

BOOK REVIEW

Services in Sport Management: Bridging Service Marketing Theory and Sport Practice

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Abstract

This book review examines Ekaterina Glebova's *Services in Sport Management*, a timely and pedagogically oriented volume that consolidates service management concepts for the sport industry. The book's 11 chapters progress from foundational service theories—such as Service-Dominant Logic and the Service-Profit Chain—to applied topics including the extended marketing mix (7Ps), customer relationship management, service quality, segmentation, and value co-creation between employees and fans. Particular strengths lie in the clear conceptual synthesis, the didactic structure, and the systematic use of exercises, self-assessment questions, and case studies drawn from major sport properties such as the FIFA World Cup, the NBA, and esports. At the same time, the models and frameworks remain only lightly supported by empirical evidence, and the case material is predominantly Western, leaving limited space for emerging sport markets and diverse institutional contexts. The review argues that future research could build on this conceptual architecture through practice-based and comparative studies that examine how service logics are enacted in different sport ecosystems. Overall, *Services in Sport Management* is recommended as a core textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in sport management and sport tourism, as well as a valuable conceptual toolkit for practitioners seeking to design and deliver sport services in an increasingly experience-driven and data-intensive environment.

KEYWORDS

sport management; services marketing; Service-Dominant Logic; customer relationship management; customer experience; sport tourism; sustainability.

Glebova's *Services in Sport Management* arrives at a pertinent time, offering a structured and much-needed synthesis of service management principles within the dynamic sport industry. This volume distinguishes itself by moving beyond a mere descriptive account, instead striving to construct a coherent framework that bridges foundational service theories—such as the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) (Vargo and Lusch 2014) and the Service-Profit Chain—with the unique operational realities of sport organizations. It positions sport services not as a peripheral subset, but as a central domain characterized by high levels of intangibility, co-creation, and experiential value (Glebova 2024).

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1 | STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The book's pedagogical architecture is one of its principal strengths. Its 11 chapters follow a logical progression from conceptual underpinnings to strategic implementation. The initial chapter adeptly frames the evolution and economic significance of services, setting a solid foundation. Subsequent chapters (2-4) provide a comprehensive analysis of the marketing environment and the augmented service marketing mix (7Ps), alongside a welcome discussion on research methodologies pertinent to the field. The core of the book (Chapters 5-8) delves into the critical operational and relational domains of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), service quality metrics, customer segmentation, and the intricate dynamics of value co-creation between employees and fans. The later chapters (9-11) effectively transition to strategic considerations, encompassing service distribution, promotion, and the integration

of sustainability and analytics into long-term planning. The consistent inclusion of practical exercises, self-assessment questions, and relatable case studies (e.g., FIFA World Cup, NBA, esports) ensures the content is accessible and applicable for its intended audience.

2 | CRITICAL EVALUATION

Glebova's work attains its primary objective: to render complex service theories accessible and relevant to sport management students and practitioners. The translation of abstract concepts from scholars like Grönroos et al. (2000) into the sport context is executed with notable clarity. The timely inclusion of digital transformation (Glebova and Madsen 2024, Desmarchelier 2024), customer experience (CX), and sustainability discourses (Glebova 2022) aligns the book with the most pressing challenges and opportunities in the contemporary sport landscape (Hautbois and Desbordes 2023). However, the book's conceptual strength, at times, highlights a relative weakness in empirical validation. While the proposed models are logically sound and intuitively appealing, their application would be significantly bolstered by supporting quantitative data or in-depth longitudinal case studies. For example, the operationalization of the Service-Profit Chain in a sport context (Chapter 5) remains largely theoretical. Hence, empirical evidence demonstrating its impact on profitability would greatly enhance its persuasive power for critical practitioners and researchers. For instance, future studies may use a practice-based approach (Bahadori and Ramjawan 2025, Lissillour and Silva 2024) to better understand the diverging interest that stakeholders will have as efforts are made to implement Service-Profit Chain in a sport context. Furthermore, while the case studies from established Western leagues are illustrative, the book's scope presents a missed opportunity for a truly global perspective. The growing economic and cultural significance of sport in emerging economies in the Middle East, Africa, and South America, or in fragile states contexts (Ghrayche et al. 2025), merits more than a passing mention. The book does not include a critical management research agenda (Lissillour 2024). Moreover, in line with indigenous scholarship (Rodríguez-Escobar 2024), a comparative analysis of service delivery models across these diverse ecosystems would have substantially widened the book's appeal and applicability. Despite these limitations, its structured pedagogy and theoretical synthesis make it an exemplary core textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

3 | CONTRIBUTION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, *Services in Sport Management* makes a valuable and distinct contribution to the field. It successfully consolidates a fragmented body of knowledge into a single, coherent volume, effectively bridging the gap between traditional service marketing literature and the evolving, experience-driven sport industry. This book is unequivocally

recommended as a foundational text for academic courses in sport and sport tourism (Glebova 2022) centric approach to service design and delivery. For the practitioner, it offers a valuable conceptual toolkit; for the student, it provides a clear and structured guide to a critical aspect of the modern sport business.

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None reported.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interests.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of the article at the publisher's website.

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