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Effectiveness of Green Olympic Initiatives on Reasons Affecting Residents' Actions to Support the Olympic Movement

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ABSTRACT

The world faces major environmental challenges that affect the well-being of human beings, plants, and wildlife. The Olympic Games, one of the most influential sport events, should pay special attention to environmental issues. In 1996, the environmental element became a central factor of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) (IOC, 2009). To scientifically and comprehensively evaluate the impact of the Olympics on the host city, the IOC launched the Olympic Games Global Impact (OGGI) study in 2003 (IOC, 2006). This study begins two years before the host city is selected, and terminates two years after hosting the Games (IOC, 2006). One of the reasons to do an 11-year OGGI study is likely because the social, economic, and environmental impact of the Games may vary throughout the whole process. To a great extent, these technical reports remain internal to the IOC.

A majority of previous studies on mega sport events have focused on the economic impact (Twynam & Johnston, 2004). Few studies have emphasized the environmental aspect of major sport events. It would be constructive to investigate the environmental impact of the Beijing Games over eight years, from the moment of being named as the host city to one year after hosting the event. Based on the environmental measures applied in Beijing, there were five critical time periods that should be considered in order to comprehensively understand the effectiveness of the Beijing Green Olympic initiatives, including July 2001 (Time 1) when Beijing was named as the host city for the 2008 Olympic Games, August 2007 (Time 2) when it was one year before the Games, August 2008 (Time 3) when it was during the Games, December 2008 (Time 4) when it covered close-out and summary period of the Games, and December 2009 (Time 5) when it was one year after the Games. Research has suggested that local residents play an important role in achieving successful and sustainable impact of mega sport events (Deccio &

Baloglu, 2002). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine residents' perceived effectiveness of Beijing Green Olympic initiatives, by investigating their awareness, perception, attitude, intention, and actual behavior through conducting a time-series analysis.

Based on a comprehensive review of literature, a questionnaire was developed that included the following sections: awareness, perception, attitude, behavior intention, and actual behavior associated with Beijing Green Olympics initiatives. All items were phrased in a 7-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). The questionnaire was phrased into five versions, corresponding with the five key time periods. Each version had a different leading statement and, to increase recall accuracy, a historical scenario/picture reflecting a specific time period. Five sets of pictures depicting significant events that happened in China during each time periods were collected and their accuracy of time representation was verified by two professors and three graduate students in sport social science from a leading Chinese university. Items within each time period were put in a random order to reduce carry-over effect in the repeated measure research design. The questionnaire was then double-translated to ensure translation accuracy.

A community intercept approach was adopted and data were collected at shopping centers, city libraries, parks, restaurants, municipal offices, and transportation centers in Beijing, China. A total of 119 subjects, who were 18 years or older in 2001 and considered Beijing as his/her primary residential location since 2001, were included in the study. A doubly repeated measure MANOVA was conducted, which revealed that the vector mean scores of the Green Olympics' effectiveness variables (i.e., awareness, perception, attitude, behavior intention, and actual behaviour) were significantly ($p < .05$) different over the five time periods. The research findings indicate that the perceived environmental impact by residents had been formed, developed, and altered as a result of different environmental efforts applied in Beijing. To a great extent, these reflected the effectiveness of the Green Olympic programs across five key periods of the Games. Further discussions are conducted on expanding environmental programs and policies beyond 2008 and the city of Beijing, and moving China toward environmentally sustainable development.

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