

Experiencing the effects of major sports events

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Aim of paper

To describe how the host community experiences the effects of major sports events in order to advise local/regional/national government why they should want to host such an event. Also the Organising Committees and other stakeholders can benefit from the outcome of this description.

Organisational/managerial context

Sports events are typically characterised by public sector involvement: financial aid, permits and/or co-operation of any other kind. The government has the task of asking itself the question, on each occasion, what it is precisely that the people receive in return. To make a comparative assessment where requests for sports events are concerned, it is important to know what the effects are. These effects should overlap with the government's objectives and its policy pursued. This necessary knowledge about the effects should cover the following: which effects occur as a result of the sports event, how do people perceive these effects, which impact/experience does the perception have and what is the size of the population group which experiences a similar impact/experience? To describe the experience of these effects, a model has been developed which has been derived from existing theories on effects and effect measurements published by, for instance Hall (1992) and Oldenboom (1999), and the research into experience conducted by, for instance, Nijs (2002) en Beunders (1997).

Organisational/managerial practice/issues

The model orders the effects, in which the appreciation of the experience is used as weighing factors. The result is a sort of "top 5" of both positive and negative effects: which effects are perceived as the most positive and what is the size of the population group which feels that way? And: which effects are perceived as the most negative and what is the size of the population group which feels that way? Such an arrangement of effects from the perspective of the various actors involved produces valuable information in the planning phase as well as the evaluation phase. It is subsequently up to the government to make choices and an assessment as to whether a sports event is or is not granted any subsidy, permit and/or co-operation. Organising Committees and other stakeholders can also benefit from this information. Finally we want to analyse the data to investigate a possible relation between the scope of the event and the perceived experiences. During 2008 and 2009 empirical research with the help of the model was conducted in a similar way during the Amstel Gold Race 2008 in the region of Zuid-Limburg (the Netherlands), the EC Swimming 2008 in Eindhoven, the WC Cyclecross 2009 in Hoogerheide (the Netherlands) and the 2009 version of the Ronde Van Vlaanderen (Belgium): the paper reports the results and the striking differences.

Implications for sport and sport management

Knowledge over the effects that occur due to your sports event and how those effects are perceived and experienced helps you in planning upcoming sports events, using your strengths and organising how to compensate the host community for experiencing negative effects. This

knowledge can be used in the Netherlands for writing a better bid-book in order to host the WC Football 2018/2022 or to host the Olympic Summer games in 2028. In our educational setting it is part of the bachelor training for our event- and sport management students and our master students LeisureSciences. The model is an important instrument, in the pursuit of quality assurance (for instance by means of the PDCA cycle) as well as in terms of the government's accountability on its policy pursued towards its public representatives. Evidently, the application of such a model is not restricted to the fields of sports events – with a different perception of similar effects it is also very well practicable in other types of events.

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