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Impact of International Sport Events in Promoting International Attention of Cities: Evidence from Google Trends

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Abstract

In order to raise the international attention and gain more competitive advantages, many Chinese cities are aiming at holding international sport events to promote urban development. However, previous studies indicated that international sport events have attracted international attention for hosting cities, but only stay at theoretical level of interpretation, empirical studies are scarce and needed. Therefore, the major purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of international sport events on urban development from the perspective of cities' international attention, and to provide new dimensions and ideas for the relationship between sport events and urban development. This study used Google Trends corpus as the data source and used the Google Trends Index to measure five cities' (Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu, Wuhan) international attention in order to analyze the impact of international sport events on hosting cities in China. Through data mining, this study collected weekly data of international attention (time range is from January 1st, 2014 to December 31st, 2018) of five cities and compared with major media events in the corresponding period when highest international attention appeared in each city. Using Pearson Correlation, correlation analysis of international attention (all categories) and international attention (sports categories) of five cities was tested. Valuable information was obtained through the relevant keyword search function of the search volume ranking to provide more comprehensive evidence for the empirical results. There was a significant correlation between the international attention (all categories) and international attention (sports categories) in these five cities, and Nanjing's data were the strongest ($P=0.987$). Through empirical analysis, the peak time of international attention in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu and Wuhan in recent five years was highly consistent with the major international sport events (Beijing IAAF World Championships, 2015; ATP1000 Shanghai Masters, 2018; Nanjing Summer Youth Olympics, 2014; ATP250 Chengdu Open, 2018; Wuhan Open, 2018), but the effect was negligible as the events ended. International sport events are an important dynamic attraction for hosting cities to gain more international attention, which can produce intense impulsive impact on each city's international attention. The effect of international sport events on hosting city's international attention is relatively short and concentrated, and there is no obvious long term effect. Finally, the international attention of cities has a relatively stable level from a long time perspective.

Keywords: international sport events, city's international attention, big data