

Social Impact of Events on Residents: Comparing a Perception – versus an Experienced-based Assessment

Oshimi, Daichi¹ and Taks, Marijke²

1: Tokai University, Japan; 2: University of Ottawa, Canada
oshimidaichi@gmail.com

Aim

Past research mainly relies on residents' accounts of perceptions of social impacts of events, but do not necessarily measure how residents actually experience social impacts themselves. This study contrasted and compared social impacts of events measured based on perceptions, with results from an experience-based assessment tool to explore better ways to measure social impacts of events.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous studies have investigated social impact of sporting events mainly based on public perceptions (e.g., Balduck et al., 2011; Kim, et al. 2015). However, the focus is starting to shift from perceptions to more personal psychosocial benefits of sporting events, such as psychic income (e.g., Oja et al., 2018), personal well-being (e.g., Yolal et al., 2016), quality of life (e.g., Ma & Kaplanidou, 2017), or residential happiness (e.g., Taks, et al. 2016). These studies call for an evaluation based on “personal experiences” (e.g., The event makes me feel happy...) rather than “public perceptions” (e.g. The event makes people happy ...). Clearly, public perceptions are usually framed by the media (e.g. Sant & Mason, 2015), which influences peoples' understanding of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In contrast, experience-based assessment measures the actual “lived experiences” of social impact of sporting events on host residents. Thus, this study aimed to differentiate the two approaches to identify if they reveal different outcomes of social impacts when the same event is taken into consideration. The goal is to explore ways to more accurately assess social impact of events. The context for the study involves citizens from Tokyo and the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPG). Given that the event is hosted in two years' time, this study tested “expected” or “anticipated” personal experiences versus preconceived perceptions of the OPG.

Research Design and Data Analysis

Data were collected through an Internet-based survey conducted by a Japanese Internet research service company in February 2018. Stratified sampling based on demographic variables (gender and age groups) from the Population Census of Tokyo was performed to establish a representative view of the 1030 participants (successful response rate: 98.7%). Participants were randomly classified into two groups: Group A (n = 515) responded to experience-based items only; Group B (n = 515) responded to both, perception- and experience-based items (in that sequence). The two scales were adapted from Author's (2017) Social Impact Experience Scale (SIES), and consisted of 23 items, representing seven predetermined factors: “social cohesion,” “community spirit,” “social capital,” “community involvement with regard to the event,” “sport participation and physical activity,” “disorder and conflict,” and “feelings of (un)safety”. Given the two-year anticipation, items were formulated in future tense. Social Impacts Experience items were worded in the “me” form (e.g., The event will strengthen *my* friendships/relationships in the community); Social Impact Perception items were worded passively (e.g., The event will strengthen peoples' friendships/relationships in the community). All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1- *Strongly disagree* to 7- *Strongly agree*). Social impact experiences were compared

with perceptions using: (a) independent t-test between the experience constructs for Group A and perception constructs for Group B; and (b) paired t-test of experiences and perceptions within Group B.

Results and Discussion

The sample was representative of Tokyo city residents. No significant differences appeared between Groups A and B in demographic variables, indicating no selection bias. CFA confirmed the factor structure of both scales. The results of the global fit indexes, which assessed the proposed model's fit with the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.42$ (898), $p < .001$, CFI = .933, TLI = .923, RMSEA = .053, SRMR = .046) showed that the measurement models fit the data. Reliability, convergent and discriminant validity were tested and deemed acceptable. Independent t-test showed no significant differences in personal experience between Group A and Group B, indicating no response bias. Comparisons between perception and experience scales consistently showed that social impact factors measured through perceptions were significantly higher than those measured through experiences.

Conclusion and Implications

The results confirmed our expectation that previous studies applying public perception-based scales consistently overestimated the social impact of sport events. The experience scale revealed that residents do not anticipate to benefit socially from hosting the OPG. It remains to be seen if the level of "lived" experiences will change when the event actually takes place in two years' time. However, two years prior to the OPG there is a clear gap between perceptions and anticipated experiences; people have very little expectations that the OPG will affect their personal lives socially, while they perceive some benefit for the community at large. It is essential that proponents of events are aware of this important distinction, so they can inform host communities more realistically how events actually affect people socially (or not), instead of overestimating the social impact claims.

References

- Kim, W., Jun, H. M., Walker, M., & Drane, D. (2015). Evaluating the perceived social impacts of hosting large-scale sport tourism events: Scale development and validation. *Tourism Management*, 48, 21–32.
- Ma, S. C., & Kaplanidou, K. (2017). Legacy perceptions among host Tour de Taiwan residents: The mediating effect of quality of life. *Leisure Studies*, 36(3), 423–437.
- Sant, S. L., & Mason, D. S. (2015). Framing event legacy in a prospective host city: Managing Vancouver's Olympic bid. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(1), 42–56.
- Taks, M., Littlejohn, M., Snelgrove, R., & Wood, L. (2016). Sport events and residential happiness: The case of two non-mega sport events. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1(3-4), 90–109.
- Yolal, M., GURSOY, D., UYSAL, M., KIM, H. L., & KARACAOLU, S. (2016). Impacts of festivals and events on residents' well-being. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 61, 1–18.