Analysis of Tourists’ Perception During 2014 World Cup in Brazil

Paola B. Lohmann*\textsuperscript{a}, Kaarina B. Virkki\textsuperscript{a}, Gabriela De Laurentis Cardoso\textsuperscript{a}, Deborah M. Zouain\textsuperscript{a}, Thayrine da Silva Pacheco\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a}Fundação Getulio Vargas, Praia de Botafogo 190, Rio de Janeiro 22250-900, Brazil
\textsuperscript{b}Universidade Federal Fluminense, Rua Mário Santos Braga 30, Niterói 24020-140, Brazil

Abstract

This article aims to analyze, in a comparative way, the perception of national and international tourists regarding the impacts generated by the 2014 FIFA World Cup on tourism in the host cities, in the period of the event. The methodology of data collection was a survey research, conducted in the period from June 12 to July 14, 2014 in all 12 host cities of the event, with a total of 2678 domestic and 872 international respondents. The research objectives are to detail the travel characteristics, the respondent profile, and perception of the positive and negative impacts of the event. As a result it will be possible to analyze the characteristics of tourists who travel to attend sporting event in Brazil and profit the experience as a reference for the Olympics and for the country as a whole. The data indicate that for domestic tourism the World Cup had a family atmosphere and for international tourists it was an opportunity to attend the event and also to know the country. From the perspective of both, the Brazilian and foreign, the stimulus to tourism and the possibility of increasing the visibility of destination are the main positive aspects to host the World Cup in the country. The negative aspects are more specific to foreigners, issues related to travel, such as distance between the host cities, high prices, lack of tickets, public transportation, disorganization, followed by the issues raised in the first place by the national respondents, which are related to excessive public spending and financial mismanagement.

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1. Introduction

Mega sporting events are part, in the current global context, of governments’ instruments to stimulate the creation of opportunities for the country, in addition to being seen as a political decision of great importance. According to Preuss (2006) "the largest events are enormously expensive to arrange, but in return bring global media exposure with effects and a value that cannot be achieved in any other way" (p. 1). These opportunities relate both on how to boost the economy as to increase international visibility, since once hosting a mega event, all nations involved or not with the event pay more attention to the host country of the moment.

Prior to the World Cup in Brazil there was an uncertainty related to the success of the event and it all changed during the event, as it turned to be a peaceful, with massive family participation event. Brazilians, who were against it, forgot the anger in order to seize the ongoing moment in the country, and show to the world why Brazil is considered the country of soccer. Thus, the research reported in this article was focused on tourism perspective, with the aim of showing the impressions of Brazilians and foreigners about the event, the infrastructure, the perceptions of the country's image and trip characteristics.

Due to World Cup's global dimension, with a strong participation of both Brazilians and foreigners, the research aims to understand comparatively the perception from the point of view of these actors specifically, and measure how the result was generated, regarding the reinforcement of aspects that may be considered relevant to the achievement of the Olympics in 2016 in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

2. Literature Review

Megacities are in global competition to attract economic activities for their cities (Sassen, 1996 apud Preuss, 2006, p. 7), being a mega event the ideal opportunity to win certain disputes. According to Allen (2003), mega-events are "those which the magnitude affects entire economies and has repercussions on global media, justifying the great competition that countries are submitted to host a big event like the World Cup" (p.17). The nations realize that they have an unique opportunity to get global exposure, in order to boost its economy in a way that would not have gotten in years.

According to Preuss (2006) there are three reasons why a mega event is important not only for the country but also for sporting entities involved. The author mentions that "a positive legacy avoids public blaming of the international sporting body and provides evidence why the event had been good for the host city/country." (p.2) Secondly, “it justifies the use of scarce public resources for permanent or temporary event infrastructure ensuring that all necessary event structures for the event are ready on time” (p.2) and third, “a positive legacy motivates other cities/nations to bid for future events” (Solberg & Preuss, 2006 apud Preuss, 2006, p.2).

The measurement of mega event legacies should begin from the changes that happen in host localities of the event, noting that the legacy is variable from one location to another, and also depends on the period in which is done, these changes are necessary to accommodate the event, so that the economic impact becomes a permanent infrastructure for the local community. Furthermore, "cities have different structural strengths and weaknesses when winning a bid competition. Therefore, some cities have to build more structures while others can stage an event without major investments "(Preuss, 2006, p .4).

With the growth of events area and the recent interest on mega sports events in the world, a few years ago it started to emerge several studies about sports mega-events, establishing this area of study. However most of the studies have a common object, such as economic impacts and tend to be mostly optimistic or extremely negative. It is also current the use of benchmarking as a technique for research on mega-events, whose goal is to "search for best practices that lead to superior performance in different places or fields" (DaCosta; Miragaya, 2008, p.42).

3. Methodology

This study was conducted through a primary research, with quantitative basis and a survey for data collection, which is "an investigation about the characteristics of a given population by means of collecting data from a sample of that population and estimating their characteristics through the systematic use of statistical methodology" (OCDE, 2005).
The survey’s target audience was domestic (resident in Brazil who travels on the country) and international tourists, who had as travel motivation specifically the World Cup and have visited some of the twelve host cities during the event, between June 12th and July 14th, 2014. The field researchers used tablets to data collection.

To define the number of days of searching for each host city it was taken into consideration the amount of games that it hosted. The questionnaires were administered on match days and the next day. The survey with domestic tourists has happened since the first round of games until the last game of the host city in question. Data collection with international tourists was made exclusively from the quarter-final, as it was expected that in the knockout stages of the competition there would be greater heterogeneity of this type of tourist, therefore we would have a major representation.

The method used was a simple random sampling, for this method the sample size can be calculated from the following equation (Bolfarine & Bussab, 2005):

\[
 n = \frac{z^2_e \times \sigma^2}{e^2} 
\]

\[
 n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5^2}{0.05^2} \rightarrow n \approx 384 
\]

In which, \(e^2\) is the acceptable error, \(z^2\) the level of trust and \(\sigma^2\) population standard deviation.

The final sample collected was 2678 domestic tourists and 872 international tourists. With these quantities collected, it is possible to calculate the sampling error of the survey:

\[
 Domestic: e = \sqrt{\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5^2}{2678}} \times 100\% = 1.9\% 
\]

\[
 International: e = \sqrt{\frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5^2}{872}} \times 100\% = 3.3\% 
\]

The questionnaire was divided into open, objective and descriptive questions and they were related to the profile, travel habits, perception and evaluation of the destination and the event. Data were analyzed using the SPSS-IBM software, allowing generating descriptive statistics, tables with absolute and relative frequencies and charts with comparative results.

For open questions an initial treatment was done in the database for possible corrections of typos. After this first step the R software was used to "count" the most cited words and afterwards create Word Clouds.

4. Discussion

The sample survey shows that for 65.7% of foreign respondents, the trip to attend the World Cup was the first visit to the country and to 84.2% of them, it was also the first visit to the host city. On the other hand, for the 67.0% of the domestic tourist, the World Cup was an opportunity to return to a previously visited destination.

The international audience was accompanied mostly by friends (44.8%) while domestic visitors were accompanied by family members (46.9%), which reveal that for Brazil, the World Cup was configured as a family event. It is interesting to observe that this result was not the result of a marketing strategy; on the contrary, it was a phenomenon that had arisen spontaneously.

The arrivals to the host cities matches, was mainly by air flights, both to foreigners (81.0%) and Brazilian (57.6%). For this particular group, the car also featured as an important mean of transportation, much influenced by the lower cost and the proximity of the host city with the respondent’s residence.

Hotels were the most used type of accommodation by both publics (56.2% of the foreigners and 51.4% of the Brazilians). Important to note that a significant portion of Brazilians used friends and relatives’ homes (42.6%) as accommodation, while for foreigners, this percentage was 17.1%, followed by 11% hostels.
For Brazilian population it was a great opportunity to participate in the World Cup, whereas 91.2% of Brazilians were participating in the event for the first time. However for foreigners, this percentage drops to 66%. To foreigners the World Cup was the main reason to visit the town where they were interviewed (58.9%), while for Brazilians this percentage was only 35.9%. For 18% of foreign respondents, the second reason was the desire to know the city, while for 20.5% of Brazilian respondents this reason was related to the presence of relatives in the destination.

Domestic tourists stayed an average of 3.9 overnights and spent R$2,752.75 in each destination while international tourist stayed 5.4 overnights and spent around R$4,239.00 in each destination where the research was done. It is important to remark that the international tourist stayed an average of 15 days in the country and visited around 3 destinations during the trip.

The survey data showed that a percentage of respondents visited touristic attractions in the destination (58.7% for the international audience and 48.6% for the national audience), but a few took the opportunity to visit other destinations nearby the host cities (22.0% for international public and 18.2% for the national).

Considering the foreign tourists interviewed, 34.6% were fans and often travel to follow their soccer team and national team or frequently attend to games at the stadium (19.8%), on the other hand, the Brazilian tourist have more heterogeneous profile and mainly watch the matches on television (30.1%) and 28.8% travels to accompany their soccer team or national team. The fact that the World Cup was held in Brazil encouraged many of these non-usual soccer matches’ spectators to go to a stadium. It is possible to realize that despite the respondent's profile being somewhat similar, the Brazilian public has more female participants (23.7%) compared to the international (13.4%). The predominant age group was 25-34 years, both for domestic tourists (41.2%) and international (39.1%), followed by 35-44 years, with complete higher education to 54% of national and international respondents. Brazilians who traveled to attend the game belonged to income classes A and B (higher income standards), with 26.1% of Brazilian respondents having above R$10,000.00 of family income and living mainly in the states of São Paulo (27.7%), Rio de Janeiro (10%) and Minas Gerais (7.8%), which are coincidentally the main emissive markets of Brazil. With regard to international tourists’ respondents, 42.1% originated from South America, 25.3% Europe and 21.3% from North America.

Finally, it is noteworthy that both domestic and foreign visitors perceive as major positive impacts of hosting the World Cup in Brazil: the tourism, the possibility of giving visibility to the country, stimulate the economy and enable Brazilian and foreign tourists to know the country, its people and culture. However, with regard to the negative aspects, we can observe a greater divergence among respondents. Domestic tourists tend to point out issues that were relevant prior the matches and the event itself started, an earlier and more extensive context, such as corruption, mismanagement and overspending of public resources, lack of urban infrastructure. While international tourists quoted in the first place, more specific questions and momentary difficulties, more related to event management, such as distance between the host cities, high prices, lack of tickets, public transportation, disorganization, followed by the issues quoted by the national public.

5. Conclusions and Future Study

In this period which Brazil is having the opportunity to host in a short period of time two of the most significant worldwide mega events, the FIFA World Cup 2014 and the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro 2016, it is important to understand the behavior of the domestic and international tourists, and their perceptions regarding the mega event.

This research data can be useful as reference for tourism planning and suggest questions that should be maximized, such as tourism for example, and minimized, as the excessive public spending and financial mismanagement during the 2016 Olympics.

In Brazil, researches and news point out intangibles aspects that were generated by the mega event, especially related to the residents’ behavior that during the event turned Brazil into the ideal place to hold a mega event, with a party atmosphere, which is positive to tourism and hospitality. Despite all the problems the country faced, this edition was considered the “World Cup of all World Cups”, favoring particularly tourism, the destination's promotion and the country's image.
References


