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The application of service quality on tourist stadia: the role of value and satisfaction on spectators' intentions

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Abstract: Service quality of a sports organisation is a multidimensional concept and an important element of the sports product. The purpose of this study was to research spectators' perception about the facilities of a stadium served during a football game. It investigated any differentiation on demographic characteristics and other attending characteristics of spectators about quality, value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. It was under investigation how a football stadium can help to develop tourism in the area. The methodology chosen was quantitative research. The results provided support of spectators' perception of the service quality model used.

Keywords: service quality; football spectators; innovative facilities; tourist stadia.

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1 Introduction

Sport is now recognised worldwide as a popular leisure activity (Larson et al., 2011). Football is one of the most popular sports and brings millions of fans to the stadiums, especially in Europe (Foroughi et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the attendance of spectators at live sporting events remains a key goal of sports organisations (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018).

Due to the intense competition in the market, the managers of professional football create more effective strategies and present a wide range of services so that the spectators are motivated to visit the stadiums to attend live games (Foroughi et al., 2014).

In Russia, the 2018 FIFA World Cup (FIFA, 2018), 3,031,768 spectators attended the event, held in 12 different stadiums across the country. The stadiums had a full attendance of 98.2% and an average of 47,371 spectators in each game. Respectively in the World Cup in Brazil in 2014, attended by 3,429,873 spectators, with an average of 53,592 spectators in each game.

It is estimated that in the World Cup final in Russia, the game was attended live on television, about by one billion viewers with various viewing modes (television, internet, etc.) (Impossibleworks, 2018).

According to a report (FIFA, 2018) published by the organising committee of the 2018 World Cup in Russia, the top event, brought revenues to the Russian economy, amounting to 12.5 billion euros, an amount equivalent to 1.1% of GDP.

In recent years, a characteristic development in the field of sports facilities is the construction of new stadiums or the reconstruction of existing ones into new multifunctional stages (Diehl et al., 2015). These constructions have highlighted the growing use of the phenomenon of naming rights for sports venues and facilities at an international level, while in Greece there is a complete absence of this use. This process is followed through sponsorships to the sports organisation. An example of sponsorship in football stadiums is the new stadium of the Spanish team Atletico Madrid, with a capacity of 68,000 seats, under the name 'Wanda Metropolitano' (Mpeliias, 2018). Dilian Wanda, owner of the Chinese construction company Wanda, acquired 20% of the shares of the Association, giving 45 million euros and bidding on the naming rights of the new stadium. Another example of sponsorship is the new stadium of the Turkish team Besiktas, with a capacity of 43,000 seats, which was reconstructed on the European side of Istanbul under the name 'Vodafone Arena' (Şimşek and Çevikli, 2018). The multinational telecommunications company agreed to return one hundred million euros to the Turkish team for 15 years (Şimşek and Çevikli, 2018). In Europe, in the USA and in other parts of the world, the phenomenon of new stadiums has grown significantly in the last ten years (Diehl et al., 2015).

In Greece (Super League, 2022) and specifically in the Greek professional league (Table 1), the financial figures are very limited, although football has a great impact on Greek society (Douvis, 2000).

Table 1 Super League tickets for the season 2021–2022

	<i>Team</i>	<i>Total tickets</i>	<i>Average</i>
1	OLYMPIAKOS	195.103	13.007
2	AEK	151.248	10.083
3	ARIS	114.268	6.348
4	PANATHINAIKOS	111.915	6.218
5	PAOK	80.504	5.750
6	OFI	37.478	2.205
7	PAS GIANNINA	27.388	1.522
8	PANETOLIKOS	24.448	1.438
9	VOLOS	15.407	906
10	IONIKOS	11.714	732
11	ATROMHTOS	10.011	626
12	ASTERAS.	10.075	593
13	LAMIA	9.139	571
14	APOLLON	8.274	517
	<i>Total</i>	<i>806.972</i>	<i>3.508</i>

Source: Super League (2022)

On weekday evenings during the football season, tens of thousands of fans travel to watch their sides play in intra-European cup competitions (Medway et al., 2019). Top male club sides from the 54 member nations of UEFA, the continent's governing body, compete annually in three cup contests, the Europa League, the Champions League and the Conference League (Jasny and Lenartowicz, 2021). The structure of the cups means that each participating side plays their rivals twice: once at their home stadium and once 'away', at the ground of their competitor (Boronczyk and Zarins, 2020). Tourists' desire to see and do sport whilst travelling has grown exponentially, as evidenced by the proliferation of holidays built around undertaking a sport, travelling to watch others competing or sometimes both (Yeoman, 2022). The increase has prompted an expansion in the field of sports tourism studies, which has grown from a small group producing mostly industry-focused publications into a multidisciplinary endeavour with specialist journals (Vuolteenaho et al., 2019). Scholars explore phenomena as diffuse as the social impact of sports events (García and Llopis-Goig, 2021), consumption amongst travelling sports fans or the motivations driving sports tourism (McManus, 2020).

Sports facilities, being notable buildings, consume a massive amount of energy (Casper et al., 2020). They are characterised by special energy and water demand profiles, unique use schedules with steady low usages during the off-season and rapidly high usages during sports events, unique comfort and ventilation requirements given the high occupancy levels and the intensive type and level of activities involved, and encompassing various spaces with different sizes, characteristics, and requirements (Elnour et al., 2022). That is, the facility's services/systems are operated more heavily

(Jarvis, 2021). Hence, they consume more energy to meet the requirements of the users' comfort, health, and safety and the requirements of the sporting event/activity (e.g., lighting, broadcasting, water heating) (Bennett and Oksoy, 2020; Huml et al., 2019). The present paper aimed to contribute to the existing literature, by testing how sports events could support developing tourism in a specific. From a managerial standpoint, the present paper aimed to help stadium managers to involve in a better decision making process. Group decision making offers different possibilities for aggregating individual opinions. The final stage of any aggregation is to determine the weights of alternatives with respect to the stated goal while respecting a given set of criteria (possibly also sub-criteria, sub-sub-criteria, etc.) (Srdjevic et al., 2020).

1.1 Research purpose

The purpose of this study was to research spectators' perception about the facilities of a stadium served during a football game. It investigated any differentiation on demographic characteristics and other attending characteristics of spectators about quality, value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. It was under investigation how a football stadium can help to develop tourism in the area.

2 Literature review

Researchers use quantitative models to enhance sustainable tourism development (Cintron et al., 2021). One model by which researchers and tourism managers assess tourism events 'environmental impacts is foot printing. A foot printing model is a Quantitative measurement describing the appropriation of natural resources by humans (Bostock and Breese, 2021; Cooper and McCullough, 2021).

Relying on the 'low-carbon economy', they will be developed low-carbon industries such as 'sports and tourism, culture and healthcare', undertake new functions such as forest tourism sports function places, regional cultural and sports characteristic buildings, forest healthcare sports and leisure venues, and promote a new development mode of sports venues in forest tourism cities (Liu et al., 2022).

A modern stadium is a multi-purpose building that stages different types of sports, culture and religious activities. Some stadia have become symbols of the city and generate important income for the city (Wheeler, 2020). The purpose of a stadium is mainly to provide a platform stage and facility for the designated sports (Chen and Li, 2020). Therefore, the comfort of athletes in a stadium is an important consideration and the design of a stadium should ensure the comfort and the best condition for athletes' performance (Behrens and Uhrich, 2022).

Clubs are increasingly marketing their brand as family friendly or, at the very least, family inclusive (Richards and Parry, 2020). The development of new sporting spaces that these fans engage with en route to a stadium challenges the naturalised and taken-for-granted hyper-masculine discourse traditionally associated with match day culture (Kellison and Mills, 2021). The creation of official fan zones, we suggest, provides alternative experiences for some fans in which pre-match entertainment is used to engage and maintain fans' interest (and generate income) before they take their seats in the stadium (Theodoropoulou and Alos, 2020). However, these spaces remain on the

periphery of football culture, which still promotes a conventional ‘masculine space and image’ (Ekendahl et al., 2022; Richards and Parry, 2020).

The stadium atmosphere has typically been conceptualised as spatially and temporally bounded within the consumption setting and experience being investigated, as a singular entity, and under managerial control (Atkinson, 2022). The atmosphere is dynamic and embodied according to growing marketing and consumer research literature on the consumption of places by foregrounding the interrelations between place and time (Steadman et al., 2021).

Schreyer et al. (2019) aimed to contribute to the ever-growing economic literature on the determinants of football stadium attendance by exploring the phenomenon of spectator no-show behaviour. They analysed a panel dataset containing unique information on no-show behaviour observed in the stadiums of 25 Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 clubs. Their results suggested that no-show behaviour is primarily shaped by explanatory factors related to a football games’ quality aspects (e.g., an appearance by superstars, an away team rich in tradition, and geographical derbies). Interestingly, these effects seem to significantly differ across Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 (Schreyer, 2019).

Botta et al. (2020) using two football stadiums in Rome and Milan as case studies presented evidence that data generated through interactions with the social media platform Instagram can be used to generate estimates of the size of a crowd. They present a detailed analysis of the impact of varying the time period and spatial area considered for the collection of Instagram data. They demonstrated how to address issues that arise from changes in the usage of a social media platform such as Instagram. Their findings showed how social media datasets carrying location-based information may help provide near to real-time measurements of the size of a crowd (Botta et al., 2020).

Football stadiums are characterised as monuments, places for community interaction, repositories of collective memory, loci of strong identities, sites for ritualised conflict, political battlefields, and nodes in global systems of sport’ (Rusu, 2022). Indeed, besides their intended functional purpose as venues of sports activities, stadiums lend themselves to critical analyses focused on commemorative and economic aspects (Williams and Caulfield, 2020; Wright, 2021).

Keeler et al. (2021), using a hedonic spatial difference-in-differences model, analysed the impact of proximity to the Staples Center, a sports and entertainment venue in downtown Los Angeles, California, on house prices. Results indicate that the arena opening increased nearby house prices and that there were also positive ‘anticipation’ effects associated with the announcement of the new arena location and local government approval.

Wilhelm (2020) found that the bodily sensations experienced by spectators during a visit to the stadium are synchronised with events on the pitch and with the more or less imposing scenery. He presented evidence that the occurrence of these bodily sensations is strongly connected with different aspects of spatiality. This includes sensations of constriction and expansion within the body, an awareness of one’s location within the stadium, the influence of the immediate surroundings and cognitive here/there and inside/outside distinctions.

Local governments often justify subsidising sports stadiums as economic development projects that have positive returns on investment (Torchia, 2020). If this is true, economic and quality-of-life spillovers that are capitalised in local property values ought to generate additional tax revenue for host municipalities through increased

property assessments (Huang and Soebbing, 2022). Bradbury (2022) estimated the effect of a new publicly-funded professional baseball stadium and team relocation on property assessments in Cobb County, Georgia. Cobb assessment values did not increase relative to other metro-Atlanta counties following the stadiums' announcement or opening, which is inconsistent with the stadium having a positive fiscal impact, even with its desirable location and accompanying mixed-used development (Bradbury, 2022).

Chikish et al. (2019), analysed the relationship between professional sports events and concerts held in LA's Staples Center and nearby hotel performance. They found that the overall impact on hotel room revenue and rooms rented was not positive. Nearby hotel room rates increased during NBA and NHL work stoppages (Kreeger et al., 2020).

Several studies have investigated the dimensions of service quality in sports organisations. With the SPORTSERV measuring instrument (Theodorakis et al., 2001), Theodorakis et al. (2013), investigated the relationship between the service quality, the satisfaction and the intentional behaviour of the spectators in the Greek professional championship football and divided service quality into:

- a quality of results
- b operational quality, which consists of the five dimensions of SPORTSERV ('tangibles', 'staff', 'accessibility', 'security', 'reliability').

With SPORTSERV, Theodorakis et al. (2009), explored the relationship between service quality and spectator repurchase intentions, through the role of identification, in the Greek football championship. They concluded that there is a strong relationship between the dimensions of service quality and the intention to repurchase, while the role of identification with the team is very important.

Rocha de Oliveira et al. (2021) examined football-based tourism research studies published in tourism-based journals, particularly to identify the primary means of publication, temporal distribution, the most productive authors and institutions, countries, standard authoring, collaborative networks, and the central themes investigated on it. In total, 67 publications focusing specifically on football tourism were identified among 27 journals. Findings revealed that only two journals – *Journal of Sport & Tourism* and *Tourism Management* – concentrated 43.27% of the knowledge production. Although revealed to be globally spread, football tourism investigations have seen the USA and its universities as the most prolific producers of football tourism studies. The football tourism niche reflects a remarkable tendency to produce investigations on and around its mega-events, notably the FIFA Men's World Cup. However, emerging trends such as football club-based tourism (stadium tours, museums, memorials, live matches, and pre-season football camps) were identified (Ozrudi, 2022).

Cho et al. (2019) based on cognitive-affective-behaviour theory examined how European football club fans' nostalgia and motivation affect the intention to visit an overseas stadium. Results from 301 European football club fans, yet to visit their favourite football team stadium, showed that nostalgia positively affected motivation and motivation significantly influenced intention to visit the stadium. Testing the mediation effect between nostalgia and intention to visit an overseas stadium, only the indirect effect was significant and not the direct effect. They presented the knowledge of first-time visitors' decision-making process and provide insights for sport marketers to develop effective marketing strategies in sport tourism.

Many football clubs are adding new usages within stadia to attract diverse types of visitor throughout the year (Edensor et al., 2021), with some moving to new multi-functional arenas. Despite these developments, many existing studies remain narrowly focused on routine match-day experiences of local fans, neglecting the experiences of more occasional visitors who seek experiences other than watching football matches, and more geographically-dispersed fans (Edensor et al., 2021).

Sports and their related activities have been ascribed into a new category, ‘sporting event tourism’ where the motivation for travelling is to have a special experience through attending sport events. It provides practical insight of tourists and their behaviour at a sporting event (Kim et al., 2020). Expenditure on football tickets is isolated to identify local economic spillovers outside the stadium walls. High spending football fans spend more, even after ticket prices are excluded. Spending effects owing to attendance are strongest for those who overall spend the least, confirming the role of sport as a generator of tourist expenditure (Rudkin and Sharma 2020). Though the attendance effect is smaller for higher aggregate spenders, there is nevertheless a significant impact across the distribution. The sale of food inside the stadium is still under investigation. Examining customers food-related lifestyle in three domains: meal preparation, script usage situation and desired consequences (Hrubá et al., 2021), is a crucial point to understand how they perceived quality.

Sport hospitality provides opportunities to maximise club stadiums’ use so that they can increase clubs’ annual turnover and function as branding platforms. Brochado et al. (2021) sought to identify the main narratives shared online about – and the dimensions of – visitors’ experiences with top football brands in stadium tours. The data collected for 400 text reviews for ten European FCs’ stadiums (i.e., 4,000 reviews) written by visitors in the post-experience phase. They confirmed the existence of 15 themes: fan, tour, stadium, team, museum, room, staff, game, (best) place, ticket, seating, recommendation, food, shop and attraction.

Moreover, residents of Northern Greece expressed a positive desire for development and perceived that the region involves a moderate development potential (Fytopoulou et al., 2020).

3 Methodology

The methodology used to implement the purpose of the study was quantitative research, with the collection of primary data through a questionnaire. The final sample of this survey consists of 940 fans (89.52% return rate), who attended the game between FC Aris Thessaloniki and FC Xanthi on 5th May 2019 as a part of the Greek Football Championship (Super League). Stratified sampling was performed (stand) as the questionnaires were randomly distributed at each gate of the stadium and were filled in voluntarily by the spectators.

The seven-point Likert attitude scale was used to measure the variables ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (7). The partial mediation model (Theodorakis et al., 2013) was used to measure service quality. Outcome quality was measured by eight items considered. It was evaluated based on two sub-dimensions: the ‘game quality’ (four items) and the ‘team performance’ (four items). Functional quality was measured in five sub-dimensions: ‘staff responsiveness’ (four items), ‘access’ (four items), ‘security’ (four

items), 'reliability' (four items) and 'tangibles' (four items). The spectators' behavioural intentions were evaluated with four items, i.e., the intentions to develop oral communication with two questions, positive comments about the team to other people and the intentions to repurchase the service with two questions, according to Theodorakis et al. (2013) and Kim et al. (2013).

Descriptive statistics tools are used for the measure for locations and dispersion, namely mean and standard deviation (Zafiropoulos, 2012). Also, the Pearson linear correlation coefficient (from -1 to 1) is used to perform correlation tests of numerical variables. The results represent the respective coefficients of the independent variables of the regression models and the constant term, and the observed levels (p-values). Controls were made of variations of the average scores of the dimensions, based on attending characteristics and other controls for variations of the mean scores of the dimensions based on the demographic characteristics. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) was used to map the reliability of extrapolators and the internal consistency of the variables that constitute them, yielding the following satisfactory results: functional quality: 'tangibles' ($\alpha = 0.892$), 'staff responsiveness' ($\alpha = 0.965$), 'accessibility' ($\alpha = 0.847$), 'reliability' ($\alpha = 0.924$), 'security' ($\alpha = 0.939$), Outcome quality: 'game quality' ($\alpha = 0.888$), 'team performance' ($\alpha = 0.830$), and the other dimensions 'perceived value' ($\alpha = 0.881$) 'behavioural intentions' ($\alpha = 0.896$) and 'satisfaction' ($\alpha = 0.790$).

4 Results

Starting the citation of the survey results and focusing on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it is initially observed that 80.1% of them are men and 19.1% are women. In terms of age, 4.6% of survey participants are under 18 years old, 19.5% between 18 and 25 years old, 19.6% from 26 to 35 years old, 26.0% from 36 to 45 years old, 21.1% from 46 to 55 years old, 6.8% from 56 to 65 years old and 2.6% over 66 years old. In addition, 46.4% of fans are single, 46.3% married, 6.2% divorced and 1.2% widowed. Regarding the professional profile of the respondents, it appears that 17.9% of the sample consists of pupils and students, 12.0% of civil servants, 36.4% of private employees, 10.6% of entrepreneurs, 13.6% from self-employed, 7.3% from unemployed and 1.3% from retirees. In addition, 1.4% of the participants in the research are primary school graduates, 5.7% secondary school, 32.8% high school, 7.6% vocational training, 12.3% undergraduate of technological institutions, 24.8% undergraduate of universities, while 8.9% and 0.5% of the sample respectively hold a Master's or Doctoral degree, with 6.0% of the respondents being students. In relation to the monthly income of the people in this sample it is less than 500 euros for 26.5%, it ranges from 500 to 700 euros for 13.3%, from 700 to 1,000 euros for 24.3%, from 1,000 up to 1,500 euros for 23.3% and is higher than 1,500 euros for 12.7% of study participants (Table 2).

The sample consists of 43.9% season ticket holders, with 20.4% of fans stating that they visit the stadium 1 to 4 times a year, 31.5% from 5 to 10 times and 48.1% constantly. Finally, 17.6% of the respondents usually attend the sports performances from Stand 1 of the stadium 'Kleanthis Vikelidis', 19.0% from Stand 2, 33.0% from Stand 3, 1.6% from Stand 4, 1.3% from Stand 5, 1.2% from Stand 6, 13.0% from Stand 7, 5.6% from Stand 9, 3.8% from the VIP stand and 3.9% from the stadium suites (Table 3).

Table 2 Demographics

		<i>N</i>	%
Gender	Male	760	80.9%
	Female	180	19.1%
Age	Under 18	43	4.6%
	18–25	183	19.5%
	26–35	184	19.6%
	36–45	244	26.0%
	46–55	198	21.1%
	56–65	64	6.8%
	Over 66	24	2.6%
Marital status	Single	436	46.4%
	Married	435	46.3%
	Divorced	58	6.2%
	Widowed	11	1.2%
Job	Pupil/student	168	17.9%
	Civil servant	113	12.0%
	Private employee	342	36.4%
	Businessman	100	10.6%
	Freelancer	128	13.6%
	Unemployed	69	7.3%
	Retired (pension)	14	1.5%
	Other	6	0.6%
	Educational level	Δημοτικό	13
Secondary school		54	5.7%
High school		308	32.8%
Vocational training		71	7.6%
Undergraduate (TEI)		116	12.3%
Undergraduate (University)		233	24.8%
Postgraduate (Master)		84	8.9%
Postgraduate (PhD)		5	0.5%
Monthly income	Student	56	6.0%
	0–500 €	249	26.5%
	500–700 €	125	13.3%
	700–1,000 €	228	24.3%
	1,000–1,500 €	219	23.3%
> 1,500 €	119	12.7%	

Table 3 Items of attending behaviour

		<i>N</i>	%
Do you have a season ticket;	Yes	413	43.9%
	No	527	56.1%
How often do you come to the stadium?	1–4 times a year	192	20.4%
	5–10 times	296	31.5%
	I do not miss a game	452	48.1%
From which stand of the stadium do you usually watch the game?	Stand 1	165	17.6%
	Stand 2	179	19.0%
	Stand 3	310	33.0%
	Stand 4	15	1.6%
	Stand 5	12	1.3%
	Stand 6	11	1.2%
	Stand 7	122	13.0%
	Stand 9	53	5.6%
VIP stand	36	3.8%	
Suites	37	3.9%	

Table 4 Descriptive statistics

	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Functional quality	4.52	1.04
Outcome quality	5.25	.85
Perceived value	4.99	1.05
Spectators satisfaction	5.71	.82
Behavioural intentions	6.47	.84

Table 5 Pearson correlation matrix

		<i>Functional quality</i>	<i>Outcome quality</i>	<i>Perceived value</i>	<i>Spectators satisfaction</i>	<i>Behavioural intentions</i>
Functional quality	r	1				
	p					
Outcome quality	r	0.655	1			
	p	0.000				
Perceived value	r	0.604	0.546	1		
	p	0.000	0.000			
Spectators satisfaction	r	0.557	0.601	0.559	1	
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Behavioural intentions	r	0.169	0.260	0.294	0.415	1
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Table 6 Controls of variations of the average scores of the dimensions, based on attending characteristics

	Functional quality			Outcome quality			Perceived value			Spectators satisfaction			Behavioural intentions		
	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p
Do you have a season ticket?	4.60	1.16	0.032	5.26	0.89	0.822	5.17	1.11	0.000	5.83	0.83	0.000	6.79	0.50	0.000
How often do you come to the stadium?	4.46	0.92		5.25	0.82		4.85	0.97		5.62	0.79		6.21	0.96	
1-4 times a year	4.38	0.93	0.059	5.12	0.81	0.051	4.67	1.04	0.000	5.49	0.89	0.000	5.69	1.12	0.000
5-10 times	4.50	0.91		5.27	0.79		4.97	0.88		5.67	0.74		6.54	0.64	
I do not miss a game	4.59	1.15		5.30	0.90		5.13	1.12		5.84	0.81		6.75	0.56	
From which stand of the stadium do you usually watch the game?	4.20	1.01	0.000	5.10	0.89	0.000	4.88	1.03	0.000	5.64	0.84	0.000	6.54	0.72	0.000
Stand 1	4.39	1.07		5.12	0.98		4.85	1.09		5.58	0.88		6.40	0.91	
Stand 2	4.40	0.93		5.23	0.88		4.91	1.05		5.70	0.78		6.51	0.76	
Stand 3	4.76	0.54		5.38	0.36		4.85	.84		5.37	0.62		5.73	0.80	
Stand 4	4.98	0.64		5.58	0.44		4.87	0.89		5.73	0.61		4.94	1.97	
Stand 5	4.17	1.11		5.34	0.62		4.56	1.10		5.52	0.66		6.02	1.09	
Stand 6	4.83	0.76		5.45	0.60		5.12	0.92		5.93	0.57		6.56	0.63	
Stand 7	4.22	1.07		5.09	0.72		4.82	0.89		5.38	0.95		6.40	0.67	
Stand 9	5.55	1.16		5.59	0.74		5.69	1.03		6.09	0.90		6.53	0.98	
VIP stand	5.85	0.86		5.86	0.51		6.10	0.75		6.36	0.66		6.76	1.00	
Suites															

Notes: *Independent samples t-test
 **One-way ANOVA.

Table 7 Controls for variations of the mean scores of the dimensions based on the demographic characteristics

	Functional quality		Outcome quality		Perceived value		Spectators satisfaction		Behavioural intentions						
	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.	M.	S.D.					
Gender*	4.49	1.07	0.072	5.22	0.90	0.006	4.96	1.08	0.072	5.70	0.86	0.506	6.51	0.84	0.001
Female	4.64	0.88		5.41	0.59		5.11	0.90		5.75	0.62		6.28	0.82	
Age**	4.75	0.97	0.004	5.51	0.78	0.004	5.28	0.94	0.013	5.96	0.69	0.042	6.55	0.97	0.001
Under 18	4.46	0.97		5.07	0.88		4.82	1.04		5.70	0.74		6.31	0.88	
18-25	4.40	0.94		5.22	0.82		4.96	0.98		5.64	0.84		6.38	0.96	
26-35	4.43	0.99		5.26	0.85		4.96	1.00		5.68	0.87		6.46	0.79	
36-45	4.58	1.15		5.31	0.82		4.99	1.13		5.73	0.74		6.69	0.56	
46-55	4.93	1.17		5.47	0.88		5.33	1.08		5.95	0.90		6.50	0.97	
56-65	4.77	1.30		5.41	0.88		5.23	1.22		5.58	1.00		6.31	1.02	
Over 66	4.45	1.00	0.009	5.14	0.93	0.002	4.90	1.06	0.003	5.68	0.87	0.045	6.39	0.90	0.009
Marital status**	4.53	1.09		5.33	0.77		5.01	1.02		5.71	0.76		6.50	0.81	
Single	4.92	0.90		5.44	0.71		5.38	1.09		5.93	0.76		6.76	0.45	
Married	4.81	1.00		5.49	0.81		5.51	0.81		6.14	0.60		6.55	0.68	
Divorced	4.52	0.95	0.000	5.18	0.88	0.199	5.05	1.03	0.000	5.79	0.74	0.019	6.36	0.92	0.000
Widowed	4.56	1.10		5.27	0.86		4.84	1.12		5.70	0.88		6.42	1.09	
Pupil/student	4.43	0.96		5.27	0.83		4.88	1.00		5.68	0.77		6.46	0.80	
Civil servant	4.96	1.19		5.41	0.88		5.41	1.03		5.92	0.86		6.75	0.48	
Private employee															
Businessman															

Notes: *Independent samples t-test.

**One-way ANOVA.

Table 7 Controls for variations of the mean scores of the dimensions based on the demographic characteristics (continued)

	Functional quality			Outcome quality			Perceived value			Spectators satisfaction			Behavioural intentions		
	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p	M.	S.D.	p
Job**	4.48	1.16	0.000	5.23	0.86	0.199	5.09	1.13	0.000	5.70	0.87	0.019	6.55	0.69	0.000
Freelancer	4.26	0.83		5.10	0.82		4.90	0.82		5.54	0.83		6.48	0.69	
Unemployed	4.66	1.34		5.29	0.77		4.47	1.36		5.21	0.92		5.54	1.30	
Retired (pension)	4.97	0.93		5.83	0.54		5.20	0.95		5.79	0.89		6.00	0.89	
Other	4.64	1.26	0.000	5.40	0.82	0.000	5.28	0.92	0.010	5.52	0.87	0.137	6.17	1.66	0.727
Primary school	4.54	1.10		5.25	1.05		5.06	1.41		5.69	1.19		6.38	1.18	
Secondary school	4.44	1.07		5.17	0.96		4.95	1.03		5.70	0.80		6.54	0.73	
High school	4.13	1.24		4.92	0.92		4.77	1.15		5.59	0.90		6.45	0.73	
Vocational training	4.38	1.01		5.24	0.82		4.87	0.97		5.72	0.73		6.49	0.69	
Undergraduate (TEI)	4.71	0.86		5.36	0.68		4.98	0.98		5.77	0.71		6.42	0.93	
Undergraduate (university)	4.60	1.15		5.31	0.77		5.12	1.21		5.65	0.98		6.45	0.83	
Postgraduate (Master)	3.71	1.71		5.83	0.43		4.84	1.07		5.00	1.21		6.60	0.65	
Postgraduate (PhD)	4.84	0.66		5.57	0.49		5.48	0.55		5.94	0.58		6.43	0.79	
Student	4.42	0.95	0.000	5.16	0.88	0.000	4.92	1.05	0.000	5.75	0.71	0.000	6.41	0.84	0.000
0-500 €	4.51	0.96		5.37	0.77		4.85	1.06		5.74	0.82		6.49	0.75	
500-700 €	4.39	1.02		5.10	0.94		4.81	0.95		5.45	0.88		6.30	0.94	
700-1,000 €	4.60	0.99		5.33	0.78		5.13	0.92		5.78	0.75		6.51	0.88	
1,000-1,500 €	4.85	1.31		5.48	0.71		5.36	1.30		5.98	0.89		6.81	0.50	
> 1,500 €															

Notes: *Independent samples t-test.
**One-way ANOVA.

Regarding the functional service quality within the stadium, as they are received by the research participants, it appears that it is relatively satisfactory ($M = 4.52$, $S.D. = 1.04$). The perceived value of the services offered is significantly higher ($M = 4.99$, $S.D. = 1.05$) and even more the outcome quality ($M = 5.25$, $S.D. = 0.85$). At the same time, there is a particularly high satisfaction of the spectators from their presence on the field ($M = 5.71$, $S.D. = 0.82$) and an extremely high average score in terms of the positive future behavioural intentions of the spectators ($M = 6.47$, $S.D. = 0.84$) (Table 4).

In the continuation of the study, is investigated, the statistically or not significant correlation of the results concerning the dimensions of the research tool. Initially, as it turns out, the pairwise correlations between the individual dimensions of the questionnaire are generally positive and statistically significant. More specifically, spectators who present high levels of perceived functional quality, also show high perceived outcome quality ($r = 0.655$, $p < 0.001$), perceived value ($r = 0.604$, $p = 0.001$) and satisfaction from their experience at the stage ($r = 0.557$, $p < 0.001$). At the same time, it is observed that while the correlation of functional quality and positive behavioural intentions is positive, the relative coefficient r is weak and equal to 0.169 ($p < 0.001$). Also, the increased perceived outcome quality is associated with increased perceived value ($r = 0.546$, $p < 0.001$) and spectator satisfaction ($r = 0.601$, $p < 0.001$), while at the same time it shows a positive correlation with their behavioural intentions ($r = 0.260$, $p < 0.001$). Regarding the pair correlations of the perceived value and the dimensions of the spectators' satisfaction and the positive behavioural intentions, the respective coefficients are equal to 0.559 ($p < 0.001$) and 0.294 ($p < 0.001$), while finally, the increased spectator satisfaction from their presence in the stage is associated with an increased level of positive behavioural intentions on their part ($r = 0.415$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 5).

In the continuation of the study, is investigated, the presence of statistically significant differences in the average scores of the dimensions of the research tool, based on the attending characteristics of the respondents. As it turns out, season ticket holders note higher functional quality ($p = 0.032$), perceived value ($p < 0.001$), satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) and positive behavioural intentions ($p < 0.001$), compared to non-season ticket holders. At the same time, the increase in the frequency of attending the games also signals increased average scores of the dimensions of perceived value ($p < 0.001$), satisfaction ($p < 0.001$) and positive behavioural intentions ($p < 0.001$). In addition, statistically significant are the differences in the mean scores of all the dimensions of the research tool, based on the stands from which the spectators watch the games ($p < 0.001$), being higher for those of VIP stand and suites (Table 6).

Next, is investigated, the existence of statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the dimensions of the research tool based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Initially, it appears that in terms of gender, women distinguish a higher level of outcome quality than men ($p = 0.006$), while vice versa are the results concerning positive behavioural intentions ($p = 0.001$). In addition, the effect of age on the spectators' perceptions of the experience within the stadium is statistically significant as there are differences in each case, while at the same time, divorced and widowed individuals also have higher relative mean scores. The results concerning the differences in the average scores of the dimensions based on the jobs of the spectators are proportional, with the exception of that of the outcome quality ($p = 0.199$), while the spectators' perceptions regarding the functional quality differ statistically significantly ($p < 0.001$), the outcome quality ($p < 0.001$) and the dimension of the perceived value

($p = 0,010$) based on their level of education. Finally, it is observed that for all the dimensions under investigation, the average scores differ based on the monthly income of the spectators ($p < 0.001$), being higher for those who have a higher income, especially when their monthly earnings exceed 1,500 euros (Table 7).

5 Discussion – conclusions

Managers, understanding the modern needs of their customers, should focus on improving service quality, creating feelings of satisfaction, but also maximising the value offered. Value is another important dimension. Therefore the selling price of an item play very important role for any business. A customer wants good quality products at minimum price and rise in selling price may decrease customer demand (Padiyar et al., 2021). Starting from the functional quality of services, in the examined data where there are lower scores, it should be possible to make interventions to improve these data. Due to the fact that most stadiums in Greece were built several decades ago with old standards, the possibilities for significant interventions to be significantly improved are limited. As an initial and basic proposal is the construction of new sports facilities, according to all modern standards, so that sports organisations can cope with the new global trends in sports. New facilities can create new opportunities and sources of revenue from sponsorships, luxury suite rentals and stadium naming rights and more (Sparvero and Chalip, 2007).

The new stadiums are now multifunctional. The services they offer (e.g., catering, various events for the whole family, etc.) positively affect the attendance at the games (Westerbeek et al., 2005). The institution of sponsorship is characterised by many as a rapidly growing and valuable form of sponsorship. In the mid-1990s in the USA the practice of naming sports venues began where a huge number of stadiums were built and renovated (Anestos et al., 2016). In recent years, the naming of sports venues has appeared in Europe with the agreements of major football clubs in advanced football leagues, mainly in its northern countries (Anestos et al., 2016) while in Greece no agreement has been implemented.

Financial reasons, of course, impose the practice on the part of the sponsor, since one of the motivations is the financial profit that may come from a possible increase in sales or increase in market value (Sparvero and Chalip, 2007).

It was found that the functional dimension of service quality were reliable, valid and applicable. As examined in this study, quality is covered by the five dimensions of material services, accessibility, reliability, staff responsiveness and safety (Theodorakis et al., 2001, 2009, 2013). Also an important role for the quality is played by the organising authority of the professional league (e.g., Super League) because it can aim for more competitive racing teams and for a better sports product. Furthermore, the Hellenic Football Federation (EPO) plays an important role, because in essence it determines the strategy and goals of the sport as a whole. Also, policies that lead to equality between groups by referees play an important role in the development of the quality dimension (Theodorakis et al., 2009). A typical example is the implementation of the video assistance referee (VAR) from 2019–2020 season.

Another conclusion that emerges regarding the dimensions of functional service quality is that the influence and importance of the role of staff responsiveness, as well as elements of reliability and material services (Theodorakis et al., 2009).

Regarding the differentiation of the perceived quality of services from the different stands, it is confirmed. Spectators watching the game from the VIP Gate and from the stadium suites rate the functional quality dimension higher. A high rating is also received by spectators watching the game in Gates 7, 5 and 4. The explanation that can be given is that the VIP, suites and seven gates are housed in a new and relatively more modern building, which was erected in 2004, when the specific stadium was used as a training ground for the needs of the 'Athens 2004' Olympic Games. Also in these stands there are restaurants and bars, televisions, elevators and more comfortable seats. Regarding the perceptions of spectators of different frequency of participation, the analysis showed that there are no statistically significant differences in service quality between those who go to the stadium very regularly and those who go occasionally or less often.

Fans who stated that they do not miss a game (with a high frequency of participation) show the most positive perceptions of service quality and more specifically of personnel, security, reliability and material services, while there are no differences in perceptions of access. In fact, in the dimensions of security and material services, differences also appear between fans with a medium frequency of participation and those with a low frequency of participation, who generally show that they are the least satisfied fans with the quality of services provided at the facility.

Regarding the demographic data, it appears from the research results that there are no significant differences. Respondents with higher income rate quality better than the others. Obviously most watch the game from more comfortable stands.

However, there are threats such as the reactions of fans and players that are identified with the history of the team and other restrictions (Westerbeek et al., 2005) that may make some companies hesitant. Some researchers directly question even the financial gain on the part of the sponsor (Westerbeek et al., 2005). For this reason, it is considered that a thorough examination should be made by the sponsor and the sponsor of the local market, the duration of the contract and other factors, such as the incompatibility of the character of the company with the team. However, many scholars suggest innovative ways and methods in order to increase the probability of success of this practice (Anestou et al., 2016). Finally, despite the important finding of the literature that there are several doubts about their use, the trend of concluding a sponsorship agreement has not weakened since 1990.

The construction of new stadiums outside densely populated urban areas would help solve the problem of access, and reduce the entry-exit times from the facility due to the rapid evacuation. Perceived sacrifices in this way would be reduced, as both the time of access to the facility and the time of return from it would be shortened. Parking lots would solve the problem of parking and at the same time could increase the revenue of the sports organisation (Westerbeek et al., 2005).

The new facilities will improve all the factors of functional quality, a field in which sports executives can intervene. It is also characteristic that the new sports facilities are safer. Because, in case of emergency, the evacuation of the stadium can be done immediately and with greater safety. The factor functional quality, with the new facilities will enable sports organisations to offer much more and better services than those that already exist. It will be possible to better design the spaces inside and outside the stadium with more comfortable seats, with sufficient facilities for all stands, such as bars and

restaurants, and to make better markings and locations, in order to facilitate the comfortable movement of the fans. The existence of modern dining and leisure areas (e.g., restaurants, cafes, bars, playgrounds, toilets, etc.) designed in all the new stadiums abroad, are very limited in Greek facilities. The placement of new audiovisual media using the electronic panel and sound systems before, during and after the game will enhance the viewers' experience of functional service quality. Also, experts working in human resources space need to do many times consuming tasks related to employee management (Bali, 2019).

According to Westerbeek et al. (2005) sports organisations should aim to build new stadiums and present 5 main reasons in support of this argument:

- 1 the new facilities that meet modern standards, it is better to create from the begging, because they better meet the expectations of spectators, rather than renovating existing ones
- 2 the new facilities, in addition to sports venues, cover other activities including accommodation, shopping malls, offices, cinemas, and other business premises
- 3 a new stadium increases the number of spectators and tourist due to the new facilities on offer
- 4 in addition to the basic choice of the spectator which is the performance of the team on the field, the possibility of choosing the field also increases for other reasons, such as, the fun from the use of the facilities and new facilities can increase spectator visits and revenue for sports organisations
- 5 the modern stadiums, with their emblematic architecture, are urban symbols that effectively promote the cities and contribute to the fulfilment of their goals.

Examples of modern stadiums associated with urban regeneration abound and are a major tourist attraction: Amsterdam Arena (Bijlmermeer district), Emirates Stadium (Islington regeneration), Wembley Stadium (Brent regeneration) and Etihad Stadium (redevelopment of the East Manchester area).

After the end of 2018–2019 competition season, Aris FC carried out important interventions for the renovation and beautification of the stadium. The projects that took place in the summer of 2019, concerned the painting of the interior of all stands and the renovation of toilets and locker rooms, the installation of completely new LED technology lamps, the change of the position of the press areas from door 7 to door 9, the repair of all the seats of the stadium, the creation of two small new stands at gate 7, the change of the position of the team benches, the creation of additional new VIP spaces, at gate 7 and more.

In conclusion, it could be said that on a practical level, the executives of sports organisations should focus on improving the service quality, creating feelings of satisfaction, but also maximising the value offered, improving the overall sports product.

Because of the data were collected from spectators belonging to a professional team, which means that the results cannot be generalised to other professional teams operating in different sports facilities, it is suggested that future studies have larger samples, involving more viewers so that the results allow generalisation with broad confidence. Furthermore, constructs, such as value, customer experience, as well as customer loyalty could be examined in relation to tourist behavioural intentions. Finally, similar research

could be done in other sports (basketball, volleyball, tennis, motor sports) with spectator participation, in order to understand the application of service quality. In this case, measuring tourists perceptions would be of great interest, depending on the nature of each sport.

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