
What motivates people to attend non-mega sport events? – An investigation of fan motivation and leisure motivation at the PWA Windsurf World Cup on Sylt

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Abstract

1 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Researches and policy makers mostly agree that sport events are a catalyst for several long-term advantages for hosting destinations such as increased tourist visitation, community empowerment, and image enhancement (Getz, 2008). Consequently, many regions try to use – very often regular – non-mega sport events as potential tools for attaining these advantages. For these events spectator attendance is a crucial factor. Without a satisfactory attendance, the event is considerably less attractive for spectators and athletes as well as for the media and even the people involved in the organization and management of the event. Thus, a major question to be answered is what motivates people to visit such non-mega sport events (Gibson, 2004, 2005).

To make a contribution to this important field of research, the study presented here examines relations among varied aspects of fan motivation and leisure motivation for visitors of the PWA Windsurf World Cup, which has been staged on the German island of Sylt between September 28th and October 7th, 2012. In addition, several trip-related (distance traveled, previous attendance, party group size and structure) as well as socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, income) are scrutinized in an effort to examine their moderating effect on event visitors' behavior.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study builds on a conceptual model of event interest and intention to attend an event developed by Kim and Chalip (2004) and its further operationalization and empirical testing by Snelgrove, Taks, Chalip, and Green (2008). In short, the model serves to investigate simultaneously two angles on sport event visitors' motivation: (1) fan

motivation and (2) leisure motivation. More precisely, the former (fan motivation) is measured via five items (a) aesthetic, (b) vicarious achievement, (c) eustress, (d) interest in players (or in this context athletes), and (e) supporting national team. The latter (leisure motivation) is measured by three items (e) escape, (f) learn more about destination, and (g) socialization. Consequently, the current study represents a theory testing approach, in which the aforementioned contributions serve as a conceptual framework for the subsequent analyses of this study.

3 METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The empirical analysis adopts an explanatory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and is based on primary data collected during the PWA Windsurf World Cup on Sylt by means of a self-administered paper-based questionnaire. Overall, 946 completed questionnaires have been returned. This dataset gives a sound base for the planned econometric analysis, especially since a reliable number of observations for a variety of potentially influencing factors can be expected.

The windsurfing event is staged in a generally very attractive tourist destination and during school holidays. Due to these characteristics, many “regular” tourists and short-time vacationers can be expected at the event. Thus, the visitors’ motivation (both fan and leisure) are furthermore analyzed regarding different categories of event visitors, namely “primary purpose event visitors” and “casuals”. The former have come to the island exclusively for the event. The latter came to the event because it happened to take place during the time they spent on the island anyway. The analysis of this possible distinction constitutes a novelty compared to the relevant strands of literature on the motivation of sport event visitors attending non-mega sport events staged in Europe.

4 RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned before, the data has been successfully collected at the event and econometric analysis is currently conducted. The final results will be ready for presentation at the time of the conference and will offer some important insights into the motivation of visitors of non-mega sport events. Undoubtedly, many of the results from this project will be of great analytical value and pave the way for further analysis of this central topic of sport tourism research. Furthermore, our findings will contribute important information to be incorporated in the future management and marketing of sports events.

References

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