

A step out of the shadow of men's football? Early findings on the event tourism at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011

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Abstract keywords

Women's football, major sport events, event tourism, FIFA Women's World Cup, consumer behaviour, economic impact

Aim of abstract/paper - research question

Given the demand uncertainty [4] in the run-up to the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup (WWC) in Germany, both the attendance in the stadia of over 845,000 and the worldwide TV viewership of nearly 250 million have to be seen as a success [2, 3]. As a result, the local Organising Committee (LOC) generated a respectable surplus before taxes of 10.6 million Euros [1]. Actually, the considerable media coverage at moderate public expenditures for WWC stadia suggests a high efficiency of the event in terms of place marketing. However and above all, the question for the host cities is raised to what extent the event tourism at the WWC contributed to a tangible impact on the local economy. Therefore measuring key indicators of the event tourism at the WWC 2011 is the major aim of this study reporting early findings of the comprehensive data analysis.

Theoretical background or literature review

There is no economic literature yet on the WWC. But many major sport events have been investigated in diverse respects on their economic impacts. Those approaches – in particular, from comparable events and/or in similar structural environments – can be applied of course. Especially, Preuß, Kurscheidt and Schütte [5] did a relevant in-depth study on the FIFA Men's World Cup 2006 in Germany.

Relying on earlier work, the authors argued that, first, the overall attendance has to be differentiated in residents and incoming visitors from outside the analysed hosting region and particularly from abroad. The event-related spending of both visitor groups represents an influx of purchasing power while the consumption of residents might have largely happened in the local economy anyway (substitution effect). Moreover, the visiting intention and traveling behaviour are decisive since only the very event-induced money flows are attributable in a proper economic impact study. That is, just those visitors who would not have come to the host region had the event not taken place are "event visitors" in a narrow sense.

Second, the spending patterns of the different visitor groups have to be measured with regard to the size of the incoming funds. Yet, this theoretical requirement for an accurate estimation of the primary impulse of visitors' consumption is often problematic in practice. The authors

however provided a tested survey instrument producing sufficiently reliable outcomes.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The outlined approach to an economic evaluation of the event tourism requires direct surveying of event visitors to distinguish the travel intention and behaviour as well as the spending patterns. Since the distribution of these characteristics in the population is unknown, the suitable procedure is a multi-step cluster sampling using a priori information, among other things, on the 9 WWC hosting venues, to avoid cluster biases. A large sample of sensibly distributed clusters, then, is an approximation of a representative sample. Using a modified version of the four-page questionnaire of Preuß et al. (paper-pencil, assisted self-administered), local clusters in the surroundings of the stadia and on the so-called "Fanfests" (fan sites with large screens) were randomly interviewed (currently: N=7,867 from 28 clusters with N=281 on average from Berlin, Bochum, Frankfurt/M, Leverkusen and Mönchengladbach, 55.4% of which were stadium visitors and 44.6% "Fanfest" visitors; further 10 clusters from Augsburg, Dresden and Sinsheim are to be included).

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

First, the preliminary results confirm the anecdotal evidence of an unusual football spectatorship. 20% of the ticket holders benefitted from free tickets and only 64% bought their tickets at regular outlets. This reflects the generous discount policy of the LOC as one instrument to solve the strategic conflict between financial security (budget constraints) and promotion goals (demand stimulation, media impact). Likewise the much lesser "euphoria effect" compared to the Men's World Cup 2006 is evidenced by the fact that 42.6% of the event visitors just went to the stadia and ignored the "Fanfests". On the other hand, the ratios of over 6.5% of foreign visitors and roughly 20% of visitors from outside of the Federal State of the match venue is fairly comparable to earlier men's team sport world cups in Germany (e.g., handball and ice hockey). The same applies to the average spending of about 150 Euros per person and match visit.

Overall, it can be concluded that the audience at women's football events is still particular and special efforts have to be made to attract substantial crowds. But once that goal is achieved, the consumption impact is comparable to men's sports which suggests a considerable economic potential of hosting major women's sports events.

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