Fortnite, the Black Hole of Waiting. Humour, camaraderie and emotional flux while waiting

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Fortnite, the Black Hole of Waiting: Challenging Assumptions about Waiting

Abstract

Waiting has long been viewed as a negative aspect of service experiences, with widely held beliefs suggesting longer waits inevitably lead to more negative emotional reactions. This study empirically examines these assumptions in a naturalistic setting, analyzing a 37-hour orchestrated wait during the Fortnite Black Hole event. Reflecting the evolving digitized servicescape, the event involved communal engagement via live streaming and real-time interactions, offering a unique context to explore how emotions evolve during prolonged waits. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, we analyzed over 28,000 live-stream chatroom entries. Grounded theory identified key emotional trajectories, while sentiment analysis and temporal segmentation quantified emotional shifts, measuring the polarity and intensity of reactions over time. Findings reveal that emotional responses fluctuate, with curiosity, humor, and camaraderie dominating early stages, and frustration and boredom increasing later. Community engagement and humor moderated negative emotions, challenging assumptions about waiting and highlighting the importance of social factors in shaping emotional experiences.

Keywords: Waiting in services, emotions, consumer behaviour

Track: Consumer Behaviour