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ERASMUS-SPORT-2021-
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Sport4Cancer
D4.2 Evaluation
report of the main
sport activities

Sport4Cancer - Project: 101050018– ERASMUS-SPORT-2021-SNCESE

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1. Introduction and theoretical framework

1.1. Sport Events

1.1.1. Conceptualisation of sport events

The sports sector is a sector that is growing continuously nowadays, also in the field of sports events, which have become a very important and more and more frequent activity in today's society. But the aim of these events is not only to promote physical activity and sport, but also to obtain large amounts of economic and social benefits for the cities and regions where they are held, as well as for the organisers of these events.

With regard to events, numerous authors have tried to give them a concrete and specific definition to help us understand the nature of these events. Shone and Bryan (2001) say that events tend to take place on specific occasions that are not part of the daily routine and that have different focuses such as leisure, cultural, personal or planned events, and that serve to get out of people's daily and routine lives.

Another definition is that of Cerezuela (2003) who, based on the previous definition of Shone and Bryan (2001), mentions that an event is the set of different types of actions that people carry out, such as leisure, cultural, personal or organisational, with sport being involved in some of them. These events range from a basic game without much scope to international events. In order to classify them, the uncertainty and complexity, as well as the scope of each event will be analysed (Cerezuela, 2003).

According to the Real Academia Española de la Lengua, the word event is defined as "an important and programmed event, of a social, academic, artistic or sporting nature", with regard to sporting events, these are social gatherings, and sometimes even shows, which focus on one or more sports and are usually attended by an audience interested in them. (Royal Spanish Academy, 2023).

Sports events have become an economic activity of relevant importance, and sports organisations and companies that carry them out must look for the key factor to obtain the strategies that allow them to differentiate themselves from the different companies in the market. The perception of quality and the satisfaction caused by the event are key elements for the choice and loyalty of participants and spectators with respect to one event or another.

These should be analysed in terms of their different impacts and perceptions of the different participants involved in order to improve their planning, meet their needs and increase support and expectations for future events (Vegara-Ferri et al., 2021). Countries that are not as well-known as tourism destinations can use sport events as effective marketing strategies to contribute to increasing awareness of destinations (Jin et al., 2013).

1.1.2. Characteristics of sporting events

Sporting events encompass a wide range of events that are distinguished by their own characteristics. Each event, whether it is a championship, marathon, tournament or other type of sporting encounter, has its own elements that differentiate and make it unique. Despite the meticulous pre-planning of any event, it is important to recognise that there is a considerable level of uncertainty as to whether the activities will take place completely as planned. As Cerezuela (2003) mentions, this uncertainty is inherent in the nature of sporting events.

Shone and Perry (2010) have identified and assigned a number of specific characteristics to sport events. These characteristics serve to understand the uniqueness and relevance of these events in the sporting and social domain.

- Uniqueness: Each event is unique and singular in nature. Each edition is not repeated in the same way and does not have the same circumstances. This gives the sporting event a special value and a unique experience for both participants and spectators.
- Non-repeatability: Unlike other regular activities, sport events are not repeatable in the exact same format or context. Each event has a specific configuration and cannot be recreated in exactly the same way.
- Intangibility: Sport events are characterised by being intangible, meaning that they cannot be physically touched or possessed. They are experiences that are lived and perceived through the senses, generating emotions and memories in participants and spectators.
- High levels of personal contact and interaction: sporting events provide opportunities for socialising and relationship building, either directly among participants or indirectly with the general public.
- Intensity of work: The logistical organisation of the event is closely linked to the degree of complexity inherent in its development. As the complexity of the event increases, a greater number of staff is required, a greater need for communication and an increase in the number of work units involved in its execution, among other aspects.
- Limited time scale: sport events have a specific duration and are bounded in time, which implies a precise planning and execution period. This temporality ranges from the initial planning and design stage of the project to the final evaluation of the event, with clearly established start and end dates.

1.1.2. Typology of sport events

After having outlined the conceptualisation and characteristics of sport events, it is important to highlight that the classification of events. The type of event becomes an essential tool for event management and planning. This classification makes it possible to organise and categorise the different types of sport events, which is essential to understand their particular characteristics and meet their specific needs.

This facilitates decision-making, the efficient allocation of resources and the implementation of appropriate strategies for each type of sport event.

Among the various existing classifications, the one proposed by Wilson (2006) stands out as a widely used and recognised approach in the field of sport events. This author has developed a classification that is based on the economic impact generated by such events and has been widely recognised and adopted in the industry due to its relevance and usefulness in the planning and management of sport events.

- Type A: large, irregular, one-off international sporting events with significant economic impact and high media interest (e.g. Olympic Games, World Cup).
- Type B: regular sporting events with large spectator numbers and significant economic impact, attracting media attention and forming part of an annual sporting calendar (e.g. Open Golf, Grand Slam tennis, Tour de France, Super Bowl, etc.).
- Type C: large, irregular, one-off international events with limited economic impact (e.g. World and European Championships in less popular sports such as handball, futsal or hockey).
- Type D: national events that are part of an annual sports calendar and have a limited economic impact (e.g. National Championships in most sports).
- Type E: minor competitive and spectator events with limited economic impact and media interest (e.g. regional and local sporting events in most sports).

On the other hand, Getz and Page (2016) present a classification of events according to their size:

- Occasional mega-events: these are large-scale events that generate global tourism demand and have a dominant market value. These events have an extremely high economic and social impact on the host country (e.g. the Olympic Games and the football World Cup).
- Distinctive recurring events: these are events that also generate global tourism demand and have a high market value. They have a significant economic and social impact on the region where they take place (e.g. Grand Tour of Spain, Formula 1 Grand Prix, Roland Garros).
- Regional events: these are events with moderate tourism demand and market value. Their impact is concentrated in the host city and its catchment area (e.g. regional sporting events in most sports).
- Local events: these are events with a low tourism demand and a market value and impact limited to the host city (e.g. local events in most sports).

1.2 Sport4Cancer Mar Menor Games

Sport4Cancer Mar Menor Games (hereafter Sport4Cancer) is a large international non-profit multi-sport multi-sport event that took place in the Region of Murcia (Spain) between 20 and 23 April 2023. It was aimed at all audiences: people who do not do enough physical activity, people with disabilities, women, immigrants, federated and amateur athletes, etc., but especially to cancer survivors and their families and friends, encouraging them to practice sport.

Sport4Cancer is born as an Erasmus+ project, co-financed by the European Union, call ERASMUS-SPORT-2021-SNCESE with the identification number 101050018. The total duration of the project is 12 months, from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

Sport4Cancer is an example of a sporting event with a charitable purpose that encourages active community participation in the fight against cancer. Such events allow participants to satisfy several motives at the same time, e.g. playing sport, enjoying leisure time and having fun while contributing to a charitable cause (Bennett et al., 2007).

The Sport4Cancer Mar Menor Games programme included more than 100 sport and leisure activities of a wide variety, whether competitive, exhibition or participatory, and gathered more than 10,000 national and international participants. In addition, recreational and leisure activities were organised for all ages with a family atmosphere, in order to encourage the participation of all members of the community. The inclusion of different sporting disciplines in the event allows for greater participation of athletes and countries and, consequently, a wider reach.

The event took place in the coastal municipalities of the Mar Menor, specifically in San Javier, San Pedro del Pinatar, Los Alcázares and Cartagena. This strategic location provides the opportunity to practice a wide variety of sports in different scenarios, such as track, land, water, water sports, among others. Sport4Cancer was organised by the University of Murcia and the Union of Sports Federations of the Region of Murcia and counted with the collaboration of 12 European institutions from Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Turkey.

In addition, in parallel to the sporting event, a scientific congress was held on current events in the field of physical activity and cancer, and leisure and music areas were set up throughout the event, with a play area for children and a wide range of activities.

All the sporting activities were organised, coordinated and supervised by qualified personnel with expertise in the different sports disciplines. More than 120 volunteers were also involved in logistical, informative and sustainable tasks.

1.2. Perceived Quality

1.2.1. *Contextualisation of quality*

When we talk about quality, a term is mentioned that does not have a concrete and exact definition. Quality is a global concept that has emerged in order to respond to the various changes in the business sector. The current definitions of quality do not replace old ones, but serve to complement and add to the existing conceptualisations. Each one will be used in the most convenient way according to its business vision and objectives.

Therefore, as there is no single concept or definition of quality, we can mention that the evolution is subject to a broadening of the concept of quality (Claver et al., 1999). Numerous authors have provided different definitions and concepts of quality such as the following:

Quality is the main concept and is defined as the characteristics of a service, activity or product that enable customer satisfaction (Feigenbaum, 1986). Therefore, perceived quality is the set of characteristics that make an event satisfactory and meet the expectations of all event participants.

Afthinos et al. (2005) define it as the difference between consumers' perception of service quality from previous experiences compared to the perception of the actual performance of the service after the event. For Vegara-Ferri et al. (2021, p. 572) quality is defined as "the perception that a consumer develops about a service, compared to what he/she expected from it", "being better valued by local participants than by tourists" (Vegara-Ferri et al., 2021, p. 572).

Event quality is a crucial issue when it comes to sports tourism and service quality is one of its most important components. Service quality has received much attention in recent years and is recognised as a critical factor due to the influence it has on the psychological and behavioural responses of tourists. It is defined as the overall perception or impression that customers have about whether an organisation and its services are inferior or superior compared to other options available in the market. Current literature defines event quality as an overall judgement made by the spectator or participant regarding the value of the event (Jeong et al., 2019).

1.2.2. *Multidimensionality*

Quality in sport events has been treated carefully, due to the large amount of existing articles and research already addressing this topic. However, it can be said that it is something new in this field, due to the fact that sport events are carried out on an international level by organisations and institutions that have the need to know more about these topics, as it corresponds to a very important part as a starting point in the future realisation of events and the approach to the needs of the participants themselves (Martínez Cevallos, 2021).

To date, there is no common consensus on the dimensions of quality. There is no set of guidelines and rules specifying what should be evaluated due to the heterogeneity and multitude of fields in which this concept is applied. Therefore, there is a clear consensus among all authors who have dealt with the subject that service quality is a multidimensional variable (Angosto, 2014).

Numerous studies and proposals have been carried out over more than half a century, but the one that has provided the most information and has stood out from the rest is that carried out by Parasunaman et al. (1985), who introduced a quality model called SERVQUAL (Service Quality), which includes ten dimensions of quality: reliability, reactivity, accessibility, competence, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding and tangibility.

This scale was later reduced to five dimensions: safety, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability and empathy. These dimensions represent key aspects for customers when evaluating and perceiving service quality (Parasunaman, et al., 1988). On the other hand, Grönroos (1984) establishes two general dimensions of service quality (technical quality and functional quality), to which he later added a third dimension, corporate image (Grönroos, 1990).

1.2.3. Perceived quality models

The SERVQUAL model, as discussed above, is a widely used tool for assessing and measuring service quality in various sectors, including sporting events. Developed by Parasuraman et al. (1980), it is based on the premise that service quality can be measured and understood through customer perceptions and expectations.

Initially, it consisted of a model consisting of ten dimensions, but was later reduced by half. These five dimensions are: security, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability and empathy (Parasunaman, et al., 1988). According to Martínez Cevallos (2021) these five dimensions have the following characteristics:

1. Tangibility: brings together facilities, service equipment and staff appearance.
2. Reliability: it deals with the way in which the service is presented.
3. Responsiveness: capacity, speed and efficiency in terms of solving a problem or inconvenience at an event.
4. Security: both financial and physical, providing confidence and knowledge on the part of the employees.
5. Empathy: that customers get individualised attention, care about their interests and understand their needs.

In order to measure service quality with the SERVQUAL model, a survey is used which contains a series of statements related to each of the dimensions mentioned above. For these dimensions, a 7-point Likert-type response alternative is proposed, where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree with the question posed.

Numerous studies support the usefulness of this model in the context of sport events. For example, Lee et al. (2011) used the SERVQUAL model to measure service quality at the 2009 World Games in Kaohsiung, and found that the empathy dimension was the most influential dimension on the attending public.

On the other hand, Ho (2012) applied the SERVQUAL model to assess service quality at sporting events in Hong Kong, and in this case, the responsiveness dimension gained the most value among participants. On the other hand, the two-dimensional model of (Grönroos, 1984) maintains an approach in which it establishes two general dimensions of service quality:

- Technical quality dimension: related to the outcome of the service offered. Technical quality is focused on a service that is technically correct and leads to an acceptable outcome (what is given). Service is essentially an intangible and somewhat subjective experience process in which production and consumption activities take place simultaneously.
- Functional quality dimension, related to the experience of the service itself. Functional quality is concerned with how the consumer is treated in the development of the service production process (how it is delivered). By its nature, the functional quality dimension cannot be assessed as objectively as the technical dimension.

Similarly, this author maintains the theory that the perception of quality is the cohesion between the expected service (expectations) and the service received (reality). Subsequently, Grönroos (1990) included a third dimension in relation to these two dimensions of service quality:

- Corporate image, which can determine what is expected of the service provided by an organisation. For Grönroos, customer experience is influenced by the fusion of these three variables and he states that the way in which consumers perceive the company is through the corporate image.

2.1.5. State of the art

The scientific literature on sport marketing is very extensive in management, especially studies that focus on the evaluation of the perceived quality of sport services. However, the field of sport events has not been studied as much previously and received a later interest from researchers. Furthermore, it is important to note that within the study and analysis of perceived quality in sport events there is a great diversity of studies. It should also be noted that there are authors who have adapted the SERVQUAL tool and others who have developed their own evaluation tool, with the pretensions of the service to be analysed, adjusting it to the characteristics and scale of the event.

The first studies of perceived quality in sport events date back to the end of the last millennium. O'Neill et al. (1999) conducted an analysis of the perceived quality of a basketball game using an adaptation of the SERVQUAL model, considering only three dimensions: tangible elements, staff and other services.

The results indicated that the spectators analysed were satisfied with the service they received at the games. Similarly, there were no unfavourable opinions to stop attending this type of event, with a high intention to recommend attendance.

Following this line, Rodríguez et al. (2003) adapted the SERVQUAL scale to football events, reducing it to 13 items. For their part, Navarro-García et al. (2014) worked to glimpse the influence of the service quality of a football sport event and obtained three main conclusions: a) spectator satisfaction is determined by tangible elements, such as infrastructures, and intangible elements, such as the emotion of a match; b) the quality of service positively determines the partial satisfaction experienced by the spectator linked to the football event; and c) the overall satisfaction of the spectator is directly influenced by the satisfaction associated with specific aspects of the sporting event, and indirectly by the quality of the services provided.

In another line of study and the link between satisfaction and loyalty, Kao et al. (2007) mention that a large part of Taiwanese citizens choose to watch sporting events on television. This information is used to analyse what makes live fans continue to attend matches in person. Kao et al. (2007) conclude that the three experiential aspects of surprise, participation and immersion have a direct relationship on intentions and loyalty, which are manifested in the emotional experience, experiential attitude and experiential satisfaction.

If we look for information comparing the variables of perceived quality and economic impact, we find the work of Case et al. (2018). This work aimed to analyse whether there is a relationship between the perceived quality of an event and its organisation with the economic disbursement generated by the athletes. The conclusions they draw is that there is a direct relationship between the perception of quality of an event and the economic expenditure of the participants, with this the authors consider mentioning that a good capital investment in the event can result in economic benefits generated by the athletes.

A study conducted by Ornelas-Martínez (2019) aimed to evaluate the perceived quality and satisfaction of football spectators of the Mexican women's league. Among its conclusions, it shows that spectators who watch the match live value the services offered in a very positive way, and in the same way, they are satisfied with the sporting experience, as they do not demand a favourable result, but rather dedication and effort; this is an important contribution to achieving the satisfaction and loyalty of the club's social mass.

On the other hand, spectators also point out the poor state of the facilities, both in terms of conservation and cleanliness of the facilities, which leads to a decrease in customer satisfaction and potential disloyalty (Mátic et al., 2017). Lastly, Ornelas-Martínez (2019) emphasises the importance of segmenting spectators and potential spectators in order to create personalised marketing strategies.

Along the same lines, Theodorakis et al. (2019) conducted a study in which they sought to answer three questions: (a) how the quality of event services affects overall event satisfaction; (b) how event satisfaction affects liking when making merchandising purchases; (c) how this liking affects the participant's perception of quality of life.

The results indicated that event evaluation, in terms of quality and satisfaction, are interrelated and affect happiness with merchandising purchases. Furthermore, they find evidence linking shopping happiness with quality of life. Similarly, the study contributes to the literature on leisure and sport management by empirically demonstrating that participation in quality sport events can significantly improve participants' quality of life.

Jeong and Kim (2019) conduct a study that aims to explore the structural relationships between quality, destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, with an emphasis on the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty, and between perceived value and destination loyalty in the context of small-scale sport events. The results showed significant impacts on: event quality, destination image and perceived value on tourist satisfaction; destination image, perceived value and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty and demonstrated destination loyalty; and the average tourist's satisfaction fully captured the relationships between destination image and destination loyalty, and between perceived value and destination loyalty.

On the other hand, Givi, et al. (2021) worked with the objective of analysing the behavioural intentions, satisfaction and perceived quality of spectators of the Asian Volleyball Championship. In this research, very interesting findings were obtained, such as: a) the quality of the services of the event, as well as the main product (the matches), had a significant effect on the perception of quality; b) satisfaction with the main product can predict behavioural behaviours and c) on the contrary, the effect of service satisfaction on behavioural intentions was not significant. Over time, the study of the quality of sporting events has become increasingly interesting, but most research focuses on the perception of the spectator, and not so much on the athlete or user actively involved in the event. There is little scientific literature on this subject. Likewise, some of the works that have been found in this field of knowledge will be mentioned below.

The first study we found was that of Bebettsos and Theodorakis (2003) in which the satisfaction of the athlete is examined both at the competitive and psychological level and with the environment in which the sports practice takes place. The sample was taken from the Youth Team Handball Finals Tournament in Greece with more than 250 players. The results indicated that the players were satisfied with the performance of their leaders and with their individual performance. There were no differences between genders; and it should be noted that the more training sessions per week, the higher levels of satisfaction were recorded in the event.

The study carried out by Angosto, et al. (2016a) was conducted within the framework of popular sport. The research aimed to assess the perceived quality of the participants of two editions of popular middle-distance races, examining the different characteristics of this type of event from one edition to another. The tool used for data collection was CAPPEP.

The results showed that the participants perceived a worsening of quality in the second event; the personal interaction dimension was the best evaluated item of all in both editions, both in general and for men and women; finally, the perceived quality assessment estimated by women was higher in both editions and dimensions evaluated.

Ma and Kaplanidou (2019) conducted a study relating three dimensions of the perceived quality of an event: Quality of Infrastructure, Quality of Interaction and Results obtained; with the intention to practice physical exercise regularly, quality of life and intentions to repeat the event. The sample was drawn from two different events, one from Taiwan and one from Greece. Among other findings, the results revealed that the infrastructure quality of both events indirectly influenced "intentions to repeat the event" through "quality of life" benefits.

Montesinos-Saura et al (2018) work on a study that aims to measure the perceived quality and value, as well as the satisfaction and future intentions of participants of a swim crossing event. The results show that within the perceived quality of the event, interactions with volunteer staff are the most highly rated, followed closely on the overall scale by satisfaction and future intentions. Another interesting fact to note is that participants with less experience in sport events perceived everything in general with a higher value.

Another work related to the perceived quality of the athlete was carried out by González (2019), which was articulated with the CAPPEP tool. This study aimed to evaluate the perceived service quality of the participating athletes and correlate it with socio-demographic variables in the XVII Half Marathon of 2018 in order to improve future editions. The perceived quality of the athletes was defined as "good", being able to be "excellent", as this is what the athletes' sporting level demands.

In relation to the participant's perception, Vegara-Ferri et al. (2021), carried out a study in which the objective was to evaluate the perception of the participating sports tourists on the quality of the event, socio-cultural perception, destination image and future intentions, comparing the possible differences between national and foreign tourists participating in an international nautical event. Some of the conclusions obtained were that the highest rated item is the socio-cultural perception followed by the intentions to return to the event and to the host town. On the other hand, the perception of the quality and image of the event are the worst rated of the event.

A study carried out by Madruga-Vicente et al. (2021), has as one of its objectives to analyse the quality perceived by trail runners and to identify the socio-sportive factors that determine the quality of the event. The data collection was done with the (CAPPEP) of Angosto et al. (2016a) and as results it was determined that: some of the conditions that determine the quality of an event are related to socio-sporting factors of the athlete, such as their level of studies or their federated status; some of the factors of higher perceived quality in this event were the treatment with the staff as well as the factors inherent to the development of the event; however the worst rated factor were the complementary services to the event.

The study by Milovanovic et al. (2021) aims to analyse the interactions of destination image, event quality and behavioural intentions, including all of them in an integrated model. The sample was drawn from the Sambo World Cup 2021. Some of the results show that perceived event quality is a key element as a predictor of future intentions. Since the sample was taken from a professional competition, the sport competition was one of the most important items. Another interesting finding was the importance of the destination image, as it directly and indirectly affected future intentions.

Other works such as the one carried out by Ramos et al (2021) have as one of their objectives to measure the quality perceived by the athletes of the Spanish Championship "Descenso de los Cañones 2019". The overall satisfaction of this event was very positive, with an average score of 4.31 out of 5. The event had as one of the best rated items the attention of the volunteer staff. On the other hand, some of the worst rated aspects were some of the services such as refreshments, showers, changing rooms and cloakrooms.

2. Objectives

2.1 General objective

The main objective is to analyse the perceived quality of the participants of the Sport4Cancer charity race and sport activities.

2.2 Specific objectives

The secondary objectives were:

- a) To describe the results of the variables related to the perceived and overall quality of the Sport4Cancer event.
- b) To analyse the existing relationships between the variables of perceived quality and overall quality.
- c) To analyse and compare the results of perceived quality and overall quality of the participants in the Sport4Cancer race according to gender and age.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample consisted of 519 participants with an average age of 43.71 years, of which 66.5% were male and 33.5% female. In terms of level of education, 15.6% had basic education, 31.2% had high school or vocational training (31.2%), and 53.2% had university studies. Regarding their current employment status, 444 were employed or working

(85.5%), unemployed (1.7%), 39 were students (7.5%), 18 were retired (3.5%) and nine were housewives (1.7%).

In terms of years of sporting experience, 18.5% had less than 1 year of experience, 20.2% had between 1 and 3 years, 23.1% of the sample had between 3 and 6 years of physical activity, 19.7% had between 6 and 10 years, and 18.5% had more than 10 years of extensive sporting experience. Finally, with regard to the number of hours of weekly sport practice, 31.8% had between none and three hours of sport practice per week, 46.2% had between 3 and 6 hours per week, 19.1% had between 6 and 10 hours of sport practice per week.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the sample..*

Variables		M	ST
Age		43.71	9.4
		N	%
Gender	Male	345	66.5
	Female	174	33.5
Education level	Basic studies	81	15.6
	High School/Vocational training	162	31.2
	University studies	276	53.2
Occupation	Employee	444	85.5
	Unemployee	9	1.7
	Student	36	7.5
	Retired	18	3.5
	Housekeeper	9	1.7
Years of sport experience	Less than 1 year	96	18.5
	Between 1-3 years	105	20.2
	Between 3-6 years	120	23.1
	Between 6- 10years	102	19.7
	More than 10 years	96	18.5
Time of week sport practice	0-3 hours per week	165	31.8
	3-6 hours per week	240	46.2
	6-10 hours per week	99	19.1
	10 hours per week or more	15	2.9

3.2. Procedure

The methodology employed to carry out this research study initially involved conducting a thorough review of the available literature on perceived quality and the instruments used to determine the most appropriate tools for evaluating spectators and participants of an event.

After identifying the relevant evaluation instruments, the Sport4Cancer event organisers were contacted to communicate their interest in conducting an evaluation study of the event and to inform them of the objectives and evaluation tools to be used.

Once consent had been obtained from the organisation, the survey was disseminated online. The data collection was carried out by creating an online questionnaire through the survey application of the University of Murcia. This questionnaire was sent to the participants of the event by email 24 hours after the end of the event. A second reminder was sent five days after the event. The response period for the questionnaire was ten days after the first mailing. To obtain this mailing and participate in the study, participants had to accept the informed consent provided. This email informed them of the objective of the study, as well as the inclusion of the link to access the survey. The questionnaire was conducted on a voluntary and anonymous basis. The whole process was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Murcia.

3.3. Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a quality questionnaire, Participant Perceived Quality in Popular Events (CAPPEP) developed by Angosto et al. (2016), consisting of two scales, one of them "Perceived Quality", composed of 19 items, divided into 5 dimensions: communication, staff, environment, logistics and complementary services. On the other hand, a second scale, "Global Quality", or "General Quality", composed of 14 items, divided into the dimensions: perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction and future intentions. The rating scale used for both was a Likert-type scale with values from 1 to 7, where 1: Strongly disagree and 7: Strongly agree.

3.4. Data Analysis

The statistical package SPSS v 28.0 licensed by the University of Murcia was used for data analysis. Descriptive analyses were performed for qualitative variables (frequency and percentage) and quantitative variables (mean and standard deviation). A Pearson correlation analysis was also performed between the perceived quality variables. The comparative analyses were a Student's t-test to compare results according to gender, and an ANOVA test to compare results according to three age groups (under 40 years; between 41 and 50 years; and, over 50 years). In the ANOVA test, Tukey's post-hoc test was applied to analyse differences by group. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

4. Results

Table 3 shows the descriptive results of the perceived quality of the Sport4Cancer event activities. Regarding the "Perceived quality" scale, one of its dimensions, "Communication", the best rated item was the simplicity when registering ($M=5.75 \pm 0.6$); while the information for the development of the competition was the worst rated ($M=5.34 \pm 1.1$). In the "Staff" dimension, the most highly rated aspect was the willingness of the organisation's staff to help ($M=5.84 \pm 0.5$); while the worst rated aspect was the collection of bibs at the competitive events ($M=5.66 \pm 0.7$).

Table 2. *Dimensions of the instrument.*

Dimension	Explanation
Communication (Co)	The objective of the Co is to evaluate the promotion and dissemination channels that the organisation uses to promote the race (brochures, advertisements in the press, radio or web, information provided...) and whether the distribution of information is good.
Logistics (L)	This dimension covers the aspects of the signposting of the event, adapting it to its location, the provision of sufficient parking spaces to cater for the number of participants and the material elements such as banners, stands, start or finish area, etc., as well as the design of the race route and its signposting.
Staff (St)	This factor values the role of the organisation's personnel and volunteers, as well as the social relations established when handing over personnel and the compliance with the timetables imposed by the organisation for the planned development of the event.
Complementary services (CS)	It has been considered as the existence of services parallel to the event such as changing rooms, stands, cafeterias or physiotherapy, assessment of the content of the runner's bag, the visibility of the results and podium with respect to where they are displayed or how the refreshment points are if there are any at the event.
Environmental (En)	This dimension assesses how the organisation takes measures to preserve the natural space on which the sporting event takes place.
Overall quality (OQ)	The OQ looks for the overall assessment of all the above dimensions as a whole.
Perceived value (Vp)	The Vp shows the generic valuation made by the runner with respect to the quality-price ratio.
Satisfaction (Sa)	This dimension assesses the degree of positive emotion that the participant has derived from his or her participation in the event.
Future Intentions (FI)	The FI is used to measure the athletes' intention to return next year or not and whether they would recommend the event to colleagues or friends in future editions

The "Environment" dimension had the item of the course respecting flora and fauna as the best perceived ($M=5.79 \pm 0.5$), on the contrary, prevention and control measures regarding environmental impact obtained the lowest score ($M=5.65 \pm 0.7$). In terms of the "Logistics" dimension, the most highly rated item was the good signposting and safety of the race route ($M=5.72 \pm 0.6$). On the other hand, the visibility of the podium and the results for all spectators was the worst rated item ($M=5.40 \pm 1.0$).

To conclude the descriptive analysis of Perceived Quality, the "Complementary services" dimension, the item that received the highest rating was the participant's bag and its contents ($M=5.69 \pm 0.7$). On the other hand, the worst rated item was the complementary services (toilets, changing rooms, cloakroom, massage areas, stands, etc.) ($M=5.34 \pm 1.0$).

The results of the "Global Quality" scale in which the sub-dimension "Future Intentions" was the best rated ($M=5.79 \pm 0.5$) with the highest rated item being the recommendation to family friends or other people ($M=5.81 \pm 0.5$), and the worst, repeating if the opportunity arises to attend a similar sporting event ($M=5.75 \pm 0.6$), although the scores were high. The dimension "Overall perceived quality" had staff involvement as the highest rated aspect ($M=5.75 \pm 0.6$), but the quality of the race was not considered to be superior compared to other, better-known races ($M=5.58 \pm 0.7$).

Looking at the dimension "Perceived Value", a clear superiority of assessment was found in the item that the participants had a high value in attending the Sport4Cancer event ($M=5.60 \pm 0.7$). On the other hand, the worst rated item was the reasonable price paid in relation to the event ($M=5.53 \pm 0.8$). Finally, the dimension "Satisfaction" obtained the highest score for the participants' satisfaction ($M=5.81 \pm 0.5$), and the lowest score for the satisfaction with the results obtained ($M=5.68 \pm 0.7$).

Table 3. *Descriptives Statistics of Quality Perceived of participants.*

	M	SD
Communication	5.51	0.7
1. The race is well promoted and publicised, providing sufficient practical information about the race.	5.44	0.9
2. During the event, clear and precise information is given to know the development of the competition.	5.34	1.1
3. It was easy to register for the race.	5.75	0.6
Staff	5.76	0.5
4. It was easy to pick up my bib number without having to wait a long time.	5.66	0.7
5. The staff of the organisation is willing to help.	5.84	0.5
6. The volunteers are sufficient and friendly.	5.80	0.5
7. The organisation complies with the timetable (announced in advance or during the race).	5.75	0.6
Environment	5.70	0.6
8. The design of the route adheres to the places authorised for the activity, avoiding the minimum disturbance to the flora and fauna of the area.	5.79	0.5
9. The organisation carries out a correct cleaning of the natural space after the event in order to reduce the environmental impact.	5.66	0.7
10. The organisation takes the necessary preventive and control measures with regard to the environmental impact of the activity, especially in terms of noise emissions and possible disturbance to wildlife.	5.66	0.7
Logistics	5.53	0.7
11. The signposting of the event makes it easy to reach the starting point.	5.53	0.9
12. There is sufficient parking near the start or finish area of the race.	5.43	1.0
13. The material elements used by the event are visually attractive (banners, fences, start, finish, route, etc.).	5.55	0.8
14. The sport activities/race course is well signposted and safe.	5.72	0.6
15. The results and the podium are visible to all spectators.	5.40	1.0

Table 3. Descriptives Statistics of Quality Perceived of participants.(continuation)

	M	SD
Complementary services	5.57	0.6
16. The race course has sufficient and adequate refreshment points.	5.58	0.8
17. The runner's bag is adequate and complete.	5.69	0.7
18. The race has sufficient support services (toilets, changing rooms, cloakroom, massage areas, stands, etc.).	5.34	1.0
19. Near the start/finish of the race there are easily accessible commercial places (cafés, bars, etc.).	5.66	0.6
Overall Quality	5.67	0.6
20. In general, the service offered by the organisation is adequate.	5.68	0.6
21. The quality of this race can be considered superior when compared to other popular races.	5.58	0.7
22. I consider that the involvement of the event staff has been excellent.	5.75	0.6
23. In general, I have received a high quality service in this sporting event.	5.69	0.6
Perceived Value	5.56	0.7
24. I think the overall event is reasonably priced.	5.53	0.8
25. Overall, I found the race to be good value for money.	5.56	0.7
26. I got great value from attending this event.	5.60	0.7
Satisfaction	5.76	0.5
27. I am happy with the experiences I have had at this event.	5.75	0.6
28. I am satisfied with the results obtained at this event.	5.68	0.7
29. I truly enjoyed attending the event.	5.79	0.5
30. Participating in this event has been enjoyable.	5.81	0.5
Future Intentions	5.79	0.5
31. I am willing to continue to return to the race in future editions.	5.80	0.5
32. I will recommend attending the race to my friends, relatives and others.	5.81	0.5
33. If I have the opportunity to attend a similar sporting event I will repeat the experience.	5.75	0.6

A correlational analysis was carried out between all the dimensions addressed in this questionnaire (Table 4). There is a positive and significant statistical relationship between all the variables analysed, with the relationship between the variables "Satisfaction" and "Future Intentions" standing out with a value of $r = 0.893$, followed by "Quality" and "Satisfaction"; and "Quality" and "Future Intentions" both with a value of $r = 0.833$ respectively. On the other hand, the least correlated was the relationship between the variables "Perceived Value" and "Communication" with a relationship of $r = 0.581$.

Table 4. Correlation analysis of Perceived Quality variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Communication	1								
2. Staff	,673**	1							
3. Environment	,611**	,765**	1						
4. Logistics	,627**	,684**	,739**	1					
5. Complementary services	,664**	,711**	,619**	,738**	1				
6. Overall Quality	,676**	,768**	,735**	,786**	,788**	1			
7. Perceived value	,581**	,663**	,650**	,716**	,755**	,810**	1		
8. Satisfaction	,611**	,756**	,703**	,736**	,744**	,833**	,771**	1	
9. Future intentions	,586**	,732**	,643**	,740**	,730**	,833**	,773**	,893**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

In the following, the data collected will be analysed from a gender perspective (Table 5). In general terms, it was observed that women had a better perception of higher event quality compared to men. Both genders differed in the rating of the dimensions, both the worst and the best rated. On the one hand, women rated the "Satisfaction" item higher ($M=5.86 \pm 0.3$) and on the other hand, men rated "Future Intentions" higher ($M=5.76 \pm 0.6$). On the other hand, the worst rated item for women was "Communication" ($M=5.55 \pm 0.7$), while for men it was "Logistics" ($M=5.46 \pm 0.7$). Statistically significant differences were found in the dimensions of logistics, overall perceived quality and satisfaction ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5. *Comparative Statistics of Perceived Quality by gender.*

Variable	Male		Female		P value.
	M	SD	M	SD	
Communication	5,49	0,7	5,55	0,7	0,563
Staff	5,74	0,6	5,81	0,3	0,304
Environment	5,67	0,6	5,77	0,4	0,220
Logistics	5,46	0,7	5,65	0,5	0,042*
Complementary services	5,54	0,7	5,63	0,5	0,344
Overall Quality	5,62	0,7	5,78	0,3	0,045*
Perceived value	5,57	0,7	5,56	0,7	0,986
Satisfaction	5,71	0,6	5,86	0,3	0,031*
Future intentions	5,76	0,6	5,84	0,4	0,235

* $p < 0,05$

Finally, the last comparative analysis of perceived quality according to age (Table 6). Athletes under 40 years of age were the ones who best perceived the quality of the event in general, followed by those over 50 years of age and finally those between 41 and 50 years of age. The best rated dimension by all athletes was "Future Intentions" (Under 40 years= 5.86 ± 0.3 ; Between 41 and 50 years= 5.71 ± 0.7 and Over 50 years= 5.84 ± 0.3), while all agreed that the worst rated item was "Communication" (Under 40 years= 5.51 ± 0.8 ; Between 41 and 50 years= 5.47 ± 0.8 and Over 50 years= 5.59 ± 0.5). No statistically significant differences were found according to gender.

Table 6. *Comparative Statistics of Perceived Quality by age.*

	Less than 40 years (n=54)		Between 41-50 years (n=80)		More tan 50 years (n=39)		P value.
	M	DT	M	DT	M	DT	
Communication	5,51	0,8	5,47	0,8	5,59	0,5	0,693
Staff	5,83	0,3	5,69	0,7	5,81	0,3	0,216
Environment	5,77	0,5	5,65	0,7	5,72	0,5	0,487
Logistics	5,54	0,6	5,49	0,8	5,57	0,5	0,788
Complementary services	5,62	0,5	5,52	0,7	5,60	0,5	0,622
Overall Quality	5,78	0,4	5,60	0,7	5,68	0,4	0,211
Perceived value	5,61	0,6	5,50	0,8	5,62	0,5	0,569
Satisfaction	5,86	0,3	5,69	0,7	5,76	0,4	0,208
Future intentiones	5,86	0,3	5,71	0,7	5,84	0,3	0,226

5. Discussion

The main objective of the study was to analyse and understand the impact of these dimensions is essential for managers and organisers of future sport events due to the implementation of improvements and new strategies in different areas of the service provided.

Continuing with the dimension most highly rated by the participants were "future intentions" and staff. This is noteworthy because a large number of studies report the dimension of personal treatment as the highest rated (Alexandris et al. 2017; Angosto et al. 2016a, 2016b; Kim et al. 2013; Madruga et al. 2021; Theodorakis et al. 2015). However, in this case, as we found in other studies such as those by Mundina et al. (2005), Calabuig et al. (2008) or Pérez Campos (2010), the participants' intentions to repeat a race of this type or to recommend it to a family member or friend outweigh the good treatment by the staff, which nevertheless obtains a very good rating.

These results confirm the results obtained by Montesinos-Saura et al. (2018) or Madruga et al. (2021). The literature shows that the provision of a high-quality service causes positive effects on participants, improving their intentions to engage in regular exercise (Chen et al. 2012; Ma & Kaplanidou, 2019). Similarly, it is important to note that spectators' perception of the facilities was not poor, but the worst rated, which according to works such as Mátic et al. (2017) and Ornelas-Martínez (2019) may reduce spectator satisfaction and potential loyalty.

Next, we will discuss the most noteworthy aspects of the results obtained from the gender comparison, which compares the results obtained with a gender segregation. In this study, it was observed that female, in general, perceive quality better than male. Gender as a variable has been studied in sports services (Afthinos et al. 2005; Calabuig et al., 2008; Dorado, 2007). Obtaining adequate information about this segmentation will lead event managers to better marketing strategies.

These results can be compared with any type of study in which the objective is to measure the perceived quality of an event or service. Some works such as Calabuig et al. (2008), García-Fernández et al (2014), or Nuviala et al (2021) confirm this trend. It should be noted that the researchers Iacobucci et al. (1994) tried to provide an answer to this, stating that the main casuistry that could cause these differences lies in the brain schemas that the different genders use to value an event or service. It could then be explained, based on this reflection, that each user, depending on their gender, uses different mechanisms to evaluate the quality of a service (Ferrer, 2007).

In the case of Calabuig et al. (2008) and their study on the perceived quality of sports services, a similarity is found with our results in that women have a higher perception of quality compared to men. This also occurs in the case of Pérez Campos (2010), in which he states that women during the World Championships had a better quality assessment than men. If we look at the socio-demographic data, we can see that there is a higher participation of men in relation to women. This percentage coincides with that of other studies in which women do not have the same participation as men (Angosto 2014; Angosto et al. 2016a, 2016b; González Ballesteros 2019).

Considering the results obtained according to the age of the participants (under 40; between 41 and 50; and over 50), it has been observed that the dimension "Future intentions" is ranked as the best valued by all age groups. This variable is critical for organisations and/or companies carrying out an event. According to studies such as Gómez Adillón and Fransi, (2003), and Cronin Jr. et al., (2000), this is because a good perception of service quality by customers is crucial for the success and future participation of participants. Therefore, it can be deduced that a high rating of this dimension will lead to more events.

The results showed that the dimension of "Communication" was the worst rated by all age groups. This dimension refers to the dissemination of information and the ease of registering for the event. This coincides with other studies such as that of Camino López and García Fernández, (2014) which states that communication is the worst rated dimension, and that it is necessary to be self-critical and pay special attention to improve these aspects in future events.

6. Conclusions

After analysing the results obtained and comparing them with the existing scientific literature, some of the conclusions obtained on perceived quality, both from the sample group and from the contributions of this study, will be presented.

1. With regard to perceived quality, the results show that the dimension most highly valued by the athletes who participated was the event staff. On the other hand, the least valued was the communication dimension. On the other hand, future intentions was the most highly rated dimension on the overall quality scale, and perceived value the lowest, although all with moderate to high scores.

2. The variables with the highest correlation are satisfaction and future intentions, the next highest correlation being global quality with satisfaction and future intentions.
3. Women in general rate the quality of the event more positively, with satisfaction being the most highly rated, and communication the lowest. On the other hand, men highlight the future intentions of the event, and rank the logistics as the worst. There are differences in the dimensions of logistics, overall quality and satisfaction according to gender.
4. With respect to age, all three age groups have high scores on future intentions and scored communication the lowest. There are no statistically significant differences between them.

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