

Motivation and satisfaction of participants and spectators attending to mass sport events

Marc CLOES, Catherine EMOND, Maryse LEDENT & Maurice PIERON
University of Liège (Belgium)

Considering their sociocultural and economic impact, sport events represent a pertinent centre of interest for sport management research (Standeven and De Knop, 1999). Considering their frequent occurrence and importance to the survival of many associations such as sport clubs (Cloes, Chapelle, Ledent, & Piéron, 1998), schools, youth or neighbourhood committees, mass sport events could receive more attention than they actually do (Wang & Irwin, 1993). Identification of attendance motives and satisfaction criteria of both participants and spectators, convey practical implications for potential organisers.

In this paper attention was focused on participants and spectators attending the following five mass sport events organised in Wallonia, the French speaking part of Belgium : (1) a beach volleyball tournament, (2) an inter-cities sports festival, (3) a 10 km jog, (4) a 24 hours karting race, and (5) a mountain bike ride. Participants (n = 373) and spectators (n = 220) were interviewed on site. Answers were transcribed on a recording sheet and analysed *a posteriori*. Intra-analyst reliability reached 96.4% of agreement. Bio-statistical software was used for comparison of data (Glantz, 1988).

Eight categories of attendance motives were identified (Figure 1). Recreation was the main motive in participants (44.5%), while spectators more often mentioned social contacts (38.5%). The motives for physical activity participation were similar for European youth and adults from several countries (Hachez and Bodson, 1995; Ledent, Cloes, Onofre, Telama, Almond, & Piéron, 1997; Scanlan and Simons, 1992). Logically, participants were more interested in the event's sport, and sport in general, than were spectators ($z > 3.386$; $p < .001$). One out of six motives reported by spectators was related to family, social, or organisational requirements («*Obligations*»). The ranking of participants' motives differed in each event according to it thought about the sport. *Recreation* and *Interest in the event's sport*; or *Interest in sport in general*, were the main categories in the beach volleyball tournament, the karting race and the mountain bike ride. Interest toward the specific sport was the category ranked first by the joggers. This could be related to the event's competitive approach. *Social contacts* was the major category of participants' motives in inter-cities sports festival. Social contacts were always the most common motives in spectators. The few spectators interviewed during the mountain bike ride were all required to be there. Mass mountain bike rides are usually designed to provide opportunities to move and rarely offer some excitement to spectators. These results correspond exactly to the analysis of each event. They point out that organisers should clearly define the concept of their product and promote it to their clients.

Incompatibility of the activity (37.8%), varied obstacles (22.7%) and no desire (21.6%) were the main factors argued by spectators as to why they didn't actively attend the event.

Satisfaction criteria were classified into eight categories. General and specific organisational aspects accounted for more than the half of the answers (Figure 2). *Good atmosphere* and *Event characteristics* were also two categories frequently reported. Due to

their direct involvement, participants identified more specific organisational aspects than spectators did (49.4 Vs 38.3% ; $z=3.082$, $p=.002$). The latter focused more on event characteristics than participants did (15.9 Vs 10.1% ; $z= 2.421$, $p=.015$). The *Site/activities tasks* (arrowing, preparing material and equipment...) represented the most important subcategory of specific organisational aspects in participants and spectators (45.4 and 42.1%). Moreover, few differences reaching statistical significance were observed in the distribution of the other subcategories. Spectators mentioned facilities (7.5 Vs 2.5%) and security (13.1 Vs 4.2%) more often than participants did ($1.992 < z < 2.924$; $.003 < p < .046$). Detailed analysis showed that according to the event, participants and spectators evidenced several subcategories. For example, security was mentioned in jogging and karting races, timing in the inter-cities sports festival and beach volleyball tournament. This information could be used as priority concern by organisers.

It must be noted that more praise than critics were reported. Moreover, several event participants and spectators didn't have an opinion about what aspects of the event needed improvement. In both groups a clear majority of dissatisfaction criterions were related to specific organisational aspects (Figure 3). Moreover, while spectators criticised more event characteristics (22.4 Vs 11.5%, $z= 3.139$, $p= .002$), participants tended to be more concerned by financial aspects (8.3 Vs 3.8% ; $z= 1.679$, $p= .093$). The list of dissatisfaction criterions presented a strong similarity to that developed for positive aspects. When asking opinions of people about the same experience, it is common to collect opposite answers. Table 1 shows the synthesis of praise and criticism of participants and spectators concerning specific organisational aspects. Subcategories were considered as positive or negative according to the answer's occurrence. Except for welcome, which was identified as a positive aspect in all events, participants and spectators opinions were rather event specific, underlining the need of systematic case analysis.

The results pointed out the major concerns of participants and spectators when attending mass sport events. Organisers should focus their attention on those aspects. Using a specific sheet -which will be proposed- the category system developed in that study could be proposed to organisers, as a checklist and/or feedback form.

References

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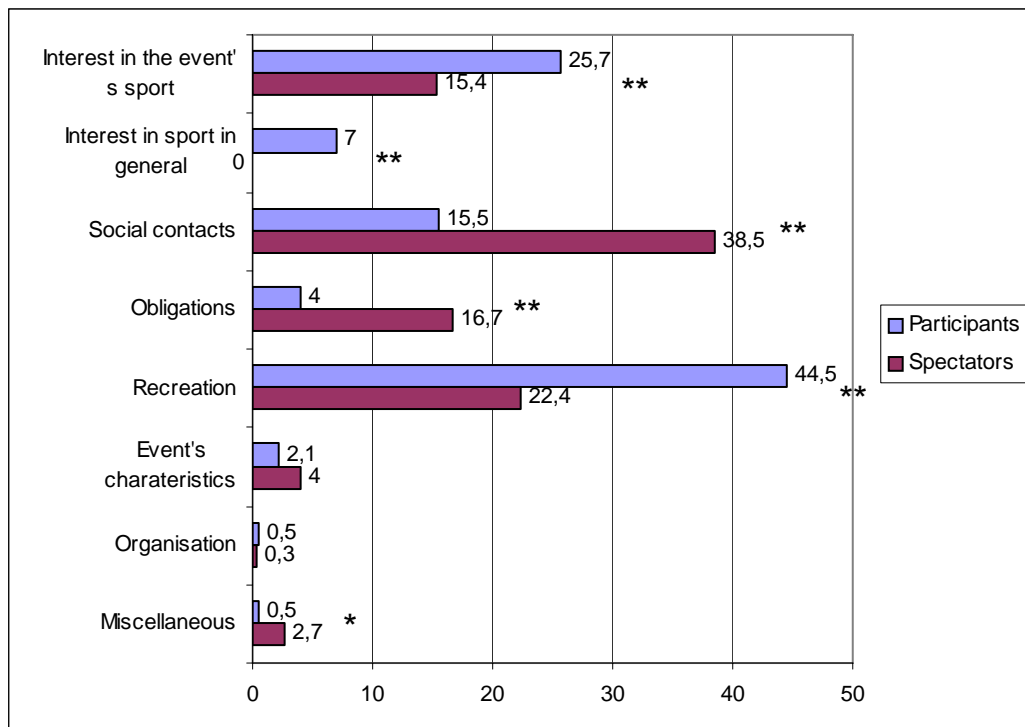


Figure 1 – Attendance of participants and spectators (%)

** $p < .001$

* $p .015$

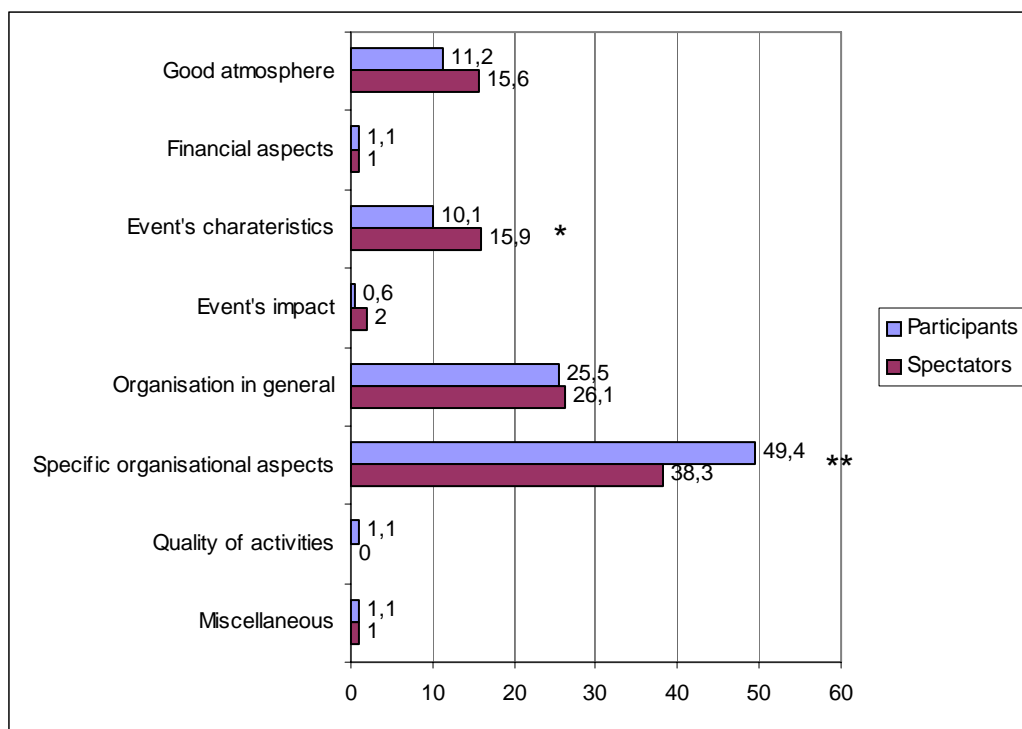


Figure 2 – Satisfaction criteria of participants and spectators (%)

** $p = .002$

* $p = .015$

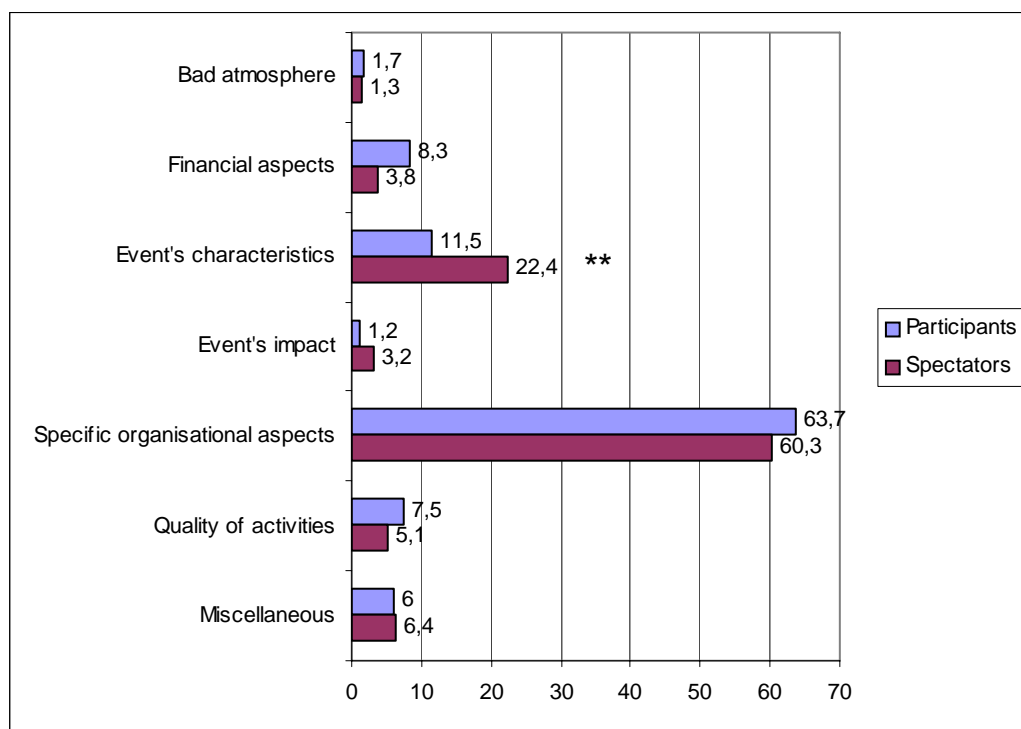


Figure 3 – Dissatisfaction criteria of participants and spectators (%)
 ** p = .002

Table 1 – List of specific organisational strong points and weakness

	<i>Beach volleyball tournament</i>	<i>Inter-cities sports festival</i>	<i>10 km jog</i>	<i>24 hours karting race</i>	<i>Mountain bike ride</i>
+	* Parking * Welcome * Catering * Animation * Security * Staff * Timing	* Welcome * Site/activities tasks * Security * Staff * Timing	* Welcome * Site/activities tasks * Security	* Welcome * Security	* Parking * Welcome * Catering
-	* Bath/dressing rooms * Site/activities tasks	* Parking * Catering * Information	* Bath/dressing rooms * Information * Staff	* Access to the site * Site/activities tasks * Catering	* Bath/dressing rooms * Staff