 percent (n = 80) male, and the majority of respondents were White/Caucasian (91%). The average age of participants was approximately 42 years old. More than 80% of participants indicated that their family members or relatives either currently have or have previously had cancer.

AMOS 20 was used to test both measurement and structural models. The results of a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the model has an acceptable fit for the data. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom was 2.23, and the reported root mean square residual of approximation (RMSEA) was .072 (Hair et al., 2009). Other fit indices also indicated that the overall fit of the model was good (CFI = .919; IFI = .920; TLI = .898). In terms of the reliability of the measurement, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the nine factors were satisfactory, ranging from .79 to .94, and AVE (average variance extracted) for each construct ranged from .54 to .87, thus exceeding the threshold of .5 (Hair et al., 2009). With regard to convergent validity, all estimated loadings of indicators were statistically significant, and all items loaded on their respective factors. Factor loading scores (λ) ranged from .69 to .94. Discriminant validity was measured by comparing the AVE value for each construct with the squared

2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

interconstruct correlations (SCI). All AVE estimates for the nine constructs were larger than the SIC estimates, indicating that the CFA model demonstrated discriminant validity.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed in this study to confirm the goodness-of fit for the structural model. The hypothesized model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df[880.175/360] = 2.44$; RMSEA = .078; CFI = .901; IFI = .902; TLI = .880). The results of the comprehensive model testing indicated the six antecedents explained 75% of the variance in CSE Satisfaction. Specifically, Sense of Accomplishment had a significant positive impact on CSE Satisfaction ($\beta = .28, p < .001$). In addition, Social interaction ($\beta = .29, p < .001$) and Trust ($\beta = .25, p < .001$) positively influenced CSE Satisfaction. However, the hypothesized link between Event Venue and CSE Satisfaction was not significant. Entertainment Value and Event Quality also did not have positive effects on CSE Satisfaction. Regarding the proposed link between CSE Satisfaction and Loyalty, CSE Satisfaction had a significant effect on Loyalty ($\beta = .60, p < .001, R\text{-square} = .36$). Finally, Loyalty had a significant contribution to Future Participant Intent ($\beta = .70, p < .001, R\text{-square} = .49$).

This study will provide valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners. From the academic perspective, the majority of research in charitable sporting events has been conducted in the area of participation motivation. This study, to our best knowledge, is the first attempt to examine Satisfaction with CSE Participation. Therefore, the study contributes to the growing body of research on charity sporting events. In addition, by presenting a theoretical framework that explains antecedents and consequences of satisfaction among CSE participants, this study can also extend the literature on consumer satisfaction and donor satisfaction within sport.

As for the practical implications, the results of this study will provide CSE directors and marketers with insights into how to enhance the level of satisfaction, which plays a critical role in participant retention. Specifically, CSE managers should enhance a participant's sense of accomplishment to assist in increasing participant satisfaction. One practical recommendation is to give recognition to participants as an expression of appreciation. Another possible recommendation is to present how their participation and donation make a significant difference in the lives of cancer patients and their family. In addition, given the significant influence of Trust on Satisfaction, it is critical for CSE managers to promote high ethical standards and financial transparency for the event organization (Hibbert & Farsides, 2005). Social Interaction (community support) also had a positive effect on the satisfaction of CSE participants. Thus, CSE managers might create events or activities (social, banquet, etc.) that can enhance common bonds among CSE participants.