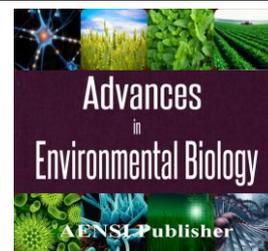




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Service Quality Satisfaction among Eastern and Western Asia Sport Tourists

¹Morteza Ghalibaf Tousi Nejad, ²Mohammad Ghorbani Ghollehzo, ³Mahdi Talebpour

¹Master of physical education and sport science, Azad university of Mashhad,

²Master of Administration and Management of Physical Education and Sports, Tehran University

³Associate professor of sport management, Ferdowsi university of Mashhad

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ABSTRACT

The present research main purpose is to study service quality satisfaction among Eastern and Western Asia sport tourists in Iran. The present research is a descriptive survey. The present research intended sample comprises of 98 individuals from a population of 135 participants in AFC Futsal Club Championship hold in Esfahan who were randomly selected. Sampling method was appropriate according to the stratified population features. The tools required for the research was John Shonk questionnaire of sporting event tourism service quality perception and satisfaction. The questionnaire was validated by 8 experts in Sports Management and tourism experts and its reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha and it was revealed to be 80% reliable. The collected data was analyzed via SPSS19 using descriptive and inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney U test). The obtained results indicate that there is a significant correlation between Eastern and Western Asia sport tourists' service quality ($P=0.001$). Findings also indicate that satisfaction among Eastern Asia sport tourists was twice the Eastern Asian ones. Results also show that accessibility, residence quality, tournament location quality and the tournament quality have significant role on sport tourists' satisfaction. As a result, it is suggested to equip hotels and residential accommodations' (lodging) based on different Asian countries tastes especially Eastern Asia for economic prosperity.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, sporting event tourism is a rich source of income and benefits and each country which is able to provide the conditions to use this source would harvest the advantages and the profits. According to World Organization Tourism (WOT) statistics, sport industry has enjoyed a dramatic flourish and development in recent decade. Until the end of 1990s, this industry has developed and reached to 213 billion dollars which exceed more than 90 billion dollars than the forecasted growth at the beginning of the decade. Roche [12] believes that tourism is the world greatest industry and claims that sporting event tourism grows faster than other parts of the industry. There is one significant factor which lead to such a growth and that is an excursion for participating in or watching sporting events. Currently, 20% of sport industry is dedicated to sport travel which has attracted many attentions to the emergence of a new field which is called sport tourism. Tourism is sport largest economy. Developing sport tourism and other related activities bring about new business and services. Bangun [1] asserts that sport tourism has turned into a presentable attraction with a high degree of benefits and economical value. Statistics indicate that those countries which enjoy an appropriate condition for sport tourism, govern a large part of their economics through sport tourism economics. Peeters [10] claims that each sport tourist for Southern Africa bring about USD13.000 income for America. McGehee & Cardenas [9] report that sport tourism in America industry has brought about an income about USD 27.000. Due to the importance of economic development in many countries around the world including developing countries, sport tourism can be assumed as sustainable development. According to WTO forecasts in 2010, more than 43% of world occupations is related to tourism industry and until 2020 the number of sport tourists will reach to 1.6 billion (WTO). In two recent decades, two important factors have had significant role in tourism growth: first factor is related to the overall growth of income which is resulted in more options for passing leisure times and leisure activities. And the second factor is that cities have started to pay more attention to sport facilities as a

Corresponding Author: Morteza Ghalibaf Tousi Nejad, Master of physical education and sport science, Azad university of Mashhad.
E-mail: Morteza.toosi@gmail.com

way for developing their city centers. Collier [3] believes that customer services comprises of two parts of tangible (goods) and intangible (services). And the customer identifies for which part spend money and use it. Service quality structure is a result of production quality. However, innovations in services quality dates back to 1920s, when producers has started to focus on products physical control and production process internal evaluation. Service quality has become an important factor for distinguishing companies and it is one of the strongest tools which service providing leading organizations have at their disposal. Tour agency suitable services which sport tourism marketers should pay attention to in selecting target markets and preparing marketing combinations. Service quality is tied to results such as customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and re-purchases intention. Customers who are satisfied with the services are willing to remain loyal and they are more likely to use the services next time [5]. Satisfaction in an important factor which should be fulfilled as unsatisfied customers seldom complaint and they prefer to provide their services using another provider. Satisfaction usually is described by a non- approved approach. The approach describes satisfaction as a difference between customers' expectations before and after receiving the services. The general idea is that mediate between service quality perception and the company performance. However, researches show that satisfaction is an introduction to service quality. Therefore, there is no agreement about the relationship between these two concepts.

As there has been no information regarding services provided in sport tourism accommodations especially international sport events, and no researches have been carried out about service quality of accommodations and satisfaction among sport tourism, present research is trying to figure out service satisfaction among sport tourists participating in AFC Futsal Club Championship in Eastern and Western Asia.

Research Methodology:

The present research is a descriptive survey. The research population comprises of all athletes participated in AFC Futsal Club Championship in Esfahan in 2009 as well as foreign spectators from other countries and their only goal was watching the Futsal tournament. According to WTO report the number of foreign coaches, administrators and referees was reported 135 people. The following 9 countries participated in this sport event: Japan, China, Thailand, Australia, Qatar, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon as well as Iran.

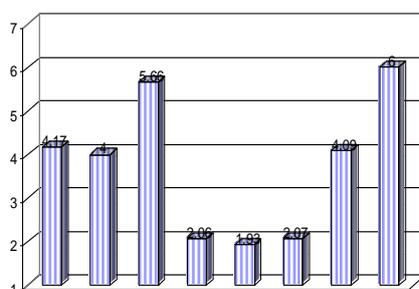
Based on the population features, stratified sampling was selected which is appropriate for the sample size. For each country one category is given. For determining the required sample size, Morgan & Jersy sample size table was applied. Accordingly, the sample size among a population of 98 individuals was quite random. In the present research, service quality perception is predictive variable and sport tourists' satisfaction is the criterion variable. For measuring the variables, JonhShonkstandard questionnaire is used. After collecting the questionnaires, the data is analyzed using Spss 19 and descriptive statistics is used for frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation tables. Inferential statistics is used for Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (K–S test) for determining if the variables are normal and Mann–Whitney U test is used for testing the hypothesis.

Research Findings:

The results obtained from table 1 indicate that the highest mean score from service quality is related to Kyrgyz sport tourists with a percentage of 6.13 and the lowest mean score is for Chinese sport tourists with 1.93 percentages.

Table 1: Respondents' satisfaction quality descriptive statistics based on nationalities

Nationality	Mean	Standard deviation	Nationality	Mean	Standard deviation
Lebanon	5.73	0.632	China	1.86	0.303
Thailand	4.81	0.544	Australia	1.89	0.446
Uzbekistan	5.85	0.363	Qatar	4.25	0.536
Japan	2.50	0.632	Qzqyzstan	5.63	0.359
Total				4.11	1.716



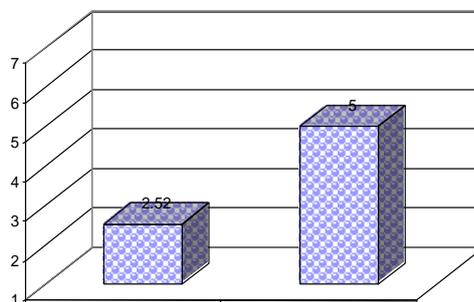
Graph. 1: Respondents' satisfaction quality mean based on nationalities

Table 2: Respondents' satisfaction quality descriptive statistics among sport tourists divided by Western and Eastern Asia

Region	Mean	Standard deviation	Grade average
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East	2.52	0.972	27.2
West	5.00	0.977	70.91

As it can be seen in table 2, mean, standard deviation and grade degree in East Asia are 2.52, 0.972 and 27.2 respectively and in West Asia they are 5.00, 0.977 and 70.91 respectively.



Graph. 2: A comparison between sport tourists conception of accommodation quality

Table 3: Mann–Whitney U test results for sport tourists' conception of service quality

Test statistics	Percentage
Mann–Whitney U test statistics	129.5
Z statistics	- 7.634
Significance level	0.001

As it can be seen in table 3, Mann–Whitney U test results for sport tourists service quality conception with the significance level of 0.0001 is equal to 129.5.

Based on the obtained results and considering the significance level of $p=0.001$, there is a significant difference between Western and Eastern Asia participants' satisfaction and service quality conception. And it can be concluded that service quality conception among Eastern Asia sport tourists is less than Western Asia ones. Table 4 indicates the respondents frequency distribution based on their nationality. According to this table, the frequency for Eastern Asia countries is 49% and for Western countries it is equal to 51%.

Table 4: Respondents' frequency distribution divided by their nationalities

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
East	48	49
West	50	51
Total	98	100

Discussion and Conclusion:

Tourism industry especially sport tourism has not sufficiently been paid attention. Tourist attractions, facilities, and modern sport centers play a significant role in the number of national and international tournaments. Modern sport centers enjoy the latest technologies for attracting sport tourists as well as developed accessibility such as airports, roads, hotels, recreational centers, restaurants etc. The present research has studied Eastern and Western Asia sport tourists satisfaction from service quality and the results indicate that there is a significant difference statistically. The results also indicate that satisfaction among Western Asia sport tourists is almost twice Eastern Asia sport tourists. Therefore, it is suggested to equip hotels and residential accommodations (lodging) based on different Asian countries tastes especially Eastern Asia for economic prosperity.

Zahedi [16] has studied Sustainable Development challenges from the viewpoint of sustainable ecotourism. Present research presents a model for sustainable ecotourism. Madhush [8] has studied tourism industry development obstacles in Lorestan province. His research results show that there is a direct relationship between plurality of decision making centers and lack of development in tourism industry in Lorestan province as well as between infrastructure facilities and tourism services and marketing weakness and finally lack of the culture to accept tourist with lack of development in Lorestan province tourism industry. ZangiAbadi [17] has analyzed Esfahan tourism market and has found out that tourists are encountered with some problems such as high prices, traffic and informing quality. He then suggests solutions for these challenges. Ghiami Rad & MoharamZadeh [4] has studied effective factors on sport tourism development in Iran and Australia from the viewpoint of administrators and those involved in. Their research results indicate that one of the important factors in Australia success in attracting sport tourists is concise and planned cooperation in organizations which arrange such sport events. Furthermore, Honarvar [6] has studied important factors in sport tourism marketing and came to the conclusion that there is an interest in culture, art, music and architecture and they should be paid more

attention to in sport tourism marketing centers. Marketing as well as tourism agency services are another important factor in attracting sport tourists in sport events. Sadr Musavi [13] studied AzarbayjaneSharqi tourism facility conditions from the viewpoint of sport tourists. The research results indicate that this province lacks required facilities for attracting sport tourists. There is one sided causal relationship between business and tourism (from business to tourism). Seifodini [14] studied Esfahan tourism capacity and quality based on host country and tourists behavioral pattern as a case study. The research results indicate that Esfahan has passed its maturity incompletely due to tourists' invasion. This city infrastructures and facilities are still under developed. KhatibZadeh *et al*[7] has studied effective factors on sport tourism services quality from the viewpoint of sport tourists participating in Esteqlal and Pespolis derby (2004) and they came to the conclusion that tournament quality has more effects than tournament location and accessibility quality. Chelladurai & Chung [2] have suggested a framework for sport services quality perception in an article titled as "sport services goals and standards". The framework presents quality from three perspectives of goals of quality, standards of quality and quality estimation. Furthermore, applicable standards are clarified in certain goals and related estimators. The proposed framework would be beneficial in quality initiative and it can be defined as a confidential and systematic evaluation of goods, services or Business processes against so called top organizations so that the intended changes and improvements are done. Greenwell [5] has carried out a research with a title of "Assessing the influence of the physical sports facility on customer satisfaction within the context of the service". The obtained results show customers awareness of physical facilities is somehow related to their satisfaction. Shonk [15] has carried out a research with the title of "perceptions of service quality, satisfaction and the intent to return among tourists attending a sporting event". He found out that accessibility has fewer effects than other factors in sport tourists' satisfaction.

So, beautification, recreational and welfare facilities should be paid more attention to. Given that Esfahan tourists is the case under the study, and due to the fact that Esfahan has appropriate tourism attractions, but different Ancillary facilities in Eastern Asia and difference in culture can be assumed as an important factor result in low satisfaction comparing to Western Asia and Muslim countries.

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