

Spectator Satisfaction with the Malaysian Football League (MFL) Match at Stadium Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ)

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Abstract

This research investigates the factors influencing spectator satisfaction at Malaysian Football League (MFL) matches held at Stadium MBPJ. The primary objectives are to identify key spectator satisfaction factors and provide actionable recommendations for enhancing the overall match-day experience. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire adapted from the SERVQUAL model, which included demographic questions and 21 items assessing service quality dimensions. A representative sample of 370 participants was selected through probability sampling techniques. The result indicated that factors such as responsiveness ($\bar{x} = 4.79$, $SD = 0.52$), tangibility ($\bar{x} = 4.74$, $SD = 0.58$), and empathy ($\bar{x} = 4.44$, $SD = 0.44$) significantly impacted spectator satisfaction levels. Based on these findings, recommendations include improving facilities, enhancing staff training, and fostering personalized interactions to optimize the spectator experience at MFL events.

Keywords: Spectator Satisfaction, Football Stadium, Service Quality, Malaysian Football League (MFL), Stadium MBPJ

Introduction

Football, a sport that has captured millions worldwide, is not just a game but a reflection of societal and cultural nuances. Its history traces back to ancient civilizations, where it was played for entertainment, ritualistic purposes, or even warfare (Goldblatt, 2008). Over time, football has evolved, adapting to various rules, styles, and technologies, and today, it is a global phenomenon that generates billions in revenue and has a significant social media presence (Szymanski, 2018).

The study of football is multifaceted, encompassing historical, sociological, psychological, economic, political, and cultural perspectives. Historical studies delve into the evolution of the sport, its governance, and its impact on society (Holt, 1995). Sociological studies explore how football shapes social structures, norms, and identities (Giulianotti, 2004). Psychological studies investigate the effects of football on mental health, motivation, and personality (Weinberg, 2014). Economic studies analyze the financial aspects of football, including income generation for various stakeholders (Szymanski, 2010). Political studies access the power dynamics and policies related to football (Giulianotti, 2009). Cultural studies appreciate the creativity and diversity expressed through football (Bale, 2020).

The Malaysian Football League (MFL) serves as the primary football competition in Malaysia, embodying the nation's fervent passion for the sport. The corporation operates and runs all entities in Malaysian football under its jurisdiction, which include the Malaysia Super League, the MFL Cup, the Malaysia M3 League, the Malaysia M4 League, the Malaysia M5 League, the Malaysia Cup, the Malaysia Challenge Cup, the Malaysia FA Cup, and the Piala Sumbangsih. According to the Football Association of Malaysia (2023), the MFL features a tiered structure of professional football leagues and cup competitions that highlight Malaysian footballers' talent and competitive spirit. Nevertheless, according to Zaki (2024), a staff member at Selangor Football Club was interviewed about the organizing match event, and he answered that the organizer will be the home team; they will manage all the services, such as ticketing, merchandise, and facilities.

Stadium Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ) serves as a prominent venue in the Malaysian Football League (MFL) hosting key matches and attracting passionate football fans. Research by Pringle, Olsen, and Hovden (2015) highlights that 82% of fans emphasize the importance of stadium atmosphere in enhancing their matchday experience. With a capacity of over 10,661 spectators, examining these factors at Stadium MBPJ provides valuable insights into fan satisfaction within the MFL context.

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used to assess spectator satisfaction. Standardized questionnaires ensured reliability and validity, though some complexity of the spectator experience might have been missed due to predefined categories. Data was collected during MFL matches at MBPJ Stadium.

Population Sampling

The study targeted spectators at MFL matches at Stadium MBPJ. Stratified random sampling was used to select 370 respondents from an estimated 10,000 attendees, ensuring a representative sample. This sample size was chosen based on Blaise (2016) to provide reliable insights into spectator satisfaction. The study targeted spectators at MFL matches at Stadium MBPJ. Stratified random sampling was used to select 370 respondents from an estimated 10,000 attendees, ensuring a representative sample. This sample size was chosen based on Blaise (2016) to provide reliable insights into spectator satisfaction.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections: demographic profile and spectator satisfaction based on the SERVQUAL model. The questionnaire included 21 items across five dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

Data Collection Procedures

The research process involved selecting a suitable questionnaire, applying probability sampling to a population of 10,000, standardizing procedures, obtaining ethical approval, collecting data, and analyzing results.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 28, with descriptive statistics summarizing key characteristics. Pearson correlation analysis explored relationships between spectator satisfaction and various factors, enhancing the study's validity and reliability.

Results and Findings*Demographic Analysis*

Table 3.1

Demographic information

Variables		Frequency	%
Age	18 to 20 years old	5	1.3
	21 to 30 years old	148	39.6
	31 to 40 years old	147	39.3
	41 and above	74	19.8
Gender	Female	221	59.1
	Male	153	40.9
Ethnicity	Chinese	147	39.3
	Indian	73	19.5
	Malay	154	41.2
Marital Status	Married	150	40.1
	Single	223	59.6
	Widow or Widower	1	0.3
Occupation	Not working	2	0.5
	Student	15	4.0
	Working	357	95.5

Table 3.1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The majority of respondents were aged 21–30 years (39.6%, n=148) and 31–40 years (39.3%, n=147), with smaller proportions in the 18–20 years category (1.3%, n=5) and those aged 41 and above

(19.8%, n=74). Females comprised 59.1% (n=221) of the sample, while males accounted for 40.9% (n=153). Ethnic representation showed Malays as the largest group (41.2%, n=154), followed by Chinese (39.3%, n=147) and Indians (19.5%, n=73). Regarding marital status, most participants were single (59.6%, n=223), while 40.1% (n=150) were married, and only 0.3% (n=1) were widowed. In terms of occupation, 95.5% (n=357) were employed, 4.0% (n=15) were students, and 0.5% (n=2) were not working.

Descriptive Analysis

Tangibility

Table 3.2

Descriptive Analysis of Spectator Satisfaction Regarding Tangibility at an MFL Match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Stadium MBPJ has modern-looking equipment	2 (0.5)	4 (1.1)	51 (13.6)	20 (5.3)	297 (79.4)	4.62	0.80
Stadium MBPJ's physical facilities are visually appealing	3 (0.8)	8 (2.1)	6 (1.6)	59 (15.8)	298 (79.7)	4.71	0.68
Stadium MBPJ reception desk employees are neatly appearing	1 (0.3)	5 (1.3)	9 (2.4)	18 (4.8)	341 (91.2)	4.85	0.54
Materials associated with the service (such as welcome no smoking statements) are visually appealing	2 (0.5)	0	9 (2.4)	60 (16)	303 (81)	4.77	0.54

Table 3.2 provides a descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction regarding the tangibility of facilities at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. The statement "Stadium MBPJ has modern-looking equipment" received a mean score of 4.62 (SD = 0.80), with 79.4% of respondents strongly agreeing. "Stadium MBPJ physical facilities are visually appealing" scored even higher, with a mean of 4.71 (SD = 0.68) and 79.7% strong agreement. The highest satisfaction was for "Stadium MBPJ reception desk employees are neatly appearing," with a mean score of 4.85 (SD = 0.54) and 91.2% strongly agreeing. Additionally, "Materials associated with the service (such as welcome signs and no-smoking statements) are visually appealing" achieved a mean score of 4.77 (SD = 0.54), with 81% strong agreement. The consistently high mean scores reflect a positive perception of the stadium's tangibility aspects.

Reliability

Table 3.3

Descriptive analysis of Spectator Satisfaction Regarding Reliability at an MFL Match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
When you have a problem, Selangor FC staff show sincere interest in solving it	3 (0.8)	6 (1.6)	8 (2.1)	346 (92.5)	11 (2.9)	3.95	0.43
Selangor FC performs the service right the first time (e.g., well-organized ticketing and comfortable seating)	3 (0.8)	2 (0.5)	6 (1.6)	354 (94.7)	9 (2.4)	3.97	0.37
Selangor FC provides its service at the time it promises to do so	2 (0.5)	3 (0.8)	7 (1.9)	309 (82.6)	53 (14.2)	4.09	0.48
Selangor FC insists on free records (e.g., recording and keeping the information without any costs)	2 (0.5)	0	13 (3.5)	15 (4)	344 (92)	4.87	0.50

Table 3.3 provides a descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction with Selangor FC's reliability at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. The statement "When you have a problem, Selangor FC staff show sincere interest in solving it" received a mean score of 3.95 (SD = 0.43), with 92.5% of respondents agreeing. The statement "Selangor FC performs the service right the first time" had a mean score of 3.97 (SD = 0.37), and 94.7% agreed, reflecting satisfaction with initial service delivery. "Selangor FC provides its service at the promised time" scored a mean of 4.09 (SD = 0.48), with 82.6% agreeing, indicating good punctuality. The highest mean score was for "Selangor FC insists on free records," which scored 4.87 (SD = 0.50), with 92% strongly agreeing. The high mean scores and agreement levels indicate strong positive perceptions of Selangor FC's reliability among spectators.

Responsiveness

Table 3.4

Descriptive analysis of Spectator Satisfaction Regarding Responsiveness at an MFL Match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Employees in Selangor FC tell you exactly when services will be performed (e.g. match schedule, ticket sales, merchandise release, community event)	4 (1.1)	1 (0.3)	4 (1.1)	57 (15.2)	307 (82.4)	4.77	0.58
Employees in Selangor FC give you prompt service	2 (0.5)	2 (0.5)	9 (2.4)	57 (15.2)	304 (81.3)	4.76	0.57
Employees in Selangor FC are always willing to help you	2 (0.5)	3 (0.8)	6 (1.6)	14 (3.7)	349 (93.3)	4.89	0.50
Employees in Selangor FC are never too busy to respond to your request	2 (0.5)	3 (0.8)	11 (2.9)	56 (15)	302 (80.7)	4.75	0.60

Table 3.4 presents a descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction with Selangor FC's responsiveness at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. The statement "Employees in Selangor FC tell you exactly when services will be performed" received a mean score of 4.77 (SD = 0.58), with 82.4% of respondents strongly agreeing, reflecting high satisfaction with service information clarity. "Employees in Selangor FC give you prompt service" scored 4.76 (SD = 0.57), with 81.3% strongly agreeing, indicating appreciation for prompt service. The statement "Employees in Selangor FC are always willing to help you" achieved the highest mean score of 4.89 (SD = 0.50), with 93.3% strongly agreeing, highlighting excellent willingness to assist. Lastly, "Employees in Selangor FC are never too busy to respond to your request" scored 4.75 (SD = 0.60), with 80.7% strongly agreeing, showing satisfaction with responsiveness. High mean scores and strong agreement percentages reflect a positive perception of Selangor FC's responsiveness among spectators.

Assurance

Table 3.5

Descriptive analysis of Spectator Satisfaction Regarding Assurance at an MFL Match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
The behavior of employees in Selangor FC inspires confidence in you	3 (0.8)	1 (0.3)	10 (2.7)	350 (93.6)	10 (2.7)	3.97	0.37
You feel safe in your transactions with Selangor FC (e.g., purchasing tickets and merchandise, participating in any activities involving financial or non-financially with Selangor FC)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	6 (1.6)	353 (94.4)	13 (3.5)	4.01	0.29
Employees in the Selangor FC area are consistently courteous with you	1 (0.3)	2 (0.5)	8 (2.1)	17 (4.5)	346 (92.5)	4.89	0.46
Employees in Selangor FC know to answer your questions	1 (0.3)	2 (0.5)	11 (2.9)	349 (93.3)	11 (2.9)	3.98	0.32

Table 3.5 presents a descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction with the assurance provided by Selangor FC employees at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. The statement "The behavior of employees in Selangor FC inspires confidence in you" received a mean score of 3.97 (SD = 0.37), with 93.6% agreeing, indicating general confidence in the employees' behavior. "You feel safe in your transactions with Selangor FC" scored 4.01 (SD = 0.29), with 94.4% agreeing, suggesting high perceived safety in transactions. "Employees in Selangor FC are consistently courteous with you" achieved the highest mean score of 4.89 (SD = 0.46), with 92.5% strongly agreeing, highlighting consistent courtesy. "Employees in Selangor FC have the knowledge to answer your questions" had a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.32), with 93.3% agreeing, reflecting confidence in employee knowledge. Overall, the high mean scores and agreement percentages reflect a strong positive perception of assurance among spectators.

Empathy

Table 3.6

Descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction regarding empathy at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Selangor FC gives you individual attention (e.g., providing necessary support or help with full potential)	3 (0.8)	2 (0.5)	52 (13.9)	16 (4.3)	301 (80.5)	4.63	0.80
Selangor FC has operating hours convenient to all its customers	2 (0.5)	0	3 (0.8)	69 (18.4)	300 (80.2)	4.78	0.50
Selangor FC has employees who give you personal attention (e.g., give full attention intentionally to help you)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.8)	9 (2.4)	306 (81.8)	54 (14.4)	4.09	0.49
Selangor FC has your best interest at heart	3 (0.8)	1 (0.3)	9 (2.4)	60 (16)	301 (80.5)	4.75	0.59
The employees of Selangor FC understand your specific	4 (1.1)	1 (0.3)	11 (2.9)	349 (93.3)	9 (2.4)	3.96	0.40

Table 3.6 presents a descriptive analysis of spectator satisfaction with empathy at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. "Selangor FC gives you individual attention" received a mean score of 4.63 (SD = 0.80), with 80.5% strongly agreeing, reflecting high satisfaction with individual attention. The statement "Selangor FC has operating hours convenient to all its customers" scored 4.78 (SD = 0.50), with 80.2% strongly agreeing, indicating convenience of operating hours. "Selangor FC has employees who give you personal attention" had a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.49), with 81.8% agreeing, suggesting personal attention from staff. "Selangor FC has your best interest at heart" received a mean score of 4.75 (SD = 0.59), with 80.5% strongly agreeing, showing that spectators feel the club prioritizes their interests. "The employees of Selangor FC understand your specific needs" had a mean score of 3.96 (SD = 0.40), with 93.3% agreeing, indicating that spectators feel their specific needs are understood. Overall, the high mean scores and strong agreement percentages reflect a very positive perception of empathy from Selangor FC.

Mean Analysis for Overall Factor

Table 3.7

Descriptive Analysis of the Key Factors Influencing Spectator Satisfaction at an MFL Match at Stadium MBPJ

Statement	Mean	SD
Tangibility	4.74	0.58
Reliability	4.22	0.39
Responsiveness	4.79	0.52
Assurance	4.21	0.32
Empathy	4.44	0.44

Table 3.7 provides a descriptive analysis of key factors influencing spectator satisfaction at an MFL match at Stadium MBPJ. Responsiveness received the highest mean score of 4.79 (SD = 0.52), highlighting the appreciation for prompt and helpful service. Tangibility scored 4.74 (SD = 0.58), reflecting positive perceptions of the stadium's physical environment. Empathy had a mean score of 4.44 (SD = 0.44), indicating satisfaction with the personalized attention from staff. Reliability scored 4.22 (SD = 0.39), showing trust in the club's dependable service. Assurance scored the lowest at 4.21 (SD = 0.32) but still reflects a positive view of employees' competence and trustworthiness. Responsiveness and tangibility were the most influential factors, followed by empathy, reliability, and assurance, contributing to overall spectator satisfaction.

Discussion

The study reveals several key factors influencing spectator satisfaction at MFL matches held at Stadium MBPJ. Tangibility, including modern equipment and appealing facilities, was crucial, with high satisfaction tied to the stadium's physical environment. Reliability in service delivery, such as accurate ticketing and dependable service timing, also significantly affected satisfaction, emphasizing spectators' value on smooth, predictable experiences. Responsiveness was highly rated, with spectators valuing clear communication and prompt assistance from staff. Assurance, characterized by employees' competence and courteous behavior, and the feeling of security in transactions, was important, though it received the lowest score compared to other factors. This aligns with Van Leeuwen's (2022) notion that basic needs must be met before higher satisfaction can be achieved, highlighting the interplay between physical and service-related aspects in enhancing overall spectator satisfaction.

A multifaceted approach is recommended to improve the matchday experience at Stadium MBPJ. Enhancing tangibility by investing in modern amenities and maintaining a clean, visually appealing environment will boost satisfaction. Improving reliability involves streamlining ticketing processes and ensuring consistent service quality supported by effective customer service protocols. Increasing responsiveness can be achieved through adequate staffing, real-time communication tools, and proactive staff engagement. For assurance, regular staff training and clear communication about safety protocols will build spectator confidence. Lastly, fostering empathy by personalizing experiences and addressing individual needs will enhance satisfaction. Creating a vibrant atmosphere with pre-match entertainment,

interactive fan zones, and diverse food options will enrich the overall experience, encouraging spectators to return for future events (Kim, 2008; Zeithaml, 2013).

Conclusion

This study highlights key factors affecting spectator satisfaction at MFL matches at Stadium MBPJ: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Improving facilities, service delivery, staff attentiveness, and personalized interactions can significantly enhance the matchday experience. Addressing these aspects thoroughly fosters positive perceptions and ensures the ongoing success of events at Stadium MBPJ. The study on spectator satisfaction at Malaysian Football League (MFL) matches at Stadium MBPJ identifies five key factors: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Responsiveness (mean = 4.79) and tangibility (mean = 4.74) were the most significant contributors, highlighting the importance of timely service and modern, appealing facilities. Reliability and assurance also influenced satisfaction, with assurance showing room for improvement in building confidence and security. Empathy, emphasizing personalized attention, was positively rated but required further engagement with diverse spectator needs.

Recommendations include enhancing tangibility through modern amenities, improving reliability via streamlined ticketing and service consistency, and increasing responsiveness with real-time communication tools. Assurance can be strengthened through staff training and clear safety protocols while fostering empathy, which involves personalized services and diverse entertainment options. The findings underscore the SERVQUAL model's relevance in sports management and suggest further research into spectator loyalty and cross-cultural comparisons.

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