

How Community Service Quality Affects Satisfaction In A Marathon Event? A Mediating Effect Analysis

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Purpose

Since last 15 years, marathon is becoming one of the most popular activities in Taiwan. In 2015, there were 923 running events. Providing a great service quality is crucial for sport event. A higher service quality yields psychological benefits for the participants, which connects with high satisfaction (Shu, Crompton, & Willson, 2002). World wide famous marathons always combine the hosting city characteristics, such as New York City, Tokyo, Singapore. Therefore, the purpose of this study aims to explore service quality impacts on satisfaction for marathon participants by including the host community characteristic. This is the first time to introduce host community characteristics into the service quality to examine effect on satisfaction for participants at marathon event.

Literature review

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed SERVQUAL to measure service quality for various organizations, such as repair and maintenance, retail banking, telephone, securities brokerage, and credit cards. However, SERVQUAL is not fit for measuring on outdoor services due to different industry category (Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005). Therefore, Yeh, Hua, and Huang (2016) modified SSQRS (Scale of Service Quality for Recreational Sports) model to extract five main factorial dimensions: Interaction quality, Outcome quality, Facility quality, Program quality, and Information quality. Their results showed that by improving service quality of sports program and the event outcome, the more participants would attend the swimming event more often in the future and increase their consumer surplus. Furthermore, the characteristics of the host city also impact the tourists' perceptions and those positively related to satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Zabkar, Makevec, & Dmitrovic, 2010). The special characteristics of host community, such as natural beauty, country culture and farmland products, will attract the participants to join the event. However, related previous studies have not considered host community characteristics in service quality study. Therefore, this study tries to examine the perceived quality of community attributes on satisfaction from marathon runners.

Methodology and data analysis

The questionnaire of service quality for sport event was based on the research of Yeh et al. (2016) and SSQRS. In addition, the characteristics of host community were also included. Therefore, both service quality and community attribute on satisfaction and the mediating effect of community attribute on service quality and satisfaction were examined. On-site samples were conducted on November 13 in 2016. Six hundred runners were asked to complete the questionnaire. A total of 537 complete responses were obtained, yielding a response rate of 89.5%.

First, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) extract 28 service quality items into 5 main factorial dimensions, i.e., physical and psychological quality, facility quality, community attribute quality, information quality, and interaction quality. Secondly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used for all variables to re-examine the relationship between the various components and satisfaction. Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to investigate the factors of service quality affecting the community attribute and satisfaction.

Results and conclusions

The results showed that physical and psychological quality, facility quality, information quality, and interaction quality have significantly effect on community attribute quality. Facility quality, community attribute quality, and interaction quality also have significant effect on satisfaction. Furthermore, community attribute quality positively mediates the linkage of facility quality and satisfaction; meanwhile, it also positively mediates the linkage of interaction quality and satisfaction.

Our contributions can be divided into two parts. First, we categorize service quality for sports tourism into five factorial dimensions, including community attribute quality. Secondly, community attribute quality has mediation effect to linkage of facility quality and satisfaction, and interaction quality and satisfaction. The characteristics of the host community have positively impacts on participants' satisfaction, which is similar to the results of Zabkar et al. (2010). Therefore, the attributes of hosting community is one of key factors to attract participants to the sports event.

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