

## Host Residents' Reactions to the Staging of the Tour de Taiwan 2012: Comparisons of Pre- and Post-event

**Authors:** Shang-Chun Ma, Shang-Min Ma, Yi-Chen Liao  
**Universities/Institutes:** Institute of Physical Education, Health & Leisure Studies, National Cheng Kung University  
 Department of Recreational Sport and Health Promotion, National Pingtung University of Science & Technology  
**E-mail:** mshangch@mail.ncku.edu.tw

The establishment of effective strategies to assess community impacts has become important because many cities are now reliant on the hosting of major events to catalyze their redevelopment (Ma et al., 2006). This article uses the *Tour de Taiwan* (TDT) cycle race as an example of how major sporting events are staged to generate publicity and destination branding. It is noted how a cycle race may have only a minimal impact on the host area due to a time limitation effect on its daily operations (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011), whereas another study (Ohmann, Jones and Wilkes, 2006) has highlighted a need for impact studies at a variety of events and locations to identify patterns and trends. A well-known major sporting event, the *Tour de France* (TDF), has received much attention in the literature (Balduck et al., 2011; Bull & Lovell, 2007; Smith, 2009). In contrast, no empirical studies have attempted to situate the TDT in the Asian context (Taiwan). This article therefore investigates impact issues by using a logistic regression technique to examine the before and after periods of the TDT. First, the framework developed by Ma et al. (2011) is adopted to provide a benchmark to compare different sporting events in Taiwan. Second, the TDF and the TDT are compared to identify strategies for the long-term management of future events. Reference is also made to how the *Tour de Taiwan* differs from events such as the Olympics and the World Games because it does not leave a physical legacy of benefit to the host residents once the event is over. Noteworthy in this context is how mega sports events have negative side effects (increased garbage on the streets, congestion, disruption of community life, etc.) that can influence residents' attitudes toward other sporting events. The *Tour de Taiwan* is described in these terms, even though it is not on the same scale as the Olympic Games, owing to disruptions such as road closures. The uniqueness of cycle racing highlights a need for this study to contribute a better understanding of a sporting event—the *Tour de Taiwan*—that does not feature in the literature. Established in 1978, the TDT has been part of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Asia Tour since 2005, and was classed 2.1 for the first time in 2012. It is also integrated with the Taipei Cycle Show, which has been organized by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council since 2006. In 2012, the event consisted of 7 separate stages, and covered approximately 870 km of closed public roads, with 19 teams and 95 riders competing from 22 countries. The total cost of hosting the *Tour de Taiwan* in 2012 is approximately USD\$2.7 million.

Data was collected from the host communities of three selected stages (i.e., Taipei City, Changhua County, and Kaohsiung City) located close to either the start or the finish lines of the TDT. The selected three stages were located in northern, central, and southern Taiwan, which is good geographical coverage. Five hundred face-to-face questionnaires were conducted either on the date of, or after the events, and 482 usable questionnaires were obtained from each survey. The tool for data collection was composed of 23 Likert-type items based on the Verified Tourism Impact Attitude Scale (VTIAS) developed by Ma et al. (2011), as well as previous studies of the impacts of events (Lankford & Howard, 1994; Shultis, Johnson, & Twynam, 1996; Twynam & Johnston, 2004). A number of questions deemed essential were included: sources of information about the *Tour de Taiwan*, level of interest in event, plan to watch the event, and attend the event. A series of statistical techniques were used (an exploratory factor analysis, and a reliability analysis) to test and refine the VTIAS. A repeated measure MANOVA was performed to examine any changes in the host residents' perceptions of the impact of the event. Logistic regression was used to assess the relationship between the residents' willingness to support the staging of the TDT, the impact factors, event-related behavior, and socio-demographic variables. Exploratory factor analysis revealed four impact factors. A repeated measure MANOVA indicated a significant change in residents' perceptions over time ( $F(4, 235) = 3.69, p < .01$ ; Wilk's Lambda = .94, partial eta squared = .06). The results of logistic regression showed that the impact factor "general perceptions" and the event-related behaviors ("level of interest in the event", and "attend the event") were significant predictors of residents' willingness to support the hosting of the TDT. Overall, our research findings are similar to previous studies of the TDF (Balduck et al., 2011; Bull, & Lovell, 2007), which have suggested that residents anticipated or perceived more temporary and intangible (e.g., promoting tourism, cultural interest, etc.) than tangible benefits (e.g., full-time jobs provided). Clearly, the main objective of this kind of major sporting event, both TDF and TDT, is to promote the host destination to the world. However, there is no research to date that reveals the extent to which this has been translated into long-term economic returns. As this type of major sporting event can leave a very limited physical legacy to the host destinations, the host residents certainly will anticipate something more directly related to their daily lives in the future. What event organizers and managers therefore need in the future is a general strategy that encompasses more than the scope of the event and destination branding, by generating long-lasting legacies such as a local volunteering system, the integration of smaller affiliated events into a combined event to leverage benefits internationally, and so forth. The scope of the study is productive because its results may have practical import for the greater success of future events.

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