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INVESTIGATING THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORT FACILITIES AND SERVICE QUALITY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN SRI LANKAN LIVE CRICKET SPECTATORS AT R. PREMADASA INTERNATIONAL CRICKET STADIUM, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Consistently maintaining attendance at sporting events is particularly difficult, as aspects of quality, such as atmosphere and game quality, are unable to be controlled (Kennett, Sneath, & Henson, 2001). Therefore, it is strategically important to understand and manage spectator perceptions of service quality and facilities, moreover to identify how these perceptions affect satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Despite this, research into importance of the spectator's perception of facilities, service quality dimensions, and the related service constructs is scarce. The current study addresses this deficiency by investigating the importance of sport facilities and service quality for live cricket spectators. Since the unfavorable, unhappy experience of the spectators, the researcher stimulated to investigate that unpleasant situation. The researcher had four objectives in this study such as, to examine the facility design and the cricket spectator's relationship, to identify the relationship of facility maintenance towards spectator's satisfaction, to explore the link of service quality towards spectator's satisfaction, and to identify the relationship of quick & easy access towards spectator's satisfaction. Four hypotheses were also formulated as, H₁: Facility design is dependent on gender, H₂: There is a relationship between levels of education and service quality, H₃: There is a relationship between facility maintenance and service quality and, H₄: Quick & easy access is dependent on facility design. While concerned spectator's satisfaction as the dependent variable, gender, levels of education were concerned as independent variables while facility design, service quality, facility maintenance, quick & easy access were chosen as intermediate variables. The researcher carried out an extensive literature review to provide conceptual background of the study and construct a conceptual model. Considering the situational factors and spectator's environment the convenience sampling technique was employed in the process of analyzing data. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to all blocks (A, B, C, D) in the stadium, and four hypotheses were tested with the association of SPSS version 19.0 Moreover cross tabulation, chi square and Cramer's V test methods were employed. The result shows that the facility design is not influenced on spectator's satisfaction, while quick & easy access and facility design moderately influence on spectator's satisfaction. When come to conclusions with the consideration of findings it can be said the Sri Lankan cricket spectators can identified as spectators who are satisfied with what they have and they don't consider much about service quality. Most of cricket spectators are moderate people, but they have different ideas, flavors getting match experience.

Key words: Satisfaction, Facility design, Service quality, Facility maintenance, Quick & easy access



INTRODUCTION

A trend and enthusiasm can be seen in watching competitive sports in recent history. Among the main reasons for watching sporting events uncertainty, enthusiasm, competitiveness, strength, thrill and entertainment can be noted. Due to above mentioned reasons many people were attracted for these sports. Cricket is a very unique competitive sport, and it's unpredictable. It is mostly specified, because of its weakness of predicting the final consequence, and decisions can be varied ball to ball. No one can predict what will happen next. It is hardly easy to decide, because of that nature a lot of spectators is created and were created. In order to experience the live quality of cricket.

Cricket has become one of the leading sport in the world, especially among Commonwealth countries. As far as it has developed as multibillion business sport in the planet. When concerning history of the cricket it has a known history spanning from the 16th (www.jl.sl.btinternet.co.uk) century to the present day, with international matches played since 1844 (www.jl.sl.btinternet.co.uk), although the official history of international Test cricket began in 1877 (www.jl.sl.btinternet.co.uk). During this time, the game developed from its origins in England into a game which is now played professionally in most of the Commonwealth of Nations.

In contemporary world cricket has come as second big sport in the world. Therefore more than 100 countries very interest about this field, Day by day new techniques, methods and technology are developed to cricket. The professionals are busy with doing research and statistics in this relevant area. Cricket depends on three major pillars. So every cricket countries and relevant bodies more concentrate to these three pillars. Such as Place, Players and fans. That's why there are superb grounds are built around the world. And also big stars like Tendulkar, Donald Bradman, Sanath Jayasooriya, Lara were created. Moreover there is a huge crowd, passion able spectator in Cricket.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In cricket, spectators are very important factor to subsistence. They come to cricket stadiums dedicate their time and other works. Every country that play cricket have even one good cricket stadium. Fans come to there and enjoy the match and also get the experience in stadium. Thus, they are looking for a comfortable service there. Concern about sport facilities and staff stadiums are the most affective for it. International Cricket Council (ICC) certified some stadiums as International Cricket Stadiums. The ICC consider more details and condition of a stadium, after testing and satisfying they give certify it as an International Level Cricket Stadium. Sri Lanka has a big image among all cricket countries. Because in 1996 they won ICC Cricket World Cup and 2007, 2011 they were runner-up. On the other hand, Sri Lanka has won many cricket series all over the world.

Sri Lanka has eight grounds that are used to host International Cricket matches, and seven of them have hosted test matches. The Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium held it's maiden One Day International in 2001, but was unable to host another until 2003 due to a legal problem. The Hambantota and Pallekele Cricket grounds are both newly constructed for 2011 cricket world cup, in which Sri Lanka jointly hosted with India and Bangladesh. The R. Premadasa stadium is the leading stadium in Sri Lanka. (List of International Cricket Grounds in Sri Lanka) However the researcher has been worked with ICC world cup 2011 and T20 world cup 2012 as a volunteer. Moreover the researcher has visited many Cricket matches in Colombo. The researcher has discovered



that there is a specific culture growing among cricket. Most spectators prefer to go open areas or step area. They are enjoying their own entertainment as well as cricket match. But in past there were no culture like this. Accordingly, some spectators booked their seats.

The Researcher has recognized the nature of the decrease of live cricket spectators, but still cricket is the most famous sport in Sri Lanka. Publicity for cricket is increasing day by day and amount of spectators is decreasing as well. This specific connection had occurred a great puzzle in the mind of researcher. So the researcher assumes that, there should be a relation of facilities of the stadiums or its lack of services and decrease of live spectators. So then focal problem of this study why such a situation has taken place and how people think of its quality.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

There are two types of objectives namely key objective and specific objectives.

Key Objective

- To investigate the importance of the sport facilities and service quality towards cricket spectators.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the facilities design and the cricket spectators relationship.
- To identify the relationship of facilities maintenance towards fans satisfaction
- To explore the relationship of service quality towards spectators satisfaction
- To identify the relationship of quick and easy access towards spectators satisfaction

Hypotheses.

The following hypotheses were based in this study.

H1: Facility design is dependent on gender.

H2: There is a relationship between levels of education and service quality.

H3: There is a relationship between facility maintenance and service quality.

H4: Quick & easy access is dependent on facility design.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevant literature pertaining to the present study has been abstracted to provide the understanding background of variables and to evaluate the significance of this study.

Spectator Satisfaction

(Yoshida & James, 2010) Studied two types of satisfaction at sporting events: game satisfaction and service satisfaction. A model of the relationships between service quality, core product quality, game and service satisfaction, and behavioral intentions is proposed and tested. Data were collected from spectators at a professional baseball game in Japan (n = 283) and at two college football games in the United States (n = 343). The results in both Japan and the United States indicate that game atmosphere was a strong predictor of game satisfaction whereas stadium employees and facility access were the major antecedents of service satisfaction. Game satisfaction had a significant impact on behavioral intentions across the two settings, although the service satisfaction-behavioral intentions relationship was significant only in Japan.. (Zhang, Williamson, Michelle , Connaughton , & Spengler, 2004) examined spectator satisfaction with the event operations of an intercollegiate athletic conference women's basketball tournament. Selected by random cluster sampling procedures, research participants (N=1,076) were the attendants of an intercollegiate athletic conference women's basketball tournament. The participants proportionally represented the number of spectators attending the three rounds of the games, with close to 50% from the first round and 25% from the second round and the championship, respectively. Overall, the research findings further emphasized the importance and relevance of event management quality for an intercollegiate athletic conference women's basketball tournament. In another study, (Alexandris, Papadopoulos, Paliolia, & Vasiliadis, 1999) compared customer satisfaction between private and public sport and fitness clubs in Greece. 418 members of five public and five private clubs participated in the study. The confirmatory factor analysis with the use of structural modeling supported the multidimensionality of the satisfaction construct, and resulted in a six dimensions model. Furthermore, results indicated significant differences between private and public clubs in facilities, staff, intellectual/ individual, and health / fitness dimensions. Customer in public clubs score lower than customers in private clubs. In sum, the literature has suggested that customer satisfaction is related to organizational prosperity. Thus, further examination of different sports settings is needed in order to advance the general knowledge, and contribute to organizational effectiveness.

Spectator Attendance at Sporting Events

(Lee & Bang, 2005) found that as the age of the facility increased attendance decreased. They conducted a study that examined facility age as a factor. The purpose of their study was to determine the number of years the honeymoon effect has on attendance last, following the opening of a new major League Baseball facility, and if attendance increase significantly later in the facility's lifespan. The major findings were that as the age of the facility increased there was a decrease in average attendance over the first 45 years of the facility's life. Thus, these results support the claim that a honeymoon period does exist for new facilities. The study also concluded that a statistically positive relationship existed between age and attendance for facilities that were more than 48 years of age.

Another study that focused on spectator attendance factors of professional sport games was conducted by (McEvoy, Nagel, DeSchriver, & Brown, 2005). Their study sought to determine the effects on the desire of people to attend professional sport games and their intentions to attend future sport events. Promotion, attractiveness, schedule, and economic factors were studied as the attendance factors. Of the 745 questionnaires from the fan of selected professional baseball and soccer sporting events in the 2001-02 season, the schedule, and the economic factors. It was also found that these same variables were influential on intentions to attend in the future. According to Boyd and Kriehbiel (2003) promotions had a positive effect on attendance and supported the use of frequent promotions to help lure fans and spectators. The results of their research found that in eighteen of the 24 teams studied, the promotions held during the week increased attendance significantly. Their study was designed to determine whether promotions are better run weekends, during day games, or against rivals versus non-rivals. The sample populations was six Major League Baseball teams during the 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 seasons. It was found that all of the teams showed positive effect of attendance increased due to promotions of over 8 000 in attendance. It was concluded that promotions are more effective when run during day games and on weekends. (Boyd & Kriehbiel, 2003) found that to maximize the effect of a promotion, It is important to run the promotion at a specific time. They conducted a study to examine three types of promotions and their effects when combined with two significant timing factors, weekend games and games against rivals. Of the six Major League Baseball teams investigated that had an outdoor stadium, promotions were found to be more effective when run during day games and on weekdays.

Service Quality in Sport

Makover (2003) started develop and test a model of the relationship between contact-employees and customers in a sport organization based on the balanced scorecard framework (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1993) and the Sears'' model (Rucci, Kirn, & Quinn, 1998). Specifically, the model proposed that employee attitudes (self-efficacy, organizational commitment and job satisfaction) and behaviors (in-role job performance and organizational citizenship behaviors) impact customer level outcomes (perceived service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty).

(Kim, LaVetter, & Lee, 2006) started little attention has been paid to the concept of service quality and the Korean male professional basketball league. Therefore, this study was primarily designed to identify the effects of five factors of service quality on customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention for spectators in attendance at the Korean professional basketball league. The questionnaire utilized for measuring perceptions of service quality included the following factors: (1) tangibles, (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, (4) assurance, and (5) empathy as identified by (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry , 1988) The findings of analysis of variance indicated that demographic variables including education, income, and season ticket status were significantly related to the mean levels of service quality. The results from the regression model considered the five factors of service quality to be independent variables and customer satisfaction, the dependent variable, indicated that the factors of reliability and assurance were the most influential factors on overall customer satisfaction. Zeithaml et al. (1996) argued that behavioral intentions had higher validity and richer diagnostic value than overall service quality and customer satisfaction because behavioral intentions were related to actual behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

Sources of data

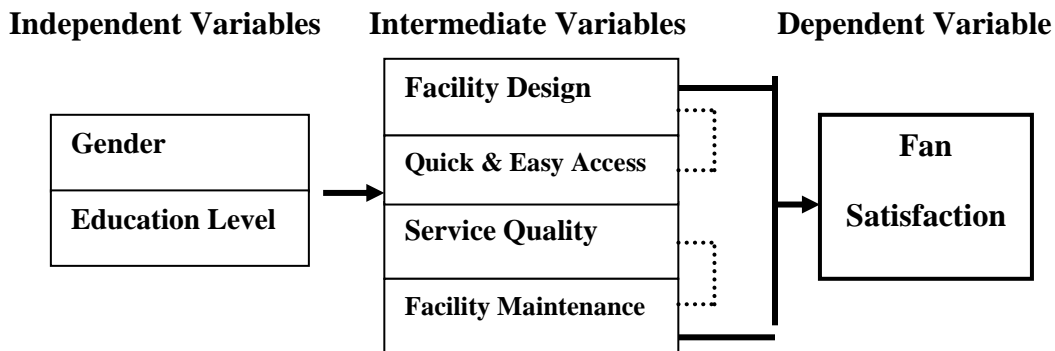
As this study is exploratory in nature, it was intended to collect primary & secondary data. To get an idea of Facilities design, Facilities maintains, staff, quick and easy access that are the standard figures SLC official reports and previous research were used.

The Sample

Cluster sample method was used because this tool helped to select the spectators who visit to watch cricket matches. Among average amount of spectators that is of 40 were selected as the sample due to the India vest Sri Lanka 1st one day match seem to be biased on social cultural and geographical factors in all cricket fans. And also this kind of series continuously appears to all parties and bodies who related with Cricket. Besides that it is a common match for all cricket fans. Sample was taken from the India vest Sri Lanka first One day international match.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the variables identified from literature, the following conceptual framework was constructed.



Source: constructed by the researcher

RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSION

Table 1 - Gender Distribution of the Sample

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	118	59.0	59.0	59.0
Female	82	41.0	41.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source: survey data

Table 1 shows male frequency is 118, female frequency is 82 and percentage of male is 59% and percentage of female is 41%. Majority is male respondents.

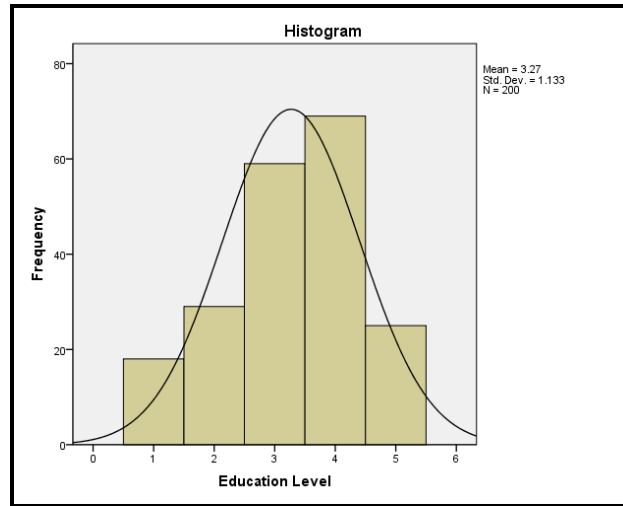
Table 2 - Distribution of Education in Sample Education Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Less than O/L	18	9.0	9.0	9.0
O/L pass	29	14.5	14.5	23.5
Till A/L	59	29.5	29.5	53.0
A/L pass	69	34.5	34.5	87.5
graduate or Higher	25	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source: survey data

According to survey data as presented in the above table (table 2) less than O/L level educated frequency is 18; its percentage is 9%. O/L pass is 29; its percentage is 14.5%. Till A/L frequency is 59, its percentage is 29.5%. A/L pass frequency is 69. Its percentage is 34.5%. High education level frequency is 25; its percentage is 12.5%. As further the table majority education level is Advance level qualified and also most of people in the sample are at least qualified ordinary level.

Figure 1 - Education Level skewness of Respondents



Source: survey data

Regarding the survey I have concluded, there is skewness of education level of sample. It's mean 3.27, and stranded deviation is 1.133. There is slope going to left side. It can be understand most of people in more than ordinary level qualified.

People Satisfaction towards Facility Design in Sample

Table 3 - People satisfaction towards facility design in Sample

Variable	Average Score Obtained	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score Possible
Facility Design	4.7	2.178	7

Source: survey data

With the results of survey presented in the table (table 3) in sample the perceived level of facility design is 4.7, the maximum score obtainable with respect to variable is 7 if any variable being rated at very satisfactory level. It should be at least be 5.0 or more if any variable being rated as good satisfactory. Therefore, the table reveals that satisfaction towards sport facility design is below satisfactory level. The scores obtained with respect to satisfaction towards sport facility design seem to be less than 5.0. Further to that the standard deviation of beliefs is 2.178, It can be understood that the standard deviation with the respects to satisfaction towards sport facility design is high (2.1 or more).

Table 4 - People Satisfaction towards Service Quality in Sample

Variable	Average Score Obtained	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score Possible
Service quality	3.86	1.908	7

Source: survey data

Survey data presented in the table (table 4) in sample the perceived level of service quality is 3.86, the maximum score obtainable with respect to variable is 7 if any variable being rated at very satisfactory level. It should at least be 5.0 or more if any variable being rated as good satisfactory. Therefore, the table reveals that satisfaction towards service quality below satisfactory level. The scores obtained with respect to satisfaction towards service quality seems to be less than 5.0. Further to that the standard deviation of beliefs is 1.908, it can be understood that the standard deviation with the respects to satisfaction towards service quality are high.

Table 5 - People Satisfaction towards Facility Maintenance in Sample

Variable	Average Score obtained	Standard Deviation	Maximum Possible
Facility Maintenance	4.08	1.992	7

Source: survey data

Table 5 shows in sample the perceived level of facility maintenance is 4.08, the maximum score obtainable with respect to variable is 7 if any variable being rated at very satisfactory level. It should at least be 7 or more if any variable being rated as good satisfactory. Therefore, the table reveals that satisfaction towards facility maintenance is below satisfactory level. The scores obtained with respect to satisfaction towards facility maintenance seems to be less than 7. Further to that the standard deviation of beliefs is 1.992, it can be understood that the standard deviation with the respects to satisfaction towards facility maintenance is low.

Table 6 - People Satisfaction towards Quick & Easy Access in Sample

Variable	Average Score Obtained	Standard Deviation	Maximum Score Possible
Quick & easy Access	4.13	1.729	7

Source: survey data

According to survey data as presented in the table (table 6) in sample the perceived level of quick & easy access is 4.13, the maximum score obtainable with respect to variable is 7 if any variable being rated at very satisfactory level. It should be at least be 5.0 or more if any variable being rated as good satisfactory. Therefore, the table reveals that satisfaction towards quick & easy access below satisfactory level. The scores obtained with respect to satisfaction towards quick & easy access seems to be less than 5.0. Further to that the stranded deviation of beliefs is 1.729, it can be understood that the standard deviation with the respects to satisfaction towards quick & easy access is high.

Testing of Hypotheses

- **H₁ Facility design is dependent on gender.**

Cross tabulation between Gender and Facility Design.

The expected count of facility design disagree male is 41.3. But the total is 23.0. It shows that there is a difference. Female expected count of facility design disagree is 28.7 and total is 12.0. The total of disagree of males and females about facility design expected count 70 but total is 35. It can be understood that, there is a difference between expected count and observation data. The expected count of facility design agree male is 76.7. But the total is 36. It shows that there is a difference less than expected. Female expected count of facility design agree is 53.3 and total is 29. The total of agree of males and females about facility design expected count 130 but total is 65. It can be understood, there is a difference between expected count and observation data.

Table 7 - Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.007 ^a	1	.157		
Continuity Correction ^b	1.603	1	.206		
Likelihood Ratio	2.028	1	.154		
Fisher's Exact Test				.177	.102
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.997	1	.158		
N of Valid Cases	200				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 28.70.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: survey data

Above table shows reliability of the research sample. Value of the cell should be more than five. There are not cells less than five in the above cross tabulation table. Accordingly this sample is reliable. Hence Pearson Chi-

Square value shows the relationship of two variables. Furthermore the value of the Pearson Chi-Square table should be more than Critical value of the Chi-Square distribution. The Critical value is 3.84. The value of the Pearson Chi-Square table above 2.007 is less than the critical value, but p value shows .157 errors in this hypothesis. Thus a relationship between two variables cannot be seen. So, H_1 was rejected and H_0 (null hypotheses) was accepted of the research. That means Facility design is Independent on gender of fans.

➤ **H_2 There is a relationship between levels of education and service quality.**

Cross tabulation between Levels of Education and Service Quality.

There are 4.0% of spectators who agree for service quality in less than O/L and O/L pass, 8.0% fans till A/L and 15.5% A/L are qualified. But there are no higher education level spectators who are agreeing with service quality. Hence above table shows spectator who dissatisfy for service quality of each education levels. This cross tabulation helps to make basement to test hypothesis in chi square test as follows.

Table 8 - Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.390 ^a	4	.001
Likelihood Ratio	26.418	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.809	1	.179
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.67.

Source: survey data

Above table shows there are no cells less than five. Hence Pearson Chi-Square shows the relationship of two variables. Furthermore the value of the Pearson Chi-Square table should be more than Critical value of the Chi-Square distribution. The Critical value is 9.49. Because degree of freedom is 4. The value of the Pearson Chi-Square in the table above 19.390 is more than the critical value. So there is a relationship between levels of education and service quality. Therefore above H_2 was accepted and H_0 (null hypotheses) was rejected of the research. It means, there is a relationship between levels of education and service quality.

➤ **H_3 There is a relationship between facility maintenance and service quality.**

Cross tabulation between facility maintenance and service quality.

59% of the spectators dissatisfied about facility maintenance. But 41% of spectators are satisfied with the facility maintenance. While 68.5% of the sample disagrees about service quality, 31.5% of spectators are satisfied with

service quality. It means most of the spectators who come to the stadium are dissatisfied about service quality and facility maintenance.

Table 9 - Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.045 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	20.615	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	22.020	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	21.934	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	200				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 25.83.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: survey data

Above table shows reliability of the research sample. Value of the cell should be more than five. Because of the value of the cell is more than five, the sample is reliable. There are not cells less than five in the above cross tabulation table. Accordingly this sample is reliable. Hence Pearson Chi-Square shows the relationship of two variables. Furthermore the value of the Pearson Chi-Square table should be more than Critical value of the Chi-Square distribution. The Critical value is 3.84. The value of the Pearson Chi-Square table above 22.045 is more than the critical value, so there is a relationship between facility maintenance and service quality. Thus, above H_3 was accepted and H_0 (null hypotheses) was rejected of the research. Therefore, (H_3) There is a relationship between facility maintenance and service quality is accepted.

➤ **H_4 Quick & easy access is dependent on facility design.**

Cross tabulation between quick & easy access and facility design

According to the above table (table 24) 53.5% of the spectators are dissatisfied with facility design and quick and easy access. But 46.5% of spectators are satisfied with the facility design and quick & easy access. . It means most of fans dissatisfied with facility design and quick and easy access.

Table 10 -Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.766 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	32.061	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	35.853	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	33.597	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	200				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.55.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Source: survey data

There are no cells less than five in the above cross tabulation table. Accordingly this sample is reliable. Hence Pearson Chi-Square shows about the relationship of two variables. Furthermore the value of the Pearson Chi-Square table should be more than Critical value of the Chi-Square distribution. Degree of freedom is 1 and the Critical value is 3.84. The value of the Pearson Chi-Square table above 33.766 is more than the critical value, therefore there is a relationship between quick & easy access and facility design. Accordingly, above H_4 was accepted and H_0 (null hypotheses) was rejected of the research. Therefore quick & easy access is dependent on facility design.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was investigating the importance of sports facilities and service quality. The research also tried to identify the most significant attributes that satisfy spectator’s needs in order to attract to stadium. It could be concluded that Sri Lankan cricket spectators can identified as who are satisfied with what they have and they don’t consider much about service quality. As expected, most of cricket spectators are moderate people, but they have different ideas, flavors getting match experience.

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