

The roles of perceived quality and age: the influence of sporting event reputation on volunteer satisfaction

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Volunteers have become a vital resource for sporting event organizations in worldwide. In an attempt to develop effective volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, it is necessary to pay close attention to volunteers' attitudes toward a sporting event that may make a significant difference in reinforcing volunteer satisfaction. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) proposes that individuals develop a feeling of positive social identity from belonging to preferable social groups and/or from their affiliation to groups that are different from other groups (Burgess & Harris, 1999). We argue that a sport event's reputation leads to high levels of volunteers' satisfaction because volunteering at a well-reputed sporting event can be a means that individuals can use to achieve positive social identity (Bang, 2009). Moreover, volunteers' perceived event quality and age may play key roles in the relationship between event reputation and volunteer satisfaction. Previous consumer research suggests that when customers receive higher quality and value of services, their satisfaction will be higher. Younger workers tend to be more associated with career related considerations than their older peers (Wisner, Stringfellow, Youngdahl, & Parker, 2005). Thus, a sporting event's reputation may become a more important factor to younger volunteers who could obtain career related benefits through volunteering at such event. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is (1) to examine the influence of sporting event (brand) reputation on volunteer satisfaction and (2) to examine the moderating roles of perceived quality and age in the relationship between sporting event reputation and volunteer satisfaction. In light of the aforementioned, we hypothesize the following: H1: Event reputation is positively and significantly related to volunteers' satisfaction. H2a: Perceived event quality moderates the influence of event reputation on satisfaction. H2b: Age moderates the influence of event reputation on satisfaction.

The sample included one hundred seventeen individuals (66% female; 34% male) who volunteered for the 2010 Super Bowl game, held in Miami, USA. The volunteers were asked to participate in a survey questionnaire at volunteer appreciation. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: (a) event reputation, (b) perceived quality, (c) volunteer satisfaction, and (d) demographic information. Event reputation was assessed using two modified brand reputation items used by Selnes (1993). Perceived quality was measured with two items of Erdem and Swait's (1998) brand quality (QUAL items). Volunteers' satisfaction was measured using Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS)-Short Form developed by Beard & Ragheb (1980). Those question items were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 =

Strongly Disagree; 7 = *Strongly Agree*). Results of the reliability measurements were found to be above the recommended level, .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994): the Cronbach's alpha values for event reputation, perceived quality, and volunteer satisfaction were .72, .76, and .87, respectively.

Simple linear regression analysis was employed to test H1, and the regression model was positively significant ($F(1, 99)=45.95, p<.001, R^2=.32, \beta = .56, p < .001$), which supports H1. Moderated hierarchical multiple regression analysis was then performed to test H2a, and H2b. The main effect and moderating variables were centered to reduce potential issues of multicollinearity by subtracting the mean from each variable (Howell, 2002). Interaction terms were then computed as cross-products of the centered predictors. The event reputation, perceived quality, and age variables were entered as predictors first where a criterion variable was volunteer satisfaction, and then each individual interaction term was added in the second model and the third model, respectively. Results revealed that the variance explained by the first model including event reputation, perceived quality, and age was high ($R^2 = .32, F(3, 87) = 13.47, p < .001$). The second model that added the interaction term of event reputation and perceived quality was significant ($R^2 = .35, F(4, 86) = 11.64, p < .001$) with significant R -square change ($\Delta R^2 = .034, p < .05$). The third model with an additional interaction term of event reputation and age was significant ($R^2 = .36, F(5, 85) = 11.09, p < .001$) with a significant incremental increase in R -squared ($\Delta R^2 = .044, p < .05$). The results indicated that there were significant interaction effects: event reputation \times perceived quality ($\beta = 3.02, p < .01$), and event reputation \times age ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$), supporting H2a and H2b. A simple slope analysis was further conducted to understand the direction of the interaction effects. It indicates that the relationship of event reputation and volunteer satisfaction is stronger when the levels of perceived quality are high while event reputation-volunteer satisfaction relations are weaker when the volunteers are older. Further implications will be discussed.

References

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