
COMPOSITION OF EVENT VISITORS: AN INVESTIGATION OF FOUR NON-MEGA SPORT EVENTS

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Type: Scientific

Category: 6: Sport Economics and Finance

Abstract

Aim and research questions

There is a growing body of research highlighting the significance of event visitors as the driving force of the economic impact of sport events (Taks, Green, Chalip, Kesenne, & Martyn, 2013). To date, however, scholars have rarely attempted to analyze the following two questions: (a) To what extent does the event lead to money inflows and outflows from event visitors that would not have occurred in its absence?; (b) What is the primary economic stimulus of these flows to a host region (Matheson & Baade, 2006; Tyrrell & Johnston, 2001)?

Based on these questions, this paper attempts to contribute to the existing literature in two ways. First, based on a conceptual framework developed by Crompton (1995) and its further extension given by Preuss (2005), the study aims to reveal the composition of several groups of event visitors ("Residents", "Home stayers", "Event visitors", "Extentioners", "Casuals" and "Time switchers") at four non-mega sporting events, whereas the definition of these groups are strictly derived from the mentioned conceptual framework. Second, the study seeks to examine differences in the composition of the event visitors according to the aforementioned groups at the four events.

Theoretical background

The current study draws on the conceptual insight into how to assess the economic impact of sport events stemming from the primary visitors' consumption in a robust and reliable manner developed by Crompton (1995) and Preuss (2005). Consequently, these contributions serve as a conceptual framework for all subsequent analyses of this study.

Essentially, the framework establishes which behavior of residents and people from outside the region will cause crowding-out, re-distribution, and deterrence effects and why this behavior does not lead to a primary economic impact. It also explains which behavior will lead to an injection of money into the host region and why only this amount of money can be

regarded as a primary impact.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The empirical analysis is based on primary data collected by means of self-administered questionnaires at the following four non-mega sporting events: (1) Giro d'Italia 2012 in Denmark (761 questionnaires), (2) PWA Windsurf World Cup Sylt 2012 in Germany (948 questionnaires), (3) two FIS Ski Jumping World Cup events 2013 in Norway (765 questionnaires).

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

The current study builds on and extends the existing literature by being the first to categorize event visitors of non-mega sporting events by means of theory driven group definitions. Moreover, to the best knowledge, this study is the first one providing a cross-event comparison of the event visitor composition among different events. This cross-event comparison is thereby supported by a consistent data collection and, thus, data analysis for all four events.

The results suggest that there are significant differences among the considered events in terms of the composition of event visitors. Further, the results show that in many cases the existing differences are associated with the specific context in which the given event was embedded. Given this, it can be concluded that there is no clear and unique pattern in the composition of event visitors among the four considered events. When these findings are compared to existing results for the event visitor composition at mega-events (e.g. FIFA World Cup or Olympics), the importance of the relevance of the event's context can be carved out even more clearly. Finally, the relevance and importance of these findings will be highlighted in the context of the need for the provisioning of reliable estimates of the event visitor composition for future ex-ante economic impact studies. Moreover, this information serves as a key input to several available models aimed at calculating the overall economic impact, such as RIMS (Regional Input–Output Modeling System) or IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for PLANing). Thus, the findings of such investigations are expected to strengthen the first step of the direct economic impact analyses.

References

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EASM 2014