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The Exploration of Influential Factors of On Sport Tourist Expenditure in Mega Sport Event

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ABSTRACT

Sport events are considered as important business and many countries are competing fiercely to host major events. This is because of the money that events generate and the marketing value of destination from hosting major events. The purpose of this study is exploring the potential factors that can influence sport tourists' spending during mega sport events. The surveys consisted of 136 questionnaires that were completed one day before 2012 Super Bowl in Indianapolis. Findings of the survey indicate that team identification, previous Super Bowl attendance, and level of the professional football involvement may influence sport tourists' spending during mega sport event. The contribution of this research is providing several possible directions for both destination and event managers to cultivate marketing strategy to increase the value and amounts generated by the event.

Keywords: *Super Bowl, sport tourists' spending, marketing*

INTRODUCTION

Sport and sport tourism are believed to be among the most popular leisure experiences worldwide, and are now regarded by many to be the biggest global social phenomenon and tourist industry (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003). This developing tourism trend has attracted much attention since its impact on local economies throughout the USA has become significant (Thwaites, 1999). Also, destinations throughout the USA and the world compete with each other for the opportunity to host major professional and amateur sporting events for anticipated economic benefits generated by sport tourists' expenditures (Turco & Eisenhardt, 1998; Hinch & Higham, 2004; Gratton et al., 2000). While the economic impact of sport events have been widely discussed, an increasing number of studies have explored the economic impacts that mega sport events such as the Olympics and the World Cup to hosting destinations (Bernthal & Regan, 2004; Wilson, 2006; Lertwachara & Cochran, 2007). However, a final answer on economic impact from mega sport events is still unclear due to

impact variation, which depends on the type of mega event, the participating countries, and whether the event is held during the peak season or off-season (Ritchie et al, 2009; Fouri & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Briedendann, 2011). Hence, in order to improve our understanding of economic impact of hosting mega sport events, many sport tourism studies have been conducted from the perspective of understanding, categorizing, or analyzing sport tourists expenditures (Saayman et al, 2005; Smith & Stewart, 2007; Dixen et al, 2012). Limited studies have focused on potential demographic or personal factors that can influence tourist's expenditures while attending sport events, however. This paper therefore examines the associations between factors such as team identification, previous Super Bowl attendance, and the spectating frequency between tourists' spending behavior during a mega sport event. In addition, the comparison of spending behavior between different sport tourist groups has been conducted. More specifically, the research questions in this study address the following:

1. Do sport tourists from outside Indiana have different spending behavior than sport tourists from Indiana?
2. What is the influence of team identification, previous Super Bowl attendance, perceived hosting destination images, and spectating frequency on sport tourists' spending?

METHODS

Data of this study were collected on 4 February 2012, one day before the kick-off of the 2012 Super Bowl. Data was based on 157 tourists who treated the Super Bowl as the main purpose of their trips. Zip codes of respondents were collected in order to segment sport tourists by areas, and survey respondents were then divided into two groups (from Indiana and outside of Indiana) based on zip code. When collecting the expenditure information, respondents were asked to recall or estimate their expenditures for entire trips. The expenditure categories included in the questionnaire were retail, eating and drinking, lodging, local transportation, local attraction fees, entertainment, and Super Bowl admission. Total expenditures were calculated by creating a new variable in SPSS 20.0 by summing all the expenditures in each of the spending categories. In order to identify whether differences existed between the two sport tourists groups and to clarify the association between hypothesized factors and tourist expenditure, the analysis conducted includes independent sample *t-test* and simultaneous multiple regression analysis, which are completed using SPSS 20.0. All hypothesis testing was conducted at the level of $\alpha=.05$.

RESULTS

For the total sample, the 51% of the event sport tourists were male and 49% were females. Also, 45% of the event sport tourists were from Indiana and 55% were from outside of Indiana. Approximately 72% of the respondents were reported being younger than 43 years

old. Over 81% of the respondents indicated having a college (68.3%) or postgraduate (12.8%) degree. The majority (69%) of the respondents indicated having an annual household income of over \$30,000, while 30.4% reported their income to be below \$30,000. A total of 78.8% of the respondents had attended the Super Bowl and 80% of the respondents had watched more than four National Football League games either in broadcasts or in the stadium during the past twelve months.

When assessing the total expenditure of the two segments, the mean total expenditure of sport tourists from Indiana was \$347 (SD=58) and sport tourists from outside of Indiana averaged \$2,363 (SD=430) in total expenditure. Additionally, a significant difference was identified between the two groups in total expenditures ($p = 0.00$). The result reveals that the sport tourists from outside of Indiana significantly spent more than sport tourists from Indiana. A multiple regression model was conducted to determine the association between hypothesized factors and tourists' spending. The overall regression model for all predicted factors was significant ($R^2 = .129$, F-statistic= 7.771, $df = 157$, $p < 0.01$). The regression analysis identified one significant positive association between team identification and sport tourists' spending ($\beta = .282$, $t = 3.624$, two-tailed $p = .000$). Previous Super Bowl attendance ($\beta = .139$) and spectating frequency ($\beta = .124$) presented a positive association with sport tourists' spending. The results reveal that team identification and previous experience can positively influence sport tourists' spending while attending that mega sport event.

DISCUSSION

According to the results, destination managers or marketers might best focus on attracting and accommodating sport tourists from outside of the hosting destination. The middle-class and younger generation should also be considered as target markets of the Super Bowl. Moreover, marketing strategies can combine with event matchups to attract sport tourists having strong team identification. In addition, previous Super Bowl attendance and spectating frequency can be considered as two factors that can potentially influence sport tourists' spending. However, considering the main limitation, the small sample size in this study, this model should be tested in future research with sufficient samples to clarify the associations between demographic and personal factors and tourists' spending.

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