

Online Sport Event Consumers: Attitude, E-Quality and E-Satisfaction

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Abstract

Sporting events attract millions of dollars in sponsorship and tourism, so a strong event brand is required. The event website quality is responsible for maintaining and attracting consumers and creating a positive attitude towards the brand. The purpose of this study was to examine key variables that affect the behavior of online sport event consumers. Specifically, it explores e-quality and e-satisfaction and how they influence the attitude towards the website and the brand. Structural equation model tests revealed that a positive quality can determine a positive attitude to the web site, even the consumer is not satisfied with it. On the other hand, the stakeholder needs to pay attention to maintain a high-quality web site if he wants to increase the attitude toward the brand to attract consumer to the sport event, because the event can generate revenue to the sponsors, cities and citizens.

Keywords: Branding, Quality, E-Satisfaction, Consumer Behavior, Internet

1 Introduction

Many professional sport organizations use their websites to enhance communication with customers by providing information about organization and products (scores, news, ways to acquire and renew season tickets, etc.) [80]. But are these websites really designed to meet the needs of their customers? [116]. The effectiveness and success of these sites depend on how consumers perceive their value and quality [127]. Consumption variables, such as perceived service quality [38] and satisfaction, are important elements in explaining overall consumption behavior. Indeed, numerous studies have focused on these concepts and the relationship between them in a wide range of contexts [61] including general business [14], retail [23], [37], marketing [21], [49], and sport management [6].

The popularity and growth of online sport consumption suggest a clear opportunity for sport-related marketers to effectively use the Internet as a key component within an overall marketing strategy. To effectively leverage the opportunities that the Internet affords to an organization, it is crucial that organizations gain a clear understanding of online sport fan behavior [61]. The growth of Internet usage among online sport fans is also evidenced by traffic patterns at popular websites. According to the website of Alexa (site 1) [6] sport web site pages like the US Open (site 2) have 1,450,400 daily average hits and It provides \$421 daily advertising revenue. Sports events web site like Uefa (site 3) receives about 30,350,000 hits daily and it is estimated to have a daily income of \$364 in the same aspect. Both sites are valued at \$0.6 million and \$5.2 million, respectively [118], [119].

Websites provide information in several issues: the event, sponsors, city, players, matches, schedules, offered activities related to the event or news, making more complete the information with pictures and videos. In addition, websites offer the possibility to buy tickets, reporting on prices, seats, and other aspects of interest, making the process easier. The use of websites of sporting events it is closely related to sport tourism [8], because what users perceive from a website, where we find concepts such as e-quality and e-satisfaction, could make them decide to go to a sporting event, generating sport tourism with its probable economic and social benefits.

Tourism to sporting events represents a growing niche market in many countries, and it has become one of the preferred options to occupy leisure time [99]. The Association of Travel Industry of America shows that more than 75 million Americans over 18 have traveled to attend at least one sporting event, either as a spectator or participant in the last three years [52]. In 2004, over a 1 million international visitors made trips to Australia and participated in a sport or outdoor activity, while 3.3 million domestic overnight trips were taken in Australia to participate in a sporting event, whether as competitor or spectator [52].

Sport event tourism is an important part of sports tourism and related communities are increasingly aware of the benefits to be derived from holding such events. The host cities of sporting events want to host such activities because they understand that could be a development and growth for the city in the short term [115]. Moreover, to celebrate a sporting event could be good not only economically but also socially, increasing the number of people interested in sport and the number of practitioners [103]. Along with this expectation, the emphasis is on the development and execution of marketing communication that emphasizes the sporting event information, attributes and benefits to help attract and retain visitors [47]. The Internet has become viable and influential marketing for this communication. The Internet has turned into a central source of information for travel and tourism consumers [128] that serves both pre-trip and trip information needs [106]. Also, a site of significant quality helps builds a strong brand image that will impact on the likelihood of a consumer buying a trip to the event.

However, in most instances site proprietors have been unable to introduce consistently profitable Internet communication strategies, or to identify other possibilities for competitive advantage, on account of the difficulty of effective communication through the internet, where ease of access to information makes users able to compare many alternatives, and consequently, make them able to switch from one to another, being really difficult for companies to achieve that distinction for customer retention. Nevertheless, internet also offers advantages such as direct access to the consumer and ease to establish communication channels and receive feedback. In addition, we know that despite of the fact that users cannot directly experience a good of service, if a particular company achieves user satisfaction by using their website, they will get greater loyalty than they could get offline [85]. Caskey and Delpy [30] help to contextualize this problem for the sport industry. Having found that nearly all US sport organizations surveyed perceived that their sport sites were capable of making money, Caskey and Delpy's research showed that fewer than half the sport sites were actually making money. In addition, one-third of organizations were spending nothing on promoting their web sites [84].

This study aims to test the theoretical relationships between key variables of online sport consumption such as sport consumers' perceptions of website quality and satisfaction. No studies have evaluated the above dimensions in relation to consumers' attitudes towards brands, that is why what follows tests a new relationship between these variables in the context of sport events websites, a context that has scarcely been researched in the field of sport management [58].

The objective of this paper is to answer the following questions: (1) how do quality and satisfaction mediate in consumer attitude toward a website? And (2) how does the quality of a sport website influence consumer attitude

toward the brand? The research results will aid managers of sport organizations to drive investments in communication toward meeting consumer needs and increasing positive attitudes towards the advertised brand. The study will also lay the groundwork for further research into sport website consumption behavior.

This research is a contribution to the scientific literature relating to marketing at sporting events for the perception of e-quality and consumer e-satisfaction. With this approach, we want to contribute to the development of this topic of research, almost nonexistent in this area, and try to add information for a better understanding of the process and the different constructs used. Moreover, perceptions resulting from the analysis of the users about the website could make them decide whether to attend the event or not, so this would have different applications related to sports tourism.

2 Background and Concepts

This section is made up of different parts. First, we will review some of the most important studies that have been carried out on marketing in sports websites. Subsequently, we will go on to comment on the most representative concepts related to the study, among which we find attitudes, quality and satisfaction. In addition to the attitudes aspect, a section will be devoted to analyzing the development that has taken place in this research topic, specifically on the development of scales to measure the construct of attitudes towards the website.

2.1 Marketing Literature on Sports Websites

Previous studies have examined the factors that influence the overall consumer use of the Internet. Searching for information has been named as an important motivating factor in a significant number of these studies [25]-[85]. A large part of consumers use the Internet during the pre-purchase search [92], and the Internet allows them to be more efficient and effective in their search for information [81]. After consumers recognize the need or desire to attend an event [47], when searching for information consumers try to find information about the event, and to judge the extent to which this event will meet their needs and motivations [7].

The Internet has become a source of study in recent years and it has been addressed by researchers in the field of sports marketing. As we can see in table 1, in the last few years six research lines have been followed. They are: importance and role of the Internet and sports websites; study of the sports web pages containing management oriented marketing; opportunities in sports marketing websites; users study, their motivations and marketing opportunities and characteristics of online fantasy sports; studies related to the reporting of sporting events over the Internet; and user behavior of sports websites or specific functions of sports websites. These lines of research are related, to a greater or lesser extent, with our article. The fact that it has been analyzed the elements of marketing in sport websites [35], the opportunities offered by sports marketing on websites [28], the analysis of the relationship between consumer behavior and perceived quality, satisfaction and loyalty [61] or the behavior of sports fans when they use sports websites [59], lays the foundation for other studies can be made, like ours, making it richer.

The Internet is a source of growing importance since for consumers of sporting events it has become a more efficient means of finding information than the traditional one [47], [55], [107]. Now that the Internet has become the initial or primary source of information seeking it is important to present content that may be claimed by potential customers of the event web site [96]. A sporting event is an experimental product and that means that viewers receive the three types of information: verbal, nonverbal and graphic. Therefore the communication is more complete and provides more information in less time, benefiting the communicative process which is crucial for success [26], i.e. the quality of the website is essential for its purpose, it helps to make a better delivery of information and make it more effective.

Research has suggested that organizations working to meet consumer needs and motivations are concerned about their marketing communication on the Internet [17], [46], [75]. A challenge exists for sports organizations to ensure that their website communication provides relevant event information to consumers properly. Traditionally, tools such as user tracking, site hits, and number of queries have been used to evaluate web sites, but doubts have been expressed about the effectiveness of these measures in assessing the information content of what has been considered a critical component of quality website [95]. The fact that event consumers use the Internet to search for information purposes emphasizes the comprehensive provision of information through web site content.

Table 1: Previous studies in the marketing literature on sports websites

Authors	Research Approach	Research Line
[41]	Identified demographic profiles of Internet users	Importance and role of the Internet and sports websites.
[66]	Identified characteristics and potential roles in Internet sports markets	
[30]	Proposed revenue models of sports websites	
[108]	They conducted a content analysis of the websites of sports facilities	
[44]	Exploratory study combining qualitative interviews with empirical observations of football websites	Study on the sports pages of web content management oriented marketing.
[114]	Proposed techniques to examine the information in a professional website sports	
[25]	Study of the marketing objectives of a website as a communication tool	
[35]	Analysis marketing elements sports web sites	
[104]	Study of European and American sports websites based on information provided on their website and their involvement in sports management	Opportunities sports marketing websites.
[46]	Study on the integration of television and the Internet	
[28]	Opportunities sports marketing websites	
[44]	Maximize the opportunities for competitive advantage	
[46]	Opportunities sports marketing websites.	
[114]	Factors affecting brand awareness of virtual advertising in sports	
[25]	How sports fans can be attracted to newspaper websites	
[35]	Communicating commitment to sustainability principles and practices on their Web sites	
[39]	Examines the audience and the participants' experiences of the target audience of fantasy sports leagues	Study about users, their motivations and marketing opportunities and characteristics of online fantasy sports.
[45]	Focus on the study of motivation and user variables on the use of fantasy sports	
[101]	Produce a conceptual framework on the influence of the consumption of fantasy sports on sports management	
[42]	Study the impact of fantasy sports on the consumption of related products	
[87]	Examine the impact of fantasy sports on assistance to live sporting events	
[70]	Examine sport as a competitor fantasy real online sport consumption	
[102]	Analysis and development of a scale to measure motivation using games based on fantasy sports	Studies related to the reporting of sporting events over the Internet.
[32]	Examined the effect of advertising and media on destination image and intention to visit the town host of a sporting event	
[47]	Analysis of the information needs of sports websites and impact assessment of the communications web site, motivation and consumer attitude toward the event	User behavior of sports websites or specific functions of sports websites.
[72]	How sports fans can be attracted to entertainment websites games	
[60]	Exploration on the motivation for using sports websites	
[126]	Examined the perception of marketing on the followers of the sport virtual advertising	
[105]	Construction of a scale to measure motivation for sport online consumption	
[114]	Brand awareness of virtual advertising	
[2]	Study of attitude towards sports Web sites and its relationship with the intention of revisiting	
[58]	Application acceptance model to explain technological use in sports websites	
[61]	Examination of the relationship between consumer behavior, perceived website quality, satisfaction and loyalty	
[51]	Construction of a motivation scale for sport consumption online	
[59]	Study of the behavior of sports fans visiting sports website	

This paper identifies the relationship between e-quality dimensions, e-satisfaction, attitude towards the website and brand attitude based on previous work on consumer behavior and disconfirmation in the theoretical model presented [9]-[91]. Overall, the proposed relationships are based on the premise that the quality attributes of a site may influence the level of consumer satisfaction (or dissatisfaction), which then has a positive (or negative) influence on consumer attitudes to the website and ultimately in the attitude towards the brand. These issues are discussed in the next section, which defines and analyzes the key dimensions in the model, by establishing a hypothesis.

2.2 Attitude toward Website

Although the scientific literature on attitude definitions varies, most agree that the attitude is the tendency to respond to an object in the form of favorable or unfavorable [48], [97]. The concept of attitude has been the focus of numerous studies of consumer behavior [3]. In Internet research, the concept of attitude also has an important role because there is a fundamental link between how consumers feel a website (i.e., attitude) and how they act in relation to the website through behavior such as the purchase of products and word of mouth in relation to services and the web page (i.e., behavior). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) [48] has been widely used as a tool to help explain the relationship between attitude and behavior. The TRA describes attitude as a sequence of cognitive constructs: beliefs, attitudes, behavioral intentions and behavior.

Several researchers have provided evidence of a positive correlation between (1) the intent of the attitude and behavior, and (2) behavioral intention and actual behavior [13], [88]. Therefore, the attitude towards the web site is critical to predict the potential behavior of a user. As a result, researchers have attempted to develop a scale to measure attitude toward the website to predict actual behavior or as a tool to evaluate a website [34].

2.3 Scale Development of Attitude toward the Website

Chen and Wells [34] developed a scale to measure the attitude towards the website. Previously there was no scale to measure the attitude towards the website. The scale they developed had six items: *This website makes it easy for me to build a relationship with this company* (1), *I would like to visit this website again in the future* (2), *I'm satisfied with the service provided by this website* (3), *I feel comfortable in surfing this website* (4), *I feel surfing this website is a good way for me to spend my time* (5) and finally, *compared with others websites, I would rate this one as* (6). They defined attitude toward the website as the willingness of Internet users to respond favorably or unfavorably to the website in the natural exposure situation. They tested the scale and then applied it to different websites to check the reliability and validity. Since then, the scale has been implemented and used effectively in Internet research and advertising [83].

Along with the variable use and satisfaction, Luo [77] investigated the influence of other factors (information, entertainment and irritation) on the attitude towards the website. To measure attitude toward the website, Luo [77] adopted Ahn [2] on the attitude towards the website. The results suggested that Internet users who obtained high values of entertainment and information provided by the website obtained a positive attitude toward the website [2]. The three factors (information, entertainment and irritation) influenced consumers' attitude towards the web site, as well as the site usage and the satisfaction towards the website. Likewise, users dissatisfied with the quality of the website, i.e. those who did not understand the operation or did not like its design, showed a negative attitude towards the website.

The works of McMillan, Hwang, and Lee [83] and Jang-Sun and McMillan [64] is about interactivity, involvement and attitude toward the website. These authors identified predictors (interactivity and involvement) of the attitude toward the website. Both were significant predictors. In the first article, they found that interactivity affected the attitude toward the participation on the website. They also found that users who have a more positive attitude using the website have a higher degree of satisfaction [83].

Others have used different scales to measure attitude toward the website [24], [122]. Wu [122], for example, defines attitude as an evaluative dimension based on cognitive, affective and behavioral information. The same author [122] suggests that the attitude toward the website is a useful indicator to measure the effectiveness of the web. Their findings indicate that interactivity and attitude toward the website are important for administrators and web designers in the development of web advertising and marketing [83].

Moreover, Jang-Sun and McMillan [64] showed that there was a strong positive correlation between participation and attitude toward the website. Bruner and Kumar [24] argue that the degree of interest in the website and web experience are significantly and positively related to attitude toward the website.

2.4 Service Quality and Consumer Satisfaction

As the literature has shown, there is a strong positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction [37], [93]. However, consumers must evaluate online services in a different manner than conventional media as they depend on attributes other than those used in traditional market settings [36]. Indeed, existing research suggests that web features influence consumer satisfaction with a website [71], [112]. Given these differences between web-based and conventional businesses, it is therefore necessary to reconceptualise at least some of the dimensions of service quality in the online context [76]. To identify these quality dimensions, the authors Hur et al. [61] developed a specific scale for measuring the quality of sport websites (Sport Web Quality, SWQ). These dimensions include the quality of: 1) information, 2) interaction, 3) design, 4) reliability, and 5) compliance.

E-service quality is defined as the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchase and delivery [129]. Although the definition seems to show a simple concept, it is not. Proof of this are articles like Madu and Madu [79] where they investigate about the dimensions of e-quality, analyzing up to 15 different dimensions with positive and negative elements that affect consumer perceptions in virtual operations, which can be influential in changing future behavior.

The background of e-satisfaction has been identified by researchers: for example, to capture e-satisfaction, [82] used consumer perception of convenience, merchandising, web design and financial security. E-satisfaction is also affected by expectations of online consumers as to the quality of information and the perceived performance [82].

The concept of electronic satisfaction is defined as customer satisfaction regarding their previous buying experience with a particular e-commerce company. If there are dissatisfied customers, is more likely they try to search information of other alternatives and more likely to yield to competitor overtures than is a satisfied customer, who is more likely to resist attempts of competitors trying to develop a closer relationship with them [11].

Moreover, the dissatisfied member may wish to redefine the relationship, because these variables are expected to apply in the electronic marketplace as well. As the same author says, online satisfaction has been assumed as a natural antecedent of loyalty, but that relationship may be moderated by other aspects such as inertia, convenience, motivation, the size of the purchase or variables of the company as trust and value [11].

Satisfaction is closely related to loyalty, and it is not exclusive of face trade, it also exists in the online market. In the latter case, the user cannot assess or judge the quality of a product directly. Thus, the perception of users that they are being treated well and seller cares about them, in terms of purchase intention, is crucial to get revisit [124] and satisfaction with the site, consequently causing an improvement of loyalty [11], [33].

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has received strong attention in recent decades [29], finding that service quality is an important predictor of customer satisfaction. Negash, Igbaria, and Ryan [86] found that the quality system of a website is positively related to user satisfaction. Similarly, Balabanis, Reynolds, and Simintiras [16] found that e-satisfaction is influenced not only by the quality of the product but also the quality of the website, including design, security issues and applications. In short, the way a service is provided through a website plays a key role in securing customer satisfaction. A consumer who perceives the quality of different attributes of e-services positively (or negatively) will be satisfied (or dissatisfied) with the e-service delivered via the website. To test the model, we propose the following hypotheses.

H1. Perceived website quality (e-quality) has a significant and positive influence on consumer satisfaction (e-satisfaction).

2.5 Service Quality and Attitude

Consumer attitude towards a website has been described as a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to the website. Several website attributes have been found to influence the formation of consumer attitudes [27]. Specifically, it has been shown that positive attitudes towards a website are associated with three dimensions of e-service quality: entertainment, informativeness, and organization, which are the names given to factors arising after the exploratory factor analysis that grouped the items [34]. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that several quality-factors positively influence consumer attitudes toward the website in the context of e-retail and online shopping [121], [123]. In the first of these articles is shown that in the hierarchical cluster analysis dimensions are: fulfillment/reliability, customer service o personalization, while as usability factors we find experiential/atmospheric, ease of use, informativeness, selection, and security/privacy. After exploratory factor analysis, the conserved items were grouped in four factors: website design, customer service, fulfillment/reliability and security/privacy, obtaining, in conclusion, that the four factors are strongly predictive of customer judgments of quality and satisfaction, customer loyalty and attitudes toward the website.

The second article, focused on the quality of a shopping site, shows the scale of quality SITEQUAL. This scale consists of 4 dimensions: ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed and security, in addition to the items used to measure constructs such as attitude toward the site, site loyalty, site equity, purchase intention or site revisit intention.

H2. Perceived website quality (e-quality) has a significant and positive influence on consumer attitude towards the website.

It has been shown that goods that provide the sought benefits positively influence attitude. [90] found that service experience influences the development of attitude toward the brand in the context of banking brands. That is, if the service received is evaluated as a quality service, the consumer develops a more positive attitude towards the bank's brand. It has also been found in the online retail sector that the perceived quality of the web influences the attitude toward the brand of the web. Specifically, [5] It has been found that usability and interaction were favorable factors in assessing positive attitudes towards the brand and the web. Even in the case of particular use of mobile website [113]. The TRA theory has been used to support the relationship between quality and attitude [4], [5]. Regarding the

attitude, the academic literature in sports sponsorship has recognized that the factors inherent to the sporting event can influence the attitude toward the event [109]. That is, the brand that sponsors the website. Therefore, based on previous research [4]-[5], [120], we propose the following hypothesis:

H3. Perceived service quality has a significant and positive influence on consumer attitude towards the brand.

2.6 Satisfaction and Attitude

It has been shown in the literature that consumers develop a positive attitude when satisfaction is considered as a post-purchase construction [90]. The communication that is controlled by the organization's website provides consumers with the opportunity to experience the brand through a quality user experience (i.e., it is easy to use, it offers value, it is interactive, personalized and timely), which can positively influence the attitude of consumers [40]. Previous research on the relationship between e-satisfaction and consumer attitude has shown that increased consumer satisfaction with the attributes of a website is associated with the formation of positive attitude towards the website. Therefore, it can be argued that the level of consumer satisfaction with the website content can be controlled through various attributes such as response time or ease of navigation [27]. A high level of consumer satisfaction with a website will therefore increase the likelihood that consumers will develop a positive attitude towards the website.

H4. Consumer e-satisfaction with a website has a positive and significant influence on attitude towards the website.

Details of hypothesis can be found below (Figure 1), where we can see the proposed model and the corresponding relations. These links are summarized in that e-quality affects e-satisfaction, attitudes towards the website and attitudes toward the brand (H1, H2 and H3) and e-satisfaction affects attitudes toward the brand (H4).

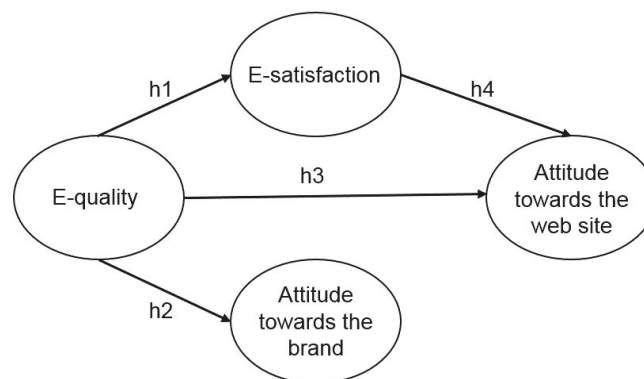


Figure 1: Proposed model and hypothesis

3 Methods

To validate the theoretical framework, a banner with a hyperlink to a questionnaire located on the website of an international tennis event was inserted, specifically the Valencia Open 500, bearing the name of the Spanish city where the event was held. The link led to an online survey that took 6 minutes to complete. To try to increase the number of participants, a draw for sports equipment was established as an incentive for those who will answer the online survey.

3.1 Participants

A total of 426 valid questionnaires were collected using LimeSurvey. The response rate was 85%. 59.17% of the sample were male. Almost the great part of the sample (49.08%) were aged between 25 and 44 (25-35, 24.31%). Over half of the people who made the sample had higher education studies (56.88%).

3.2 Measurement Scales

The scale developed by [74] (SWQ) was used to measure the perceived quality of a sporting event website. This scale consists of 5 dimensions: information quality, which refers to sport consumer perception about the quality of the information presented on the sports website. The second one, interaction quality, is related to the dynamic interaction between sports fans and the service provider (sport website) and with the interactions between the fans. The third dimension, design quality, is measured by assessing the ease of use and aesthetic qualities of the sports website. That ease of use represents that the website is easy to navigate and provides the user a friendly interface [113]. The fourth is system quality, which is defined as the perceived performance in delivering information that

makes the website, from the point of view of sports fans. This point consists of two subdomains, security and privacy (1) and confidence (2). Finally, the fifth dimension is quality fulfillment. Huang [57] contrasted two relevant outcome variables for assessing different categories of website usage: utilitarian and hedonic fulfillment. The utilitarian outcomes refer to the assessment that website user do about the instrumental benefits derived from its functional attributes, while hedonic outcomes refer to the degree of playfulness and pleasure that online sport consumers experience [65].

An adaptation of [63] scale was used to measure e-satisfaction. This study was conducted through interviews and transcription of results, with the age of respondents between 14 and 62 and between grammar school studies and doctorate. A guide for the interview was used to ensure everything that had been proposed was made, which was related to the feelings and perceptions of users about online shopping, asking them about their experiences on websites valid for online shopping. After analysis, 5 dimensions were identified: performance, Access, security, sensation and information. In the second study, with the identified dimensions, multi-item measures were created to test the reliability and validity of the survey. The scale was finally formed by items about satisfaction with the online experience and positive WOM, the likelihood of future purchase behavior, and complaint behavior were added to previous five dimensions, with Likert scale of 7 points.

The construct of attitude towards the site was measured using the scale proposed by Carlson y O’Cass [27]. In this article the aim of the study was to develop a conceptual model that would allow examine the relationship between e-service quality, consumer satisfaction and attitudes toward the website. The variables that form the questionnaire are: likefulness, ease of use, entertainment, complimentary relationship, consumer satisfaction, attitude toward the web site and behavioral intentions.

The scale for measuring brand attitude has been adapted from Speed y Thompson [109]. The study of these authors examines the impact of consumer attitudes on a sporting event, their perceptions of sponsor-event fit, and their attitudes about the sponsor on a multidimensional measure of sponsorship response. The questionnaire used by the authors contained 6 dimensions: sponsor-event fit, personal liking for the event, attitude toward the sponsor, perceived ubiquity, perceived sincerity and status of the event.

3.3 Statistical Methods

Statistical analysis of data collected in the online survey was conducted to obtain the results of the study. Because it wasn’t required to answer all the questions in the survey (online), sometimes users answered leaving missed values, so once the analysis was done, we proceeded to an analysis of those lost values, with the aim that adequacy of the study was correct.

3.3.1 Treatment of Missing Data

Regarding the lost data, when its percentage exceeds 5% of the sample, it is necessary to use some method to deal with this missing information, as its removal would compromise the reliability of the analysis and the generalization of the data [78]. Paying attention to our data, the percentage of missing values is between 6% and 8% in the different variables. For this reason, it was decided to impute missing values by using the Lisrel own software version 8.8. The method of imputation EM algorithm (Expectation-Maximization) was chosen as the most suitable for the data not distributed according to a multivariate normal distribution.

4 Results

The validity of the measuring instruments is checked by examining the convergent and discriminant validity and by exploring standardized loadings and correlations. Content validity answers a question from the qualitative study of the theory developed in the review of the literature. Table 1 shows a literature review of sport marketing websites.

The evaluation of the items started with an exploratory assessment of their reliability and validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, as recommended by [89], to confirm the reliability of the items. All values were above 0.7 (Table 2). Table 2 indicates: Means, Factor Loadings (β), Cronbach's α , Standard Error (S.E.), Construct Reliability (C.R.), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed for further examination, as recommended by [15]. To evaluate the reliability of the scales used in the model a double analysis was performed: a) the composite reliability coefficient is considered more appropriate than Cronbach's alpha because it depends on the number of attributes associated with each concept [117], all coefficients showing a value greater than 0.7 [52], and b) The average variance extracted (AVE) [50], reflects the total amount of the variance of the indicators collected by the latent construct. All factors are beyond the recommended value of 0.5 [15], [54].

Regarding the convergent validity of the measures: all items were significant, they loaded on their respective hypothesized dimensions, and the parameters estimates were 10 to 20 times larger than the standard errors, as [10] recommend.

Table 2: Assessment of reliability and validity.

Factor	Items	Mean	β	α	S.E.	C.R.	AVE
System Quality	The website loading properly and without errors	.86	.83	.91		.97	92
	I trust the website to keep my information safe	.88	.94		.02		
	I hope the website will not misuse personal information	.93	.93		.02		
Interaction Quality	The website has interactive features that help me navigate	.66	.96	.91	-	.98	93
	I can learn something valuable by interacting with other fans in ValenciaOpen500 website	.98	.89		.02		
	I can count on ValenciaOpen500 web managers to be friendly.	.72	.85		.03		
Fulfillment Quality	I find it easy to use the website	.09	.71	.82	-	.91	76
	The text / labels / web site menus are easy to understand	.08	.93		.05		
	The information available on the website is the one I'm looking for	.13	.81		.04		
Design Quality	The website is visually attractive ValenciaOpen500	.87	.87	.91	-	.98	95
	The website uses ValenciaOpen500 multimedia features correctly	.85	.93		.02		
	The website is attractive ValenciaOpen500.	.93	.87		.02		
Information Quality	The website is updated regularly ValenciaOpen500.	.57	.89	.87	-	.94	83
	The ValenciaOpen500 website is a source of useful information.	.75	.84		.04		
	The information contained in the ValenciaOpen500 web is rich in detail.	.47	.81		.04		
E-satisfaction	I am satisfied with my decision to use the ValenciaOpen500 website.	.79	.95	.94	-	.98	94
	My choice of using the website was successful	.87	.92		.02		
	I think I did the right thing when I decided to use the ValenciaOpen500 web.	.93	.96		.02		
Attitude brand	ValenciaOpen500 is a great event	.92	.92	.93	-	.95	86
	I like the event ValenciaOpen500.	.13	.93		.03		
	ValenciaOpen500 is a quality event	.92	.88		.04		
Attitude web	This is a nice website	.85	.84	.95	-	.96	89
	I have a favorable opinion of the website ValenciaOpen500	.83	.96		.04		
	I like the ValenciaOpen500 website	.79	.96		.04		

The measures also showed adequate discriminant validity after calculating the shared variances between pairs of constructs and verifying that this result was lower than the average variances extracted for the individual constructs [50] in all cases. The squared correlations between pairs of factors are smaller than the variance extracted for this construct. In the interest of thorough discriminant validity, an additional test confirmed this assumption, as the confidence interval (± 2 standard errors) around the correlation estimate between any two latent indicators never included 1.0.

The sample does not meet the assumption of multivariate normality, since the method of weighted least squares (WLS) or function asymptotically free (ADF) [22] was used as an appropriate estimation method. This estimation method obtains parameter values minimizing the weighted sum of the differences between the variance-covariance matrix of observed variables and the variance-covariance predicted by the model. The advantage of this method is that it does not assume multivariate normality, nor does it require a large sample size [125].

Some fit indices were the basis for evaluating the model: goodness of fit index (GFI) and comparative fit index (CFI). This incremental fit index, belongs to the group of indices that do not use the chi-square in its raw form but compare the chi-square value to a baseline model [56]. Their value must be above .9, because models with overall fit indices of less than .9 can usually be improved substantially [18]. Other indices, such as the chi-square and Root Mean Square Errors of Approximation (RMSEA) that are appropriate for the evaluation of the model, were also included. In

this parameter RMSEA cut-off points have been reduced over the years. It is generally considered in a well-fitting model the lower limit is close to 0 while the upper limit should be less than .08 [56] but a stringent upper limit of .07 established by Steiger [110] seems to be the general consensus among authorities in this area. The results indicate an adequate fit. (χ^2 : 32, df: 73142, $p > 0.05$, GFI: .91 and RMSEA: .033) (See table 3).

Table 3: Summary of Fit of the Measures, Reliability, Content Validity, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Hypothesis	Standardized loadings (λ)	Test
H ₁ E-quality -> E-satisfaction	.91	Confirmed
H ₂ E-quality -> Attitude toward the web	.28	Confirmed
H ₃ E-quality -> Attitude toward the brand	.79	Confirmed
H ₄ E-satisfaction -> Attitude toward the web	.72	Confirmed
Fit of the Measures		
χ^2 : 32; df: 73.14; $p > 0.05$ GFI: .91; y RMSEA: .03		
Reliability		
Composite reliability and average variance extracted indices presented higher values than those of the evaluation criteria of .5.		
Convergent Validity		
Regarding the convergent validity of the measures: all items were significant, they loaded on their respective hypothesized dimensions, and the parameters estimates were 10 to 20 times larger than the standard errors.		
Discriminant Validity		
An additional test confirmed this assumption as the confidence interval (± 2 standard errors) around the correlation estimate between any two latent indicators never included 1.0.		
For each pair of factors, the value of χ^2 for the model as it has a fixed correlation one is significantly larger than a model that does not have this restriction.		
The measures also showed adequate discriminant validity after calculating the shared variances between pairs of constructs and verifying that this result was lower than the average variances extracted for the individual constructs in all cases.		

After checking the reliability and validity of the scales used, it proceed to the analysis of causal models [67]. For this purpose we used the computer program [12]. Figure 2 presents a summary of the results generated by the system of structural equations (SEM) and a summary of the results of reliability and validity of the scales used in this model.

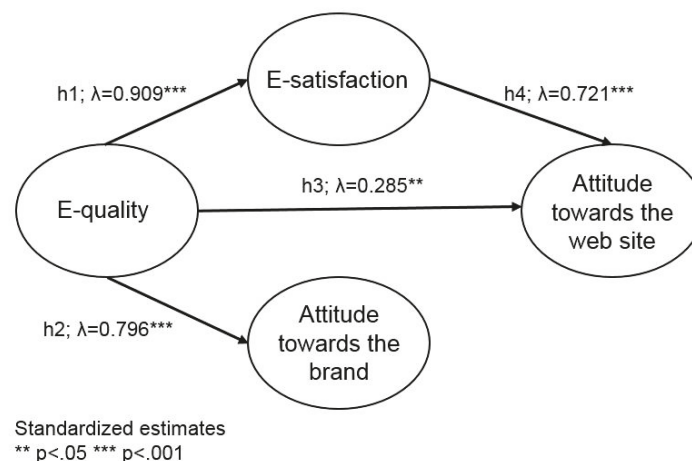


Figure 2: Result of structural model test for the proposed model

5 Discussion

The discussion allows to better understand the results and contextualize them. In this section, we find first the theoretical implications, where we can see why this study which has been carried out is a contribution to the area, and we will comment on the relationship of the results obtained in the analysis with other studies that have analyzed the same issues. The managerial implications are also presented, showing the implications of the results obtained in this research, and providing information that can be useful for managers of web based sport media. To conclude this

section, the limitations of the study and the future research lines are presented, for which this study can serve as a basis

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The aim of this study was to explore perceived e-quality and e-satisfaction in the context of sport websites. The contribution of this work is that it investigates the influence of perceived quality on consumer behavior, namely e-satisfaction, attitude towards the website and attitude towards the brand. It is significant because the importance of a sport event goes beyond the sports sphere, it has an impact on the social field. Nowadays, hosting a sporting event means direct and indirect income for the venue organizers. [94] have concluded that the smallest recurrent international sporting events have not been examined in detail, despite the impact that these events may have on a small or medium-size city. Towns that can accommodate these types of events are increasingly interested in hosting them [31]. Media coverage also improves event brand positioning, as well as the image of both the tourist event and the host city [62], [100]. The event branding impact on stakeholders and likewise on the sponsors, attendees and competitors [94].

Data were collected online by inserting a banner on the website of an international tennis event. An analysis of the proposed scales confirmed the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments employed, while the analysis of the structural equation model showed that the proposed model is parsimonious and has a good fit. None of the hypotheses were rejected.

As shown in figure 1, the positive relationship between e-quality and e-satisfaction (H1) is consistent with findings from previous studies conducted in both offline and online environments. This suggests that better quality sites lead to greater consumer satisfaction. More specifically, consumer satisfaction with a sport website is enhanced when the site provides useful information, has an attractive design and is easy to navigate.

In addition, the assumption is that e-service quality influences consumer satisfaction, the theoretical model also assumes that perceptions of service quality affect consumer attitudes towards the website and towards the brand. In this context, the results indicate that e-service quality is an antecedent of attitude towards sport websites. Moreover, hypothesis H3 is accepted, confirming that the quality of the website influences the attitude toward the brand, as [90] found in the context of banking brands. Never had this relationship been tested in a sports web context. The influence of consumer satisfaction on consumer attitude towards sport websites is consistent with findings from traditional research on satisfaction and its influence on consumer attitude [47]. Hence, the results of this study demonstrate that customer satisfaction influences attitude towards the website (H4). Sport consumers will form a positive attitude towards a sport website when they are satisfied with their website usage experience.

The results also show that online consumers can have a positive attitude towards the website, even when the quality of the site is not perceived. This is because satisfaction has a direct and positive influence on attitude. Therefore, consumers can be satisfied with the website, although they may think the website does not meet the quality ratio requirements. However, web quality is essential to create a positive attitude towards the brand.

5.2 Managerial Implications

These results provide sport marketing managers with a better insight into online consumer behavior. It is important for specialists in sport communication management to understand the behavior of sport fans on the Internet.

The study of the relationships among e-satisfaction, e-quality and attitude toward the brand and website indicates that specialists in web-based sport communication and marketing should provide interesting and informative content in an attractive and easy to navigate environment (web quality). Given that users will inevitably compare the information received from various sources, their loyalty to a website will depend on the extent to which their needs are met. To secure user satisfaction, it is therefore crucial to ensure website quality.

Managers of web-based sport media should be aware that their websites do not function solely as sources of sport information, but are also communication tools with which to satisfy users. Other authors who have examined the factors that influence the general consumer use of the Internet have come to the same conclusion [47]. The most important factor of consumption that has been observed has been the search for information [73], [75], as the Internet allows them to be more efficient in their search [81]. Many Internet consumers use this source during this process [92].

When consumers recognize the need or desire to attend a sporting event, they get involved in the information search process [47]. In searching for information, consumers try to find information about the event, and to judge the extent to which this event will meet their needs and motives [27]. So, providing essential information is crucial to increase attendance to the event and to increase the attitude toward the brand.

The proposed model confirms that consumers who evaluate e-quality positively are satisfied users. This is important because satisfied customers develop a more favorable attitude, which may in turn influence behavioral intentions

such as visits to the website, products and services purchases, and they may generate positive recommendations, as well as reduce the likelihood of switching to the competition.

Managers must also be aware that a negative evaluation of the e-quality of a website may influence consumers' attitude towards the brand. Moreover, managers of sport organizations must strategically control brand development via website quality. Finally, it is advisable to periodically evaluate changes in the e-quality attributes that determine levels of consumer satisfaction. Ongoing website quality monitoring is key to identifying consumer satisfaction and redirecting the e-marketing strategy through a customer-centered approach in the context of electronic service delivery.

Managing sporting event should also worry about the quality of the website to the extent that this can generate revenue for the city [62], [100], for sponsors or consumers and participants [69].

Sporting events such as tourism products can generate partnerships with the destination through media [32] or through direct experiences [68] and through the experiences of participants in the sports event [69]. Therefore, the web site sporting event can influence the likelihood for the viewer or visitor to reelect the destination at a later time [20] and stimulate the economic impact of the host community or city [53]. As mentioned above, it all starts with a visit to the website as an information source.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

As for the limitations of this study, firstly, the sample under study belongs to the consumer market. Caution should be used to outsource the business to business market outcomes. Secondly, the generalization of the findings to other service contexts should be taken with care, as they require further empirical investigation. Thirdly, the sample data were taken in the context of Spanish consumers, and the generalization of the results to other cultures must be treated with care.

Finally, this paper shows possible future avenues of research. The results of this study provide a theoretical basis for consumer evaluations of e-quality and its influence on consumer behavior. It would be desirable to explore the research model through other websites based on content from other services sectors. It would also be interesting to include the relationship event attendance intention in the model.

6 Conclusions

In this paper, the proposed model showed significant relationships for the 4 hypotheses: e-quality significantly influences e-satisfaction, attitudes towards the website and brand attitudes towards the event. E-satisfaction has shown a significant relationship with the attitudes to the web. Therefore, as a conclusion we can say if we get that website users perceive good levels of e-quality, we contribute to the fact that they are satisfied, and both, attitudes toward the website as to the event are positive, which will make the event has a better result in terms of participation and consequently in terms of economic and social benefits. Compared with previous research, this study is a novelty in the analysis of sports websites and therefore contributes to the existence of more bibliography, since there are practically no studies of this subject in the sports field.

Related to practical implications, this study provides knowledge to experts in charge of communication. With the results obtained, we give information to these specialists to understand better the process and the behavior of fans using websites and how they should work with the important variables to obtain better results, and therefore, more success for the company or event.

As a limitation of the study we find the impossibility of generalization, on the one hand due to the sample, only corresponding to Spanish consumers in a specific purchasing scenario, and on the other hand because of the context, the scope of study of sports services is very broad, not only corresponds to a specific event. These types of studies allow us to begin to create a theoretical basis in the field, adding knowledge about the subject, but in future studies of this same line, we must analyze the variables in other types of events, other types of service and having other types of Samples to be able to offer more generalizable conclusions.

Websites List

Site 1: ALEXA
www.alexa.com

Site 2: US Open Tennis Championship
www.usopen.org

Site 3: Union of European football associations
www.uefa.com

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