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Aim

Brazil built or remodeled twelve stadiums or arenas to host the FIFA World Cup 2014. The Brazilian government and FIFA took through the strategies established for the mega event that such constructions should follow certain standards for the accommodation of fans it provides for "Football Stadiums - Technical recommendations and requirements." Such a document defined the so-called "FIFA standards". Fans now treated as consumers and, in recent years, it has a demand for safety and comfort of the football stadiums/arenas around the world. The objective of this study was to evaluate, through a survey instrument applied to 11,052 Brazilian fans, the fan-consumer perception of the quality of services offered by the new stadiums and arenas, that approaching the sport more and more of the global entertainment.

Theoretical Background

There is not a spectacle of football (and sports in general) without a suitable place dedicated to it. The stadiums and arenas for football should be designed to involve the healthy participation of multiple public and fans and provide a link between them and the teams and their players. Worldwide, these facilities have incorporated important changes to facilitate the sport of consumption, now treated as entertainment. Paramio et al. (2008) draw attention to the fact that the post-modern stadiums, arising from 1990, were born to be functional and present innovative design, especially in safety, accessibility and comfort for spectators and expansion of possibilities of economic exploitation to its owners, including the promotion of others activities than football (arena concept, Crompton, 2004). Van Winkel (2000) draws attention to the fact that the commercial operation of stadiums started to become an end in itself. The same author emphasizes that some emblematic football stadiums also had acquired a renovated profile; like the Allianz Arena in Munich; or contribute to the regeneration of cities where they are located, as Millennium Stadium in Cardiff or the Stade de France in Paris; or become major tourist destination, such as the Camp Nou in Barcelona, or the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid. Contemporary football stadiums become real entertainment centers, as long as well-structured and socially contextualized for this purpose. Such stadiums or arenas, anywhere in the world, must comply with quality standards to meet sport fans. In the case of football and its major football event in the world (FIFA WORLD CUP), the FIFA standards are easily identified in many football stadiums/arenas in the world. Potential consumption, standardization of services and surveillance for security are the key features of FIFA standard. Ritzer (2010) calls it the McDonaldization of society. For Bryman (2004), a british research, it is the disneyization of society.

Method

For investigate the perception of the fans about the quality of services offered in the new facilities built in Brazil for the World Cup 2014, we applied a research instrument in three different moments: a) in the first half of 2014, before the World Cup in the “old” stadiums (not used for the FIFA event; b) during the World Cup, in the new stadiums and arenas, built especially for the event and managed by FIFA; and, c) in the second half of 2014, after the World Cup, in the new facilities during local competitions, managed by local sport organizations. The questionnaire used in the three moments was the “Sport Spectator Identification Scale” (SSIS) standardized and validated for Portuguese by Theodorakis et. al. (2010). SSIS is a standardized instrument consists of sentences and answers on a Likert scale of seven levels and had been used by studies and translated into different languages, including Greek, German, Japanese, and Dutch (Theodorakis et. al., 2010). In this study, it used for analyses descriptive statistics, in order to identify the main differences in the perception of fans about the old stadium, the new facilities managed by FIFA in its main event and the new stadiums and arenas managed by sports organizations in Brazilian events. The issues
involving the analyzes were accessibility and hospitality; field alignment; security services and first aid service; parking and distance thereof towards the stadium; barriers that separate the field and fans; public comfort; areas inside the stadium and ticket purchasing areas.

Results, Discussion and Implications

In all, 11,052 people were interviewed for this research project. In the first moment, before the World Cup, in the stadiums that were not used during the World Cup, 4,602 people were interviewed. During the FIFA World Cup, 2,794 people that went to the facilities answer the questionnaire to during the FIFA event. After the World Cup (step 3), 3,656 fans were interviewed about the new arenas, now managed by local sports entities in national competitions. Several important results were obtained. The main, were the differences between the results of the first/third moments with the second moment. In the first/third moments do not matter the quality of services offered of the facilities and event, but emotional aspects that to make consumers watch football matches in stadiums/arenas. On the other hand, it was identified good prospects for better utilization of the facilities, since in local events and competitions exist an organization dedicated to entertainment. It was identified high satisfaction rates in the World Cup moment. During the FIFA event, 93.19% said they would like to return to a stadium, because of lived experience. Safety was the reason given in three stages, as the most important item for the consumer’s decision to go to the stadium (26.17% in the first phase; 23.72%, during the World Cup; and 30.61% in phase 3). During the World Cup it was also remarkable the presence of fans with higher income level. All of these results and others clearly suggests that the new sports facilities and the quality of services they provide collaborate to further football “entertainment” in the worldwide context.

References


