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PERCEPTIONS OF PRE- AND POST-EVENT IMPACTS OF PEI 2014 YEAR-LONG CELEBRATIONS

ABSTRACT *This study examines Canadian perceptions of pre- and post-event impacts of the PEI 2014 Celebrations using the 2013 and 2015 surveys of PEI residents and other Canadians conducted by the Centre for Tourism Research. Overall, results indicate that Canadians' awareness of, knowledge about, and attitudes toward the 1864 Charlottetown Conference and the PEI 2014 Celebrations increased and positively changed over time. The research also suggests that event organizers and/or destination tourism managers need to put greater emphasis on the "socio-cultural aspects" of the event such as community participation and cultural identity, and make an effort to increase tourism volume and value in order to obtain strong support from residents and be successful.*

Keywords: Perceptions, 1864 Charlottetown Conference, PEI 2014, impacts of pre- and post-event.

INTRODUCTION

Prince Edward Island (PEI) and all of Canada celebrated an important chapter in Canadian history in 2014, marking the 150th anniversary of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference - where the idea of Canada, as a nation, was proposed. The Island hosted a spectacular year-long tribute to the beginning of this great country and welcomed visitors to participate in more than 150 festivities. The mission of "the PEI 2014 Celebrations" was to build pride and awareness among Island residents and visitors about PEI's important role as the Birthplace of Confederation, to provide increased economic impact through tourism visitation to PEI, and to act as a catalyst for Canada's 150th Birthday celebrations in 2017 (www.tourismpei.com; www.pei2014.com).

For the PEI 2014 year-long celebrations/events, the specific research programs and study objectives were set around following three over-arching themes during the period from January 2012 to November 2015: 1) determine the level of awareness of the PEI 2014 Celebrations (*pre-event*); 2) measure economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of the PEI 2014 Celebrations on Prince Edward Island (*during the event*); and 3) measure the impact of the PEI 2014 Celebrations on visitors' and residents' perceptions of PEI regarding the Charlottetown Conference and PEI's role in Canadian Confederation and the overall evaluation of the Celebrations (*post-event*). Of many studies conducted, this study focuses on identifying changes or differences in perceptions of pre- and post-event impacts of the PEI 2014 Celebrations perceived by both PEI residents and other Canadians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review of data sources was undertaken to analyze different research theories and studies concerning residents' perceptions toward tourism (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams 1997; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997; Liu & Var, 1986; McCool & Martin, 1994; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990). Emphasis was placed on the different positive and negative socio-cultural (Andereck et al., 2005; Ap, 1990; Delamere, Wankel, & Hinch, 2001; Getz, 2007; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; King, Pizam, & Milman, 1993; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Tosun, 2002, environmental (Andereck et al., 2005; Collins, Jones, & Munday, 2009; Mason & Cheyne, 2000; Simpson, 2008), and economic (Chhabra, Sills, & Cabbage, 2003; Goldblatt, 1997; Gursoy, Sharma, Carter, 2007; Logar, 2010; Mossberg, 2000; Saayman, 2007; Small, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2005) impacts of local festivals/events in the community, research of existing measuring instruments and various theories and models and other factors that influenced the perceptions of the local community.

METHOD

The samples used for this study were populated from two groups in terms of residency of respondents (PEI residents and other Canadian residents) and collected in two ways regarding the timing of the surveys (pre- and post-event). As a result, this study used four different survey

data sets, which include PEI resident respondents (575 from the pre-event survey and 588 from the post-event) and other Canadian respondents (1,037 from the pre-event survey and 1,187 from the post-event) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Survey Period and Survey Participation Statistics

	Pre-Event (2013)	Post-Event (2015)
Resident Surveys		
Survey Period	Nov. 5 to Dec. 6, 2013	Mar. 3 to Apr. 3, 2015
Number of Survey Invitations (Sampling Frame)	3,192	3,200
Number of Samples used	575	588
(Response Rate)	(18.0%)	(18.4%)
Other Canadian (Potential Canadian Visitor) Surveys		
Survey Period	Oct. 29 to Nov. 29, 2013	Mar. 5 to Apr. 3, 2015
Number of Survey Invitations (Sampling Frame)	11,500	11,448
Number of Samples used	1,037	1,187
(Response Rate)	(9.0%)	(10.4%)

The survey collected a wide range of information regarding pre- and post-event impacts of the PEI 2014 year-long celebrations from Canadian perspectives. The primary variables used for this study include awareness of, knowledge about, and attitudes toward the 1864 Charlottetown Conference and awareness of the PEI 2014 Celebrations. Twenty items were used to measure respondents' perceptions of outcomes of the PEI 2014 Celebrations between pre- (expectations) and post-event (performances). These variables consist of five constructs of impacts of the festivals/events on communities: 1) economic, 2) social-cultural, and 3) environmental impacts, 4) interaction with tourists, and 5) tourism performance.

RESULTS

Perceptions of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference

PEI residents and non-resident Canadians were asked to indicate perceptions of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference. As shown in Table 2, Canadians' awareness and knowledge of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference increased over time (pre- vs. post-event). Further, Canadians' attitudes toward the Conference changed more positively over time.

Awareness of the PEI 2014 Year-Long Celebrations

Focusing on awareness of the PEI 2014 year-long celebrations/events (Figure 1), more PEI residents and other Canadians were likely to be aware of the PEI 2014 celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference over time. It is noted that the increased awareness of the PEI 2014 celebrations was significantly influenced by several sources of information, including media news or commentary and advertisement (newspaper, radio, TV, online, etc.), word of mouth, and social media.

Perceptions of Outcomes of the PEI 2014 Celebrations

As presented in Table 3, results of paired *t*-tests between pre- and post-event indicated that both PEI residents' and other Canadians' perceptions of outcomes of the PEI 2014 celebrations were significantly different before and after the event. Interestingly, non-resident other Canadians perceived all twelve impact variables as stronger after the year-long party was over than before. Although PEI residents' overall perceptions of pre- and post-event impacts of the PEI 2014 Celebrations were high; surprisingly, they held less strong perceptions of most of the impact variables after the event, excluding "increasing local cultural identity" and "being a strong economic contributor to PEI", compared to results of the pre-event survey.

Table 2. Perceptions of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference between Pre- and Post-Event

	PEI Residents			Other Canadians		
	Pre (n=575)	Post (n=588)	Statistical Value	Pre (n=1,037)	Post (n=1,187)	Statistical Value
Awareness of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference ^{a)}						
Yes	94.6%	98.6%	19.153***	40.2%	62.9%	234.710***
No	4.9%	0.7%		54.3%	34.8%	
Don't know	0.5%	0.7%		5.5%	2.3%	
Identification of the Key Results of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference ^{a)}						
The British North American Act was passed and Canada became a country	4.2%	4.2%	48.285***	12.5%	9.3%	101.106***
Prince Edward Island joined the Confederation of Canada	10.8%	5.3%		10.6%	4.6%	
The idea of Canadian Confederation was agreed to in principal	62.9%	80.2%		36.0%	62.8%	
It was the final in a series of conferences or debates that led to Canadian Confederation	15.6%	9.1%		24.5%	18.8%	
Not sure	6.4%	1.2%		16.5%	4.5%	
Level of Knowledge of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference ^{b)}						
	3.24	3.43	3.329***	2.64	3.16	8.862***
Attitudes toward the 1864 Charlottetown Conference ^{b)}						
The 1864 Charlottetown Conference is an important part of Canada's history	4.19	4.40	-4.115***	4.18	4.48	-8.384***
The 1864 Charlottetown Conference was a catalyst for the formation of Canada	3.88	4.34	-2.466*	4.04	4.39	-9.350***
The 150th anniversary of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference is an important event for all Canadians that should be recognized and celebrated	3.90	3.97	-1.098	3.80	4.18	-9.112***
I am interested in learning more about the 1864 Charlottetown Conference and its role in Confederation	3.30	3.31	-0.122	3.36	3.72	-7.615***
I am proud of PEI's role in Canadian Confederation	4.19	4.24	-0.805			
Charlottetown's designation as the "Birthplace of Confederation" is important	4.23	4.27	-0.844			
When friends or family visit Prince Edward Island, I encourage them to learn about the province's role in Confederation and visit related sites	3.10	3.38	-4.195***			
There is value in celebrating and showcasing the Island's historical role in Canadian Confederation	3.88	4.05	-3.061**			
The 1864 Charlottetown Conference is important in defining PEI's identity within Canada	3.87	4.03	-2.712**			

Note: ^{a)} Results of Chi-Square analysis; ^{b)} Paired T-test results for mean values based on a 5-point scale; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

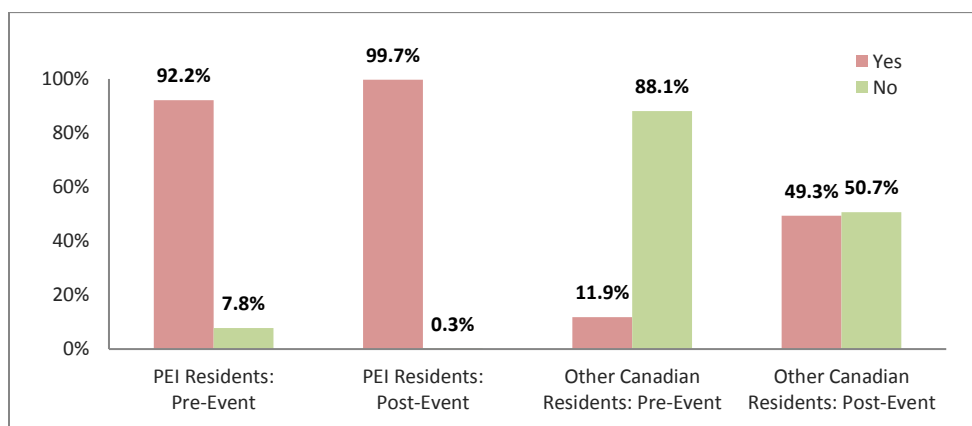


Figure 1. Awareness of PEI 2014 Celebrations marking the 150th Anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference between Pre- and Post-Event

Table 3. Perceptions of Outcomes of the PEI 2014 Celebrations between Pre- and Post-Event

	PEI Residents			Other Canadian Residents		
	Pre (n=575)	Post (n=588)	t- value	Pre (n=1,037)	Post (n=1,187)	t- value
Outcomes of the PEI 2014 Celebrations						
Pre: I expect the PEI 2014 celebrations will ...						
Post: I believe the PEI 2014 celebrations ...						
Increase awareness and knowledge of PEI's role in Canadian Confederation across Canada	3.89	3.93	-0.758	3.88	4.05	-3.865***
Enhance pride amongst Islanders	3.89	3.83	0.975	4.03	4.18	-3.668***
Enhance community spirit and participation	3.94	3.81	2.453*	3.95	4.09	-3.311***
Strengthen our identity and pride as Canadians	3.72	3.69	0.605	3.77	3.99	-4.990***
Receive national recognition as a kick-off to Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017	3.67	3.56	1.739	3.65	3.66	-0.124
Provide economic benefits to small businesses (R) Provide economic benefits to PEI (V)	3.71	3.60	1.823	4.11	4.21	-2.332*
Encourage participation in a variety of cultural activities by PEI residents	3.71	3.91	-3.729***	3.92	4.12	-4.933***
Encourage more cultural exchanges between local residents and tourists	3.55	3.61	-1.190	3.82	3.93	-2.732**
Increase local cultural identity	3.56	3.68	-2.134*	3.85	3.98	-3.077**
Provide an incentive for the restoration/conservation of historical buildings and natural resources	3.68	3.59	1.451	3.87	3.99	-2.901**
Strengthen arts, culture, and heritage platforms in PEI	3.71	3.72	-0.163	3.82	4.03	-4.997***
Encourage more public development in PEI	3.44	3.29	2.555*	3.72	3.81	-2.169*
Increase tourism visitation to, and spending in, PEI during 2014	4.01	3.99	0.289			
Increase tourism visitation to, and spending in, PEI in subsequent years	3.63	3.32	5.312***			
Provide local Island talent with exposure to a broader audience	4.15	4.03	2.183*			
Develop lasting partnerships amongst institutions, community organizations, non-profit associations and individuals	3.59	3.40	3.513***			
Be a strong economic contributor to PEI	3.74	3.89	-2.409*			
Attract more investment and spending in PEI's economy	3.49	3.55	-1.030			
Contribute positively to the income and standard of living of PEI residents	3.23	2.91	4.725***			
Increase employment opportunities for PEI residents	3.33	3.18	2.226*			
Support for and Success of the PEI 2014 Celebrations						
I am (was) supportive of the PEI 2014 celebrations	3.99	3.66	5.198***			
I think the PEI 2014 celebrations will be (were) successful	3.99	3.78	3.694***			

Note: Paired *T*-test results for mean values based on a 5-point scale; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Factors Affecting Support for and Success of the PEI 2014 Celebrations

Linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the factors relating to outcomes of the PEI 2014 celebrations affecting PEI residents' overall support for and success of the year-long events. The pre-event regression model has 60.9% of explanation power and the post-event model has 66.0%, which are statistically enough for further interpretation. A review of the result of the pre-event survey indicates that PEI residents' strong, positive perceptions of three potential outcomes, including "socio-cultural identity", "tourism performance", and "economic benefits" significantly influenced the overall expectation of support for and the success of the PEI 2014 celebrations. On the other hand, the result of the post-event survey shows that the residents' overall perceptions of the success of the PEI 2014 celebrations were significantly influenced by four outcome factors including "socio-cultural identity", "tourism performance", "economic benefits", and "interaction with tourists".

Table 4. Factors Affecting Support for and Success of the PEI 2014 Celebrations:
A Comparison between Pre- and Post-Event

	Model I: Pre-Event (<i>n</i> =575)			Model II: Post-Event (<i>n</i> =588)		
	Std. Coefficients β	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Std. Coefficients β	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
(Constant)		4.153	.000		-3.049	.002
F1: Socio-cultural Identity	.468	8.485	.000	.520	10.439	.000
F2: Economic Benefits	.112	2.367	.018	.113	2.530	.012
F3: Public Development and Improvement of Physical Environment	.098	1.698	.090	.002	0.050	.960
F4: Interaction with Tourists	.050	1.021	.308	.105	2.457	.014
F5: Tourism Performance	.117	2.659	.008	.144	3.766	.000
Model Summary						
<i>R</i>		.782			.814	
<i>R</i> Square		.612			.663	
Adjusted <i>R</i> Square		.609			.660	
<i>F</i> -value (Sig.)		179.59 (<i>p</i> = .000)			228.52 (<i>p</i> = .000)	

Note: Dependent variable input in each of the regression models was "support for and success" of the PEI 2014 Celebrations indicating the composite mean value from the two variables.

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to identify changes or differences in perceptions of pre- and post-event impacts of the PEI 2014 Celebrations perceived by both PEI residents and other Canadians observed between 2013 and 2015. In the given case, longitudinal perceptions of pre- and post-event impacts were constructed and used to present changes over time.

Results indicate that Canadians' perceptions of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference and the PEI 2014 Celebrations increased over time and suggest that event organizers and/or destination tourism managers need to put greater emphasis on the socio-cultural aspects of the event such as community participation and cultural identity, and make an effort to increase tourism volume and value in order to obtain strong support from residents and be successful.

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