

QUALITY OF LIFE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN EVENT IMPACTS AND MEGA EVENT SUPPORT AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN RESIDENTS: THE 2010 FIFA WORLD CUPTM

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INTRODUCTION

Mega events are viewed as means of tourism development for a country through infrastructural upgrades, media exposure, and overall socio-emotional pride and enthusiasm experienced by the host country's residents (Fredline, Jago, & Deery, 2003; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Rogerson, 2009; Swart & Bob, 2007; Waite, 2003). In the case of South Africa, the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ was viewed as a driving force toward unification and a way of signaling messages to the World about the progress being made in all sectors of society (Theron, 2008; Van Wyk, 2008). The country also hopes to sustain future bids to host mega sport events in an attempt to strengthen the government's nation building efforts and to bring about economic and other benefits such as tourism and sport development (Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Rogerson, 2009). Within the approach of utilizing mega sport events as a tourism development strategy, the support of local residents becomes important as they are one of the key stakeholders in tourism planning and development (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Furthermore, residents provide volunteer services; they create the local event atmosphere and interact directly with the sport consumers of such events namely spectators and athletes. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence their support for hosting mega events is of essence. Given that the tourism literature has not extensively examined the outcome of support for a mega event, the purpose of the study is to test the factors that can influence such support. These factors are reviewed in the following literature review.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the literature examining residents' attitudes toward tourism development has examined the outcomes of support toward tourism development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004) or in the case of mega sport events, support for hosting of mega sport events (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006). The theoretical approach utilized in such studies is social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). Within this theoretical framework, variables such as social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts contribute to residents' levels of support for tourism development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Similar variables are advanced when the outcome of tourism development is support for mega events (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Twynam & Johnston, 2004). The underlying assumption from the theory is that the benefits received from tourism development will positively influence residents' support toward that outcome primarily due to perceived gains that such development brings (Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Surprisingly, even without the perceived gains, support for tourism was still evident among residents of tourism communities (Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Such an outcome suggests that residents may perceive tourism development as benefiting their quality of life. Interestingly, Andereck and Vogt found that quality of life was a significant predictor of support toward tourism development for some communities. However, when other variables such as negative impacts were included in the model predicting support for tourism, this variable lost its predictive power (Andereck & Vogt, 2000). Although this was not proposed by Andereck and Vogt (2000) as future research, it may be probable that quality of life is a mediator of the relationship between tourism impacts and support for tourism development because improved quality of life is perceived as the exchanged benefit. Indeed this supposition is indirectly suggested by Andereck, Valentine, Knopf and Vogt (2005) who suggest that "tourism is widely perceived as a potential economic base, providing elements that may improve quality of life such as employment opportunities, tax revenues, economic diversity, festivals, restaurants, natural and cultural attractions, and outdoor recreation

opportunities.” (pp. 1056-1057). Andereck et al (2005) also acknowledged how negative impacts such as crowding, traffic and parking problems and increased crime and cost of living can negatively influence quality of life, ideas that are in agreement with Ap and Crompton (1993) and McCool and Martin (1994). Similarly, in the context of mega sport events Gursoy and Kendall (2006) suggest a model that predicts residents’ support toward hosting mega sport events incorporating variables such as perceived benefits and costs, community concern and attachment as well as ecocentric attitudes. However, Gursoy and Kendall (2006) did not include quality of life. This study therefore extends previous research by proposing that perceived quality of life would mediate the influence of impacts (economic, social, cultural, perceived benefits and perceived costs) on support for tourism development through the hosting of mega events.

METHODS

In order to test the model of this study, data were collected from residents of five South African host cities approximately three months before the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The primary method of data collection was in-person survey (i.e., questionnaire) intercept. Data collection was conducted among the residents of five cities (Rustenburg, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Nelspruit, Polokwane) during April, 2010. A trained team of twenty eight student fieldworkers [from Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)] and five field coordinators (Lecturers-TUT) administered the surveys at major traffic areas such as shopping centers and other public areas such as popular squares and business districts. The respective site selections were to ensure a true representation of the population and demographics of each city. If a site had multiple entry and exit points, interviewers rotated and included all possible entries. The field teams wore name badges with a TUT logo, and were instructed to dress professionally. A stratified random sample of residents by age, gender, area of the city, and race were identified. At each respective location, a random sample of residents were intercepted and requested to complete a questionnaire. Every fifth person or group was targeted and only one adult from each party was identified (alternating male and female) and requested to participate at the designated site. A screening question was asked of potential respondents to assess if they were a resident of the city. If so, they were requested to complete the questionnaire which took approximately 15 minutes. In the event, residents were not able to read or write, respondents requested the field member to complete the responses based on an oral interview. A total of 1759 questionnaires were collected from all cities (Johannesburg=373, Nelspruit=357, Polokwane=315, Pretoria=349, Rustenburg=365).

Measurement and data analysis. A three page questionnaire was used for this study and was written in English. The questions for this study comprised one section as they were part of a larger research project. Twenty-two impact questions examined the economic (three items), tourism (three items), socio-cultural (three items), psychological (four items), infrastructure (three items), costs (three items) and benefits (three items) of hosting the World Cup in South Africa. The items were based on those used in previous research (Fredline, et al., 2003; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Preuss, 2007) and were worded as statements asking respondents to agree or disagree on a five point scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Quality of life was measured with three statements (I would like to move away from South Africa, I am satisfied with South Africa as a place to live, The future of South Africa looks bright) (Perdue, Long & Kang, 1999). The respondents provided their level of agreement on a seven point scale where 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree. The dependent variable was measured with one item “overall I support the hosting of the World Cup in South Africa” evaluated on the same anchors as the quality of life questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was estimated for the model to verify the measurement fit of the model and then the structural equation model (SEM) estimation was performed (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Robust statistics were used due to somewhat large multivariate kurtosis indicator (Mardia's coefficient normalized=144.29) (Yuan & Bentler, 1998). The robust statistic indices results were not satisfactory and three items were deleted due to very low factor loadings (two items, one from economic factor and the other one from the quality of life factor) and due to modification indices suggestion (one item from the infrastructure factor). The second CFA model was satisfactory (Sattora Bentler $\chi^2=694.59$, $df=161$, $NFI=.91$, $NNFI=.90$, $CFI=.93$, $RMSEA=.046$, 95% Confidence Interval .043 to.05). Thus, the estimation of the SEM model followed. The results for the SEM model were acceptable (Sattora Bentler $\chi^2=3096.17$, $df=203$, $NFI=.95$, $NNFI=.95$, $CFI=.95$, $RMSEA=.096$, 95% Confidence Interval .093 to.099). Table 1 presents the path coefficients from the event impact factors to quality of life and from quality of life to event support. The results reveal the important role of quality of life as a mediating factor between the influence of event impacts and overall support for the hosting of a mega event such as the World Cup.

Table 1. Standardized path coefficients of the SEM model predicting support for hosting the 2010 World Cup and Quality of Life from event impacts.

Variables	Standardized	R²
Economic → Quality of life	.14*	
Tourism → Quality of life	.08*	
Social/Cultural → Quality of life	.12*	
Psychological → Quality of life	.19*	
Infrastructure → Quality of life	.06	
Costs → Quality of life	-.09	
Benefits → Quality of life	.18*	
Quality of life → Support for World Cup hosting	.37*	.14

*Denotes path is significant, $p < .05$.

Note: $R^2=.12$ for the event impact factors on quality of life

CONCLUSION

This research extends the theoretical models proposed in the literature about residents' support for tourism development by adding the quality of life factor as a mediator. This study also reveals that perceived psychological impacts created by the World Cup have a larger contribution to the perceived quality of life of the South African residents residing in five host cities. Furthermore, the economic impact is of importance for the quality of life of residents along with the socio-cultural and benefits factors. Although the model was acceptable, the variance explained by the variables should also be examined. For this study, the variance explained is relatively low (14%), which suggests that other variables should be considered such as residents overall attitudes toward the event (Andereck & Vogt, 2000) and economic dependency resulting from the event hosting preparations (Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999). Practical implications stemming from this research involve the creation of communication campaigns that promote the economic but also psychological and social benefits resulting from the event hosting with the aim of increasing quality of life in order to garner continuous support from one of the key stakeholders in mega event hosting, the local residents.

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