From Event Quality To Quality of Life: The Role of Satisfaction and Purchase Happiness

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Marketing Friday, June 3, 2016 20-minute oral presentation (including questions)
Abstract 2016-149 10:55 AM (Legacy South 2)

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of event quality on satisfaction with a sport event, and in turn their relationship to happiness with the consumption of a sport event and subsequently overall quality of life. As Theodorakis, Kaplanidou and Karabaxoglou (2015) found, event quality aspects and satisfaction are related with happiness with the consumption experience. Experiential purchases such as registering to run in a sport event can be more correlated with overall happiness than material purchases per the findings of Nicolao, Irwin and Goodman (2009). Funk, Jordan, Ridinger and Kaplanidou (2011) discussed that securing participants' satisfaction with the event contributes to further committing to running events. This is important given that the event organization is directly tied to the sport event's image perceptions (Kaplanidou, 2010). Considering the experiential nature of event participation it is critical to understand the relationship between the event service quality aspects and event satisfaction and in turn the influence of event satisfaction on consumption happiness. More importantly however, it is critical to see how such happiness with the experience contributes to overall quality of life. Given that consumption (e.g., material or experiential) is one of the domains of the Quality of Life construct (Day, 1987) it is interesting to see how much sport event consumption happiness relates to quality of life given the leisure time and funds that can be invested in sport related activities. Thus, the research questions of the study are: how do sport event service quality elements influence overall satisfaction with the event? How does satisfaction with the event influence happiness with the consumption experience? How does happiness with the consumption experience influence quality of life?

Data were collected from 5km and 10km runners in a large-scale international running event in Greece using a web survey (N=344). A modified context-specific scale adapted from Alexandris et al. (2004) measured three dimensions of event quality. Runners' satisfaction with the event was measured using a four-item scale based on Brady et al (2006). Nicolao's et al (2009) three-item scale was adapted to measure happiness with participation purchase. Finally, quality of life was measured with 7 items on a 10 point scale where 0=completely dissatisfied and 10=completely satisfied based on Cummins et al. (2003). Since we were interested in describing the strength and magnitude of the relationships between event quality, satisfaction, happiness, and quality of life, a path model was estimated. The three service quality dimensions were modeled as being correlated and as having both direct and indirect (satisfaction) effects on happiness. Finally, happiness with the participation consumption was hypothesized to directly influence quality of life.

Results from the structural equation modeling testing indicated that interaction quality (b=.10) and outcome (b=.80) predicted satisfaction with the event. These dimensions of event quality accounted for 69% of the variance on satisfaction. Outcome quality (b=.41) and satisfaction (b=.42) predicted happiness with the consumption experience, accounting for 65% of the variance. Quality of life was influenced by happiness (b=.36), accounting for 13% of the variance.

Results of this study supported our hypothesized model with the exception of physical environment quality's effect on satisfaction. Our study extends the research by Theodorakis et al. (2015) by empirically showing how the happiness with the consumption experience connects to the quality of life of a recreational running participant. The impact of happiness with experiential purchases on quality of life, although small is still significant given that quality of life can be influenced by a number of other factors besides leisure and sport related activities. Nevertheless, the importance of such experience suggests the significant role of sport event participation in a person's life, when the experience is delivered in a satisfactory manner.