

LINKING CAR RACING ATTENDEE EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES WITH TRUST, SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Few sports events studies attempt multi-level understanding of consumer-perceived values as potential pathways towards competitive advantage and market leadership. This study of 1242 car racing attendees, shows value as a five dimensional higher-order construct; develops six motivational attendee groupings; frames: pre-event expectations, at-event values, and post-event satisfaction, trust and loyalty along a timeline consumer perception process; and finally shows the common pathways of the values-expectations outcomes model across different consumer groups. Implied timeline-related survey verbiage remains an important consideration as each construct measurement item is operationalized. This paper is of use to major events managers, marketers and retail researchers.

Key Words: service customer-perception performance satisfy sport-event

INTRODUCTION

Attendees at major car racing events physically commit to and then attend each of their chosen events. Such major events are perceived to bring personal, business and economic values into a location [25].

Management of major car racing events seeks to maximize the growth in their attendee markets, and to build further understanding regarding their consumer base [13] [14]. Sport event attendees come to absorb the event's offerings and make selections/purchases from its ranges of specialized goods, services and activities [42]). Others attend to share in social experiences [15] [28], and some attend to enjoy the 'fit' of aspects of the event's value adding experiences [1] [41].

Attendee approval of car racing is influenced by available hedonic and functional features [9]. Hedonic features include symbols such as: signed race-team signed tee-shirts, race-specific merchandise, and latest ideas, whilst functional features are non-symbolic and may include utilitarian and convenience product/service orientations such as: foods, drink, pathways and even water taps.

Car racing attendees also display retail-like engagement motivations and readily classify themselves into one group – chosen out of a set of different motivational groups [21] in a similar manner to normal retail shopping consumers. Like retail shoppers, these attendees are motivated to seek a selection of sport event features they perceive to be of value to their current situation [3]. For example, buying an entry ticket establishes a chosen entertainment and viewing position; monies spent money on selected goods are value assessed; desired

services and suitable social experiences are gauged against consumer perceptions. However, like other sports events, car racing attendees do not exhibit uniform perspectives [49] [55], and Wann [58] suggests attendees temporary and enduring social connections at the event help to build group and/or team identification, and positively add to the attendee's social and psychological well-being.

Hence, major sports events may be more precisely assessed by sectioning their attendees into 'likeness' groupings such as those developed from psychology [32] for retailing [2], and for sport [45]. Likeness groups are also same value groups, and so we investigate the attendees at the second largest event in an annual, fourteen-event, international car racing circuit from a consumer perceived value perspective. As remote/online car racing event viewers see car racing through the eyes of television producers their experiences differ and so remain beyond the scope of this study.

SPORT EVENT ATTENDEE GROUPS

In this study our sports event car racing attendees display very similar engagement motivations to those of retail shoppers. Hence, we section these car racing attendees into groups in line with Arnold and Reynolds [2] social value sectioning approach, and we follow McGuire's [32] psychological and motivational social value frameworks. Our social value group names and their descriptions fit the literature (Table 1: columns 3 and 4), yet differ slightly to those of Arnold and Reynolds [2] retail study. Yang and Kim [62] tried extending Arnold and Reynolds [2] six groupings by adding 'efficiency,' but due to study limitations could not establish support for this value dimension. Hence we adopt our six sports event attendee social value groupings to attend (right columns of Table 1) and discuss these next.

TABLE 1: Car racing attendee groups

<u>Arnold & Reynolds (2005) Retail Shoppers</u>		<u>Theoretical Framework</u>		<u>Major Car Racing Sports Event</u>	
<u>Reason to Shop</u>	<u>Shopper Description</u>	<u>Grouping Theory</u>	<u>Key References</u>	<u>Attendee's Description</u>	<u>Sports Group</u>
Adventure	For stimulation, self expression and curiosity	Human motivation; Stimulation	McGuire 1974; Arnold & Reynolds,	Feel the experience, excitement and adventure	Adventurers
Social	Socializing with friends and for enjoyment	Human motivation; Entertainment	2005; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Roig et al. 2006; Funk et al.,	Socialize and exchange views with like-minded persons	Socializers
Gratification	To treat oneself, and to reduce tension	Tension reduction; Salubrious effects	2007, 2009; Snelgrove et al.	Treat oneself to this self-gratifying special event	Gratifiers
Role	For ego enhancement and fulfilling a desired role play	Human motivation; Achievement	2008; Hutchinson et al. 2009; Prichard et	Rave about experiences and knowledge of the event	Actors
Value Seeking	To get value for money and some bargains	Assertion; Aggression	al. 2009; Yoshida & James, 2009; Yang	Demand value for their commitment to participate	Valuers
Idea	To keep current with what's new and to obtain information	Objectification; Salubrious effects	and Kim, 2012	Expand personal knowledge about the event	Inquirers

At car racing events *adventurers* derive value by 'feeling' and enjoying [26] the experience through thrills, excitement of action, noise, smells, closeness, speed, and stimulating exploration dimensions [44] and associated motivations [6] [32].

Socializers are convivial and 'chatty' and share their experiences with close friends/family/acquaintances [35] [50] and others with similar racing interests. Their value is derived from convivial motivations [32] that help satisfy their altruistic acceptance and affection seeking [2].

Gratifiers treat themselves to a special occasion and target their perceived value agendas. They 'participate' and treat attending this special occasion as delivering emotionally

satisfying value experiences towards themselves [29]. By attending some also derive value by relieving stress or forgetting other problems [26] and so feel better about themselves [63].

Actors are fans with psychological allegiances to their sports team [11] [54]. They achieve value and degrees of satisfaction [2] [44] by ‘bragging’ of past unique/learned experiences and roles [53]. These fans socialize widely [10], remain loyal [59] and seek distinctive team affiliations [16].

The *valuers* competitiveness satisfies their self-esteem, sensory-involvement and excitement [3]. Their attendance is value driven by their perspectives of attaining sufficient personal value [23]. Event items of perceived value may include their special ticket prices, viewing aides such as big TV event action and replays, bargains, and the quality of entertainment [63]. *Inquirers* desire relevance and pursue being ‘up-to-date’ with latest ideas and trends. They derive value by learning of racing car adaptations and forthcoming innovations [24] [44] [63], and by expanding their personal knowledge [53] about latest products/services [26].

Value Considerations

From a car racing consumer’s perspective where value is seen to be delivered it can influence after-the-event considerations such as satisfaction, loyalty and trust [19] [27] [34], and such after-the-event considerations can sometimes assist management in their ongoing competitive advantage initiatives [48] [61].

Value also has precursors or intended deliverables expected by the attendee. In addition, the attendee’s expectations may be further raised when additional items are included beyond the normal expected intention expectations - these items we term extension expectations. Typically extension expectations are promoted through new initiatives, latest processes or other additional experience enhancers. These extension expectations must also be of relevance to the consumer’s assessment of the together should be designed to initiate a stronger desire within the consumer to attend the sports event. Further, these intension and expectation items are normally promoted prior to the sport event.

A timeline related study can link such pre-event expectations with the at-event attendee perceptions of the values they are experiencing whilst at the sports event.

If the consumer’s after-the-event and carefully considered assessment of the sport-event is captured as a set of outcomes, then the attendee’s reflective and broad gauging of the sports event may be added to build an expectations-to-value-to-outcomes timeline study of the sports. Such understanding offers management a way to assess attendee perceptions of their chose sports event.

Hence, this preliminary study adopts a time line approach, and seeks to investigate the linkages between consumer-perceived: expectations (as intentions and extensions), value, and the event’s assessment or outcomes measures (such as satisfaction, trust and loyalty).

EXPECTATIONS TO VALUE TO OUTCOMES

Intention is the normative ‘goodness-present’ expectation [39] [40] [64] and it is operationalized as the level at which the consumer wants/wishes the product/service to perform [33] [51] [60]. It is typically ‘the level of service-expected by the consumer from an excellent service provider’ [18].

Mattson [31] and Barnes and Mattsson [4] define extension as the perceived extension of the intention concept. As a predictive expectation of the variation in servicing expected [8] its measures can contribute positively or negatively to value, but generally remain less than corresponding intention measures [8]. Rust and Chung [47] add ‘*extensions do not necessary*

exceed normal consumer expectations (intentions), yet may yield more-than-fulfilled (positive) or less-than-fulfilled (negative) contributions [30].

Hartman [22] and Hamilton and Tee [20] suggest intention and extension jointly contribute to consumer-perceived value but that each value contribution may vary. Where extension effects on value equal the intention effects, then the consumer may believe their personal interactions with a service provider are optimal. This construct is operationalized by others as: ‘expected standard.’ Hence, the more net ‘goodness’ criteria the consumer observes as intentions and extensions, the more net value is assigned [56] and vice versa [33] [43] [51].

Hartman [22] defines value as the outcome derived from the amount of goodness (or intention perceived by the consumer) and the degree of value adds (or extension perceived by the consumer/attendee) present. Mitra and Fay [34] connect consumer expectations to their perceived outcomes (values). Oliver [38] and Tse and Wilton [56] assess individual consumer expectations. These intention and extension engagement channels can offer enhanced consumer-perceived value [57]. Niedrich et al. [37] believe expectations are maximized by combining the ‘should-exist’ (or intentions) and the supporting ‘may exist’ (or extensions) combine. Hence, as consumers, attendee-perceived values of sports events are personal combinations of expectation (intention and extension) outcomes as suggested by Barnes and Mattsson [4]. Equation 1 captures this expectations-to-value relationship.

$$\text{Intention} + \text{Extension} = \text{Value} \quad (1)$$

When value is assessed from a consumer or attendee perspective it typically encapsulates different concepts and theories [7] and it is captured as perceived value. This attendee perception has cognitive and affective components which may occur at the pre-purchase and/or post-purchase phase, and can influence consumer willingness to buy, to seek information, and to compare/evaluate alternatives [7]. Thus value has an economic dimension, but value also encapsulates performance, quality, servicing, and emotional satisfier dimensions [36] [46] [61]. Thus equation 2 shows the multi-dimensional nature of value.

$$\text{Intention} + \text{Extension} = \mathbf{fn} (\text{Economic}, \text{Performance}, \text{Quality}, \text{Servicing}, \text{Satisfiers}) \quad (2)$$

Value precedes after-the-event considerations such as satisfaction, trust and loyalty [5] [19] [27] [34], and it is a consumer driver towards competitive advantage [48] [61]. Thus equation 3 is generated.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Intention} + \text{Extension} &= \mathbf{fn} (\text{Economic}, \text{Performance}, \text{Quality}, \text{Servicing}, \text{Satisfiers}) \\ &= \mathbf{fn} (\text{Satisfaction}) + \mathbf{fn} (\text{Loyalty}) + \mathbf{fn} (\text{Trust}) \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

Hence to assess the attendee’s time-lagged, considered and assessed outcomes concerning the sports event of car racing and its offerings, we develop the research framework of Figure 2. At a chosen location and when applied to all attendees, this framework allows the effect of each of the multi-dimensions value to be assessed for this study’s car racing event. In addition, with a sufficiently large survey database, it is possible to make comparisons between Table 1’s attendee groups.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our 2012 preliminary structural equation modeling (SEM) study of 1242 car racing attendees uses 72 trained surveyors to collect responses across all differentiated sports event viewing zones, plus the activities and foods sections, plus the recreation and relaxation areas around the circuit.

Over 150,000 attendees come to this study's annual major car racing event each year. Figure 1 displays the recent 2011 and 2012 attendee group comparisons. Each year over 84 per cent of survey respondents classify themselves into one of our six attendee groups. The significant shift from adventurer attendance to socializer attendance resulted from management rebranding this car racing event as a fun, family-friendly experience.

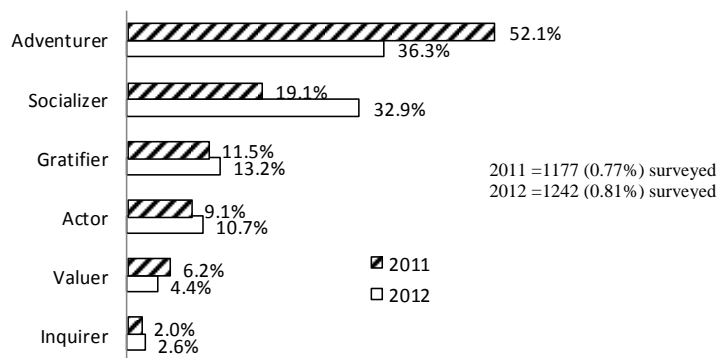


FIGURE 1: Car racing attendee group mix

Outside demographics survey items are operationalized as 5-point strongly-agree to strongly-disagree Likert scales. For outside quartiles early versus late non-response bias checking used t-tests on age and gender, and for between groups checking used the servicing and loyalty-of-attendees constructs. SPSS/AMOSv21, PAF obliminal CFA reflective item reductions on the cleaned data set left each construct with at least 3 items (residuals < 0.05). Uni-dimensional (p 's < 0.01), convergent (loads > 0.5), discriminant, plus average variance extracted (0.53-0.73) against shared items variance (0.00-0.56) considerations provide validity and reliability acceptance, and indicate internal consistency [12].

Next we SEM test the higher order value model ($\chi^2/df = 11.09/5 = 2.22$, $p = 0.05$, all β 's > 0.80). This significant higher order model supports value as a five dimensional construct. We repeat this for the six nested group models. We do not find significant interactions between the constructs [17]. Although we recognise the servicing construct may warrant refinement [17], and we suggest (subject to sample size limitations) a consistent higher order value solution can represent the five value constructs.

We recognise a timeline consumer decision process occurs from left to right across Figure 2. Deciding to attend the sports event involves a set of preconceived expectations, which if sufficient can motivate attendance.

At the sports event each attendee holds a set of immediate or 'required now' consumption requirements. These immediate requirements are embedded in the consumer's perceived standards or values framework as indicated in Equation 3.

After experiencing even a part of the sports event, the attendee begins making reflective assessments about the sports event. These consumer decisions are typically captured as: satisfaction – generated by the event's deliverables in the eyes of the consumer; trust in the event – decided through suitable delivery of the consumer's perceived value requirements; and loyalty towards the event – developed through the event meeting the requirements of consumer's perceived value framework.

This suggests the attendee's pre-conceived expectations of the sport event frames their perceived value acceptance, and this in-turn, impinges on the attendee's formed opinion of their relative satisfaction, trust and loyalty. Hence we incorporate the value constructs of Equation 3 as a higher order solution and test the interrelating construct areas above as per Figure 2.

An overall valid SEM path model ($\chi^2/df = 21.78/10 = 2.09$, $p_{(Bollen)} < 0.05$) built from Table 2 emerges under Figure 2 – with loyalty projected as the strongest (and ultimate) output driver of this system. The strong standardized path β weights indicate management has further room to continue the build of its consumer perceived value drivers – possibly by promoting its improving services range, ensuring the event is consumer group targeted and action-packed, providing outstanding servicing and support, controlling prices, and creating an emotionally satisfying time for consumers.

TABLE 2: Construct measures

Construct (Cronbach Alpha) and Construct's Measurement Items (Item Loading)	
Expectations - Intention (0.82)	
Have fun during the day (0.80)	Enjoy the day with friends / family (0.81)
See exciting racing (0.76)	Share experiences with other fans (0.63)
Expectations - Extension (0.83)	
Great competitive atmosphere between supporter groups (0.83)	Events in good (build-up) sequence(0.82)
Day packed with non-stop interesting activities (0.74)	See different types of car racing (0.60)
Value - Servicing (0.70)	
Merchandise sales people know their products well (0.71)	Adequate safe kids zones (0.60)
Get event information through many communication modes (0.57)	Get latest race information on event's website/phone app (0.55)
Value - Performance (0.80)	
Enjoy time with family and friends here (0.82)	Share experiences here (0.77)
Meet with people of similar interest here (0.65)	Seeing live is exciting (0.60)
Value - Quality (0.72)	
Level of services provided meets my need (0.77)	Placement of toilets and bins are good (0.68)
All day's events well managed (0.58)	
Value - Economic (0.74)	
Each day's events worth ticket price (0.85)	Race viewing matches ticket price (0.84)
Merchandise range matches event's themes (0.51)	Spend within my planned daily budget (0.50)
Value - Satisfiers (0.88)	
Doing heaps of interesting activities (0.86)	Event mixes great (0.86)
Seeing great mixes of supporting events (0.84)	Enjoying competitiveness between racing teams (0.63)
Satisfaction (0.66)	
Short wait times for foods / drinks (0.63)	Quality of purchase items matched expectations (0.59)
Loud Speakers and big TVs connected me to events (0.55)	Range of supporting activities were worthwhile (0.52)
Trust (0.63)	
Encouraging others to attend this event (0.61)	Useful information from event volunteers (0.55)
Facebook/Twitter communications with V8 management (0.53)	Learnt about competitive car technologies (0.50)
Loyalty (0.83)	
With no changes will revisit in 2013 (0.88)	A revisiter in 2013 (0.87)
A first choice day out with family and/or mates (0.63)	

With insufficient group numbers (Table 3) all six group-level models cannot be established. The *Valuers* and *Inquirers* models both lack validity (RMSEA > 0.080; GFI-AGFI > 0.060; small sample size). Consequently, to further test Figure 2, we again SEM model Figure 2 as a higher order value approach – but this time for all males versus all females; for first-time attendees versus loyal revisiters; and for locals versus out-of town attendees. In each case we find a consistent significant SEM pathways set resides between the three outcomes constructs (and moves from satisfaction to trust to loyalty).

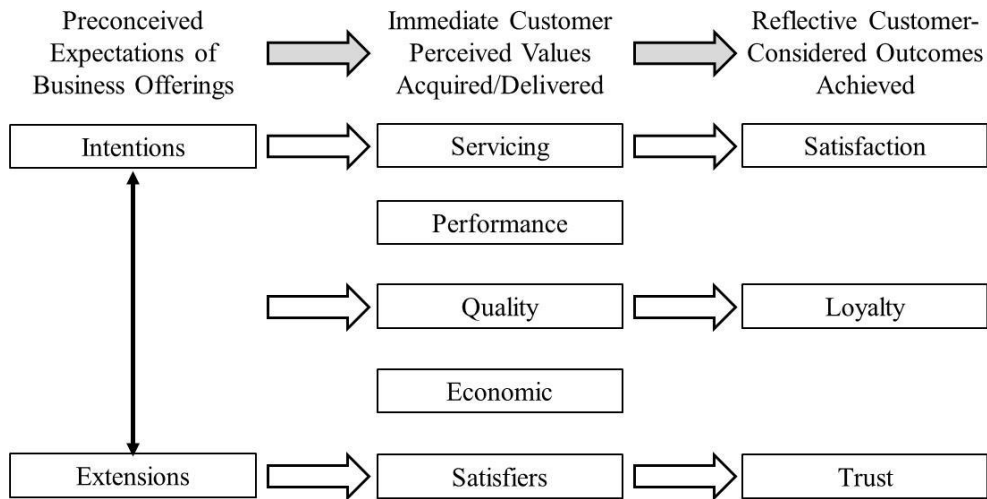


FIGURE 2: Sport event attendee-assessed outcomes framework

TABLE 3: Higher order value models

Measurement	Full Data Model	Adventurers	Socializers	Gratifiers	Actors	Valuers	Inquirers
		(Standardized Values)					
Servicing	0.96	0.98	0.98	0.88	0.99	0.97	0.99
Performance	0.84	0.81	0.85	0.91	0.94	0.96	0.69
Quality	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.88	0.97	0.91	0.98
Economic	0.86	0.82	0.83	0.81	0.98	0.99	0.82
Satisfiers	0.80	0.71	0.78	0.87	0.84	0.94	0.39
χ^2/df	2.22	1.20	1.04	1.28	1.03	2.28	1.73
p value	0.050	0.306	0.393	0.270	0.397	0.044	0.193
RMSEA	0.031	0.023	0.011	0.045	0.017	0.173	0.131
GFI - AGFI	0.007	0.012	0.011	0.036	0.032	0.180	0.032
Numbers	1242	383	346	137	106	70	27

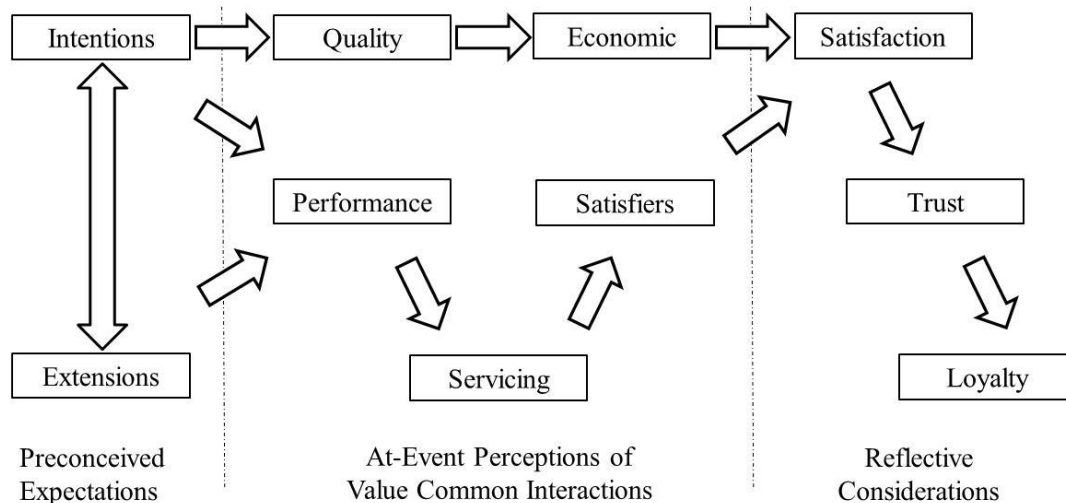


FIGURE 3: Consumer outcomes framework

Next we unpack the higher order value constructs, and from Table 2 build a full pathways model, test whether there are timeline differences between the five value constructs. We find

within the five value constructs – performance and quality influence servicing and economic value, whilst servicing influences the emotive satisfiers and economic and satisfiers are the final outcomes constructs precursors.

Hence, we present Figure 3 as our draft consumer outcomes framework with arrows indicating the paths where consistent and overall SEM pathways exist across each timeline ‘expectations-to-value-to-outcomes’ construct. Here, we recognise each individual group model may offer differing mixes of other significant pathways thus showing group model differences – which may be appropriately targeted by management. Finally, for future studies we note that in a few group models consumer-perceived performance links directly to loyalty, but as this observation is not uniform, this path is not included in Figure 3.

DISCUSSION

To date past research around sports events such as car racing remains shallow and uni-dimensional with very few studies attempting to develop a multi-level understanding of their targeted consumer market. Hence, this study seeks to provide the management team of a major international car racing circuit with a deeper understanding of the relationships between pre-event, at-event, and post-event consumer considerations. This study’s findings offer a pathway that enables the car racing management team to astutely frame ongoing strategies – and particularly to focus on aspects that retain competitive advantage and strengthen ongoing market leadership.

Expectations considerations

We highlight that attendees choose to come to a sports event (such as car racing), and they each bring their set of intensions – items or experiences they expect to acquire at the event. In addition they may be pleased further if receive some additional items or experiences (as extensions) that are not expected but by being included extend their pre-event contentment. These sports event attendees hold expectations (or preconceived views) of their sports event’s offerings. Management can influence these expectations through its pre-event promotions and its pre-event publicity. Fellow consumers can also add to these pre-event expectations through word-of-mouth and social media commentary which again extend the attendee’s contentment with their decision to attend. Provided management recognises, and then correctly targets, their campaigns at appropriately engaging *these expectations drivers (intentions and extensions)*, they may also positively influence future attendances.

Value considerations

By comparing the psychological value motivators of consumers [32] in the retail industry [2] to the specific values sought by the social groups attending sports events (such as car racing), we develop six sub groupings of car racing value seekers. We then consider consumer perceived value as a multi-dimensional approach [52] and also a multi-level approach [46]. Our social groups of value seekers show each sports event group displays a consistent higher order value model (but with some differences in path strengths). This studies refinement of attendees into groups offers further understanding regarding the target marketing of car racing attendee groups. For example, Table 3 shows adventurers and socializers make up around 70 per cent of attendees and these two groups show differences. When compared to socializers, adventurers show lower performance and satisfiers path strengths. These differences fit logically within each attendee group’s overall defined classification (Table 1), and these differences can be used for target marketing. Similar interpretation can be applied

by comparing all six attendee groups. The differences between all six attendee groups also support the relevance of our initial six group classifications.

Value has consistently been considered multi-dimensional, but not in five dimensions, and not including a value satisfiers construct. *This differentiation of value satisfiers from satisfaction is an important addition to existing research.* We clarify this differentiation by recognising value is a ‘now’ or immediate consideration by the consumer (attendee). Thus with five consumer-perceived value dimensions, we strengthen the capturing of value for car racing events – and very likely, across all consumer perceived situations.

We also isolate the value constructs into a very fine ‘now’ timeline of between-values linkages, that combine to deliver the consumer’s overall perceived value effects onto the car racing event’s outcomes constructs. *This unique time-lining of the value constructs is another important addition to existing research.*

Outcomes considerations

Our car racing event’s outcomes constructs are the ones desired by management to benchmark their sports event’s progressive improvements. Like many retail studies, this study incorporates measuring the growth in overall satisfaction (that summarizes the consumer’s total experience as a belief that the sports event delivered enough for them), improving trust (that the event has and will met the consumer’s expectations), and growing loyalty of repeat attendees (who state they will definitely attend the sports event again next year).

Again, we find *there is timeline sequence embedded across these three outcomes constructs.* This logical flow shows with rising consumer satisfaction, consumer trust then normally increases, and as these consumer outcomes constructs improve, then consumer loyalty also normally increases. Hence, management monitors these outcomes constructs closely and reflects back as to where improvements, modifications or added innovations may further optimize these sports event outcomes constructs.

This study’s outcomes constructs, loads and path β weights indicate inter-relational strengths and offer comparability against this sports event’s previous car racing studies. *When treated as a six group approach it is possible to further refine to the ongoing target marketing for future car racing events.*

Management can also selectively target market. For example, if Figure 3 delivers a very strong loyalty outcome for the adventurer attendee group, and if this group is say 40 per cent of all attendees, then management may consider this group is likely to remain loyal, and so may choose to focus its marketing towards another less loyal group.

Other contributions of the study

We also consider the importance of the survey. We offer management and researchers a timeline dependency approach to framing survey questions. This approach should have the language of the question expressed so as to capture a pre-event response, through to occurring ‘now’ perceived response, through to post-event fully assessed response.

The three sport event outcome constructs each deliver reflections or post-event reasoned thoughts. It may be wise to again express questions based around sequential progression from satisfaction, to trust, and through to loyalty. We observe that across many studies such timeline sequencing is often weakly embedded in questionnaire framing.

CONCLUSION

Many researchers assess attendees using perceived value approaches, and often consider value as a multi-dimensional combination of trade-offs, and particularly as a single data set or one-size-fits-all study. This study expands on previous value approaches using socially grouped value studies to provide understanding of attendee groups at a major car racing sports event.

We establish six car racing attendee groups – each with unique social needs. These social needs are value groupings [46]. We also establish five value constructs – including a new ‘occurring now’ or instantaneous satisfiers value construct. We isolate satisfaction as a post-event (or considered) measure, and one that differs from the occurring now value ‘satisfiers’ construct.

We frame the attendee’s value input drivers around the attendee’s pre-event expectations – measured as intentions and extensions. We link expectations and value via an attendee time line perceptions approach, and complete the time line linking through to the post-event outcomes drivers of satisfaction, trust and loyalty. We suggest the most important value drivers are likely to be those related to the economic and satisfiers constructs – as in all cases these constructs are key direct feeds into the outcomes constructs (satisfaction, trust and loyalty).

This study recognizes value as a trade-off between five contributing constructs. This value block resides in the ‘now’ or immediate position on the timeline between pre-event, and post-event constructs.

Future value studies involving ‘retail’ style events can be refined using social value groupings such as those used in this car racing study. From such a perspective, management and researchers can better understand their embedded target market groupings. Comparing the uni-dimensional value study against its multi-dimensional/multi-level value studies can indicate benchmark points for improvement of weakly performing groups.

When value is linked to pre-event expectations and to post-event outcomes, questionnaire language can be timeline sequenced as suggested in Figures 2 and 3. Such value assessment models display a consistency of key pathways as shown in Figure 3. However, differing groups may show additional group-specific pathway inclusions. These group-specific pathways provide managers with new and differentiated understandings concerning how they may approach growing their chosen (or targeted) attendee group (or attendee groups).

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