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When journalists are consumers: examining effects of media service quality on media members' behavioural intention

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Abstract: Existing service marketing literature has shown the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions among sport spectators; however, the media's experience working at these events has largely been neglected. Journalists both report on the sporting event and the destination or host of the event. To reduce the gap in this research area, this study examined how media service quality impacted journalists' satisfaction, which ultimately influences their behavioural intentions in their reporting of the host city or country and their revisit intentions. Through surveying 211 journalists who covered two major international sporting events (the 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2019 FINA World Aquatics Championships), findings revealed that sport journalists' service satisfaction was determined by the following services: information, interactions with employees/volunteers, and operating time. Also, media professionals' destination image and service satisfaction had positive relationships with their behavioural intentions, word of mouth, and intention to positively cover the event.

Keywords: service quality; media service; service satisfaction; word of mouth; behavioural intention; FIFA World Cup.

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1 Introduction

Hosting major international mega-events is an effective strategy for city, state, and national governments to enhance the host community’s image on a global stage. The most well-known global sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games, have worldwide reach and global interest (Giampiccoli et al., 2015). Therefore, bidding for and organising these events has become a platform for the host city and country to promote tourism, attract foreign investment, and enhance their image both domestically and internationally (Hemmonsby and Tichaawa, 2018). While such large-scale events can provide numerous benefits, the prospect of both success and failure for event hosts is equally significant. One of the key obstacles in destination marketing is that an event host depends upon numerous domestic and international media to effectively promote its desired image to global audiences (Avraham and Ketter, 2016; Rivenburgh, 2002, 2004).

Media coverage of sports events is important since this coverage can influence the event and the host city’s reputation based on the media’s reporting (Supovitz and Goldwater, 2013). Controlling their coverage is impossible given journalists are independent and their published work largely is free of influence from event organisers. In order to receive positive media coverage and enhance media professionals’ working experience, event organisers often incorporate the media as an integral part of the event starting at the planning stage (Kim et al., 2013). The International Olympic Committee

(IOC), for instance, requires the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) to establish the Olympic Media Village to accommodate media professionals and technicians for the duration of the Games and to provide a good working environment. The 2008 Beijing Olympics established a whole set of amenities at the Olympic Media Village such as a pharmacy, post office, bank, supermarket, gyms, dry cleaners, and shuttle bus connections to all competition venues (Xinhua, 2008). To accommodate different needs of journalists, there are three main centres at the Olympic Games: the Main Press Center (MPC) is created for press media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, international news agencies, and internet media); the International Broadcast Center (IBC) is established for broadcast professionals; and the International Media Center (IMC) is to facilitate media members who want to cover the events but are unable to receive official media accreditations issued by the Olympic Games. In addition, different event venues also contain their own media centres and workspaces for reporters.

As Rivenburgh (2002) noted, there are several factors that could significantly influence journalists' working environment at sporting events, such as traffic jams, weather, security checks, internet connection, knowledgeable staff/volunteers, available translators, and so forth. In addition to providing a comfortable working environment, event organisers also attempt to cultivate positive relationships with media by creating an effective communication plan and organising a series of activities to fulfil their needs, such as scheduling interviews, organising site visits, and answering questions relating to event organisation. Although the importance of providing excellent services to media professionals is broadly recognised, there is a noticeable gap in marketing and event management literature regarding the actual experiences of journalists at major events and the potential influence of event organisers on their coverage.

The positive impact of service quality on sport consumer behaviours, such as event satisfaction and behavioural intention, has been well identified in the service marketing literature (e.g., Brown et al., 2017; Shonk and Chelladurai, 2008; Theodorakis et al., 2001). Research has shown that service quality can impact a customer's behavioural intentions (e.g., Olorunniwo et al., 2006). However, many of these studies have concentrated on the experience of event participants or spectators; largely overlooking the group of media personnel who are both event producers and important consumers. Unlike spectators at sporting events, media members also need to perform their jobs at the events for their news organisations. Journalists often work in a hectic environment and require the latest technology and human support to complete their work (Schwartz et al., 2016). Various disciplines in the media industry also have distinct requests and demands. For instance, print journalists face strict deadlines since they must send their content to editors within specific timeframes; while broadcasters may only have one chance to report on an event or create live programming. To enable media personnel to perform their jobs, event managers must develop efficient internal and external communication systems, provide software and hardware, accreditation, appropriate physical locations (e.g., media seats, media centres, and media technology), and experienced public relations professionals and staff who can help solve potential problems (Schwartz et al., 2016). Due to the unique services required from media professionals and their influences on the success of the event, it is worthwhile to understand how to measure media service quality and how it might impact their intention to report on the event location.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine how media service quality impacts journalists' satisfaction and whether satisfaction can influence their behavioural intention and coverage intention. In particular, this study aims to examine what factors may impact media professionals' service satisfaction and also demonstrate the relationships between media service satisfaction, game satisfaction, destination image, and behavioural intentions. This study will assist sport and event organisers to have a better understanding of the needs and experiences of media professionals and will help them understand the relationship between media service and media coverage on the destination.

2 Literature review

2.1 *Media management in sports events*

Sports and the mass media have developed an inseparable relationship in society (Rowe, 2009). In addition to delivering the sport experience to the audience, sport media also serve as a platform to communicate social value, patterns, trends and fashion, lifestyles, aesthetic elements, and customer-related products with its audiences (Leonard, 1980; Rowe, 2009). The goals of sport media relations are to create and maintain positive relationships with media professionals for generating favourable publicity for sport organisations and sporting events (Stoldt et al., 2020). Primary responsibilities for public relations professionals include building positive relationships, maintaining communication, developing public relations plans, providing information, and managing crises (Mullin et al., 2014). In order to receive positive feedback from sports fans and sport journalists, sport teams and event organisers provide assistance and services to facilitate journalists' needs to enable them to perform their job effectively (Gibbs and Haynes, 2013).

Getz and Fairley (2004, p.130) defined media management as "the deliberate management or manipulation of media coverage to achieve both strategic and tactical objectives for the event, its sponsors, and the host destination." This is one of many actions that destination organisations use for generating future visits to the host community, often in the form of tourism. However, one of the biggest challenges is that no one can ensure that the host city will generate positive media coverage of the event and the host destination. Many media professionals have limited interest in promoting the destination and are more likely to make their broadcast time available to paid advertising (Getz and Fairley, 2004). Compared to destination promotion, the media might be more interested in covering negative news on the destination, such as the transportation chaos and bombing incident during the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games (Higham, 1999) and the robbery scandal during the Rio Olympic Games (Vredenburg and Giroux, 2018).

Although event organisers cannot ensure that all publicity is positive, organisers seek to incorporate a variety of strategies to enhance media members' experiences while working at the event. The 2000 Sydney Olympic Committee, for instance, created a media relations program that included organising media visits, using the newest technology for the event organisation, information distribution, and developing a crisis/risk management plan to enhance the media's experience and maximise tourism benefits (Morse, 2001). Mario Andrada, the executive director of communications for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, revealed that the Rio Games created a strategic plan for maintaining relationships with media members many years before the Olympics took

place. These plans included transparency, proactive communication, creating dialogue with the media, and preparing information materials for both domestic and international media (Mioli, 2015). He also highlighted the difficulty of maintaining favourable media coverage when the media's inclination was towards negative news, and sport media professionals needed to find a way to help the media with their stories when negative questions were raised. He noted that the media's focus on major events is not always about the results of the competition; they also are interested in human rights issues, traffic, negative sport impacts, and even scandals within the organisation. Therefore, it is important for event organisers to understand what factors or services they can provide to media personnel and whether there is a relationship between the quality of media services provided by event organisers and the media coverage and future behavioural intentions.

2.2 Service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intention

Service quality is "the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organization and its service" [Bitner and Hubbert, (1994), p.77]. As one of the most important topics in service marketing, providing high quality services will lead to consumers staying longer at an event, purchasing additional products and services, and recommending the destination to other customers (Joeng and Kim, 2020; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Previous studies have examined that the dimension of service quality is a strong predictor of customer satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Dabholkar et al., 2000; Fesanghari et al., 2017). The SERVQUAL model, which was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), has been broadly utilised to assess service quality. In this model, researchers suggested five dimensions of service quality can predict customer satisfaction: reliability, empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and tangibles. However, this model also has been challenged by other scholars (e.g., Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994) since they believed that service quality has been confused with customer satisfaction, which is measured by a performance-minus-expectation equation. Cronin and Taylor (1992) further suggested that service quality is better to describe how service is delivered to customers.

Sport marketers face challenges to manage sports' core products and ancillary services (Yoshida and James, 2010). Core products are the competitions between two teams, which are unlikely to be controlled by marketers. On the other hand, ancillary services can be influenced under managerial control, which include stadium employees, seating comfort and facility accessibility, and operational time (Greenwell et al., 2002). Based on a suggestion from previous literature (i.e., Cronin and Taylor, 1992), this study defines media service quality as the perceived services received by media professionals, which potentially support them to effectively perform their jobs and successfully complete their tasks. As suggested by Parent (2008, 2016), the quality of media service in this study was measured by the following four elements: accessibility, information communication, employee/volunteer interaction, and media service operating time.

Providing updated and correct information is one of the main tasks for a media operation's service at sporting events since all news stories written and produced by media professionals require solid facts and journalists often have quick deadlines to submit their work to their editors or producers (Kim et al., 2013). Quality of information communication measures whether the media professionals can receive correct and newsworthy information in a timely manner (Parent, 2016). Signage and accessibility at

the facility is another important aspect that enables media professionals to perform their jobs well (Theodorakis et al., 2001). The quality of accessibility is measured by reporters' experiences in receiving their media accreditations, accessing facilities, and accessing other media services such as media centres, media seats, press conference rooms, and the mixed zone, among others. Brady and Cronin (2001) indicated that the interaction between event staff and the service environment is a significant factor influencing the service quality perceived by customers. Quality of service regarding stadium employees and volunteers measures the journalists' perceptions toward attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours of employees and volunteers who work for the event. Finally, Schwarz et al. (2016) stated that one challenge all media members face is meeting deadlines requested by their news institutions. Therefore, operating time also was introduced in the media service model to measure whether the operating time of the related media services is convenient to media professionals.

2.3 Customer satisfaction

Enhancing service quality is crucial in boosting customer satisfaction and further cultivating stronger loyalty to the event and the host destination, which will also foster customer retention and increase revenue generation (Kim et al., 2013). Spectator satisfaction is defined as a "pleasurable, fulfilment response to the entertainment of a sport competition" [Yoshida and James, (2010), p.340]. It contains two types of satisfaction – service satisfaction and game satisfaction. Service satisfaction pertains to an individual's overall satisfaction toward the services provided during an event which includes stadium environment, interactions with employees and so forth; on the other hand, game satisfaction refers to whether an individual is satisfied with the game experience relating to the sport competition such as player performance and game quality (Yoshida and James, 2010).

Satisfaction is measured by how customers perceive all tangible and intangible products through their feelings and experiences (Molina-Gómez et al., 2021). Customer satisfaction is achieved if their expectations are met. However, if expectations are not met, customers will feel disappointed and dissatisfied. Previous studies have shown that ancillary services such as service environment (Brady et al., 2006; Greenwell et al., 2002), facility accessibility (Yoshida and James, 2010), and stadium employees' interaction (Brady et al., 2006; Yoshida and James, 2010) are significant predictors for customer satisfaction. Therefore, the following four hypotheses are posed:

Hypothesis 1a (H1a) Accessibility has a positive influence on journalists' service satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b (H1b) Easily obtaining information has a positive influence on journalists' service satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1c (H1c) Employee and volunteer interaction has a positive influence on journalists' service satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1d (H1d) Event operation time has a positive influence on journalists' service satisfaction.

2.4 Destination image

Destination image has been referred to as an individual's overall perceptions, knowledge (beliefs), and feelings of a destination, which also is characterised as a person's mental portrayal of a destination (Chen and Tasi, 2007). A destination's image could be developed as an understanding of the region's characteristics. When a tourist has a positive perception of the destination image, it is likely they will be motivated to visit the destination (Chen and Tasi, 2007). Destination image plays two important roles in customers' behaviours: first, it impacts the customer decision-making process of choosing a tourism destination. Second, it can influence their after-decision-making behaviours, which include their onsite experience, satisfaction, and future behavioural intentions such as revisiting or displaying positive word of mouth (Ashworth and Goodall, 1988; Lee et al., 2005).

Current marketing literature suggests that destination image is a direct antecedent of satisfaction and revisit intention (Jeong and Kim, 2020); it also has direct relationships with behavioural intention (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Lee et al., 2005) and indirect relationships with behavioural intention through satisfaction (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2007). Research also suggests that the perception of event quality has a significant impact on destination image. When event quality is rated highly by consumers, their perceptions toward a destination's image will be higher (Moon et al., 2011). Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 2a (H2a) Game satisfaction has a positive impact on destination image.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b) Service satisfaction has a positive impact on destination image.

Hypothesis 2c (H2c) Destination image has a positive impact on journalists' behavioural intention.

Hypothesis 2d (H2d) Destination image has a positive impact on journalists' media coverage.

Hypothesis 2e (H2e) Destination image has a positive impact on journalists' word of mouth.

2.5 Behavioural intention

Behavioural intention refers to an individual's tendency to behave based on his or her feelings, knowledge, and previous experiences (Spears and Singh, 2004). It could be divided into two categories: favourable intention and unfavourable intention. Customers' favourable behavioural intentions include that they will continue to spread positive word of mouth, increase their future purchases, and agree to pay a price premium after developing bonds with a company, destination, or brand (Zeithaml et al., 1996). With unfavourable behavioural intentions, customers will disseminate negative comments, spend less money on products and services, and even leave the company (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Favourable behaviours can also assist an organisation to reduce its administrative and marketing expenses, maintain profit margins without reducing prices, and also reduce the costs used for attracting potential customers (Wilson et al., 2012).

There is a lack of research exploring the consequence of customer satisfaction in sport event research (Koronios et al., 2022a; Yoshida and James, 2010). Many sport

marketing studies (e.g., Koronios et al., 2022b; Wicker et al., 2012) have found that the intention to attend future sporting events is one of the main consequences of customers' satisfaction. However, repurchase intention also has been questioned by some marketing researchers (e.g., Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1996), because they believe it might not provide adequate evidence to illustrate the extent to which a customer is committed to repurchasing goods and services. Zeithaml et al. (1996) suggested that behavioural intentions should include the following five dimensions: loyalty to the company, propensity to switch, spending more money, external response to the problem, and internal response to the problem.

Based on suggestions from Zeithaml et al. (1996), Cronin et al. (2000) developed three indicators of customers' behaviour intentions: repurchase intention, positive word of mouth intention, and customer loyalty. Yoshida and James (2010) suggested three dimensions of behavioural intentions: recommending to other customers, attending future games, and remaining loyal to the team. In our study, both events are travelling events and each host destination rarely will host the same event in the near future. Therefore, we defined customers' behavioural intentions to include the following two elements: intention to revisit the host destination and positive word of mouth.

The media coverage on destination images directly impacts customers' intentions to visit the host destination (Chalip et al., 2003). Therefore, event organisers seek to enhance sport media professionals' satisfaction to enhance their positive media coverage on destination and event organisation. In this study, media coverage intention consists of three elements: intention to positively report event organisation, comment on social media, and share stories and thoughts with readers and audiences. Previous literature (i.e., Yoshida and James, 2010) suggested that sport customers' game satisfaction and service satisfaction will positively relate to their behavioural intention. According to the theory of service quality-satisfaction-behavioural intentions chain (Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994), the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 3a (H3a) The higher the sport journalists' service satisfaction, the more likely they are to positively cover the event organiser and host country.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b) The higher the sport journalists' service satisfaction, the more likely they will exhibit positive word of mouth behaviours.

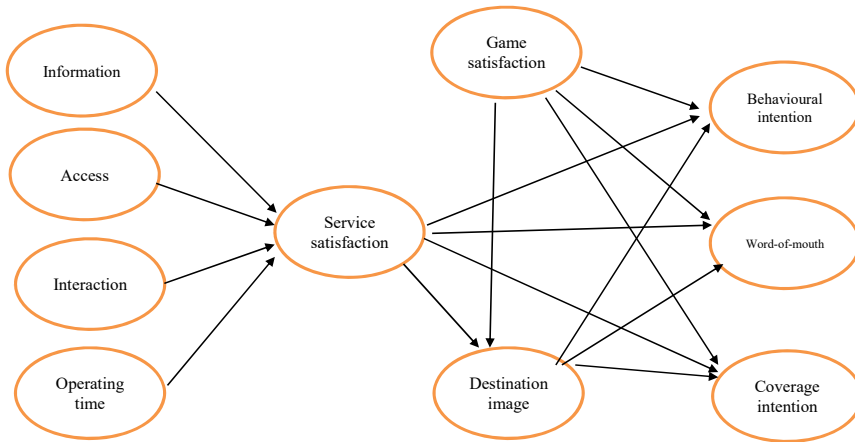
Hypothesis 3c (H3c) The higher the sport journalists' service satisfaction, the higher likelihood they will come back and revisit the destination.

Hypothesis 4a (H4a) The higher the sport journalists' game satisfaction, the more likely they will exhibit positive word of mouth behaviours.

Hypothesis 4b (H4b) The higher the sport journalists' game satisfaction, the higher likelihood they will come back and revisit the destination.

Hypothesis 4c (H4c) The higher the sport journalists' game satisfaction, the more likely they will have a positive destination image.

The proposed model has been displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Structural relationship model (see online version for colours)

3 Methods

3.1 Participants

As the purpose of the study is to examine media members' experience during mega sporting events, data were collected from accredited media professionals who covered the 2018 FIFA World Cup and the 2019 FINA World Aquatics Championships. The 2018 FIFA World Cup was held across 13 cities in Russia with a total of 17,572 media members covering the event, including 3,528 journalists and photographers and 14,044 broadcast professionals (FIFA, 2018). The World Aquatics Championships is the biggest international event hosted by FINA (now renamed as World Aquatics), the international federation of water sports. The 2019 event was held in Gwangju, South Korea, and featured swimming, diving, high diving, open-water swimming, water polo, and synchronised swimming. Both snowball sampling and convenience sampling methods were used to access media professionals.

The snowball sampling was utilised to reach out to journalists who reported on the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Snowball sampling is a common recruitment strategy that has been used to utilise participants' social networks to gain access to a specific population (Browne, 2005). This sampling technique has been efficient to reach out to a particular target population with minimal time and cost (Li et al., 2017; Sadler et al., 2010). The researchers used their personal network to contact 20 accredited World Cup journalists from six different countries, and those journalists agreed to pass along the survey to other colleagues who also covered the event. The data collection procedure lasted for one month, starting from 15 July 2018 (the end of the World Cup) to 15 August 2018. A total of 108 sports journalists from 15 countries completed this study and 107 responses were effective. 61% of participants ($n = 66$) were from European countries including the UK, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Russia. Other reporters were mainly from Asia (i.e., Korea, Japan, China), the Americas (i.e., the USA, Brazil, Argentina), Australia, and Africa (i.e., South Africa). Among these participants, 37.9 % of journalists ($n = 41$) reported that they

covered the World Cup for the first time, 26.8% ($n = 28$) have been to the World Cup twice or three times and 25.9% ($n = 38$) reported on the event 4 or more times.

To obtain responses from the media professionals who reported the 2019 FINA World Championships, researchers contacted 15 accredited journalists, and the latter sent the survey to other colleagues who also covered the event after the World Championships. A total of 103 media professionals from 21 countries completed the study and the majority of journalists were from Asia (i.e., Korea, China, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore) and Europe (i.e., the UK, Germany, France, Russia, Hungary, Sweden, Italy). Nearly 37.8% of participants ($n = 39$) indicated that they covered the FINA World Championships for the first time.

Though the current sample size was limited for the following data analysis such as structural equation modelling, some context specificities could justify it:

- 1 most of measure scales show superior measurement properties in terms of Cronbach's α , AVE and CR
- 2 the population of interest in the current study is tremendously smaller and homogeneous than in related research contexts, such sport fans and visitors
- 3 the current sample size was very close to the suggested sample-item ratio of 5:1 (Hair et al., 2010)
- 4 it was very challenging to obtain a large number of responses from frontier media professionals reporting on the aforementioned mega events.

3.2 *Instruments*

Based on the results from the literature review, the developed survey contains the following five sections:

- 1 demographic information
- 2 service quality
- 3 satisfaction
- 4 destination image
- 5 behavioural intention.

Commonly-used measurement scales in relevant research context were revised and integrated to accommodate the specialty of the current research context. Specifically, to measure the media service quality, 11 items from Ko et al. (2011) were adopted to examine information communication, employee/volunteer interaction, and operating time quality, and three modified items adopted from the Theodorakis et al. (2001) SPORTSERV scale were used to evaluate the accessibility quality of the event. These items were examined on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Service satisfaction was measured by six items adopted from the Yoshida and James (2010) study. Three items were used to assess game satisfaction and another three to measure media service satisfaction. To measure customers' behavioural intention, three items were created to examine revisiting the host nation, word of mouth, and intention to recommend to others. To examine journalists' behavioural intention on media coverage,

three items were created to measure positively covering the event organisation, positively covering the host nation, and positively commenting on social media. Measurement of all items used a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree/very unlikely; 7 = strongly agree/very likely).

3.3 Data analysis

With the presence of latent factors and intercorrelated relationships with multiple outcome variables, structural equation modelling (SEM) could provide a robust analytical solution (Hair et al., 2010). Suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the data analysis in this study includes a two-step procedure: the first step was to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for examining the measurement properties of aforementioned scales; next, SEM was performed to assess the relationships specified in the conceptual model.

The following indexes were used to examine the goodness-of-fit of structure equation model: chi-square (χ^2), normed chi-square (χ^2/df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), 90% confidence interval (CI) of RMSEA, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and standardised root means square residual (SRMR) (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha (α), construct reliability (CR), and averaged variance extracted (AVE) were used to assess the reliability of measurement scales. The convergent validity was evaluated by standardised factor loadings (Hair et al., 2010), and the discriminant validity was assessed by inter-factor correlations and factors' AVE values (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). The Sobel test was employed to examine the potential mediation effect of service satisfaction and destination image.

Descriptive statistics for respondents' socio-demographic information were calculated by executing the procedures in the SPSS 24.0. CFA and SEM were conducted by using the Mplus 8.0 program with MLR estimator (i.e., maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors) that is robust to the possibility of non-normal data and the data with a missing value (Muthén and Muthén, 2017). Lastly, a SEM analysis was conducted to assess the proposed relationship as outlined in the hypotheses. The aforementioned goodness-of-fit indexes also were utilised for the SEM model evaluation. To assess construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were examined.

4 Results

4.1 Structural model test

The initial structural equation model produced satisfactory fit indices: $\chi^2 = 676.566$, $df = 378$, $p < 0.001$, $CFI = 0.929$, $TLI = 0.918$, $SRMR = 0.069$, $RMSEA = 0.061$ (90% $CI = 0.054-0.069$). However, the item of friendly employees and volunteers had a below-criterion factor loading ($\lambda = 0.551$) and therefore was removed. The fit indices revised structural equation model was improved: $\chi^2 = 589.670$, $df = 350$, $p < 0.001$, $CFI = 0.941$, $TLI = 0.931$, $SRMR = 0.068$, $RMSEA = 0.057$ (90% $CI = 0.049-0.065$) and this improvement was significant: (χ^2 differential = 86.896, df differential = 28, $p < 0.001$). In terms of reliability, as shown in Table 1, all latent factors have Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE values superior to the suggested criteria: 0.60 of Cronbach's alpha, 0.70 of CR, and 0.50 of AVE. All factor loadings of measurement models were more

than the suggested value of 0.60, indicating sound convergent validity. As to discriminant validity, all inter-factor correlations were less than the threshold of 0.85 (see Table 2), meeting the criterion of Hair et al. (2010); however, a couple of inter-factor correlations were higher than corresponding factors' AVE values, failing to meet the suggestion of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Given distinct conceptual differences between involved factors (e.g., destination image, word of mouth intention, and revisit intention), no further modifications were made.

Table 1 Mean values (M), standard deviations (SD), factor loadings (λ), Cronbach's alpha (α), CR, average variance extracted (AVE) of factors/variables

<i>Factor/item</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>λ</i>	
Facility accessibility				$\alpha = 0.832$, $CR = 0.834$ and $AVE = 0.628$
Facility accessibility-1	5.76	1.421	0.696	
Facility accessibility-2	5.63	1.339	0.792	
Facility accessibility-3	5.52	1.391	0.879	
Information obtaining				$\alpha = 0.921$, $CR = 0.925$ and $AVE = 0.804$
Information obtaining-1	5.33	1.517	0.851	
Information obtaining-2	5.26	1.428	0.931	
Information obtaining-3	5.19	1.566	0.906	
Employee and volunteer interaction				$\alpha = 0.856$, $CR = 0.863$ and $AVE = 0.617$
Employee and volunteer interaction-1	5.20	1.612	0.775	
Employee and volunteer interaction-3	5.40	1.602	0.916	
Employee and volunteer interaction-4	5.19	1.468	0.808	
Employee and volunteer interaction-5	5.74	1.316	0.613	
Operating time				$\alpha = 0.845$, $CR = 0.848$ and $AVE = 0.651$
Operating time-1	5.37	1.446	0.814	
Operating time-2	5.10	1.645	0.844	
Operating time-3	5.31	1.546	0.761	
Service satisfaction				$\alpha = 0.938$, $CR = 0.939$ and $AVE = 0.837$
Service satisfaction-1	5.39	1.424	0.900	
Service satisfaction-2	5.26	1.468	0.948	
Service satisfaction-3	5.14	1.613	0.896	
Game satisfaction				$\alpha = 0.892$, $CR = 0.897$ and $AVE = 0.745$
Game satisfaction-1	5.53	1.309	0.914	
Game satisfaction-2	5.51	1.313	0.881	
Game satisfaction-3	5.37	1.436	0.789	
Destination image				$\alpha = 0.821$, $CR = 0.827$ and $AVE = 0.549$
Destination image-1	5.67	1.252	0.807	
Destination image-2	5.16	1.404	0.836	
Destination image-3	5.63	1.419	0.644	
Destination image-4	5.45	1.421	0.655	

Table 1 Mean values (M), standard deviations (SD), factor loadings (λ), Cronbach's alpha (α), CR, average variance extracted (AVE) of factors/variables

Factor/item	M	SD	λ	
Word of mouth intention				$\alpha = 0.884$, CR = 0.882 and AVE = 0.789
Word of mouth intention-1	5.26	1.535	0.867	
Word of mouth intention-2	5.29	1.479	0.909	
Revisit intention				$\alpha = 0.937$, CR = 0.937 and AVE = 0.833
Revisit intention-1	5.02	1.584	0.914	
Revisit intention-2	4.97	1.625	0.933	
Revisit intention-3	5.32	1.453	0.890	
Coverage intention	5.33	1.487		

Table 2 Inter-factor correlations and average variance extracted (AVE) of factors/variables

	Access	Info	Interact	Operate	Serv_Sat	Game_Sat	Dest_Ima	WOM_Int	Revis_Int
Access	0.628								
Info	0.670	0.804							
Interact	0.664	0.717	0.617						
Operate	0.609	0.595	0.693	0.651					
Serv_Sat	0.628	0.717	0.816	0.697	0.837				
Game_Sat	0.690	0.585	0.628	0.567	0.575	0.745			
Dest_Ima	0.503	0.529	0.594	0.514	0.684	0.543	0.549		
WOM_Int	0.526	0.578	0.653	0.561	0.778	0.525	0.762	0.789	
Revis_Int	0.438	0.476	0.538	0.463	0.636	0.445	0.709	0.781	0.833

Note: AVE values of latent factors were presented on the diagonal line.

As shown in Figure 2, among dimensions of media service quality identified in this study, information obtaining ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.05$), employee and volunteer interaction ($\beta = 0.500$, $p < 0.01$), and operating time ($\beta = 0.204$, $p = 0.076$) were positively associated (either significant or marginally significant) with service satisfaction. Thus, H1b, H1c, and H1d all were supported. The relationship between facility accessibility and service satisfaction was not significant, thus, H1a was not supported. Service satisfaction positively linked to desired outcomes, such as destination image, coverage intention, word of mouth intention, and revisit intention. Thus, H2b, H2c, H2d, and H2e all were supported. In comparison, game satisfaction as a control factor only had a marginally significant relationship with destination image ($\beta = 0.224$, $p = 0.052$). As a result, H2a only was marginally supported. As the result of Sobel tests, information obtaining ($\beta = 0.123$, $p < 0.05$) and employee and volunteer interaction ($\beta = 0.278$, $p < 0.01$) had significant indirect impacts on destination image. Only the dimension of employee and volunteer interaction had significant indirect impacts on coverage intention ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.01$), word of mouth intention ($\beta = 0.238$, $p < 0.01$), and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.141$, $p < 0.05$). The propositions under Hypothesis 3 were mostly supported, evidenced by significant impacts of service satisfaction on coverage intention (H3a, $\beta = 0.497$, $p < 0.01$), word of mouth intention (H3b, $\beta = 0.476$, $p < 0.01$), revisit intention (H3c, $\beta = 0.282$, $p < 0.01$), and destination image (H3e, $\beta = 0.555$, $p < 0.01$). The

relationships between game satisfaction and their behavioural intentions were not significant, so all Hypotheses 4 were rejected.

Table 3 provides the information about the direct effects in the SEM model.

Table 3 Results of hypothesis testing

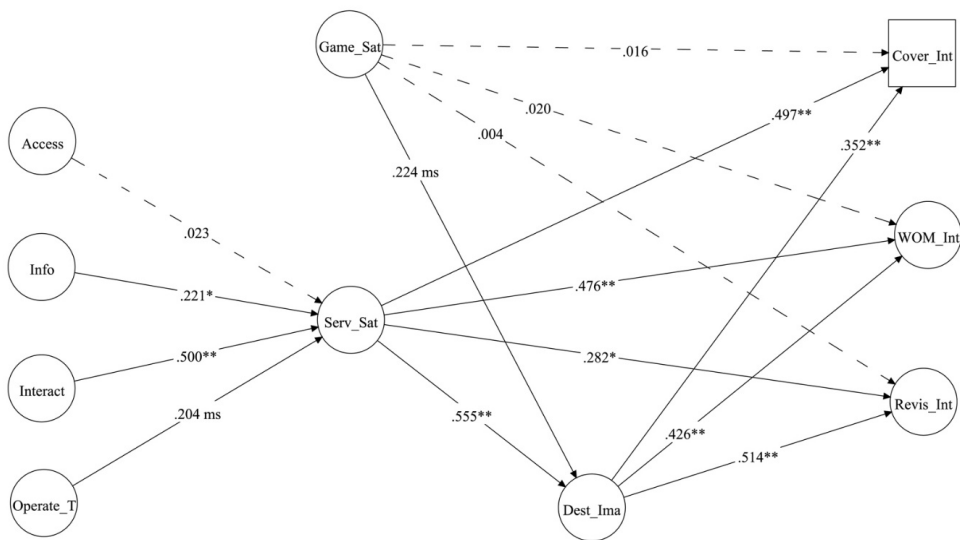
<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Standard error</i>	<i>Results</i>
H1a	Accessibility → service satisfaction	0.23	0.103	Rejected
H1b	Information obtaining → service satisfaction	0.221*	0.098	Supported
H1c	Employee interaction → service satisfaction	0.500**	0.126	Supported
H1d	Event operation time → service satisfaction	0.204 ^{ms}	0.115	Supported
H2a	Game satisfaction → destination image	0.224 ^{ms}	0.115	Supported
H2b	Service satisfaction → destination image	0.555**	0.083	Supported
H2c	Destination image → revisit intentions	0.282*	0.111	Supported
H2d	Destination image → media coverage intention	0.352**	0.117	Supported
H2e	Destination image → word of mouth intention	0.426**	0.123	Supported
H3a	Service satisfaction → media coverage intention	0.497**	0.111	Supported
H3b	Service satisfaction → word of mouth intention	0.476**	0.105	Supported
H3c	Service satisfaction → revisit intention	0.282*	0.111	Supported
H4a	Game satisfaction → media coverage intention	0.016	0.097	Rejected
H4b	Game satisfaction → word of mouth intention	0.020	0.098	Rejected
H4c	Game satisfaction → revisit intention	0.004	0.076	Rejected

Notes: ^{ms}<0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01.

5 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study aimed to explore the relationships between media service quality, service satisfaction, game satisfaction, destination image, and behavioural intention among sport media professionals. Through surveying 211 journalists who covered two international mega sporting events, the study sought to contribute to the understanding of the importance of providing good media services to media professionals during event planning and management, and how media service satisfaction, game satisfaction, and destination image can impact journalists' behavioural intentions, particularly around future intention to revisit the host city, word of mouth recommendations, and positive media coverage on the host city/country.

Figure 2 Results of structural relationship model

Notes: Dashed lines indicate insignificant relationships; **<0.01, *<0.05, and ms<0.10.

Access = facility accessibility.

Info = information obtaining.

Interact = employee and volunteer interaction.

Operate = operating time.

Serv_Sat = service satisfaction.

Game_Sat = game satisfaction.

Dest_Ima = destination image.

Cover_Int = coverage intention.

WOM_Int = word of mouth intention.

Revis_Int = revisit intention.

First, one contribution of the study is to extend our understanding of how media service quality impacts their service satisfaction. Previous service quality literature primarily has focused on event services related to spectators and ticket holders (e.g., Brown, 2017; Yoshida and James, 2010) and participating athletes (e.g., Bamford and Dehe, 2016; Crespo-Hervás et al., 2019). The demands and experiences of media professionals have been neglected in event management literature. Major international sporting events always attract global attention. For instance, there were more than 25,000 accredited media professionals who covered the 2016 Rio Olympic Games from all over the world. Many media outlets also sent unaccredited media members to the host city to cover the event (Thurston, 2016). Similar to other customers and tourists, sport journalists travel to the event destination to experience the culture and the event itself. However, different from other spectators and visitors, the main duties for journalists during the event are to perform their jobs and, thus, they usually stay at the host city longer than regular visitors due to their work requirements. Therefore, understanding their experience and satisfaction is significant to the success of the event since it could help event organisers understand their demands and provide higher quality of the service in the future.

In this study, we found that media professionals' service satisfaction was determined by the quality of the following services: quickly obtaining related information, great interactions with employees/volunteers, and operating times. The findings were

somewhat in line with the Kim et al. (2013) study where they found significant relationships between information services and journalists' satisfaction during the 2011 World Athletic Championships. Unsurprisingly, the provision of timely information has a significant impact to journalists' service satisfaction. As highlighted by Parent (2016), external stakeholders always expect event managers to disseminate timely information and also be open and transparent to them. This holds particular importance for media professionals who rely on accurate and up-to-date information to work. To fulfil their demands, event organisations need to provide various materials (i.e., press releases, game statistics) and opportunities (i.e., press conferences and other media activities) to help them better complete their work tasks (Stoldt et al., 2020).

The study also revealed that the operating time of media services and interactions with employees had significantly positive relationships with journalists' satisfaction. Since major sporting events often attract journalists from media all over the world, their submission deadlines might vary given the differences in the time zone and media requirements. Therefore, having flexible and reasonable operating hours available to journalists is important because it will make it easier for them to perform their job. In addition, previous studies (i.e., Theodorakis et al., 2015) have often indicated the importance of human interactions in enhancing customers' sport experience. A similar finding has also been shown in our study where sports journalists also valued the importance of human interactions in the media services. The presence of friendly interactions between media professionals and stadium employees could greatly facilitate journalists in carrying out their work. These interactions and the bonds between them could enhance their experiences and foster nostalgic memories of the events (Shonk and Chelladurai, 2008).

The second contribution of this study is the impact that this study has on sport tourism literature by highlighting the impact of media service quality on journalists' service satisfaction and how satisfaction ultimately can influence their behavioural intentions. Previous literature (i.e., Kunkel et al., 2017) has analysed spectators' behavioural intentions to understand how to retain customers and influence other personal relationship perceptions about the host community. In this study, we also examined whether these satisfactions are related to their media coverage and opinions that journalists will share on social media. The findings revealed positive relationships between service satisfaction and destination image and their intentions on media coverage. This suggests that providing high quality media service is significant because it encourages these media members to revisit the host city/country in the future as tourists. Moreover, the study also revealed that journalists also are likely to positively report the host community on their media outlets and on social media, which potentially contribute to the formation of positive image of the host destination. However, game satisfaction was found not have a significant relationship with journalists' behavioural intentions. Due to sport events being unpredictable and the fact that marketers cannot control the quality of the core product, improving service satisfaction has become more important to obtaining positive publicity.

The third contribution to the sport marketing literature is that this study explores the relationships between game satisfaction, destination image, service satisfaction and their impacts on behavioural intentions, and word of mouth behaviours. The traditional 'service quality-satisfaction-behavioural intentions' chain is to illustrate how high quality of services will assist the event to enhance visitors' satisfaction and then retain customers (Cronin and Taylor, 1992).

In the current investigation, our causal model found the link between media service quality, particularly employee and volunteer interactions, and media professionals' behavioural intentions. In addition, we also inspected how destination image impacted satisfaction, behavioural intentions, and word of mouth on journalists. Many studies have found a positive relationship between the perceived destination image and future behavioural intention (e.g., Kaplanidou, 2006; Kaplanidou et al., 2012) and the results of this study also reconfirm this direct relationship. However, Jin et al. (2013) did not find a significant relationship between destination image and customers' behavioural intention through their survey of sports fans attending the 2011 IAAF World Championship. In this regard, the findings contributed to the sport marketing literature in confirming the significant impact of destination image on behavioural intentions in the context of mega-sport events. In our study, journalists who covered the FIFA World Cup and the FINA World Championship all indicated that the positive destination image of the host community will motivate them to return and revisit the host city/nation in the future, share positive word of mouth with others, and also positively portray the host community in their media coverage.

5.2 Managerial implications

Even though the majority of event organisers value the importance of media service on the success of sporting events, the services they should focus on in order to boost journalists' satisfaction have not yet been explored. As one of the first studies to investigate media professionals' experience and how media-related services impact these journalists' behavioural intention, the results of the study provide some insightful suggestions to sport event organisers.

First, our study reinstates the importance of media service quality to the success of the event. Results revealed that media service satisfaction will positively relate to journalists' word of mouth and their intention to revisit the host community in the future, but it may also impact their media coverage of the host community. Their media coverage might eventually impact the destination image of the host among potential tourists in the future. Therefore, event organisers should have a better understanding of media professionals' demands and provide better services to meet their expectation and eventually enhance their satisfaction toward the services.

The findings of this study also suggest event organisers should focus on the following areas if they would seek to enhance sport media members' experience and their satisfaction: information services, employee interactions and media service operating time. At first, providing updated information about the event and the competition to media professionals is crucial to the success of event media service. Since media professionals' primary responsibilities are to report the event, as event organisers, not only should they provide updated event related information such as game statistics, press conference transcripts, team/athlete updated information, they could also organise and schedule media activities such as media tours to help them have a better understanding of local cultures and the host community. As Parent (2016) notes, from the media's perspective, they hope that sports events could disseminate information in a timely manner, increase transparency and openness. Additionally, being proactive is expected when it comes to communication between event organisers and media.

In addition to information service, event organisers need to provide more training to event staff and volunteers, particularly these individuals who work directly with media members at venues and media centres. Due to the fact that media members such as TV reporters, photographers, cameraman, and news journalists might have different demands while performing their work, it is necessary for these employees and volunteers to better understand their job characteristics and duties and then able to provide more support to them.

Last, event organisers should ensure their media service operating time is met with the majority of sports journalists' time requirements. With the increased demand of information among audiences, sport journalists' working routine have been changed. The competition from digital outlets has changed sport journalists working hours, so they need to provide the most updated information to their audiences (Moritz, 2018). For international sports competitions, journalists from different nations might have to work in different hours as they are in different time zones. Therefore, event organisers need to consider these differences while creating schedules for media service operation.

6 Limitations and future directions

Since the current research is presented as an exploratory study in nature, it is subject to some limitations. The first limitation is the number of variables used in media service quality. Our study only measured four key services: information, accessibility, operating time, and interaction. Other media-related services scholars could consider in their future studies include translation service, transportation service, registration service, internet, and technology support, among others. To better understand media professionals' experience of reporting a particular sporting event, researchers could conduct a qualitative study to understand what kinds of services are most desired by the sport journalists covering the event.

Another limitation lies in the sample selected in the study. Due to the difficulty of accessing this special group, the study used the snowball sampling method, making it harder for researchers to monitor the survey distribution process. Also, as mentioned in the study, there were more than 17,500 accredited journalists who covered the 2018 FIFA World Cup held in Russia, and we only received 108 responses, so the generalisation of the result also is restrained. In addition, our study did not include the impact of media personnel's stereotypes on their coverage. Since their stereotypes of cities, countries and cultures might also have influenced what they cover and how they cover, future researchers are encouraged to investigate this area.

Our study has only focused on media service in the context of major international sporting events, and most of these events are one-time events and the host community will be unlikely to host the same event again in the future. Scholars should expand to other events, particularly some small-scale sporting events such as tennis, golf, Formula One tournaments or circuits, professional team sports, and high school events. For these recruiting events, since the majority of the journalists come from local media, their experience and requirements toward media service might be differ from participants in our study.

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