

Determinants of Psychological Impacts of a Cause-Related Sport Event on Local Attendees

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(including questions)**

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Purpose of the Study: Sport events have the potential to generate psychological impacts for local residents by enhancing the level of local pride, a sense of community, and enthusiasm for the community (Chalip, 2006; Crompton, 2004; Ritchie, 1984). In response to inconclusive evidence on the positive economic impact of sport events (e.g., Baade, 1996; Crompton, 1999), the examination of those intangible benefits has received growing attention in the literature (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011; Kim & Walker, 2012; Waitt, 2003). However, while the existing studies have attempted to reveal what psychological impacts entail, they have yet to identify factors that may determine the extent to which these impacts occur (Chalip, 2006). Investigating the determinants of psychological impacts is essential because it provides event organizers with insight on how positive benefits can be enhanced at future events. Furthermore, such investigation can extend the literature on social leverage, which aims to understand processes and conditions by which sport events produce intangible benefits for local communities (Chalip, 2006; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012).

As such, the purpose of this study is to identify the determinants of psychological impacts generated from a sport event. Specifically, the current research was conducted at the 2012 FedEx St. Jude Classic ("FESJC"), a regular PGA TOUR event held annually in Memphis, Tennessee, due to its unique nature as a cause-related event (Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clark, 2003). The FESJC extensively supports St. Jude Children's Research Hospital ("St. Jude"), a research and treatment facility for childhood cancers and other catastrophic diseases, through donations and cause awareness activities. This aspect of the event is incorporated into the theoretical framework of this study as explained below.

Theoretical Framework: This study proposes both event-related and individual factors that may contribute to creating psychological benefits for local attendees of the FESJC. First, the event-related factors identified include: 1) the ability of the event to provide attendees with the opportunity for social interaction, and 2) attendees' perception of the event's association with its supporting cause. These two factors are identified on the basis of Chalip's (2006) conceptual work proposing that the level of psychological impact generated from a sport event depends on a sense of social camaraderie and celebration. A sense of social camaraderie captures the extent to which a sport event enables attendees to have the opportunity for social interaction with other residents and visitors at and beyond the event venue (Chalip, 2006). That is, the greater opportunity of social interaction the event generates for attendees, the higher level of psychological impact they likely receive from that event. On the other hand, a sense of celebration refers to feelings that something special is taking place at an event, which can be enhanced through the theming of the event and holding ancillary events (Chalip, 2006). In the current research context, the FESJC is themed as a cause-related event that benefits its sole beneficiary (i.e., St. Jude) and multiple events related to the cause are held throughout the tournament. Therefore, attendees would likely gain a greater sense of celebration from the event if they positively evaluate the event's association with the cause. In turn, the increased sense of celebration could lead the attendees to perceive the high level of the psychological impacts of the event (Chalip, 2006).

Second, this study identifies two individual factors as additional determinants of psychological impacts: 1) personal involvement in golf and 2) personal involvement in the cause. These factors are proposed based on existing research on the impacts of tourism-related events (Ap, 1992; Fredline, 2004). Specifically, one key finding of this research is that individuals who are personally involved with the themes of events tend to satisfy their needs through the events, thus perceiving greater benefits (Fredline, 2004). Building upon this finding, it is likely that attendees of the FESJC would enjoy greater psychological impacts from the event if they are highly involved with golf and St. Jude, the two main themes of this event.

Method: A web-based post-event survey was distributed to attendees of the 2012 FESJC through the event organizer's email database approximately one week after the event. This survey included the following measures to

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fulfill the study's purpose. First, the dependent variable, psychological impacts of the FESJC, was measured using Kim and Walker's psychic income (2012) scale. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not socialization was their primary reason for attending the event to capture the use of the event as the opportunity for social interaction. Furthermore, attendees' evaluation of the cause association of the event and their personal involvement in golf and in St. Jude were measured with multi-item scales developed and validated by past studies (Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, & Jordan, 2011; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). For main analysis, we performed an ANCOVA that assessed the effects of the four proposed factors on psychological impacts after controlling for various personal characteristics, such as demographics and levels of satisfaction with the event.

Results: 748 attendees completed the survey. Of them, the final data consisted of 466 responses provided by attendees who identified themselves as local residents. The results of the ANCOVA indicated that the independent variables collectively explained a substantial amount of the variance in psychological impacts (Adj. $R^2 = .30$). In particular, all four hypothesized determinants, namely, the use of the event for social interaction ($B = 23, p < .01$), cause association of the event ($B = 24, p < .01$), personal involvement in golf ($B = 17, p < .001$), and personal involvement in St. Jude ($B = 14, p < .01$), were found to have significant positive effects on the outcome.

Discussion: In summary, the results of this study indicated that the FESJC generated greater levels of psychological benefits for local attendees who 1) used the event for the place to socialize with others, 2) evaluated its association with St. Jude positively, 3) had higher levels of personal involvement in golf, and 4) had higher levels of personal involvement in St. Jude. The first implication of these findings is to provide some of the first empirical evidence to Chalip's (2006) framework on social leverage. In particular, the current investigation that quantitatively identified the determinants of psychological impacts can be an important addition to the event leverage literature which predominantly consists of conceptual articles and qualitative-based studies (O'Brien, 2007; Chalip, 2006; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). The second implication of the study's findings is to demonstrate the role of cause association in creating psychological impacts. Although the importance of themes has been discussed in the literature (Chalip, 2006; Fredline, 2004), the current investigation is the first to show that theming a sport event through its association with a cause can increase its psychological benefits for the local community.