

# Measuring The Sport Club Experience Quality For Migrants In Germany: Development And Validation Of Sport Club Experience Quality Scale

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## Aim of paper

Migration is a timeless phenomenon. As European countries continue to experience increasing migration flows, integration of migrants is a priority issue (Guild, Carrera, & Luk, 2017). Sport, widely viewed as an effective socializing agent, has become an important instrument to promote integration (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003). In Germany, the national program 'Integration through Sport' has been implemented to encourage migrants to participate in sport clubs which provide a range of activities and help build mutual relationships. Albeit with this effort, the number of migrants in German sport clubs has continued to decrease rapidly over the past ten years (Breuer, 2009; Breuer & Feiler, 2015; Breuer & Wicker, 2011).

One of the biggest challenges for sport clubs is member retention, and it can be contended that the experience quality has important influence on the retention and the satisfaction (Otto & Ritchie, 2000). Hence, successful implementation of the program requires practitioners and sport club operators to understand which experience quality elements of sport clubs actually attract migrants to join and retain them as members. Few empirical studies, however, have been conducted to investigate variables surrounding sport club experience quality for migrants. Therefore, the purpose of this research was twofold: (1) to conceptualize the notion of sport club experience quality for migrants (SCEQM) and (2) to develop a valid and reliable instrument of the SCEQM.

## Theoretical background

Academics and practitioners, in general, have come to agree that the experience is a multidimensional construct involving cognitive, behavioral, and social components (Schmitt, 1999; Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros, & Schlesinger, 2009). To date, in marketing research of service industries including sport and leisure, many scholars have focused on exploratory attempts to conceptualize and measure experience quality (e.g., Grewal, Levy, & Kumar, 2009; Verhoef et al., 2009). Lemon and Verhoef (2016) suggested that it may be more fruitful to consider existing various service quality approaches because other measures have yet to gain traction due to their recency or difficulty. Service quality would be considered an antecedent of service experience, in line with earlier research (Mittal, Kumar, & Tsiros, 1999).

In light of this, the sport club experience quality for migrants was conceptualized as migrant's cognitive, physical, social judgment to all experience and interactions with sport clubs factors: Staff, Peer, Sport Program, Interaction Opportunity, and Facility. With regard to the procedures of investigating the constructs of SCEQM scale, we have referred to several literatures including Brady & Cronin (2001), Chellandurai and Chang (2000), Howat et al. (1996), Kim and Kim (1995), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988).

## Methodology, data analysis, and result

The SCEQM scale was developed in three stages (Churchill, 1979; Clark & Watson, 1995). In stage 1, a pool of items was generated by literature review, on-site observation and interviews, and a panel of experts evaluated the content-relevance items through a modified application of the Delphi technique. A set of 31 items was formulated to represent five dimensions consistent with the conceptual framework. In stage 2, a pilot study was conducted to examine the items and refine the measurement with 218 samples (male = 174, female = 44, Mage = 21.2) participating in German sport clubs for more than three months. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) led to 23 items. In stage 3, the new data set (N = 409; male = 262, female = 147, Mage = 25.1) was analyzed using the exploratory and confirmative factor analysis. Finally, 15 items in five factors were developed.

All dimensions in five factors met the .7 minimum Cronbach's alpha criteria ranging between .811 and .909. The average variance extracted (AVE) values emerged all above the recommended criteria over .5 ranging from .629 to .794 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The confirmative factor analysis (CFA) result, in particular, indicated the data fit the model well (GFI = .920, RMSEA = .080, SRMR = .033, CFI = .940, NFI = .919, TLI = .921).

## Implications

It is vital for practitioners and sport club administrators to comprehend the SCEQM factors that facilitate migrants' participation and retention. The importance of interaction with staff and peer, interaction opportunities, and interesting sport programs has been highlighted in this study. Moreover, in examining participation of new migrant members, policy makers and administrators should work with migrants already participating in sport club activities to establish further sophisticated promoting strategies on the basis of the proposed factors in this research. Lastly, managers and trainers in sport clubs should frequently monitor the SCEQM, and determine if specific characteristics need to be strengthened, augmented or even deemphasized, and then promptly solve unforeseen problems.

## References

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