



## **A STUDY ON THE BENEFITS OF SPORTS TOURISM ON CITY MARKETING**

**Yun-Che Hsieh<sup>1</sup>,**

**Kuo-Wei Lin<sup>2i</sup>,**

**Xiao-Qing Wu<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer,

Department of Physical Education,

Army Academy,

Taiwan (R.O.C.)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor,

Physical Education Office,

National Central University,

Taiwan (R.O.C.)

<sup>3</sup>Graduate student,

Master of Business School

Henderson State University,

U.S.A.

### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the benefits of sports tourism on city marketing. In recent years, Taiwan has been actively striving for the marketing of large-scale sports events in the development of international sports. The host city uses the resources invested before the holding of the sports event to develop sports tourism attractions, develop sports tourism policies, and make good use of marketing and promotion strategies to shape the city's image; and uses media marketing as a tourism promotion tool to expand Taiwan's sports tourism facets which would bring huge tourism effects. This study organizes the research of past scholars by way of literature discussion, and then collects, organizes and analyzes the data. It is concluded that Taiwan has opened up its international reputation through international large-scale sports events and city marketing. From the experience of hosting international large-scale events, Taiwan not only attracts countless domestic and foreign tourists, but also promotes its city's culture, tourism, and economy. The vigorous development of related industries, the enhancement of sports tourism quality and the improvement of sports tourism image in Taiwan are also achieved. Finally, international large-scale events revitalize the city to bring business opportunities and make such events the pride of the city. Therefore, this study serves as a reference for future exploration of sports tourism development and city marketing

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [fjcu70@hotmail.com](mailto:fjcu70@hotmail.com)

issues, integrating relevant resources, and providing reference for relevant organizations to jointly build Taiwan as a sports tourism island.

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**Keywords:** sports events, sports tourism, city marketing

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, due to the popularity of physical activity and leisure sports, the tourism industry has formed a diversified development. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2006) points out that sports tourism has accounted for about 5-10% of global tourism output. The output value of sports tourism in Taiwan could reach NT \$20 billion per year (Fang, 2015). According to a survey conducted by the Tourism Bureau, Ministry of Transportation and Communications in 2016, the number of travelers having fitness and sports for tourism purposes was 5.4%, an increase of .3% from 5.1% in 2015. This shows that sports tourism has gradually become one of people's leisure activities and also represents the growth space and potential of the sports tourism market. The added value generated by the combination of tourism and sports is more attractive, which also makes it become the tourism experience with added value pursued by people of all countries, and thus becomes one of the fastest growing fields in the global tourism industry, and makes sports tourism a global industry with unlimited business opportunities (Huang, 2016).

## 2. Literature Review

Countries all over the world hope to market cities through sports tourism. For example, triathlon develops rapidly in European and American cities and begins to extend to countries around the world. In many countries, triathlon has been listed as a major event held every year, with outstanding famous athletes from all over the world competing in it. The holding of the event could start the local host city or country's opportunities for international exposure and tourism benefits (Kuo & Li, 2014). In Taiwan, with the trend of cycling around the island, the tourists who have no experience in circling the island in Taiwan could also experience cycling around the island more easily through the package of food, accommodation and cycling tours (He, 2016). According to the introduction of Wang, Chang and Tsao (2017) about the development of cycling tourism in Taiwan, in recent years, some companies launched innovative products: cycling competitions and slow cycling itineraries "two railways (cycling and railways) round the island tour". In addition to creating a niche for market operations, it also hopes to attract different sports and tourism groups.

According to Lin (2015), Wang (2014) and other scholars, sports tourism could be roughly divided into: "participatory sports tourism" (e.g. golf and marathon), "spectator sports tourism" (e.g. watching the Olympic Games and professional baseball) and

"nostalgic sports tourism" (e.g., visiting Colosseum or Beijing National Stadium). Among them, participative sports tourism plays an important role, that is, a type of sightseeing mode in which participants need to personally participate in the sport. Through the planned sports itinerary, participants could personally experience the relaxation, fun, and even novelty and adventure brought by sports (Chen & Fang, 2010).

As sports games have the effects of competition and entertainment, holding international sports games could drive many economic developments. Sports games are also considered to be an important indicator that could attract a large number of people to watch the games in a short time and drive the economic situation (Liou, 2017). Therefore, many countries and cities compete fiercely in competing for the host country. In addition to increasing the international exposure rate and urban marketing through the use of sports events, and by enhancing tourists' positive impression of the host city, the host city with the reflux ratio of tourists could also be increased (Fang, 2009). The above literature shows that the promotion of sports tourism to urban marketing requires comprehensive planning to integrate all resources and achieve long-term development.

### **3. The concept of sports tourism**

Sports and tourism are the focal phenomena of the globalization of tourism and leisure industry. The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games used marketing management to attract global tourists to participate in the Olympic Games, and formed the trend of combining sports with sightseeing tourism, which was the key to start sports sightseeing tourism activities (Su, 2005). Scholar Kao (2003) classified sports tourism into three types according to the core resources of product services and the tourists' length of stay: (1) Sports tourism attractions: Tourists stay for a short period of time. They usually do not study the attraction, involvement level, perceived value, behavioral intentions and attitudes of sports tourism development of international sports events. The overall tour mainly focuses on actual participation in sports or sightseeing. (2) Sports tourism: Tourists stay for a long time, and the overall tour is mainly based on actual participate in sports. (3) Event sport tourism: Visitors could stay for a long time or for a short time and the whole tour is mainly for watching sports events.

#### **3.1. Spectator sports tourism**

Striving for international comprehensive sports events to be held in Taiwan has become an important part of the national sports policy. Many local governments have also actively bid for various levels of international sports events in accordance with this policy. Many countries or cities have multiple considerations when preparing large-scale international sports events. These considerations mainly focus on whether sports events could bring substantial benefits to the country and society (Liu, Broom & Wilson, 2014; Sant & Mason, 2015). In fact, the benefits of handling large-scale sports events have been supported, including traditional political functions (such as strengthening the body, strengthening the country; the cohesion of national consciousness and the promotion of national policy purposes), economic functions (such as increasing employment

opportunities, driving urban construction and Promoting tourism development), social functions (such as promoting parent-child relationships, strengthening social norms and promoting ethnic harmony), cultural functions, and leisure and entertainment functions, etc (Cheng, 2011). For a long time, cities that host international games have actively set up successful models, and all major cities around the world hope to bring huge benefits to their countries by hosting large-scale sports events. In order to welcome guests, athletes and tourists from all over the world, the host city would re-plan its urban appearance. Whether it is the beautification of the city appearance, the reorganization and planning of traffic, the construction of large sports venues, or the renovation of environmental pollution, it would shape a new urban atmosphere and create a fresh and healthy urban atmosphere (Yeh, 2013). Many cities have successfully created a good image of themselves after hosting large-scale sports events (Zhang, 2018). The LPGA Taiwan Championship was held in Taiwan in 2011 and 2012, attracting tens of thousands of enthusiastic fans to visit this world-class golf tournament. The audience was undoubtedly to witness the demeanor and superb skills of the world's top female golfers. The exciting experience brought to the audience in the game also proves that watching international sports games is borderless: as long as you are interested, you could enjoy the fun and experience of the game (Chen & Chen, 2017). Large-scale international events such as the 2009 Kaohsiung World Games and the Taipei 2017 Summer Universiade have been very successful in marketing Taiwan and attracted many domestic and foreign sports tourists. Therefore, holding international large-scale sports events, whether global or local, is a good opportunity to market the city.

### **3.2. Participatory sports tourism**

In 2012, Nearly 50 full marathon events were held in Taiwan, such as Taipei Fubon Marathon, The Color Run sponsored by Taishin Financial Holding co., LTD., Corporate Charity Road Run sponsored Mercuries & Associates Holding, LTD., Taroko Gorge Marathon, Zengwen Reservoir International Marathon, Dapeng Bay Sports Carnival, etc. (NPF Research Report, 2012). In 2015, there were 637 half marathon or full marathon races in Taiwan, with an average of 53 races per month and 6.6 races per weekend (Chang & Hung, 2017). The marathon is growing fast, which is quite amazing. It could not only attract tourists from abroad, but also promote the sports atmosphere in Taiwan and the development of sports tourism industry. Cheng (2008) studies the Taroko Gorge International Marathon and finds that the Taroko Gorge International Marathon held in Taroko National Park not only guides people to engage in legitimate and healthy leisure activities, but also attracts foreigners to visit Taroko Gorge and promotes the tourist image of Hualien area. Road running is currently the most popular sport in Taiwan, and it is also the sport with the most competitions. The combination of road running activities and sports tourism policies should be emphasized, and the economic development of rural cities should be promoted through sports event tourism, marketing customs of all parts of Taiwan, and improving the gap between urban and rural areas (Hsieh, 2015). The 2014 New Taipei City Wan Jin Shi Marathon is the first internationally certified event in Taiwan. In that year, the race attracted many international marathon runners to

participate in Taiwan, which not only enhanced Taiwan's international reputation, but also improved Taiwan's marathon performance. Afterwards, counties and cities began to actively promote road running activities. Taking Taoyuan Half Marathon as an example, runners could enjoy the natural scenery while jogging along Shimen Reservoir, making Taoyuan a sports and sightseeing city. This is also a new direction for the development of sports tourism. Therefore, all counties and cities across the country are very active in planning relevant policies and sightseeing activities in combination with the unique topography and characteristics of Taiwan according to the local urban characteristics, so as to attract tourists to experience and then become a routine activity to continuously attract tourists to participate.

### **3.3. Nostalgia sport tourism**

Kinmen Combat Summer camp and boat race of Dragon Boat Festival dragon in various counties and cities are also a demonstration of the traditional cultural form of sports tourism. In addition to the active participation of local teams, they also attract many foreigners to participate in recent years (Ye & Liou, 2012). Many sports-loving tourists choose to visit the sports hall of fame, famous venues (such as the main Olympic stadium), sports venues (such as the Roman Colosseum), and sports museums to cherish the memory of the people, events and objects in the past sports history which is a display of nostalgia in sports tourism (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Ritchie & Adair, 2004). Located next to Longtan Baseball Field, Taiwan Baseball Hall of Fame is the first baseball hall of fame in Taiwan to be operated by way of free admission. However, maintenance cost is required. Therefore, Fame Hall Garden Hotel is built to operate the Baseball Hall of Fame with the revenue of the hotel. There are also sports operators who combine the traditional beliefs and culture of Matsu with bicycles and religious tourism, develop new ideas for activities and events, form unconventional pilgrimage, and then understand Matsu culture. Therefore, cultural activities could be combined with sports or sports museums and other attractions to promote urban marketing and drive the surrounding cultural and sports tourists.

### **3.4. City image marketing**

In addition to attracting tourists with attractions, cities also need to coordinate activities to attract tourists in order to achieve marketing effects. Almost all local governments in Taiwan would cooperate with local characteristics to carry out activities to improve economic efficiency throughout the year (Chung & Huang, 2014). With the opportunity of bidding for large-scale international sports games, the infrastructure of the host city would be upgraded comprehensively; in addition to achieving the function of city regeneration, it also has the effect of conveying the image of the city, thereby driving the benefits of the tourism industry (Chen & Fang, 2010). For sports and leisure related industries, the marketing strategy combined with the city theme could specifically achieve the goal of generating revenue and further promote this development trend (Huang, He & Chang, 2015). The short-term strategy is based on business and tourism development and competition-related income. Through the rapid accumulation of

tourists, the income could be turned into capital to improve the economic conditions. The long-term strategy focuses on economic reshaping, increasing the competitiveness of competing cities and the long-term economic development, increasing job opportunities, improving residents' lives, and enhancing the overall wealth of the city.

For sports and leisure-related industries, marketing strategies combined with urban themes could specifically achieve the goal of generating revenue and further promote this development trend (Huang, He & Chang, 2015). The city hopes to bring profits through the competition, increase the city's wealth and improve the economic situation. As a result, it hopes that the tourism economic benefits generated by city marketing include the increased income to the local economy, the creation of many new job opportunities, the improvement of regional economic structure and the balance of economic activities, and the promotion of enterprise investment (Page & Hall, 2003). The successful hosting of the World Games 2009, Kaohsiung (a city in Taiwan), has successfully cast aside the industrial city of the past and shown its enthusiastic and energetic side, bringing a positive image to the athletes and the tourists who participate in the event; Taipei and Taichung, Taiwan, hosted the 2017 Summer Universiade and the 2019 Taichung East Asian Youth Games respectively, and these two host cities are also working hard to build their image, hoping to attract tourists during and after the events and market their cities to the world (Chou, 2016). Li's (2019) research indicates that the stronger the runner's motivation to participate, the higher the effectiveness of service quality and technology, brand image, re-participate intention, and city marketing benefits. In terms of city marketing benefits, the higher the perception of the brand image is, the greater the impact of city marketing benefits would be. Through the intermediary effect of re-participation intention, the city marketing benefits would be improved. Therefore, a city is a brand. Through city marketing strategy planning, creating brand benefits for the city and increasing employment opportunities for the people are the goals of city marketing. Ultimately, it is also to increase the city's international reputation and attract more tourists. .

#### **4. Conclusions**

In addition to the economic benefits generated by the crowds and business opportunities brought by sports events, the venues for large-scale competitions might become future nostalgic sports tourism destinations, and various infrastructure constructions could also make the area look brand new. Other benefits, such as the increase in the popularity of the city, the new appearance of the city, the integration and unity of ethnic groups, the improvement of popular sports atmosphere, the improvement of sports venues' quality, the improvement of the environment and the increase of job opportunities, etc., may become tangible or intangible benefits of handling large-scale sports competitions. In addition to the attractiveness of the competition itself, the attraction of its own tourism resources is also an important factor in the success of sports events and its economic efficiency. The activities of large-scale sports events could not only promote the development of sports and sports atmosphere, but also promote the players and

spectators to visit and spend money in other local scenic spots outside the competition time, so as to drive the development of local tourism.

The city itself is a product. Local governments combine with local industries to attract enterprises and manufacturers to jointly build a planned city, which would not only improve the image of the city, enhance the city's living standards, but also drive the overall economic development of the city. Local governments urgently need to achieve the purpose and effectiveness of sustainable urban development through this marketing method. In Taiwan, Kaohsiung City hosted the World Games 2009; Taoyuan City hosted the 2011 LPGA Taiwan Championship; New Taipei City hosted the 2014 Wan Jin Shi Marathon; and Taipei City hosted the 2017 Summer Universiade. The above-mentioned cities have made great efforts to shape their image and promote the cities around the world by hosting large-scale international competitions. This not only gains international recognition, but also relatively enhances the host city's shaping as an international tourist city, promotes city brand characteristics, accelerates the degree of internationalization, as well as tourism-related support facilities, social and cultural development and progress, thereby establishing an unified tourism development organization and planning strategies bring new positioning for city development and transformation, creating and exuding the unique style and charm of the city.

Finally, it is recommended that relevant units of the county and city governments can diversify the development of sports and tourist attractions. They could design links to deeds or touching stories through sports halls of famous sports celebrities, or representative sports venues, sports parks, etc. Then the local characteristics, history and culture, and cultural activities are combined with packaging to develop the attraction of the city as a selling point for tourists. Sports events are not just about watching or participating in them, but a rich sightseeing tour. It would impress the tourists with deep memories and bring huge business opportunities by marketing sports tourism through the attractiveness of the city.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

### **About the Authors**

**Yun-Che Hsieh** is a physical education teacher working in a military academy. He is currently studying for a doctoral degree in physical education.

**Kuo-Wei Lin** is currently a university physical education teacher. His research field is sports and leisure management.

**Xiao-Qing Wu** has graduated from Henderson State University. Her research field is business management.

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