



The Impact of small-size outdoor sport events on local communities: the case of mountain destinations

Karagiorgos Th. 1, Ntovoli, A. 2, Alexandris, K. 1
1 Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Dept. of PE & Sport Sciences
2 Fredrick University of Nicosia

Abstract

Several remote tourism destinations bid sports and leisure events, such as trail running, to raise direct economic impact, empower their image and associated with sport tourism experiences. The majority of academic research focuses on participants' attitudinal and behavioral concepts rather than the impact of such events on their host areas. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of small-scale outdoor sport events on local communities and their contribution to tourism development. The sample consisted of 231 participants from local organizations and entrepreneurs within two mountain tourism destinations in Greece. The measurement tool was adopted by Wu & Chen (2015) with three dimensions: a) economic impact, b) social impact and c) environmental impact. Confirmatory factor analysis and correlation analysis were performed to test internal relationships. The results showed that all impact dimensions are positively correlated with the intention to repeat the event in the same area, as well as, with the positive word of mouth communication. The environmental impact played a key role on the development of positive intentions and the social impact was the most robust dimension for positive word of mouth communication. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed in detail in the study.

Key words: small scale sport events, impact of trail running events, mountain tourism destinations