



## Key success factors for fan zones (public viewings) covering mega sport events – the case of UEFA EURO 2008™ in Austria

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### Abstract

This article sheds light on results from a quantitative on-site visitor satisfaction survey (n=8,093), a post-event analysis based on a subsequent quantitative analysis (n=25) and five qualitative interviews with key decision makers involved in the UEFA EURO 2008™. Based on a dual importance grid analysis, key success factors in organising mega sports events have been identified, particularly with respect to fan zones and public viewings. Comfort in fan zones was identified as an excitement factor for visitors, while pre-match entertainment is often over-estimated by event organisers. Creating a good atmosphere is an important performance factor, while a general level of safety is perceived as a basic factor by event visitors. Furthermore, the paper in hand reveals discrepancies in event perception between different stakeholder groups, such as visitors, event right holders and event organisers. It became evident that the event organisers' views differ significantly from those of the spectators and that consideration of spectators' interests is crucial to organising fan zones successfully. In conclusion, experts commented on the results and highlighted the importance of external factors such as general organisation, weather and location of the fan zone.

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**Keywords:** key success factors – fan zones – visitor satisfaction - mega sports events – UEFA EURO™

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### Introduction

Mega sports events have not only increasingly gained media attention in recent years, but they have also led to a huge number of on-site

visitors in the host countries and cities. Since the number of event tickets is limited, the organisation of fan zones where thousands of people can, for example, watch football

matches on giant screens has become more important. Fan zones and public viewings are increasingly developing into an integral part of mega (sports) events. As a consequence, the visitors' expectations of public viewings are also on the rise, resulting in challenges in organising mega events, not least because knowledge is still rather limited as regards the key success factors for public viewings. Until now, little research has been conducted on fan zones and public viewings covering mega events, whereas research on service quality factors and the assessment of spectator satisfaction with respect to major sports events has been carried out on occasion. In an attempt to close this knowledge gap, the paper in hand focuses on the following research question: "What are the key success factors when organizing fan zones for mega sports events?" The paper presents findings based on the case of the UEFA European Championship (UEFA EURO).

The UEFA EURO is a football competition held every four years featuring national teams from European countries. The UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> Austria / Switzerland was the second tournament to be hosted by two countries after the UEFA EURO 2000<sup>TM</sup> in Belgium / Netherlands. From 6-29 June 2008, 16 international teams participated in the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> in eight cities. Over 1.1 million spectators attended 31 matches during the entire period in Austria and Switzerland (Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte & Stickdorn, 2010).

To answer the proposed research question, the paper reports on a quantitative study of 8,093 questionnaire-based interviews with event visitors during the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> (n=8,093), as well as two post-event studies with event managers: A quantitative online survey with event managers in different positions (n=25) and five in-depth, semi-structured interviews with senior UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> coordinators.

## Literature Review

### *Football mega events*

Since the 1980s, mega events started to trigger interest as a research topic, especially in the field of tourism and leisure research (Hall, 20

1992, 1989; Getz, 1991; Burns, Hatch & Mules, 1986; Ritchie, 1984). With regard to mega football events, extensive studies were carried out on the FIFA World Cups 2002 and 2006 (Rahman, 1998; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2002; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Kurscheidt, 2006; Heyne, Maennig & Süßmuth, 2007; Preuss, Kurscheidt & Schütte, 2009) and on the UEFA EURO 2004 and 2008 (Marivoet, 2006; Moesch & Mueller, 2007; Helmenstein, Kleissner & Moser, 2007; Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte & Stickdorn, 2010; Müller, Rütter, Stettler, 2010). Looking at the different definitions and approaches (Ritchie, 1984; Getz, 1998; Roche, 2000; Roberts, 2004; Kurscheidt, 2008; Kaspar & Schnitzer, 2011), the authors define the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> as a typical mega event. The event was not only big in terms of on-site spectators, but also in terms of TV audiences (UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> Marketing Review, 2009, 269) with a particularly strong economic and social impact in their host countries and beyond, such as infrastructural developments and vast media attention (Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte & Stickdorn, 2010; Müller, Rütter & Stettler, 2010).

### *Spectators' perception of sports events*

Scholarly literature widely discusses what drives people to attend sports events and proposes models to investigate factors influencing attendance (Pan, Zhu, Gabert & Brown, 1999; Laverie & Annett, 2000). Dale, van Iwaarden, van der Wiele & Williams (2005) discuss factors that influence the attendance of fans at games (Arnold, 1991; Knowles, Sherony & Haupt, 1992) and their behaviours / attitudes (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001). Dale et al (2005) based their survey on the effects of service quality perceptions on the Grönroos (1994) service quality model and measured the service quality perception of the home spectators at a Rugby League Club in functional quality dimensions ("how" are services provided), in technical quality dimensions ("what" services are provided) and in image quality dimensions. Their surveys led to practical implications such as how to sell better club merchandising products or how to perform better on PR initiatives.

In order to gain a better understanding of what satisfies spectators at sports events, motivation

studies have been carried out. Motives for attending sports events range from socio-emotive dimensions to on-site entertainment, depending, among others, on the different fan types. Zhang, Smith, Pease, Jambor (1997), as well as Robertson & Pope (1999), show that whether or not casual event visitors attend a sporting event depends on the available alternatives (eg. other leisure activities, TV). Attendance at sports events is also an opportunity to socialise with friends and family (Wann, Waddill & Dunham, 2004; Kahle & Riley, 2004). Gladden & Milne (1999) have already pointed out that the inclusion of entertainment before and after the event as a means of engaging and maintaining spectator interest is a fundamental element of sports events. Very important factors influencing the decision to attend a sporting event include issues such as size, seating comfort, access as well as the stadium's aesthetic qualities (Buttle, Morres & Tomlinson, 1995; Shank, 2001). Buttle et al (1995) have classified venue characteristics into front-room factors (factors impacting attendees' enjoyment, e.g. smoke-free zones), back-room factors (parking, stadium accessibility) and circumstantial factors (e.g. comfort of the venue, pre- and post-event entertainment). Hall, O'Mhony & Viecei (2010) criticise that academic research on attendance at sports events does not identify the factors that influence emotions during the sports event. Their empirical study of citizens in the "sports event city" Melbourne showed that attendance at sports events is "affected by the emotions attached to the sports events and to the perceived quality and availability of facilities [...] Spectators are more likely to attend sports events and to enjoy the experience more if they are satisfied with the facilities associated with the stadiums such as access, parking and seating." (Hall et al, 2010: 332-333).

Theodorakis, Kambitsis, Laios & Koustelios (2001) and Thodorakis, Koustelios, Robinson & Barbos (2009) have assessed perceptions of service quality among sports spectators and introduced five dimensions (tangible dimension, responsiveness, access, security and reliability), while Kelley & Turley (2001) have developed nine factors for measuring service quality at spectator sports (employees, facility access, concessions, comfort, games

experience, show-time, convenience, price and smoking). Ko, Zhang, Cattani & Pastore (2011) finally introduced a Model of Event Quality for Spectator Sport (MEQSS) by defining key factors that determine service and event quality at spectator sports, such as (1) game quality, (2) augmented service quality, (3) interaction quality, (4) outcome quality and (5) physical environment quality.

Nevertheless, by doing this extensive literature review, the authors learnt that there is little research on success drivers in organising single sports events such as a mega event like the UEFA EURO 2008. The authors assume that since mega events are staged in a host city only once, there may be less interest in learning and improving the services for the sake of a "single shot". Furthermore, the authors have learnt that the spectators' behaviour at mega events differs from that displayed at regular league matches.

#### *"Public viewing" – fan zones at sports events*

Public viewing in the context of mega events refers to watching a sporting event in public spaces, usually following the competition on large screens in a social atmosphere. Even though large screens in dedicated event zones had been used for tournaments before, such as the FIFA World Cup 2002<sup>TM</sup> or the UEFA EURO 2004<sup>TM</sup>, the popularity of public viewing reached new heights during the FIFA World Cup 2006<sup>TM</sup> in Germany. Public viewing in designated fan zones was organized as long ago as 1987 to mark the UEFA European Champions Clubs' Cup (today Champions League) match in Dortmund (Borussia Dortmund vs. Celtic Glasgow), when the organiser realized that the stadium was sold out and the city of Dortmund would have to handle several thousand fans to avoid a major security risk (Kolbe, 2007).

In scholarly research, the phenomenon of "public viewing" has been discussed mainly from a sociological perspective. Cybulska (2007) and Strasser (2011), for example, assert that collective football viewing at mega events is a form of social isolation in the bulk and see this type of event as an ersatz religion.

Mazoll (2009) compared the experience of spectators in fan zones and stadiums and found that sharing the experience in a social atmosphere in public viewing zones is much more important than being at the event and being informed about the competition results. Mazoll defines “public viewing” as a social event, due to the fact that the experience spectators gain in a fan zone is not as strong as it is in a stadium. Thus, experiences in the fan zones are not comparable with a “live experience” in the football stadium (Mazoll, 2009).

Schulke (2006) argues that the organisation of the “Fan Fest” during the FIFA World Cup was not an exit strategy for those unable to purchase a ticket for the stadium, but that it became a new dimension of the World Cup. Schulke summarises that the “Fan Fest” has satisfied new customer needs and is therefore an irreversible element of this tournament (Schulke, 2006). During the World Cup, 2,000 public viewing events were organized and the official “Fanmeilen” (“fan miles”) alone attracted over 21 million visitors (DZT, 2006; Rollmann, 2006).

Raney (2004) argues that by attending a public viewing, one could obtain the combined benefits of both alternatives: The out-of-home media reception served to intensify the emotional aspects of the entertainment factor and the escapism from everyday life, whilst also enhancing feelings of companionship, group affiliation, and release (Raney, 2004). Nevertheless, the authors came to the conclusion that there is a lack of research on the organisation and impact of public viewing zones.

#### *Visitor satisfaction analysis*

The expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm became established in behavioural literature as a relevant process model for visitor satisfaction analyses (Oliver 1977, 1980 & 1997; Matzler, 1997; Matzler & Hinterhuber, 1998; Matzler, Pechlaner & Siller, 2001). According to this approach, satisfaction is highly dependent on expectations with respect to a certain subject matter and refers to a comparison of expectations with the actual perceived quality of a product or service. According to Oliver

(1980), this process consists of three phases. Initially, visitors develop their expectations before an event. He defines expectations in this context as “anticipation of future consequences based on prior experience, current circumstances, or other sources of information” (Oliver, 1997, 68). During the event, visitors experience the actual performance and consecutively compare the perceived service quality with their expectations. This adjustment leads to disconfirmation or confirmation of respective expectations and while the former leads to dissatisfaction, the latter causes satisfaction. Satisfaction is therefore the result of a cognitive comparison of actual experiences with pre-event expectations. In this context, literature also refers to fundamental work such as the motivator-hygiene theory by Herzberg (1966) as well as Kano’s theory of attractive quality (Kano & Takahashi, 1979).

A large number of authors propose that visitor satisfaction involves several independent factors (e.g. Schütze, 1992; Dutka, 1993; Gale, 1994; Bailom, Hinterhuber, Matzler & Sauerwein, 1996; Deschamps & Nayak, 1996; Oliver, 1997; Hinterhuber, Handlbauer & Matzler, 1997; Vavra, 1997; Homburg & Werner, 1998; Matzler, 2000; Stahl, 2000 and Matzler, Pechlaner & Siller, 2001). This assumption is also supported by ample empirical evidence (an overview can be found in Matzler, 2000). In general, research literature distinguishes three factors, though using differing terminology (a comparison of different approaches to the classification of quality attributes can be found in Witell & Löfgren, 2007):

✓ *Basic factors* cause dissatisfaction if the experience does not live up to expectations, and commonly do not lead to satisfaction even if expectations are exceeded. Basic factors are thus requirements and constitute the core components of an event.

✓ *Performance factors* lead to satisfaction when visitor expectations are exceeded as well as to dissatisfaction when certain expectations are not met. Thus, they form a continuum with no thresholds.

✓ *Excitement factors* trigger satisfaction, but not necessarily dissatisfaction if they are not available, since excitement factors are not

explicitly expected. Therefore, they increase the perceived value, but cannot be set off against a lack of basic factors.

The proposed three-factor model includes three characteristics. Customer satisfaction arises hierarchically from the confirmation of basic factors to the positive evaluation of performance factors and potentially the perception of excitement factors. The individual factors are subject to changes over time and thus give the model a dynamic nature. Over time, excitement factors degrade to performance and later to basic factors, which can be explained by the expectancy-disconfirmations paradigm, since experiences affect expectations and, therefore, returning visitors expect former unexpected (excitement) factors. Furthermore, it is not possible to determine a priori which attributes represent basic, performance or excitement factors, since classification is determined by individual expectations varying between visitor groups, events and other circumstances. Thus, a customer-specific assessment of basic, performance and excitement factors is crucial. Stahl & Matzler (2001) suggest the following implications for the creation of high visitor satisfaction. Basic factors must be met in order to avoid dissatisfaction and thereby build the basis for subsequent implications. Performance factors are based on current visitor expectations and thus need to at least meet these expectations in order to generate satisfaction. Excitement factors can significantly increase the perceived customer benefit in comparison with other events, if basic requirements are met and performance factors are achieved at a competitive level. Hence, excitement factors can contribute significantly to the event's distinction and the generation of high satisfaction (Stahl & Matzler, 2001).

#### *Dual Importance Grid*

Importance-Performance Analysis as formulated by Martilla & James (1977) is a measurement instrument based on the difference between the importance and performance of single services. The grid can be reduced to a tabular form with only two columns – the perception of the performance of a dimension and the expectation of the importance of a dimension (Pitt, Watson,

Kavan, 1995). A resulting gap between the perceived performance and the expected importance of a dimension might provide some indication of critical dimensions. The instrument has been applied and adopted by several researchers, and is also known as the four quadrant Dual Importance Grid (Matzler, Pechlaner & Siller, 2001; Vavra, 1997), which was adapted slightly from the traditional instrument. The Dual Importance Grid is a measurement tool based on the difference between explicit (self-stated and specified by the customer) and implicit (indirectly derived) importance. The diagram makes it possible to prioritize improvement action, starting with those items in the bottom right of the grid, where there is high explicit and low implicit importance. This method is used in the empirical study with the retrieved data plotted for each attribute on the grid which classifies the attributes into the three-factor model categories: basic, performance (important and unimportant), and excitement factors. These values are spread among the two-dimensional matrix shown in Figure 1.

The rationale behind this method can be summarised as follows: Excitement factors are those consumers say are not particularly important but are high in implicit importance. Important performance factors have both high levels of stated and derived importance. Unimportant performance factors are low in direct and indirect importance, thus having little impact on satisfaction and requiring little attention from the service provider. Finally, other attributes high in self-stated importance but low in implicit importance are basic factors.

#### **Methodology**

##### *Research design*

The research design follows a three-stage approach of pre-event, during-event and post-event research, including a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Based on a comprehensive literature review during the pre-event stage, a questionnaire was designed for the visitor satisfaction analysis of mega sports events, building on the experiences gained by the much publicised studies for the FIFA World Championship Germany/2006 and various Ski World Championships, such as St. Anton/2001, St. Moritz/2003, Bormio/2005 and Åre/2007. Thus, it can be assumed that the structure and

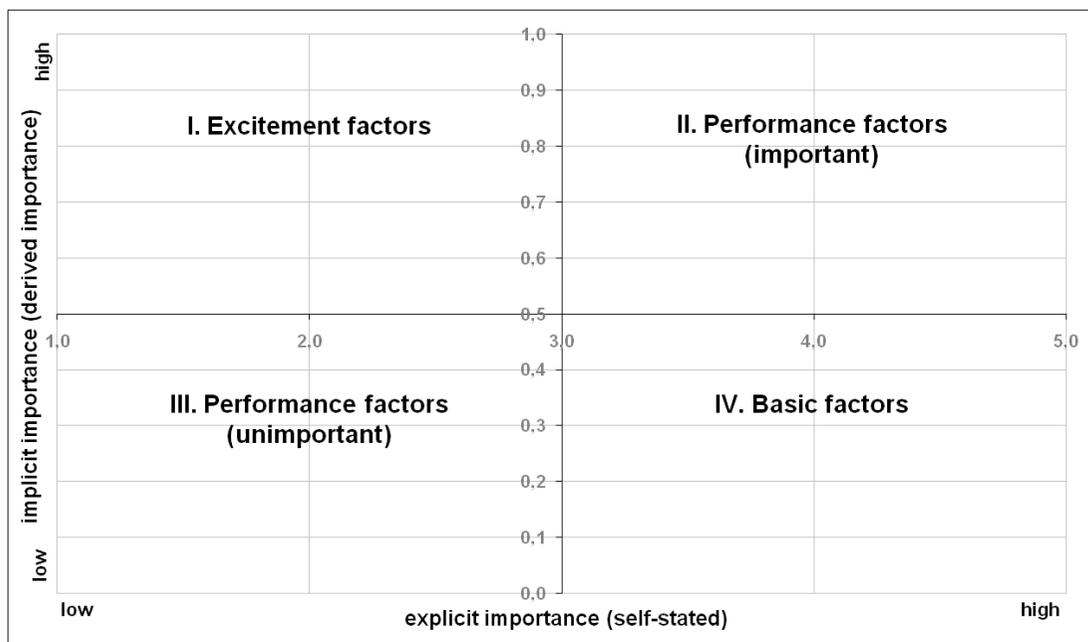


Figure 1. Dual Importance Grid Source (adapted from Vavra, 1997, p. 385).

underlying methods applied in this questionnaire are robust and reliable (Kurscheidt, 2006; Kurscheidt, 2008; Siller & Stickdorn, 2009; Preuss, Kurscheidt & Schütte, 2009; Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte & Stickdorn, 2010; Stickdorn, Schütte, Zehrer, Siller, 2010). A quantitative survey during the event focuses on a visitor satisfaction and image analysis of the event which aims to identify key success factors for public viewings of mega sports events from a visitor's perspective. By contrast, subsequent post-event research focuses on identifying key success factors from an organiser's perspective. Hence, post-event research includes a quantitative study of event managers in different positions using the very same questionnaire. To conflate both – visitors' and organisers' – perspectives, in-depth interviews with senior event coordinators were subsequently conducted to discuss findings and identify possible reasons for the differences revealed in the perceptions of these groups.

This paper sheds light on a single case study at the mega sports event UEFA EURO 2008™ in

Austria. The sample sizes of the during-event and post-event research vary due to their different populations: There were more than a million spectators in Austrian fan zones in contrast to only eighty managers involved in the organisation of such zones.

#### *The case: UEFA EURO 2008™ in Austria*

The UEFA European Championship 2008 took place in Austria and Switzerland from 6-29 June. Besides the matches, Austria's host cities organised large fan zones with giant TV screens in a move to make the matches accessible to a wider audience than just the spectators at the stadiums. Thus, official figures state that 4.2 million spectators visited the official UEFA EURO 2008™ fan zones – 4 times more visitors than at the stadiums (UEFA EURO 2008™ Executive Report, 2009).

In this context, Schnitzer (2008) explains that more than 465,000 spectators visited the fan zones in Innsbruck. This is four times the official figure stated by the UEFA EURO 2008™ Executive Report, since many non-official, but licensed public viewing zones were organized in order to elude UEFA regulations regarding

ambush-marketing. Therefore, it seems likely that the total number of fan-zone visitors exceeded the official figures.

Although football is apparently dominated by male fans, fan zones increase the appeal of the sport for female visitors. While 19% of spectators inside the stadiums were female, the fan zones attracted 32% women. Among Austrians, the largest group of fan-zone visitors, this proportion almost levels out, with 45% female fan-zone visitors (Stickdorn, Schütte, Zehrer, Siller, 2010; Siller & Stickdorn, 2009).

Visitors in Austria were in general highly satisfied with the entire event. On a 5-point Likert scale, 81% stated they were satisfied with the event, including 29% who stated they were very satisfied; only 7% asserted that they were (very) dissatisfied. On average, fan-zone visitors were more satisfied than stadium visitors. 83% of the fan-zone attendees confirmed they were (very) satisfied with the event, in comparison with the significant difference of 78% of stadium visitors. 83% of respondents explicitly specified that excitement and atmosphere during the matches were most crucial for the visitors' overall satisfaction with the event. Furthermore, 70% stated that the success of their favourite team was essential. (Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte & Stickdorn, 2010).

#### *Pre-event and event research*

The event survey was carried out by the MCI Management Center Innsbruck (Tourism Business Studies) and the Johannes-Gutenberg University Mainz (Institute of Sport Science) during the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> in Austria (n = 8,093). The survey was conducted face-to-face with questionnaires available in 10 languages and consisting of 11 sub-samples collected in the four Austrian host cities Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Klagenfurt. Back translation was used when possible; however, depending on the progress of the tournament, some translations had to be made in a very limited time. In this case, translations were carried out by genuinely bilingual interpreters without a subsequent back translation loop. The data was collected by a randomized multi-stage cluster sampling, related to the lacking

information available on the population of the public viewings and stadium visitors. On each selected match day, the interviewees collected questionnaires from one randomly chosen location around the stadium or public viewing site to ensure that visitors were in the process of waiting and thus willing to participate in the survey. The interviews started approximately four hours before a match and ended approximately half an hour before the match started. The questionnaire took ten minutes to complete. The research method is based on a very similar survey conducted at the FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany (n = 9,456) and was coordinated with a parallel study in Switzerland to achieve comparability (Preuss, Kurscheidt & Schütte, 2009; Müller, Rütter & Stettler 2010).

#### *Post-event Research*

The post-event empirical survey was carried out by the MCI Management Center Innsbruck (Tourism Business Studies) and the University of Innsbruck (Department for Sport Sciences) after the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup>. The survey was completed online in the period from 10-21 December 2009 by former host city managers, their staff in Austria and Switzerland as well as by former UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> SA staff and UEFA staff. Of the 80 persons invited to participate, 25 filled out the online survey completely, resulting in a return rate of 31%. It took ten minutes to complete the questionnaire, which included the same questions regarding satisfaction as the event questionnaire, with the important addition that respondents were asked to answer these questions from their own – event management – perspective as well as to give details on how they thought event visitors would have answered.

The subsequent qualitative analysis was carried out by the University of Innsbruck (Department of Sport Sciences) and involved a content analysis of transcribed, semi-structured personal interviews with decision-makers involved in the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> (Merten, 1983; Krippendorff, 1980; Mayring, 1994). The methodologically controlled procedures of a qualitative content analysis allow the connection to be made between a systematic text analysis and quantitative steps of analysis (Mayring, 2000). The interviews were carried

out in the period from 3 February – 16 March 2010. The duration of each semi-structured interview was approximately 30 - 45 minutes. The interview questions referred to the findings of both quantitative during- and post-event surveys. After short presentations of these findings interviewees were asked to elaborate on these and answer some key questions based on the findings of the quantitative analyses. Subsequent open discussions were

initiated to find possible reasons for differences revealed in perceptions between the groups of event visitors and the different groups of event organisers.

## Findings

### Quantitative analysis

Table 1 below briefly summarizes the results from both quantitative during- and post-event surveys.

**Table 1.** *Implicit, explicit importance and explicit satisfaction of selected factors (during- and post-event survey)*

n=8,093 (on event) n=25 (post event)	during-event survey						post-event survey						
	stadium visitors			Fan-zone visitors			event managers			estimation for fan-zone visitors			
	implicit importance	explicit importance	explicit satisfaction	implicit importance	explicit importance	explicit satisfaction	implicit importance	explicit importance	explicit satisfaction	implicit importance	explicit importance	explicit satisfaction	
	implicit importance: correlation (0-1) explicit importance: 1 very unimportant - 5 very important explicit satisfaction: 1 very dissatisfied - 5 very satisfied												
1	Transport to the host city	0.23	4.01	3.94	0.11	3.91	3.78	0.66	4.20	3.93	0.40	4.00	4.00
2	Public Transportation	0.20	3.99	3.85	0.11	4.02	3.78	0.52	4.53	3.80	0.17	4.20	3.87
3	General spectator information	0.18	3.89	3.62	0.11	3.89	3.66	0.74	4.47	3.87	0.25	4.33	3.93
4	Admission at the public viewing	0.19	3.35	3.49	0.14	4.07	3.84	0.58	4.07	3.80	0.32	4.07	3.33
5	General level of safety	0.14	4.13	3.95	0.10	4.19	4.03	0.50	4.60	4.07	0.23	4.27	4.20
6	Comfort at the public viewing	0.30	3.30	3.36	0.13	3.90	3.59	0.63	3.53	3.67	0.49	3.80	3.40
7	Atmosphere at the stadium	0.17	4.28	4.03	0.10	4.01	3.71	0.62	4.67	4.53	0.20	4.53	4.60
8	Atmosphere at the public viewing	0.23	3.43	3.47	0.14	4.23	3.96	0.63	4.53	4.00	0.20	4.47	3.93
9	Atmosphere in the host city	0.20	4.01	3.83	0.12	4.18	3.97	0.72	4.60	4.20	0.09	4.27	4.07
10	Pre-match entertainment	0.19	3.30	3.32	0.10	3.73	3.51	0.36	3.60	3.80	0.39	3.60	3.80
11	Accommodation	0.18	3.57	3.50	0.09	3.71	3.60	0.25	3.53	3.87	0.23	3.53	3.80
12	Organisation in general	0.26	4.03	3.71	0.14	4.09	3.80	0.62	4.67	4.07	0.17	4.00	3.93
13	Hospitality in Austria	0.21	4.04	3.89	0.13	4.19	4.02	0.27	4.07	4.53	0.03	3.93	4.27
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>3.69</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>3.93</b>

Based on these results, individual dual-importance grid analyses were conducted for both the during- and post-event survey. While the during-event survey includes the two groups of stadium and fan-zone visitors to examine differences in expectations and satisfaction between the core event target group of stadium visitors and the extended target group of fan zone visitors, the post-event survey comprises the two groups of event managers and their estimation of how fan-zone visitors would answer the same questions.

#### *During-event survey*

Both groups in the during-event survey show rather similar levels of explicit importance and satisfaction, but significantly differing levels of implicit importance, i.e. stadium visitors with a mean of 0.21 compared to 0.12 of fan-zone visitors, giving rise to differing quadrant boundaries within the successive dual-importance grid analysis. The main findings of the during-event survey are summarized in Table 2.

While there are apparently some similarities between the groups of stadium and fan-zone visitors, i.e. such as factors (6), (9), (10), (11), most factors show differences. The most striking ones, i.e. (4), (6), (8), (9), (10), (12), (13) are visualised in Figure 2 below.

Although (6) *comfort in the fan zone* is the only

common excitement factor of both groups, its implicit importance is significantly higher for stadium visitors, while the explicit importance is notably lower, which leads to the assumption that stadium visitors may be surprised with the comfort in fan zones. Furthermore, (8) the *atmosphere in the fan zones* is indicated as an excitement factor for stadium visitors but is an important performance factor for fan-zone visitors, mainly but not only due to the higher level of explicit importance of this factor by fan-zone visitors (i.e. a higher level of expectation for this factor). According to the dynamic nature of the model, excitement factors over time degrade to performance and later maybe even to basic factors, based on increasing expectations. It is likely that with the increasing popularity of fan zones for mega sports events, the level of expectations regarding the atmosphere will increase such that the atmosphere in the fan zones will in future be degraded also for stadium visitors from an excitement factor to an important performance factor or even to a basic factor.

However, both groups specify factors (9) *atmosphere in the host city*, (12) *organisation in general* and (13) *hospitality in Austria* as important performance factors - or on the threshold to being important performance factors - though on significantly different levels of implicit importance, which leads to the

**Table 2.** *Dual-importance grid classification of during-event results*

<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>Stadium visitors</b>	<b>Fan-zone visitors</b>
Quadrant I: Excitement factors	(6) Comfort at the public viewing (8) Atmosphere at the public viewing	(6) Comfort at the public viewing
Quadrant II: Important performance factors	(4) Admission at the public viewing (10) Pre-match entertainment (11) Accommodation	(1) Transport to the host city (3) General spectator information (10) Pre-match entertainment (11) Accommodation
Quadrant III: Unimportant performance factors	(1) Transport to the host city (12) Organisation in general (13) Hospitality in Austria	(2) Public Transportation (5) General level of safety (7) Atmosphere at the stadium
Quadrant IV: Basic factors	(2) Public Transportation (3) General spectator information (5) General level of safety (7) Atmosphere at the stadium (9) Atmosphere in the host city	(4) Admission at the public viewing (8) Atmosphere at the public viewing (9) Atmosphere in the host city (12) Organisation in general (13) Hospitality in Austria

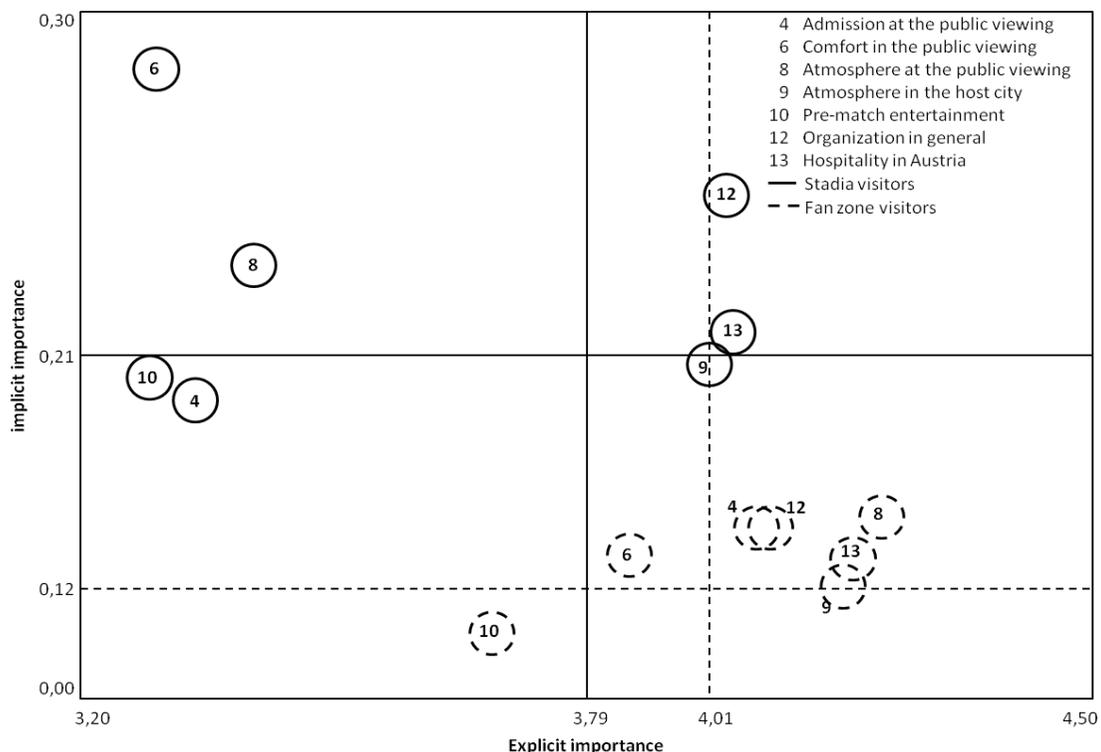


Figure 2. Importance grid comparison of selected factors: stadiums and fan zones (Source: own illustration)

Table 3. Dual-importance grid classification of post-event results

Quadrant	Event managers	Event managers' estimation for fan zone visitors
Quadrant I: Excitement factors	(1) Transport to the host city (4) Admission at the public viewing (6) Comfort at the public viewing	(1) Transport to the host city (4) Admission at the public viewing (6) Comfort in the public viewing (10) Pre-match entertainment
Quadrant II: Important performance factors	(3) General spectator information (7) Atmosphere at the stadium (8) Atmosphere at the public viewing (9) Atmosphere in the host city (12) Organisation in general	(3) General spectator information
Quadrant III: Unimportant performance factors	(4) Admission at the public viewing (10) Pre-match entertainment (11) Accommodation (13) Hospitality in Austria	(11) Accommodation (12) Organisation in general (13) Hospitality in Austria
Quadrant IV: Basic factors	(2) Public Transportation (5) General level of safety	(2) Public Transportation (5) General level of safety (7) Atmosphere at the stadium (8) Atmosphere at the public viewing (9) Atmosphere in the host city

assumption that these factors arouse more overall event satisfaction for stadium visitors

(who display the higher level of implicit importance) than for fan-zone visitors. On the contrary, factors (4) *admission at the public viewing* and (10) *pre-match entertainment* show a significantly higher level of explicit importance for fan-zone visitors. Hence, fan-zone visitors expect these factors more than stadium visitors, e.g. while pre-match entertainment is an unimportant performance factor for stadium visitors, fan-zone visitors rather expect pre-match entertainment and, therefore, even indicate it to be a basic factor.

#### *Post-event Survey*

A profound understanding of customer needs is vital for event organisers. Thus, the post-event analysis sheds light on whether event organisers have a similar perception of the event's success factors and whether their estimation of how fan-zone visitors perceive the event matches reality. Table 3 summarizes the sets of basic, performance and excitement factors of both event managers and their estimations for fan-zone visitors.

Both groups indicate common factors in each quadrant, such as (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (11), (13). However, some factors differ considerably such as (10) *pre-match entertainment*, which event managers themselves specify as an unimportant performance factor, while at the same time estimating this factor to be an excitement factor for fan-zone visitors. However, findings from the during-event survey show that both fan-zone visitors and stadium visitors state pre-match entertainment as an unimportant performance factor. Factors (7) *Atmosphere at the stadium*, (8) *Atmosphere at the public viewing* and (9) *Atmosphere in the host city* are stated as important performance factors by event managers, who, however, interestingly estimated these as basic factors for fan-zone visitors. The latter reasonably matches the during-event findings with the exception that stadium visitors stated (8) *atmosphere at the public viewing* as an excitement factor – possibly due to low expectations regarding the atmosphere in fan zones compared to the atmosphere in the stadiums.

Subsequent qualitative research based on five interviews with key decision makers at the event strove to shed light on the discrepancies revealed, above all, with factors such as (6) *comfort in the fan zone*, (7) (8) (9) *atmosphere at the stadium, public viewing and host city*, (10) *pre-match entertainment*, (12) *organisation in general* and (13) *hospitality in Austria*.

#### *Qualitative analysis of decision-makers after the event*

The semi-structured interviews of the post-event research were based on the quantitative event and post-event findings. Hence, the qualitative analysis was focused on four key questions:

- ✓ What are the success factors for organizing fan zones?
- ✓ What role does comfort play in fan zones?
- ✓ How important are pre-match entertainment programmes?
- ✓ What can future organisers learn from the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup>?

Table 4 summarizes the findings of the qualitative content analysis. In this context, *category* refers to the categories deduced from the key questions, *Host City* to the two interviewees, who held the function of host city managers in Klagenfurt and Innsbruck, *UEFA* to the head of the event management division and host city manager to the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> SA and *Government* to the EURO 2008 head coordinator in the Austrian government.

The authors conclude that host city organisers have a clear perspective of all aspects listed above and analyze the event from a significantly different angle than UEFA as the holder of rights for public viewings and event organiser of the tournament. This is similar to the national government co-coordinator, whose view is much more neutral and focuses on the overall picture and not just a single host city. In particular, the dissimilarity of answers regarding pre-match entertainment and lessons learned for the forthcoming EURO 2012 between the different interview partners reveal interesting insights regarding differing individual aims and how these affect the perception of an event.

**Table 4.** Results of the qualitative analysis of the fan zone organisation during the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>IM</sup>  
(Source: own illustration)

Category	Host City	UEFA	Government
<i>Success factors</i>	Pre-match entertainment, General level of safety, weather conditions, match constellation	Location of the fan zones, organisation in general, quality of screens	Location of the fan zone, match constellation, weather, PR / communication
<i>Success</i>	General level of safety, logistics, organisation in general	organisation in general,	organisation in general
<i>Comfort</i>	Seating, stands, toilets, weather (indoor / covering)	Seating, stands, toilets, weather (indoor / covering)	Seating, stands, toilets, weather (indoor / covering)
<i>Pre-match entertainment</i>	High importance, greater acceptance of the event, people stay longer in city centre	Less importance, entertainment programme only if high quality, spectators are interested in football, not in other programmes	Risk of too much noise, spectators are interested in football, not in other programmes
<i>Lessons learned for EURO 2012</i>	Management of expectations, remain flexible, when organizing fan zones	Management of expectations, place focus on the tournament, fan zones are only part of it	Management of expectations, not too much pre-match entertainment

## Conclusions

### Summary

In terms of spectator satisfaction, the UEFA EURO 2008™ in Austria was a huge success, as 81% stated they were satisfied with the event, including 29% who even stated they were very satisfied. The authors found that fan-zone visitors (83%) were more satisfied than stadium visitors (78%).

Furthermore, findings show that explicit visitor satisfaction regarding comfort in fan zones and pre-match entertainment was relatively low. However, comfort in fan zones could be identified as an excitement factor and thus an improvement may result in higher satisfaction rates. Further analysis showed that pre-match entertainment is a rather unimportant performance factor for the core target group, but considered as very important for the host city in terms of event acceptance and duration of stay. Austrian host cities showed their expertise as hosts, creating a good

atmosphere, which is reflected in the survey's results. Organisers gave low priority to meet guests' expectations for accommodation and transport to the host city as these factors only marginally affect customer satisfaction. Delivering a high standard of basic factors, such as the general level of safety, general spectator information and public transport, is crucial for success as they are widely expected.

Interesting to the authors is the fact that findings show differences in the event's success factors between the organisers and spectators. For example, organisers identify pre-match entertainment as an unimportant performance factor – as do the spectators. However, organisers estimate pre-match entertainment as an excitement factor for spectators. Above all host city managers see it as an excitement factor, as opposed to UEFA officials and government coordinators, as the qualitative analysis reveals.

The different perspectives of event organisers and visitors clearly show that fan-zone organisers think that spectators rate their satisfaction in the stadium at 4.60 (on a 5-point Likert scale) and think that spectators in the fan zones were less satisfied at 3.80. The results of the quantitative analysis show a different result. Spectators in the stadiums were less satisfied (3.79) than the spectators in the fan zones (3.97). The authors assume that the expectations of stadium visitors could have been much higher than the expectations of fan-zone visitors and therefore the respondents in the fan zones were much more satisfied. The findings clearly reveal that well organized fan zones are crucial to the success of such an event. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the three-factor model of customer satisfaction gives rise to the conclusion that spectators will expect well organized fan zones to a greater degree in the future, since excitement factors such as comfort in fan zones become performance, if not basic factors over time.

#### *Implications*

The main conclusions of the paper in hand regard the analysis of key success factors for organisers of fan zones in connection with mega sport events:

✓ The *comfort in fan zones* (toilets, seating, accessibility of food & beverages) is an excitement factor. The importance of comfort has been outlined in the literature (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Robertson & Pope, 1999; Browkaw, 2000; Shank, 2001). Results of the study in hand show that spectators do not vary their expectations as regards atmospheric variables such as quality of offered services, cleanliness of the venues and availability of restrooms, food and beverages between visiting sports events in stadiums or public viewing areas. Findings of the current surveys reveal a lack of comfort in the Austrian fan zones. One conclusion could be that fan zones need to perform well in terms of "comfort" if they are to reach high visitor satisfaction levels even though they are commonly installed temporarily.

✓ *Pre-match entertainment* is often over-estimated by (local) event organisers. Football

fans in particular are more interested in watching the matches. Thus, pre-match entertainment is not necessarily an excitement factor; though this clearly depends on the target group and thus cannot be generalized. As discussed, literature (Gladden & Milne, 1999; Horrow & Swatek, 2009) has pointed out the importance of pre- and post-match entertainment. Here, the authors noticed a difference between league match visits and a visit to a once-in-a-lifetime experience such as a mega event with public viewing, as was confirmed by the experts in the qualitative interviews. People watching a UEFA EURO 2008 match (stadium and / or fan zones) look forward to the football match itself and are less interested in additional entertainment.

✓ Creating a good *atmosphere in the fan zones*, but also in the stadiums and host city is an important performance factor. Austria did well by creating a good atmosphere which was also expected by spectators. A typical feature of mega football events (Schulke, 2006; Cybulska, 2007; Mazoll, 2009; Strasser, 2011) is "partying" before and after the football matches, but not only in the stadiums and fan zones, but also in the streets. Austrian host cities, therefore, created fan boulevards and places to entertain. These factors, as well as host city dressing, the overall look and atmosphere created opportunities to socialise with friends and family. This extends respective literature, such as Wann, Waddill & Dunham (2004) and Kahle & Riley (2004), which indicates cases of socializing with friends and family only in stadiums, but not as yet in fan zones and host cities.

✓ *Accommodation and transport* as well as *admission to the public viewing* were not very important to spectators in Austria. It can be assumed that this is because visitors expected Austrian host cities to be well organised. An initial reason for organising public viewings is to satisfy the desire to watch football matches in a stadium-like atmosphere in cases where tickets for the stadiums are sold out, thus resulting in the attendance of many locals who do not require accommodation or transport. As UEFA EURO fan zones were free of charge and most of them were located in the city centre, admission did not gain the importance

described by Kelly et al (2001) or Theodorakis et al (2001, 2009).

✓ *Feeling safe* at a large event is largely expected as is being well informed about the event and the host city. Both success factors are important to spectators and should be well respected by the organisers. The importance of security has also been outlined by the service quality dimensions of Theodorakis et al (2001).

✓ Event organisers have a different view than spectators and mainly focus on other issues, which may initially be unimportant to the spectator (e.g. general safety, admission to stadiums/fan zones), but certainly would become very important in extreme situations.

In conclusion, it is crucial to know where and in which context a mega sports event is taking place. The success factors may vary, for example, between UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> and UEFA EURO 2012<sup>TM</sup>. Expectations may be different – especially regarding hospitality, transportation and general safety levels. Analyzing and managing spectator expectations and experiences emerges as a crucial factor in event organisation to ensure sustainable spectator satisfaction. Experts and organisers of the past UEFA EURO prefer to focus on the tournament itself, but fan zones could be attractive for non-ticket holders in general, and for residents of the host cities in particular, thus increasing acceptance within the local community. Flexible organisation could be crucial to preventing oversized fan zones which triggers dissatisfaction among fans (poor atmosphere), but also among other stakeholders (e.g. sponsors, booth operators).

The study in hand also revealed the importance of fan zones and organized public viewings of mega sports events such as the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup>. This leads the authors to the following extension of the definition by Raney (2004):

*Organized public viewings (fan zones) are evolving into an integral part of mega sports events. The out-of-home media reception serves to intensify and prolong the emotional aspects of mega sporting events and the related escapism from everyday life, and also enhances excitement through feelings of*

*companionship, group affiliation, and release.*

#### *Study limitations and further research*

Even though the survey includes a sample of over 8,000 interviews in four host cities, from a methodological point of view analyzing the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> is a single case study, thus requiring further research into additional events with a similar research design. In this context, problems arising as a consequence of questionnaires in multiple languages need to be mentioned, since it was not possible to use back translation for every language. Sports event organisation means handling uncertainty and depends on the success of single teams (how would satisfaction have been influenced, if the Austrian team had played in the tournament longer and had not been knocked out in the preliminary round?). Weather conditions can greatly influence the satisfaction of the interviewees (what if June had been without rainfall and high temperatures in Austria?). Furthermore, Austria is known for high quality and high living standards as well as being famous for its hospitality. Expectations among all visitors were, therefore, quite high before travelling to Austria, thus resulting in an equally higher risk of failing to meet these expectations. Also, the well organized and very successful FIFA World Cup 2006<sup>TM</sup> in Germany raised expectations for Austria. Therefore, the same survey in another place, at another time and / or regarding another event could have delivered significantly different results.

The quantitative survey used during the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> had already been tested on various other occasions and can therefore be considered reliable. The quantitative online survey conducted in December 2009 certainly includes limitations such as a fairly small sample size. The fact that the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> already took place 1 ½ years ago certainly had an impact on the response rate, but may also have influenced the quality of the answers themselves.

Another limitation concerned the quantity of the semi-structured interviews conducted with key organisers of the event. Although obviously there are a very limited number of potential interview partners worth considering in this

category, five interviews are still quite a poor yield. Nevertheless, they were very useful in helping the authors understand the organisers' perspective more clearly.

Further research of comparable events is needed to identify the impact of differing venues and respective cultures as well as the alteration of success factors over time in accordance with the dynamic nature of the three-factor model. Furthermore, research regarding holistic approaches to visitor satisfaction through service design such as customer journey mapping (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2010) may be beneficial for research on mega sports events.

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