

DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF SPORT EVENTS

Mark van den Heuvel, Willem de Boer
Fontys University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands
HAN University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands mark.vandenheuvel@fontys.nl

Aim of abstract

Sport event impact research is rapidly generating more interest. As a result of public pressure for more transparency and efficiency from local, regional and national governments there has been a surge in the demand for measurement of the effects of sport events. Also, the interest from event organizers, sponsors and the general public has grown. With an increasing number of impact studies available, however from different research perspectives, the diversity among impact studies also increased. At the same time the principals of the studies demanded the research to be more comparable. In 2008, to ensure the impact measurement would be comparable, several researchers in The Netherlands, led by Oldenboom, decided to cooperate and develop standardized research tools for the measurement of the impact of sporting events. The result was an open-source research network: Working Group on Evaluating Sporting Events (WESP). Currently, the WESP contains over 30 researchers from Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands and public and private research institutes, as well as several representatives of public organizations connected to sporting events.

The aim of this poster presentation is twofold:

1-to present the several sport event impact tools (economic and social) that have been developed through the WESP in The Netherlands over the last couple of years and some research with these tools.

2-To discuss the WESP tools with respect to a) the theoretical perspectives on economic impact analysis, cost benefit analyses and social impact analysis, b) the strategies and tactics that are formulated via and around events and c) the differences between mega and non-mega events.

Also, we invite researchers who are working of the measurement of social and economical effects of sport events to collaborate with WESP to improve and add to the current set of event evaluation tools. Our long term aim is to incorporate current international knowledge and evaluation tools as well as to add our own insights to the existing literature and make a joint effort to develop international standards.

Theoretical background and methodology

The economic impact tools developed by WESP are based on the framework of Preuss (2006) and the works of for example Gratton (2001). These theoretical frameworks are combined with the practical experiences of the researchers within WESP. The tools then reflect the academic and practical insights of researchers and are aimed to meet the demands.

With respect to the social impact, the key word is social participation. Social participation refers to all activities outside the private domain and the economic domain. Closely related to social participation is social cohesion which refers to participation to social institutions, social contacts and people's orientations on collective norms and values. In this context the term social capital is relevant.

Sports events can play a role in building social capital (Chalip, 2006 and Putnam, 2000) in several ways: face-to-face social contact, the easy way to participate in sports events, sport events are places where social life easily can be discussed, sports events can promote organizational and social skills of individuals and sports events give the possibilities to maintain or develop friendships.

Results and discussion

Over the last couple of years, researchers of the WESP have developed the standardized tools on the evaluation of events on the following subjects (WESP, 2010-2012):

- economic impact
- visitor profile
- number of visitors
- perception of the general public of the event
- satisfaction of event visitors, sponsors, participants, etc.
- promotional value of the event

Also, a model has been developed to forecast economic impact and the evaluation tools for the following are currently in progress:

- effects on social cohesion and societal participation
- health and life style effects
- environmental effect

In the poster presentation we will demonstrate how the WESP-research gives theoretical and practical insights to the understanding of small and medium scale events, especially in the field of economic impact analysis and how the economic impact model addresses the problems of overestimation of the economic impact of events. Furthermore we want to discuss the usefulness of some specific survey-questions on measuring social impact. Finally we discuss the possibilities of giving (marketing) advice to event organizers, local governments and other stakeholders to enhance the economic and social impacts based on our research.

References

- Chalip, L. (2006). Towards social leverage of sport events. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 11(2), 109-127.
- Gratton, C., Dobson, N., & Shibli, S. (2000). The economic importance of major sports events: a case-study of six events. *Managing leisure*, 5(1), 17-28.
- Preuss, H., Seguin, B., & O'Reilly, N. (2007). Profiling major sport event visitors: The 2002 Commonwealth Games. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 12(1), 5-23.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone*. Simon & Schuster.
- WESP, Werkgroep Evaluatie Sportevenementen (2010-2012). *Richtlijnen Evaluatie Sportevenementen*. www.evenementenevaluatie.nl