

Session: **Project management of big sport events II.**

Abstract nr: **EASM-0049**

Taipei residents' perceptions of social impacts from the 2009 Summer Deaflympics

D.M. Turco¹, C. Kao², C.Y. Wu³

¹Drexel University, Sport Management, Philadelphia, USA

²National Taiwan Sport University, Sport Management, Kueishan, Taiwan

³National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Sport Management, Taipei, Taiwan

douglasmicheleturco@gmail.com

Background

Staged every four years since 1924, the Summer Deaflympic Games is the longest running multi-sport event in the world, excluding the Olympics. In 2009 Taipei became the first city in Asia to host the Deaflympics Games, accommodating over 3,000 Deaf athletes from 91 nations competing in 20 sports. The Deaflympics cost an estimated \$US 200 million, the majority covered by local and central government funding.

Residents in host cities experience first-hand the impacts of large-scale sport events across the event lifecycle: Application/bidding, preparation, operation, and legacy stages. They are therefore in a unique position to evaluate the event as taxpayers, hosts, consumers of infrastructure, and as possible consumers of sport venues. Guala and Turco (2007) found that public perceptions of the event shift from elation and euphoria at the bid stage; concerns over readiness, costs, anxiety and “wait-and-see” in the preparation stage; relief and joy during operations; and pride, appreciation, and satisfaction following the Games. This pattern of is remarkably consistent across events, decades, continents, and cultures (Cashman, 2003; Mihalik, 2003; Ritchie & Lyons, 1990).

Purpose of Study

Despite the number of studies gauging residents' perceptions of sport events, few have examined events involving persons with disabilities. The purpose of the study was to ascertain Taipei residents' perceptions of the social costs and benefits from hosting the 2009 Summer Deaflympic Games.

Methods

Two samples were drawn from the population of persons 18 years of age and older residing in Taipei City with registered telephone numbers. Using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing System (CATI system), interviewers called telephone numbers generated at random and asked subjects to participate in the surveys, one performed before and the second after the 2009 Deaflympic Games. The telephone survey instrument featured questions in three sections: (1) Resident's intended or actual attendance at the 2009 Deaflympic Games; (2) perceived social and cultural impacts, modified from Fredline et al (2003); and (3) socio-demographic information. For the pre-event survey, a total of 3,665 households were connected and called with

1,113 successfully completed interviews, a 30.4% completion rate. For the post-event survey, a total of 1,131 interviews were completed.

Results

Nearly 98 percent (97.6%) of pre-event survey subjects knew that the Deaflympics were to be held in Taipei; 2.4% did not. Twenty-seven percent intended to attend the Deaflympics; 73 percent would not attend. Only 4.7% of survey subjects had a relative or close friend participating in the Deaflympics; 95.3% did not. Pre-event respondents were closely split with respect to gender: 50.5% were male and 49.5% were female.

Results of the post-event survey revealed that 98.3% of subjects were aware that Taipei hosted the 2009 Deaflympics, 1.7% were unaware. Over 50 percent of the subjects were female (51.2%); 48.8% were male. Only 4.8% had a relative or close friend participating in the Deaflympics; 95.2% did not. Approximately 12% had relatives or friends who were deaf (12.2%). Nearly five percent (4.9%) of respondents attended the Deaflympics; 95.1% did not attend. Approximately 43% of Taipei residents (43.1%) identified themselves as avid or interested sport spectators, 56.9% had little or no interest in sport.

Nearly 86 percent (85.7%) agreed “The Deaflympics gave Taipei residents an opportunity to attend an interesting event, have fun with their family and friends, and interact with new people.” Approximately 83 percent agreed “The Deaflympics made local residents feel more proud of their city and made them feel good about themselves and their community.” Eighty-percent of the subjects agreed that the Deaflympics showcased Taipei in a positive light. In terms of social costs, 17.9% felt the event disrupted the lives of local residents and created inconvenience, i.e. traffic congestion, parking difficulties and excessive noise. Sixteen percent perceived that the “Deaflympics was associated with some people behaving inappropriately, perhaps in a rowdy and delinquent way, or engaging in excessive drinking or drug use or other criminal behavior.”

Conclusion

The slogan for the 2009 Deaflympics was “First time in Asia, proud of Taiwan,” a sentiment most Taipei residents held true as hosts for the event. The open working relationship between the Organizing Committee and Taipei city government may have contributed to the positive perception of Taipei residents toward the event. The 2009 Deaflympics were the first time Taipei had hosted an international multi-sport mega event, and therefore few experiences can be compared or referred to by residents. A follow-up telephone survey is planned for the one-year anniversary of the Deaflympics to determine the lasting effects or “staying power” of the event on Taipei residents.