Who’s House? Our House: Instrument Development to Assess Student-Athlete Satisfaction with Stadium Facilities

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College athletics are in the midst of an era of rapidly increasing budgets and an accompanying facility construction and renovation boom (Fulks, 2015). Athletic departments are building and renovating facilities at extremely high rates and the building boom has persisted through the most recent economic recession (Bennett, 2012). From 2009 to 2018, 11 FBS universities invested an average of $333,000,000 each on football stadium construction or renovation (Patterson, 2018). As facility construction and renovations boom the question becomes, what impact are these new facilities having on their institutions and more specifically their athletes?

Researchers have examined the impact of numerous factors regarding the student-athlete experience (Chartrand & Lent, 1987; Hill, Burch-Ragan, & Yates, 2001; Blann, 1985; Martens & Cox, 2000), but not the impact of the built environment, specifically athletic facilities. To conduct this type of research, a tool to assess facilities from the student-athletes’ perspective must be developed. Therefore, this study developed and validated a survey scale to measure student-athlete satisfaction with football stadium facilities.

Using the norms as comparative standards model of consumer satisfaction developed by Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins (1987) as the theoretical basis, a review of facility evaluation and service quality literature informed the development of a conceptual model for student-athlete satisfaction with stadium facilities. The resulting three-factor model included functional, atmospheric, and aesthetic components with one moderator (financial). This model guided the development an initial 54-item survey with all responses using a seven-point Likert scale.

Initial surveys were distributed to football student-athletes (n = 779) from ten universities within a cross-sectional sample by NCAA division (D-I = 4, D-II = 3, D-III = 3). Exploratory factor analysis (n = 350) revealed six underlying factors of student-athlete satisfaction with stadium facilities: functional (α = 0.954), convenience (α = 0.923), game day (α = 0.897), audio video (α = 0.926), safety security (α = 0.869), and aesthetics (α = 0.963). Confirmatory factor analysis (n = 429) revealed a good fit to the data [χ² (1388) = 5516.73, p < .001, CFI = .89, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .08]. Additionally, financial variables (football revenues and expenses and total athletic revenues and expenses) were found to have weak positive correlations to each of the six underlying factors resulting in a final model for student-athlete satisfaction with stadium facilities of six factors with one moderator. The resulting final validated instrument includes 47 items on a seven-point Likert scale and four financial items.

The instrument developed from this study has numerous theoretical and managerial implications. Researchers can use the instrument to examine the relationship between facility satisfaction and numerous student-athlete focused variables including the student-athlete experience, as well as recruitment and retention. This instrument will also be a valuable tool for university administrators by allowing them to collect valuable information from their student-athletes informing decisions regarding their athletic facilities.