
SOCIAL IMPACT AND INTRINSIC DIMENSION: A CASE STUDY OF FORMULA ONE CHINESE GRAND PRIX

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Type: Scientific

Category: F: Mega-events - Delivering legacies?

Abstract

AIM OF ABSTRACT/PAPER – RESEARCH QUESTION

The current study was inspired by Faulkner and Tideswell's (1997) seminal work on the social impact of an event on a local community. It attempted (a) to investigate residents' perceptions of the social impact of the Formula One Chinese Grand Prix and (b) to test the relationship between the perceptions of social impact and four variables from Faulkner and Tideswell's intrinsic dimension: involvement in tourism, community attachment, identification with theme, and socio-economics characteristics.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND / LITERATURE REVIEW

Staging a mega event is a complex process, requiring a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders. Particularly, considerable evidence supports the importance of strengthening community involvement in order to facilitate the events and create legacies for the community. Because local residents involved in mega events are vital to the short-term and long-term success of the hosted event, their perceptions of the social impact of these events are essential to success (Preuss & Solberg, 2006).

Social impact can be conceptualized as any force that potentially influences the quality of life of local residents (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011). The social benefits of sporting events are much greater and more important than the economic benefits, especially to host cities in transition countries (Huang & Zhang, 2012). The social impacts of tourism or a mega event, as perceived by the residents, have been found to be moderated by a number of factors. Faulkner and Tideswell (1997) classified these factors into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. The extrinsic factors, such as stage of development, seasonality, type of tourists, and tourist/resident ratio, moderate the social impact of tourism or an event on a macro level and have been shown to have little bearing

in case studies of single events. The intrinsic factors include involvement, socio-economic characteristics, residential proximity, and period of residence. A fifth variable, identification with theme, emerged in later empirical studies on sporting events (Fredline & Faulkner, 2001). Because the intrinsic factors take into account that the host community is heterogeneous and that residents perceive impact differently, they are more central to the analysis of events.

In discussing the definition of mega-event, Maennig and Zambalast (2012) were reluctant to draw a line between mega and non-mega event since what can be considered as “mega” is rather subjective. Instead, the magnitude of event is a continuum defined by its significance, popularity and revenue generation. With over 100,000 spectators and a projected economic impact of 1.1 billion yuan (Huang, Mao, Kim & Zhang, in press), Chinese Grand Prix may be considered as a mega event.

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were gathered from local residents (N = 600) who knew about the Shanghai F1 event. Data were collected at five locations in different areas of Shanghai in 2013 over a period of one month. 37 five-point Likert scale items measuring perceived social impact of a mega event, two “yes / no” items measuring involvement in tourism, three five-point Likert scale items measuring community attachment, and an ordered series of five statements measuring identification with theme, adapted from existing literature (e.g., Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Bull & Lovell, 2007; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Kim & Petrick, 2005; Preuss & Arne Solberg, 2006; Yang, Zeng, & Gu, 2010; Zhou & Ap, 2009), were included in the survey. Additionally, key demographic information about the respondents was also gathered.

Factor analyses were utilized to determine the dimensionality of the perceived social impact of the event. A multivariate multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationships between the intrinsic dimensions (i.e., community attachment, tourism involvement, and identification with theme) and perceived social impact. Additionally, to examine the relationships between the demographic variables and perceived social impact, a series of MANOVA and planned contrasts were conducted.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS / CONCLUSIONS

The results show that perceived social impact among Shanghai residents included three positive dimensions and three negative dimensions (Cronbach α ; ranged from .72 to .88) . The results also indicate that all three dimensions of positive social impact were significantly associated with the identified intrinsic determinants (i.e., involvement in tourism, community attachment, and identification with theme). Only one dimension of negative impact (i.e., environmental and cultural problems)

was significantly associated with the identified intrinsic determinants. Furthermore, the results reveal that perceptions of the social impact of F1 are likely to differ across socio-demographic profiles.

This study differentiates itself from most recent research in the field because it focuses on an international, annually recurring sporting event (i.e., Formula One Chinese Grand Prix) hosted by a city in a transition country (i.e., China). Findings have implications for practitioners. Because F1 is an annual mega event in Shanghai, the results of this study can be used by government officials and event organizers to plan and run the event more effectively in the future.

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