
MARKETING THROUGH A SPORTS EVENT: RESULTS OF THREE QUESTIONNAIRES UNDER SPORT PRACTITIONERS, AUDIENCE AND THE RESIDENTS IN AMSTERDAM DURING A RUNNING EVENT

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Abstract

1. AIM OF PAPER

The paper studies the differences in perception of three groups (residents, runners, visitors) towards a large recreational running event hold in Amsterdam. We study the biggest running event of the Netherlands (damloop.nl) which starts from the center of Amsterdam and ends in the center of Zaandam (10 English miles, 16 Km). The number of participants is 54.000. The characteristics of the different groups (residents, runners, visitors) are related to the specific place at the track and to the role the peer group had in this running event. The study focuses on the effect of the running event 'damloop' on the perception and behavior of the different target groups (participants, residents and visitors) towards the brand of City of Amsterdam and the event.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The perceptions of the event for the different groups is linked to two strands of literature. First, we look at the studies on consumer perception and city marketing. Barke (1999) speaks of marketing cities meaning attracting hallmark events to the city, for residents and tourists. Braun (2008) focuses on city marketing influencing the city's customers behavior. This study combines these approaches. For the running event studied, we know place and role of the respondents and their perceptions towards the different attributes of the event: health awareness, sporting intention and image of the city.

Second, we link our study to the studies on city marketing and events. For example, Hritz and Ross (2010) analyze the perception of the residents of the city of Indianapolis in Indiana towards the impact of sport tourism on their city. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2010) study how active sport

tourists perceive the meaning of a sport event experience using an post trip context. Other papers (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010) study how participants experience the event and the city in which they practice their sport.

The current paper adds to this literature by studying the perceptions of both runners, visitors and inhabitants. We do so for a non-mega event, which attracts relatively little attention in the media, despite it attracts 54.00 runners.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research is based on three questionnaires during and after the event: one under the runners (using an internet questionnaire, n=2,963, response rate 33.0%) one under the visitors (768 face to face interviews), one under the residents from Amsterdam (using a panel n=400).

The target groups visitors and runners consist of inhabitants of Amsterdam and visitors from outside the city. This enables us to distinguish between internal and external city marketing.

For the visitors the questionnaire addresses whether they intent to visit again, whether they would recommend the event to friends, the visit motive (supporting friends, watching the professional runners, coincidence, for the atmosphere, or inevitable), the intention to visit the event if it were in a different city, and scorings to 8 statements on the effect of the event on tourism, health, nuisance and whether or not the municipality should support the event. The inhabitants answered partly the same questions (like the statements) which allows for comparison as well as a few other questions (like about nuisance). The runners were mostly asked questions about training behavior, but also a few questions about their participation motives and their background (like age, place of residence).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tentative findings (we are in the process of analyzing the various questionnaires) is that there is a significant difference between visitors and inhabitants on the following topics: good for tourism, importance for the city, impact on sport behavior and life style. Visitors are more positive than inhabitants on these items. However, also the perception amongst non-visiting inhabitants is very positive. Also there seems to be a peer group effect among the visitors. The perceptions of inhabitants and visitors are comparable on good for health and life style issues (which are confirmed from behavior changes by the runners). Despite that the event also causes nuisance (traffic delays and extremely crowded start and finish areas) the support for the event is much higher than expected, both under visitors and under non-visiting inhabitants.

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5. REFERENCES

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