

# PROFILING VISITORS OF NON-MEGA SPORT EVENTS FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract keyword

non-mega sport events, sport tourism, economic impact, local government, consumer behavior, event visitors

## Aim of abstract

Crompton (1995) and Preuss (2007) established groundbreaking work in the profiling of visitors and economic impact of mega sporting events. The main aim of this research is to impose the theoretical framework on mega-sporting events of Preuss (2007) on smaller scale events and then to establish the differences between several types of event visitors. The objectives of this research are however fourfold:

1. Profiling different types of visitors in five medium and small scale sporting events.
2. Distinguishing differences between the visitors in economic terms of repetitive visits, overnight stays and expenditures and economic impact and who in the local community benefits
3. Establishing if the determination of the host-region matters on the outcomes of the above. This draws upon Preuss et al. (2010) and for that we will distinguish between the municipality and the province (state) as the level of host-region.
4. Comparing the outcomes with existing research on mega-events

## Theoretical background

According to Higham (1999) non-mega sports events include regular season sporting competitions, international sporting fixtures, domestic competitions' and they are different from mega-events because of their use of existing infrastructure, their avoidance of tourism seasonality and their more easily managed scale (Higham, 1999). Furthermore, Gibson (2012) suggest that small-scale sports events, consistent with a community's infrastructure and human and cultural capital, may be a viable form of sustainable tourism development.

Following Preuss (2007) we introduce a new framework for visitors of sport events. Because small-scale sporting events will have no or very limited effect on incoming or outgoing tourism, this research focuses on four types of event-affected persons that remain: event visitors, casuals, residents and homestayes. We then apply these types of persons to the visitors of the event. Deviating from Preuss (2007), homestayes are defined by their willingness to travel to an alternative location for the event. If a resident visitor is identified as a homestayes, then, when he or she would have attended the event as well if it were held elsewhere. Only event visitors and homestayes contribute to the economic impact of an event, because only they make *additional* expenditures in the host-region.

## Methodology

For this research data from five different sporting events at the same venue, Omnisport Apeldoorn, were used. All events were indoor spectator sports and, except for the World Championship Track Cycling and the Handball Tournament, annual events held at this venue. The sporting events are:

World Championships Track Cycling 2011;

AFAS Tennis Classics 2011, an annual commercial sports and entertainment event;

Qualifying Tournament for the World Cup Handball in 2012;

National Championships Track Cycling 2012;

National Championships Indoor Athletics 2013;

Event visitors were interviewed during the event with pen and paper (a and b) or with an app on mobile phones and tablet computers (c, d and e), using a standardized questionnaire. For all events socio-economic questions as well as questions concerning the consumption behavior and appreciation of the event were included. In total, n=2001 persons were interviewed, ranging from 266 (d) to 696 (a) for individual events.

## Results and discussion

All events have a similar distribution pattern of the four visitor profiles, event visitors being the largest group, with an average of 39% with the province as the hosting region and an average of 55% if the municipality is considered the host area. Furthermore, the homestayors were the group with on average a significantly higher than average number of days at the event. Casual visitors were more likely to spend the night in the region than event visitors. Also their average spending per day was highest for all but one event. Other outcomes were more ambiguous, especially with regard to average expenditure of visitors and their appreciation of the event. Event visitors contribute much more to the economic impact of the events for the host-area than the homestayors, because of the size of this group and their overnight stays, although their average day spending does not significantly differ.

Except the sizes of the different visitor types, the choice of host-area does not have a large impact on the general outcomes in terms of the classification and expenditure of these groups. Some outcomes of this research vary substantially over the five sporting events. For most events the visitor's spending outside the sporting facility Omnisport is limited. This may be largely because all events are held indoors, and the absence of nearby shopping, eating and drinking facilities near the venue. The type, size and objectives of sporting events differ between them as well as the organizers, and thus may have a large influence on the other results. More research on non-mega events is needed to determine the effects of the event characteristics and the influence of the event organizer on the types of event visitors and their consumption patterns.

## References

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