

# The Role Of Stakeholders In Small-Scale Sporting Events: A Case Study Of The Val Di Fassa 2019 FIS World Junior Alpine Ski Championships

**Bazzanella, Filippo; Peters, Mike; Schnitzer, Martin**

University of Innsbruck, Austria

E-mail: filippo.bazzanella@gmail.com

## **Aim of abstract/research question**

The World Junior Alpine Ski Championships, launched by the International Ski Federation (FIS), is an international sports event targeting young elite ski athletes aged 16–20. Besides placing those young athletes to the centre of attention the events' general approach is a youth driven one in which also young people living in the host city/region are offered several options to become part of the event. This is an opportunity for the region of Val di Fassa (Trentino), one of the top Italian winter tourism destinations, to be pinpointed as "world ski event" location. Moreover, many tourists but also residents will take the chance to watch competitions, ceremonies or visit other side events during the World Championships. As local stakeholders play a major role in conceptualising and developing such an event this study sheds more light upon local stakeholders' attitude towards such an event. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the events' leverage and the perception of the World Junior Alpine Ski Championships in the valley and surroundings from the perspective of local stakeholders.

## **Theoretical background/literature review**

There is not much evidence of the topic in the literature regarding world alpine ski championships and sporting events. An interesting perspective about the importance of the sporting event as asset for a tourism strategy is given by Schnitzer, Schlemmer & Kristiansen (2017). A large scale event analysis has been conducted during first Winter Youth Olympic Games held in Innsbruck in January 2012 (e.g. Peters & Schnitzer, 2015), assessing young elite athletes' perceptions of the Youth Olympic Games experience from the point-of-view of different stakeholder groups.

Even if World Junior Alpine Ski Championships has been assigned to Val di Fassa for 2019 without any bidding process, the local stakeholders played a key role (e.g. Hautbois, Parent & Séguin, 2012). The subject matter has been deeply examined, concerning books and articles with a particular attention of role of stakeholders in the organizations (e.g. Chelladurai, 2001) as well as the general theory of stakeholders (e.g. Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005).

## **Methodology, research design and data analysis**

By differing the stakeholders on the basis of their different "identification and salience" (e.g. Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005), the present study keeps the most influential group of people in term of the capacity of conditioning the organizing committee decisions in consideration, representing the economical drivers of territory (hotel owners, lifts companies, tourism marketing, ski clubs, etc.)

In collaboration with the Organizing Committee of World Junior Alpine Ski Championships Val di Fassa 2019, a stakeholder analysis and selection has been conducted. Currently, interviews with about 15 of them are conducted (data collection finished by mid-June 2017).

## **Results, discussion and implications/conclusions**

Results will be available in autumn 2017. Our assumptions are:

- A small size sporting event might be delivered through the involvement of all local stakeholders in order to obtain the most reasonable result.
- The World Junior Alpine Ski Championships is assigned without a bidding phase but just with the interest of national ski association; in such a case local stakeholders play a key role in the start-up phase of the sporting event.
- The impact of the event is higher with a complete involvement of local stakeholders.

The discussion of the empirical data will be given on occasion of the EASM Congress 2017. Marketing and event management implication can be derived to improve event planning and developing phases in destinations.

## **References**

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