

After 2008 Olympic Games: From a Glorious Mega Event to a Sustainable Destination Brand

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Abstract

The recognized impacts of a mega-event on host or co-host communities, including social, environmental, political, economic, and development benefits, have been documented. Previous studies focused on what and how various factors impact the Olympic Games resulting in bringing activities and development to their host cities, such as the impact on cities' transportation infrastructures, economic development, and facility construction. Seven years after those Olympic Games, all the post-Olympic effects have emerged, and the iconic Olympic facilities in Beijing have become significant landmarks on the global map. National and international tourists now choose Beijing as a destination, and, because of the uniqueness of the Olympic facilities and architecture in Beijing, those buildings are on the must-see list. The main purposes of this study are to examine (a) Beijing's city image before and after the Olympic Games and (b) if tourists and residents have different perceptions about the city's destination image.

Keywords: Olympic Games, Mega Event, Destination Image

Introduction

Ritchie (1984, p. 2) indicated that hallmark events refer to “major one-time or recurring events of limited duration which are developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal, and the profitability of a tourism destination in short and/or long time”, while Jafari (1979) categorized international sporting events into hallmark events and mega-events. A mega-event is characterized as “big” and “temporary.” (Mills & Rosentraub, 2012), while Bramwell (1997) categorized mega-events into different groups depending upon the level of governmental involvement and the amount of the investments from the public sector.

The recognized impacts of a mega-event on host or co-host communities, including social, environmental, political, economic, and development benefits, have been documented (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Yu & Chen, 2011). The costs and benefits of hosting a mega-event, the impact upon the quality of life of the locals, and the changes of personal income and employment opportunities have been reported in past studies (Whitson and Macintosh, 1996; Crompton, 2000). Various investments and infrastructure renovations have benefited the local economy and increased the effectiveness of travel time between

lodgings and the venues of the mega-events. Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo, and Alders (2012) and Shi and Chen (2015) indicated that integrating host community attitudes into the planning process will sustain the legacy of mega-events' host cities through effective policy, communication, and collaboration.

Since the late 1800s, numerous cities in many countries have competed to host the Olympic Games, which are recognized as among the most important mega sport events in the world. Previous studies have focused on investigating the factors that impact the selection of a host city for the Olympic Games, which include transportation, economy, and facilities (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2006; Friedman, Powell, Hutwagner, Graham, & Teague, 2001; Jasmand & Maennig, 2008). It has been widely discussed how various sports events should be used as a strategy to market a tourism destination and how the effects of such events are not limited to the period during and after the events, but directly affect the construction, development and branding of a destination image (Chalip & Green, 2001; Chalip & Costa, 2005; Kaplanidou, 2006; Lee, Taylor, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Yu & Chen, 2011).

Residents and tourists are the two main groups that form city populations. A mega event induces infrastructural construction, improves the environment, and creates opportunities for the entertainment industry. Studies about residents and non-residents have revealed that local visitors and non-local visitors may hold different perspectives toward a destination image and brand (Ritchie & Lyons, 1990; Aas & Skurdal, 1996; Chen, Brothers, & Gustket, 2002; Nuvolati, 2003; Spengler & Büttner, 2003). Residents are the direct beneficiaries of the mega event. All of the changes, such as the venues, roads and city facilities, will continue to serve the residents after the mega event. While non-local visitors are attracted by these lasting facilities of the event, they can also enjoy them during their travel. Thus, the feelings about the destination image between visitors and residents may not be the same (Shi & Chen, 2015). Previous Olympic Games host cities have benefited from various positive effects, including attracting investments and people (Brown, 2007), increasing tourism (Chalkley & Essex, 1999), building a favorable city image (Hall, 1987), transforming into a world tourism destination (Zeng & Luo, 2008), and obtaining sustainable businesses (Shi & Chen, 2015).

Beijing hosted the 2008 Olympic Games. This was the first time in the history of China that Beijing hosted a mega sports event. Seven years after those Olympic Games, all the post-Olympic effects have emerged, and the iconic Olympic facilities in Beijing have become significant landmarks on the global map. National and international tourists now choose Beijing as a destination, and, because of the uniqueness of the Olympic facilities and architecture in Beijing, those buildings are on the must-see list. The main purposes of this study are to examine (a) Beijing's city image before and after the Olympic Games and (b) if tourists and residents have different perceptions about the city's destination image.

Literature Reviews

Destination image

Destination image is the sum of the beliefs and impressions about a destination that a person gets from a variety of sources over time (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Crompton, 1979; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013). The two components model of destination image is widely accepted as necessary to understand a destination's image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Cognitive image is the sum of beliefs and knowledge about a destination's attributes and affective image is the emotion or feelings that a person attaches to the destination (Chew &

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Jahari, 2014; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Zhang et al. (2014) concluded in their meta-analysis that cognitive image is the main point among destination image studies. 41 out of 66 articles used in their study have studied cognitive image; only 13 articles have studied affective image. The authors indicated that more studies have recently been researching affective image and how these feelings and emotions from tourists affect the destination image formation.

Previous studies about destination image are mainly about two categories. When destination image was first developed, most studies were about the formation and the measurement of destination image (Crompton, 1979; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gallarza, Saura, & Garcìa, 2002). Echtner and Ritchie (1991) examined previous research about the concept of destination image and assessed the strengths and deficiencies of the methods used to define and measure destination image. They found that the methodologies used to measure destination image cannot be exclusively structured or unstructured. For example, standardized scales and open-ended questions should be combined. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) developed a model about the determinants of destination image. The path analysis of this study found that both stimulus factors and tourists' characteristics affected the formation of the destination image.

After the measurement scales were developed, researchers became interested in investigating the factors that influence the destination image and its relationship with tourists' loyalty or behavior intention (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). Beerli and Martin (2004) found that primary and secondary information sources, motivations, experience of leisure travel, and socio-demographic characteristics related to gender, age, level of education, social class and country of origin are the factors that can influence the destination image. Chen and Tsai (2007) developed a more integrated model by adding destination image and perceived value into the "quality–satisfaction–behavioral intentions" paradigm and found that destination image directly and indirectly affects behavioral intentions. Chi and Qu (2008) used data from Arkansas and found that destination image has a direct effect on attribute satisfaction and that destination image and attribute satisfaction both directly affect overall satisfaction.

Zhang et al. (2014) collected 66 independent studies to do a meta-analysis about destination image and tourists loyalty. They concluded that destination image has a significant effect on tourist loyalty but to varying degrees. The outcomes also revealed that the destination image has the greatest impact on tourist loyalty, followed by affective image and cognitive image. The authors also concluded that destination image has different effect on different components of tourists' loyalty. The destination image affects composite loyalty the most followed by attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty.

Olympic Games

Previous studies focused on what and how various factors impact the Olympic Games resulting in bringing activities and development to their host cities, such as the impact on cities' transportation infrastructures, economic development, and facility construction (Ritchie & Lyons, 1990; Searle, 2002; Hiller, 2006; Kasimati & Dawson, 2009). Ritchie and Lyons (1990) studied the impacts of the winter Olympics on Calgary residents. The results showed that, in the short term, the games helped the city develop community construction, inspire the population's imagination, and inspired the citizens to show their enthusiasm for the Games. The Games also made Calgary well known throughout the world. In the long-term, the Games drove local industry development, increased the tourism budgets, and helped government to implement tourism education and training as priorities and to attract more tourists.

Searle (2002) studied the stadiums in Sydney and found that the lack of pre- and post-events made the city build the infrastructure only for the Games. Many stadiums are no longer being used, because the stadiums built before the Olympic Games can handle the regular matches, and they cannot generate audiences larger than the capacity that existed before the Olympic Games. Furthermore, the research showed that the State and the private investors did not work together to eliminate the risk of overbuilding. Hiller (2006)'s study focused on the post-Olympic outcomes and how the facilities are utilized when the Olympic Game is over. Two decades after the Calgary Winter Olympics, the author found that the world standards facilities continuously gives the city an international profile, but the Olympic facilities should be integrated into the urban life and needs of its residents. Nevertheless, the Olympic facilities played a role in transforming the post-Olympic city into a leisure consumption city.

To estimate the effect of the Athens 2004 Summer Olympics, Kasimati and Dawson (2009) developed a small macro-econometric model of the Greek economy. They found that the Olympic Games appear to have had a positive impact on the Greek economy. Based on Greece's experience, the Summer Olympics is an event that can successfully boost the economy of the host city and generate benefits that can outweigh the cost. While the impact effects are quite strong during the preparation stage and the Games take place stage, the long-term economic legacy effects is quite modest. Liu, Mao, Huang, Zhang, and Chen (2008) studied the effects of the traffic control measures in Beijing and found that (a) the composition of the traffic flow has changed in that the proportion of the cars was less than before, and the percentage of the bused increased; (b) the volume of motor vehicles decreased sharply; and (c) travelers were more interested in public transportation than before.

Destination image and mega-event

Destination image is an integrated concept, in which many factors play a role. As an influential incident, a mega-event may change how people perceive the destination. When talking about a mega-event, several studies relate it to destination image (Chalip & Green, 2001; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Chalip and Green (2001) compared the event marketing effect between the United States and New Zealand and found that event marketing affected all of the dimensions of the destination image of the United States but only three dimensions of the destination image of New Zealand. Lee, Taylor, et al. (2005) investigated the effect of the World Cup on South Korea and found that tourists' perception of South Korea has positively changed. Even foreign tourists, who were not visiting the country for the World Cup, changed their perception of destination image; those who were there for the World Cup had more positive perceptions of the destination image. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) used sports tourists as a sample to test their model and found that a sports event image can positively affect destination image.

Destination image and behavior intention

In most of the previous research, destination image was tested to determine whether it has a direct relationship with tourists' behavior (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hernández-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena, & Sánchez-García, 2006; Prayag, 2009). Chi and Qu (2008) collect 345 questionnaires, tested their model and found that destination image directly affected attribute satisfaction; destination image and attribute satisfaction both directly influenced overall satisfaction; and overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction positively impacted destination loyalty. Hernández-Lobato et al. (2006) found in their model that two dimensions of destination cognitive image, namely service quality and entertainment, and destination affective image can positively affect destination satisfaction, while natural resource cognitive image does not significantly affect destination satisfaction. Prayag (2009)

collected data from 705 international visitors to the island of Mauritius and found that destination image has a positive relationship with overall image and that overall image can also affect tourists' future behavior.

In other studies, researchers have begun to realize that destination image may affect tourists' behavior directly. Gibson, Qi, and Zhang (2008) data from 350 American college students and found that the respondents held positive perceptions of China and the Beijing Olympic Games and that destination image can predict the intention to travel to China and the Olympic Games. Hernández-Lobato et al. (2006) found that destination affective image can significantly affect tourists' attitudinal loyalty and that attitudinal loyalty is an antecedent of compartmental loyalty. Prayag (2009) found that destination image can directly affect tourists' future behavior.

Based on the above literature review, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: The 2008 Olympic Games changed the destination's cognitive image.

H1b: The 2008 Olympic Games changed the destination's affective image.

H2a: Tourists' perceptions of the destination cognitive image differ from residents' perceptions of the destination cognitive image.

H2b: Tourists' perceptions of the destination affective image differ from residents' perceptions of the destination affective image.

Method

Sample and data collection

The data was collected in June and July, 2014, in Beijing. For the tourists' data, the first author selected the front doors of the famous attractions and asked the people to finish the data in return for a small gift provided as an inducement to participate. The survey spots were selected, because these famous attractions, including Tiananmen Square, are the must-see sites for tourists in Beijing. For the residents' data, the data collection used the snowball sampling. A total of 186 surveys were collected. Since several respondents might skip some questions, we deleted every questionnaire in which the person had completed less than 90 percent of the questions (Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2009). A usable data set of 168 was generated.

The survey instrument consists of six variables, the perceived destination cognitive image of Beijing, the perceived destination affective image of Beijing, the perceived difference in the Beijing cognitive image after the Olympic Games, the perceived difference in the Beijing affective image after the Olympic Games, and the intention of tourists to revisit. The cognitive image consists of 10 items adapted from Baloglu and McCleary (1999) and Chew & Johari's (2014) studies. After revision, we eliminated some items that were not suitable for Beijing and kept ten within the finalized survey instrument. To measure the difference before and after the Olympics, the respondents were asked to rate how different they felt about the image items when the Olympic host icon was added to the destination Beijing. The cognitive image, affective image, revisit intention and recommendation were measured by a seven-point-Likert scale with anchors (1) very little and (7) agree. Many agreed. Affective image was measured using a seven-point semantic-differential scale in which the latter had smaller values: 1, Unpleasant and 7, Pleasant; 1, Sleepy and 7, Arousing; 1, Gloomy and 7, Exciting; and 1, Distressing and 7, Relaxing.

Results

From table 1 below, the means for the perceived destination image difference are all above 4.

In the survey, the respondents were asked to rate the degree of the image change, and 4 is the neutral point. The value above 4 means that the perceived destination image is better than before. From table 1, the values of both the cognitive image and the affective image are above 4, which means that the perceived images of the respondents were changed.

Table 1. Perceived Destination Image Difference Between Tourists and Residents

	Years1	Mean1	Years2	Mean2
cleanliness	>= 2.0	5.491	< 2.0	5.321
Infrastructure	>= 2.0	5.833	< 2.0	5.509
Safety	>= 2.0	5.500	< 2.0	5.368
Nightlife	>= 2.0	5.365	< 2.0	5.340
Accommodation	>= 2.0	5.296	< 2.0	5.151
Food	>= 2.0	4.667	< 2.0	5.226
People	>= 2.0	4.886	< 2.0	5.079
Historical Attractions	>= 2.0	4.991	< 2.0	5.660
Natural Attractions	>= 2.0	4.693	< 2.0	5.075
Value	>= 2.0	4.123	< 2.0	4.226
Pleasure	>= 2.0	4.781	< 2.0	4.983
Arousing	>= 2.0	4.930	< 2.0	4.809
relaxing	>= 2.0	4.219	< 2.0	4.236
Exciting	>= 2.0	4.781	< 2.0	4.811

In table 2, for all of the items, the p values are above 0.05, which means that there is no statistically significant difference between the perceived destination image between tourists and residents. In contrast, for several items, such as cleanliness and natural attractions, the p value is small. If we choose a different cut off point, these items might be significantly different at 0.1. Liner regression is used to test the relationship between the revisit intention and the destination image of tourists. The table below suggests that the model is accepted and the destination image can affect tourists' intention to revisit. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 2. Statistically Significant Difference Between Residents and Tourists

	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
cleanliness	-1.964	165	.051	-.4288
Infrastructure	.863	165	.390	.1688
Safety	.571	165	.569	.1250
Nightlife	.806	165	.421	.1750
Accommodation	1.158	165	.248	.2772
Food	-1.333	165	.184	-.3530
People	.388	165	.698	.0861
Historical Attractions	-1.167	165	.245	-.2216
Natural Attractions	-1.624	165	.106	-.3899
Value	.019	165	.985	.0048
Pleasure	-.044	165	.965	-.0096
Arousing	-.755	165	.451	-.1478
relaxing	-1.498	165	.136	-.4227
Exciting	-1.576	165	.117	-.3148

Conclusions and Suggestions

From the results of this article, after holding the Olympic Games, both tourists and residents changed their perceptions toward the cognitive and affective image of Beijing, although the degree of the difference is slight. We collected the data in 2014, which is 7 years after the Olympic Games. People may have become accustomed to Beijing being referred to as an “Olympic Game hosting city”. Consequently, they cannot clearly recall the difference. On the other hand, 7 years after the Olympic Games, people still think that the Olympic Games increased the destination image, and we can infer that they should have stronger perceptions than existed in 2008. The t test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between tourists and residents regarding the destination image. The media presents the real-time-Beijing through all kinds of media, and tourists already have some perceptions of the destination image before they arrive.

Several host cities of Olympic Games were transformed from a manufacture-focused economy to a consumption-based economy. Policy leaders have noticed the importance of gaining global recognition and competitive advantages. Promoting tourism businesses effectively and achieving economic sustainability while integrating with host cities' image enhancements are a few of the reasons why decision-makers at various levels conduct governmental planning and management (Hall, 1987; Waitt, 1999; Andranovich, Burbank, & Heying, 2001; Chung, 2004). Domestic, inbound and outbound tourism businesses have stimulated the boom of China's economic development. Having enjoyed an average annual increase of 9.6 plus percent in its economy during the past thirty years, China is now recognized as one of the top countries in terms of economic power and potential. The 2008 Olympics Games proved to be one of the main factors that drove the hosting city and co-hosting cities in China to experience speedy urbanization, globalization, and modernization (Yu & Chen, 2011).

How to utilize Beijing's iconic structures effectively has been discussed through various channels, including the Chinese government, main media, local media, and international media. For example, after the spectacular opening ceremony at the Bird's Nest, the governments and tourists of both domestic and international tours may continuously assist this Bird's Nest not look empty and depressing while \$480 million were invested to the Bird's Nest's construction for the sporting games. Creative events and programs that can be supported by government decision makers, endorsed by tourists, and participated in by locals are among the sustainable business ideas that may make this world-class facility valuable to the communities. The Beijing National Aquatics Center has found a possible afterlife, though it still struggles to maintain a continued profit. \$40 billion were invested in the 2008 Olympics, and now the once-glorious facilities carry China's pride before, during, and after the games. These 2008 Olympics Games facilities have become global landmarks and brought modern architecture to China and to Beijing in particular. Chinese citizens and the government will benefit from using the facilities on a regular basis and by integrating them with citizens' celebrations, healthier and more athletic life styles, and tourist experiences.

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