

# Image Transfer Through Junior Sports Events And Their Legacy Effect

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## Aim of research

Youth sport events are generally under-researched on the academic side and the public awareness is rather low compared to adult events. Nevertheless, hosting international youth tournaments is worth considering for sport organisations as various benefits relate to those events. Apart from youth development or increased awareness for the youth sport in general, this study analysed, whether the organising association could profit from a positive image transfer from the event and how sustainable such an effect is (in this study called: legacy effect) — especially when other affairs have led to negative press and bad reputation recently. As some positive image effects could already be confirmed in our previous studies, the research objective for this paper was to finalise the study by analysing the long-term legacy effects through junior sports events one year after the tournament.

## Theoretical background

There are various image transfer models in the literature whereby the internationally most acknowledged image transfer models in context of sport event marketing and sponsoring was established by Nufer (2002). The current state of the research is summarized in a conceptualized model by Novais and Arcodia (2013). This approach includes variables influencing the image transfer, for example, the level of involvement of the participants with the event (Neijens, Smit & Moorman, 2009). Although the area of image transfer in sponsoring and event marketing is well-researched (Anholt, 2007; Novais & Arcodia, 2013; Nufer, 2002), the construct used in this research project — analysing a potential image effect from the youth sport event to the organising sport association — is not yet considered in the literature. Anholt (2007) who researched intensively issues around brand management, does not analyse the image effect from an event to the organiser, but only the implications for the national brand. Regarding legacy impacts mega-sports events are analysed as they promise long-lasting effects such as improvements in infrastructure and services called tangible legacy. Other effects are more part of intangible legacy such as increased awareness and image of the city or nation (Anholt, 2007; Ferrari & Guala, 2017). In context of youth sport events, mainly intangible legacy effects are worth considering as the investments in tangible legacy are rather low.

## Methodology, research design and data analysis

The overall research project consists of three quantitative surveys building the case study of the UEFA Under-19 European Football Championship in Germany in 2016. In total, more than 1,100 people — mainly pupils as major target group of the event — have taken part at the three different times of the survey. The questionnaire was distributed in schools in the region as well as in the control group and enlarged by additional data from field surveys in city centres. In total, this holistic research design has provided three results: the basic image value (survey before the tournament), event image value (survey during and briefly after the tournament) as well as the legacy image value effect (9–12 months after the tournament). Image items which were tested in the questionnaire on a 5-item Likert scale were next to the overall image of the national organisation (very negative to very positive) also a behavioural dimension (unscrupulous to responsible, exclusionary to integrative, egoistic to social, competing to cooperative), a reputation dimension (unattractive to attractive and unappealing to appealing) as well as a rationale dimension (unsuccessful to successful and unorganised to organised).

## Results

It was found that there are positive effects from the youth tournament on the image of the national football association and how the organisation is perceived in public. Additionally, the level of involvement is a major predictor for the intensity of the image effect. The analysis revealed that three differently involved groups (match spectators, DFB-campaign target audience and not specifically addressed population) vary strongly from each other regarding the DFB image values: match spectators with the highest image value level, followed by the campaign target audience and finally the not actively involved inhabitants of the match venues — the latter almost matching the low image value level of the control groups having had no contact to the event at all (other regions in Germany). The results from the 2017 legacy survey show that some effects last on one year after the event — especially in the region where the tournaments took place. From this, one can derive practical implications for the organisation of youth tournaments. There is a case

of positive image transfer from the event to the organising association, but the event organisation needs to be supported by specific target group campaigning.

## References

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