

The economic impact of local sport events: significant, limited or otherwise? A case study of four swimming events

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It is widely recognized that sports events can act as a 'catalyst' for economic development and urban regeneration. Much has been made of the potential economic benefits of hosting major sport events. Indeed, much of the research in the UK has focused on the economic impacts of sport events such as the First Cornhill Test Match; England vs. Australia (1997), 2000 Flora London Marathon, 2001 World Snooker Championships, 2001 World Half Marathon to name a few. However, while all of these studies have focused on so called 'major' events this study examines much smaller ones. This research utilizes the standardized methodology and model established by UK Sport to produce an accurate estimate of the additional expenditure generated by four swimming events. The results suggest that small-scale local swimming events have the potential to generate unequivocal economic benefit to their host communities providing that secondary expenditure opportunities are available. In total more than £80,000 was generated over 8 days of competition, though this was spread disproportionately between the events. Commercial accommodation was responsible for the majority of the expenditure, followed by food and drink and shopping and souvenirs.

INTRODUCTION

Each weekend across the United Kingdom a sport event of some description will be taking place. This may be a Premiership football match, a semi-professional cricket match or an amateur swimming gala. No matter what type of event it may be there will be an event organizer, competitors, spectators and officials. As a result questions can and have been asked about certain events; why do they occur? What do they contribute? And what do they cost? To this end, five key research themes regarding the impact of sport events have been established, namely; urban regeneration impacts, sporting legacy benefits, tourism and image benefits, celebration, social and cultural benefits and the wider economic benefits.

Although the other benefits and/or impacts are an important focus for some research, this paper will investigate the wider economic benefits of hosting sport events.

Due to the changing nature of the global markets since 1970, sport has been utilized to promote potential tourism and to stimulate local economic growth through the staging of international sporting events (Dobson, 2000). It is now a widely held view that sports events can act as a 'catalyst' for economic development and urban regeneration (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2002). Research, in the UK predominantly carried out by the Leisure Industries Research Centre (LIRC, 1997, 1998, 2002), has illustrated the economic benefits of staging major events on a host city, such as the First Cornhill Test Match; England

vs. Australia (1997) and the Flora London Marathon (2000) to name but two. These studies have contributed to an increasing body of knowledge that examines the economic impact of sport events (see for example, Burgan and Mules, 1992; Crompton, 1995; Mules and Faulkner, 1996; Coleman, 2003). Following this, work undertaken by Gratton *et al.* (2000) has led to the development of a typology of events (see Table 1), designed to place events into an economic context.

Gratton *et al.* (2000) use the word 'major' to signify the importance of sporting outcomes rather than the economic importance. The typology is used to indicate that not all events, which are classed as 'major' in sporting terms, are important in economic terms. As far as the literature goes the majority of events, which are staged in the United Kingdom fall into the Type C and D category. It would therefore be meaningful, if not pertinent, to discover the impact of such events, as 'major' events only take place every so often. Research to date has been concerned largely with major sport events (see UK Sport, 2000, 2004). This study therefore identifies a notable gap in the research and is unique in that it quantifies the economic impact of relatively small-scale swimming events in the UK. In this context economic impact is defined as 'the net economic

change in a host community that results from spending attributed to a sports event or facility' (Turco and Kelsey, 1992, p. 9). A study of this nature can help define the potential economic benefits of staging a relatively small, competitor-led event on a host city. Furthermore, such a study can complement and potentially reinforce the growing body of research concerning economic impact and the projects commissioned by Sports Councils, governing bodies and local authorities in the United Kingdom. This new data can help to achieve a better understanding of the economic benefits associated with staging local sport events and establish whether Gratton *et al.*'s (2000) typology can be applied to them. The events that were studied are outlined below.

- The City of Sheffield Designated Open Meet (COSDOM)—March/April, 2001
- Western Counties Swimming Championships (WCSC)—Millfield, May, 2002
- Middlesbrough Open Meet (MOM)—June, 2002
- Satellite Open Meet (SOM)—Macclesfield, June, 2002

THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SPORT: A REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Until the 1980s the staging of major sport events was seen as a financial and

Table 1 Typology of events

Type A	Irregular, one-off, major international events generating significant economic activity and media interest (e.g. Olympic Games, Football World Cup, and European Football Championships).
Type B	Major spectator events, generating significant economic activity, media interest and part of an annual domestic cycle of sport events (e.g. FA Cup Final, Six Nations Rugby Union Internationals, Test Match Cricket, Open Golf, Wimbledon).
Type C	Irregular, one-off, major international spectator/competitor events generating limited economic activity (e.g. World and European Championships in all sports unless previously stated).
Type D	Major competitor events generating limited economic activity and part of an annual domestic cycle of sport events (e.g. National Championships in most sports).

(Gratton, Dobson and Shibli, 2000).

administrative burden on the host community due to the multi-million pound losses recorded at the Olympic Games staged in Munich (1972, £178 million) and Montreal (1976, \$692 million) (Gratton *et al.*, 2000). However the 1984 Olympics staged in Los Angeles Olympics bucked this trend making a highly publicised surplus of \$215 million (UK Sport, 2000; Gratton and Henry, 2001). Additionally, the 1996 Atlanta Games was suggested to have generated \$5.1 billion in direct economic activity as well as 77,000 new jobs in Georgia (Humphreys and Plummer, 1995). This change of fortune has led to increased competition for bidding for the rights to stage major events.

Internationally, much has been made of the economic benefits associated with hosting sport events. In the US the announcement of nearly every national or international sporting event is accompanied with news headlines that claim significant benefits. For example, the National Football League claim that the Super Bowl is worth around \$400 million (National Football League, 1999), Major League Baseball attaches a \$75 million benefit to the All-Star Game (Selig *et al.*, 1999) and the Men's Basketball Final Four is said to generate up to \$110 million (Mensheha, 1998, Anderson, 2001). However, such claims have led to questions about the validity of such studies as some are based purely on estimates or other methodological misapplications (Crompton, 1995).

Research in the UK has also acknowledged the economic and social benefits that major events can generate in a host community. In 1994 the Major Events Support Group, now the Major Events Steering Group (MESG), was established in an attempt to not only assist local authorities and/or governing bodies to bid to stage major events but also to assist in staging them. However, it was suggested that the UK had started to fall behind other countries in its approach to stage major sport events, the outcome being an adopted approach of

'Policy and Strategy for Major Events' being set-up and National Lottery funding becoming available to support major events (UK Sport, 2000).

The economic importance of major sport events in the UK was publicly recognized following the economic success of the 1996 European Football Championships (Euro '96). Dobson *et al.* (1997) suggest that in the broadest sense Euro '96 was considered as a huge football success in the UK. It was established that there were in fact 280,000 visiting spectators and media representatives, spending approximately £120 million. These visitors generated over 900,000 bed nights in local hotels, guesthouses and campsites, and created over 4,000 full-time equivalent job-years. The event emphasized that major sport events can be big business and this led to an increased demand for more major sport events to be staged in Britain (UK Sport, 2000). As a result of this growing activity LIRC (1997–2003) was commissioned by various organizations to estimate the economic impact of sport events in the UK using the methodology and model developed for UK Sport (for example, Euro '96, European Junior Swimming and Diving Championships '97, European Short Course Swimming Championships '98, Flora London Marathon '00 and the World Indoor Athletics Championships '03).

In total 16 events have been studied, using the standard methodology, illustrating that economic rewards can be achieved by staging a major sport event. There is no evidence, however, to prove or disprove the notion that a Type D (or smaller) sport event can have similar economic benefit themselves, it is merely assumed that any associated impact will be limited. Although Type A and B events dominate in terms of economic impact, it is the smaller events, the Type C and Ds, which are staged on a more frequent basis. As a result it might be reasonable to assume that Type C and D events could generate significant levels of

additional expenditure when considered as a group of events in a specific town or city. When considered across a region or country it may also be reasonable to assume that these events (combined) could generate more additional expenditure than Type A and B events when it is known that the staging of Type A and B events is infrequent (Gratton *et al.*, 2000). In the case of swimming, the 2004 events calendar produced by the Amateur Swimming Association indicates that there would be 255 events staged throughout the United Kingdom. These events must therefore generate some level of economic impact; this article will assess how much.

METHODOLOGY

Following similar economic impact studies which have been commissioned, this study utilizes the same methodology as that employed by LIRC (UK Sport, 1999) in order that the results can be confidently compared with current literature. Consequently the four studies are based on primary research, namely self-completion questionnaires and the same questions were used at each of the events. These questions included; how many visitors (competitors, spectators, officials, media and VIP) will come to the event from outside the local area? How long they will stay in the local area? How much they will spend? And what will this expenditure be on? (UK Sport, 1999).

The primary data collection instrument used was a short 4–5 minute questionnaire. The administration of this questionnaire was the key task of the research team. Surveyors helped to address interpretation issues and other problems experienced by respondents in order that data collection ran smoothly. A non-probability convenience method was used for sampling due to the relatively small population size. The research team approached as many potential respondents as they could and moved

on if any were unwilling to participate in the study (Cramer and Howitt, 2004).

Different versions of the generic questionnaire were required for different respondent groups and for different information requirements in order to satisfy the objectives of the study. In practice, this meant colour-coding questionnaires relating to different respondent groups and collecting more detailed information from spectators so that 'dead-weight' responses (i.e. those from local residents) could be completed quickly without collecting meaningless data. Table 2 indicates that 857 responses were received from people at the four events, providing an average sample size of 214 and an average response rate of 67%.

The completed questionnaires were collated and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). During the first stage of the data analysis the questionnaires were analysed by three filters:

1. whether respondents were local residents or visitors;
2. by respondent group type e.g. spectators, competitors etc.;
3. within each respondent group, by day visitors and overnight visitors.

This information was then used to generate frequency and descriptive tables, which were used to trim the data. In other words the top 1% and bottom 1% of responses were removed from the sample to offer a more concise data set, as it removes exceptional responses, which may have skewed

Table 2 Nature of the samples

Event	COSDOM	WCSC	MOM	SOM
Group Competitors	108	88	36	42
Spectators	149	107	67	84
VoIs/Officials	69	40	30	37
Media	0	0	0	0
Total	326	235	133	163

the results (LIRC, 2002). Using the output from this analysis enabled the economic impact of those who had been interviewed to be aggregated.

The statistical analysis gave the average expenditure per day by each respondent group. These data then became the input for spreadsheet analysis. Spreadsheet analysis calculated the aggregated totals of additional spend by each group, which then generated the total additional expenditure figure, which could then be classified as the economic impact attributable to the event. This method concentrates on additional expenditure created by the events - it does not attempt to estimate any displacement effects on normal recreational participants when closing facilities to them in order to host swimming competitions.

FINDINGS

The additional expenditure associated with the four events totalled £84,626; this however was spread disproportionately between the four events. The figures indicate that the COSDOM (£58,875) has a much higher economic impact than the other three events. This finding was followed by the WCSC (£15,124), the MOM (£6,585) and the SOM (£3,644). Although these figures can be used to make an overall assessment of each event; a number of key issues were determined when the results were analysed in more detail. The remainder of this paper will therefore discuss such issues relating to the respondent groups: spectators, volunteers/officials and competitors.

Spectators

UK Sport (2000) have suggested that the total number of spectators has a significant impact on the levels of additional expenditure attributable to an event, indeed they are the main driver of expenditure in the Type A, B and C events already studied. In

total the spectators at the four events in this study generated \$46,916, this figure is split between the four events as follows; COSDOM £31,161, WCSC £8,736, MOM £4,313 and SOM £2,706. Proportionally the spectator group is the single most important contributor to each of the events overall impact generating at least 50% to the overall economic impact figure (COSDOM 54%, WCSC 58%, MOM 66% and the SOM 74%). These findings are contrary to those found at the European Junior Swimming and Diving Championships (8%) (Junior Swimming) and the European Short Course Swimming Championships (9%) (Short Course).

According to Figure 1, food and drink followed by accommodation are the major items of expenditure. Food and drink was the most important category of additional expenditure for each event (contributing on average 42%). This would indicate that there was an opportunity to buy food and drink at or around the event facility for each event. Each venue had its own cafeteria and a number of vending machines. Moreover, with the exception of the WCSC each facility was within walking distance of local shops and restaurants providing an opportunity to generate secondary expenditure.

Accommodation was the category associated with the second highest level of spending (25%), with the exception of the SOM where there was no expenditure on commercial accommodation due to the timing and location of the event. Each of the other three venues had a number of hotels and guesthouses in close proximity providing a good base for the duration of the competition. With the exception of the SOM the events involved numerous competitors from clubs situated significant distances from the host facility.

At each of the events there was a 'swim shop', i.e. an area set up inside the venue for the sale of swimming merchandise. This gave spectators an opportunity to spend

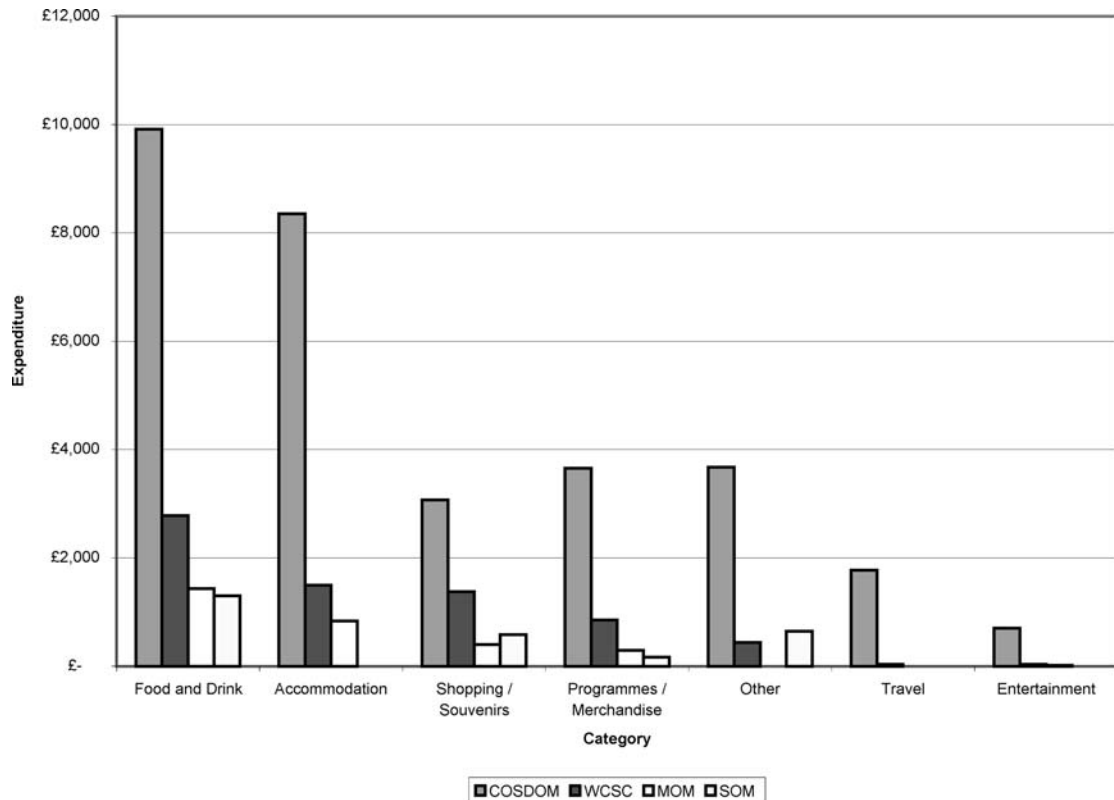


Fig. 1. Breakdown of economic impact for spectators

money on costumes and other swimming related goods at the venue, from a recognized supplier. Expenditure on shopping and souvenirs was the third most important category (16%) followed by programmes and merchandise (10%). However, it should be noted that any related expenditure related to the 'swim shop' may not be retained in the local area if the organization is from outside that area.

Negligible levels of expenditure were associated with entertainment, travel and other categories for a number of reasons. Notably, when competing in swimming, heats are generally staged in the morning with finals staged in the afternoon/evening sessions. As LIRC (1998) suggest this limits the opportunity to take in any entertainment

as time in between heats and finals will be spent resting for the next swim. Any expenditure for this category could therefore be attributed to competitors failing to make finals or those who have finished competing at the event.

In order to calculate the overall expenditure attributable to the spectator group the data was sub analysed according to whether respondents stayed commercially, non-commercially or were day visitors. Again with the exception of the SOM, the COSDOM, WCSC and MOM events all displayed characteristics which illustrated the importance of commercially staying visitors to a sports event. The data suggests that around 25% of all spectators at swimming events will stay overnight in the host

community. This will potentially generate significant levels of additional expenditure in local hotels and guesthouses.

The additional expenditure attributable to commercial visitors amounted to £27,609, whereas expenditure associated with non-commercial visitors and day visitors totalled £16,273. The disparity between the figures highlights the importance of commercially staying visitors to the overall economic impact of an event as the general levels of expenditure (minus that on accommodation) for commercial visitors was higher than that of non-commercial and day visitors. Possible reasons for this could be that spectators who were day visitors brought their own food and drink. Any additional expenditure is unnecessary, as they will be returning home at the end of the day, therefore they do not require evening meals or breakfasts and packed lunches will be brought to the events. The expenditure at the COSDOM was generally higher in each of the six categories and this might be explained by the increased variety of shops and other opportunities in which to generate secondary expenditure. Ponds Forge, the swimming centre for COSDOM, is located in the City Centre whereas the other venues are situated outside of the central business district, notwithstanding the fact the event attracted a larger audience due to the size of the facility and the reputation of the hosting club.

Unlike spectators who stayed in non-commercial accommodation, the expenditure on food and drink by commercially staying spectators was high as meals would be required throughout their stay in the host community (LIRC, 1998). Furthermore, the expenditure on accommodation per night is very similar across the range of events (an average of £42.80) with commercially staying spectators visiting for an average of 1.5 nights. The information recorded at the COSDOM is slightly higher than the average, however. Sheffield is a major city and this can account for slightly higher prices as the

prices do vary by region. Furthermore, there are more shops and hotels to choose from offering an increased opportunity to develop secondary expenditure.

The results show that all of the events are similar in terms of where they choose to spend money. The SOM event was the anomaly to this trend due to the lack of expenditure on accommodation. In addition to these findings it is essential to point out that all of the spectators surveyed were residents of the United Kingdom, therefore generating zero invisible exports (i.e. services paid for by overseas visitors). Moreover, 100% of the spectators interviewed stated that they were there to watch a friend or relative taking part. These findings are in slight contrast to those found at both the Short Course and Junior Swimming where accommodation was the single most important category of expenditure followed by food and drink.

The key points identified above have begun to characterize the type of spectators who visit a swimming event of this size. These characteristics could be summarized as follows; approximately 75% of spectators are day visitors with the remaining 25% staying in commercial accommodation for 1.5 nights. One-third of expenditure is related to food and drink. A combined 25% of expenditure is related to shopping and souvenirs and programmes and merchandise. Every spectator will be there to watch a friend or relative taking part in the event. There will be no invisible exports.

Having examined the characteristics and additional expenditure that can be attributed to the spectator group, the remainder of this article will examine the other key groups in attendance at the events, beginning with the volunteers and officials.

Volunteers and officials

The majority of the 179 volunteers and officials confirmed that they lived locally and were associated with swimming clubs

themselves. Therefore many of the responses were classified as 'deadweight' as they would not bring any new money to the local economy. Moreover, they all worked for little more than the free lunch and the knowledge that they had helped their clubs swimmers compete at the event. The primary research revealed that the volunteers and officials worked throughout the weekend and at most of the sessions (i.e. heats and finals), with many not finishing their day before 21:00. Allied with this finding and the lunches offered by the hosting club there was little time left for any additional expenditure. These findings were repeated across each of the events and in total £2,047 was spent: COSDOM £1,199 or 2% of the total impact, WCSC £394 (2%), MOM £326 (5%) and SOM £128 (4%).

Therefore it can be concluded that volunteers/officials do not make any meaningful contribution to the additional expenditure attributed to these events. The group is characterized by generating limited additional expenditure by virtue of the fact that 90% of them live locally. Consequently expenditure attributable to the group will be on food and drink and shopping and souvenirs with very little being spent on commercial accommodation.

Competitors

As with the spectator group UK Sport (2000) indicate that the competitor group can also have a significant impact on the overall expenditure at an event. In total £35,264 was generated by competitors at the four events. This can be broken down as follows: COSDOM £26,514, WCSC £5,993, MOM £1,946 and the SOM £811. Proportionally, the competitor group was ranked as the second highest contributor to the overall impact (COSDOM 41%, WCSC 40%, MOM 30% and the SOM 22%) at the events, which is in contrast to the Short Course (56%) and Junior Swimming events (81%).

Previous research at the Short Course and Junior Swimming events had indicated that the majority of the economic activity attributable to competitors was spent on commercial accommodation; however, the findings from these studies were not as straight forward. According to Figure 2, accommodation, food and drink and shopping and souvenirs are jointly responsible for the majority of the total expenditure by event competitors although each event had a different primary category, for example, at the COSDOM the most important category was food and drink (£7,356 or 28%), at the WCSC it was expenditure on accommodation (£2,492 or 42%), at the MOM it was split between accommodation (£855 or 44%) and food and drink (£854 or 44%) and at the SOM it was shopping and souvenirs (£471 or 58%). In line with the other findings the additional expenditure generated at the COSDOM is greater than at any of the other events due to the number of competitors taking part.

In line with the spectator findings the breakdown of expenditure between commercial, non-commercial and day visiting competitors reveals the importance of commercial accommodation. The total additional expenditure attributed to commercial visitors was £22,763 whereas expenditure by non-commercial and day visitors was £12,501. Proportionally such visitors were responsible for the majority of expenditure during the events (with the exception of the SOM where there were no commercial visitors). These findings were broken down as follows, COSDOM 66%, WCSC 57% and the MOM 88%. This can be attributed not only to the expenditure on accommodation but also to the higher levels of expenditure on food and drink and shopping and souvenirs than were recorded by non-commercial and day visiting competitors. The average expenditure on accommodation per night was similar at the three events ranging from £42.00 to £47.00. Moreover, those

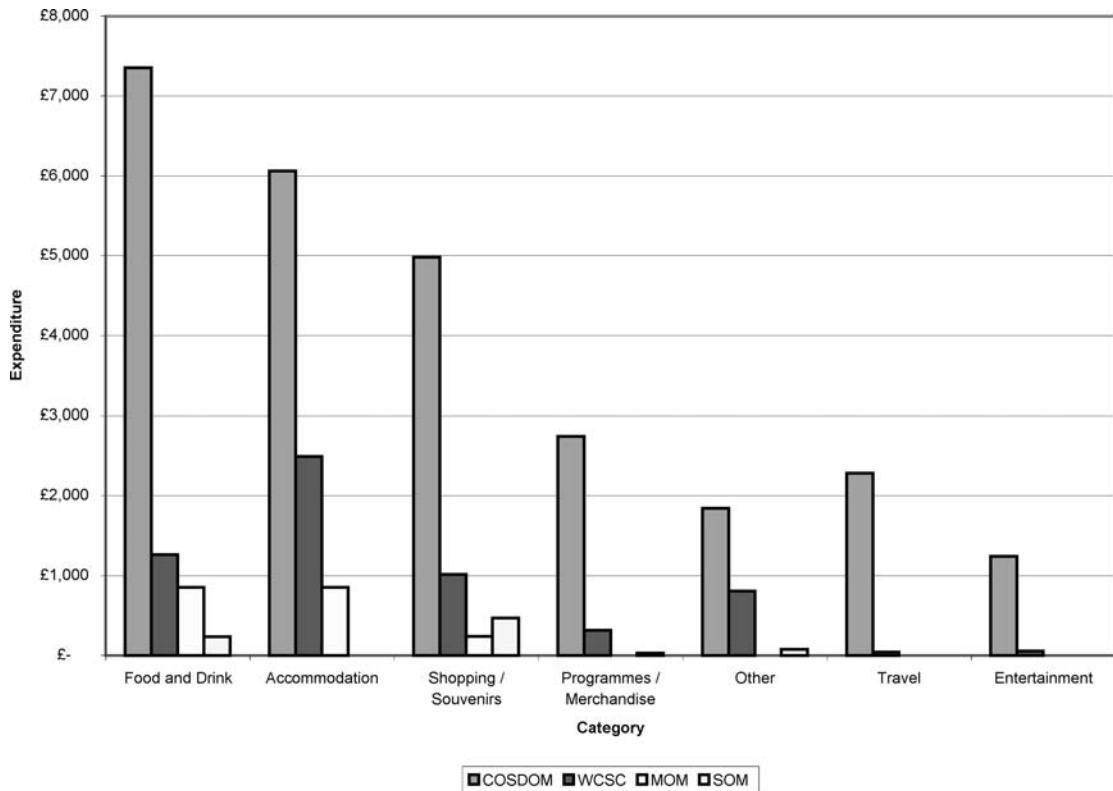


Fig. 2. Breakdown of economic impact for competitors

competitors who did stay commercially did so for the duration of the event, i.e. 2 days or nights.

The numbers of commercial visitors varied at each event due to the timing of the competition and the availability of hotel accommodation. There was not a good choice of hotels and guesthouses in the Millfield and Macclesfield areas resulting in smaller numbers of competitors using commercial accommodation. In contrast hotels were more widely available in Sheffield and Middlesbrough and as such there were more competitors using commercial accommodation. Furthermore as the swimming calendar draws to a close, swimmers will be focusing on specific events in order to achieve the entry times for National Championships. This usually meant that competitors would

only be day visitors, thus reducing the necessity for staying overnight in the host community. This was the case for the events in both Middlesbrough and Macclesfield.

Expenditure on the remaining categories was limited at each of the events. Programmes and merchandise recorded some activity at each event, ranging between 0 and 10% of the total impact (COSDOM 10%, WCSC 5%, MOM 0% and the SOM 5%). However, the nature of a swimming event is such that there is little time to take in any additional entertainment. Inter session breaks lasted about an hour at all of the events, thus limiting the time for competitors to take in some sort of entertainment. In addition to these findings all of the competitors questioned were residents in the

United Kingdom; therefore, no invisible exports can be attributed to the events.

In line with the findings from the other sub groups of respondents the competitors have illustrated some characteristics. These can be summarized as follows; commercial visitors will make up the majority of the impact attributable to the group, although significant amounts of money will also be spent on food and drink.

DISCUSSION

Shibli and Gratton (1998) contend that it has long been recognized that major events tend to be either 'spectator driven', or 'competitor driven' in terms of generating an economic impact in a host community. For example, a Type A event such as the Olympic Games is spectator driven, indicating that spectators are the main group of people generating any additional expenditure. In contrast a Type D event is said to

be a major competitor event. This is contrary to the findings of this paper.

When examining the economic impact figures, from this study, it is apparent in each instance that they are driven by spectator expenditure. However, in this case it does not mean that the events were spectator driven. The number of competitors outweighs the number of spectators, while the additional expenditure attributable to the spectators outweighs that attributable to competitors (see Figure 3). Some of the possible explanations for the magnitude of the variances are explained below.

There is an inter-relationship between the competitors and the spectators. This point is evident when it is considered that 100% of the spectator responses indicated that they were in attendance to watch a friend or relative taking part. Furthermore a large number of the competitors at each event were under the age of 16. It would follow therefore that junior swimmers, i.e. a swimmer under the

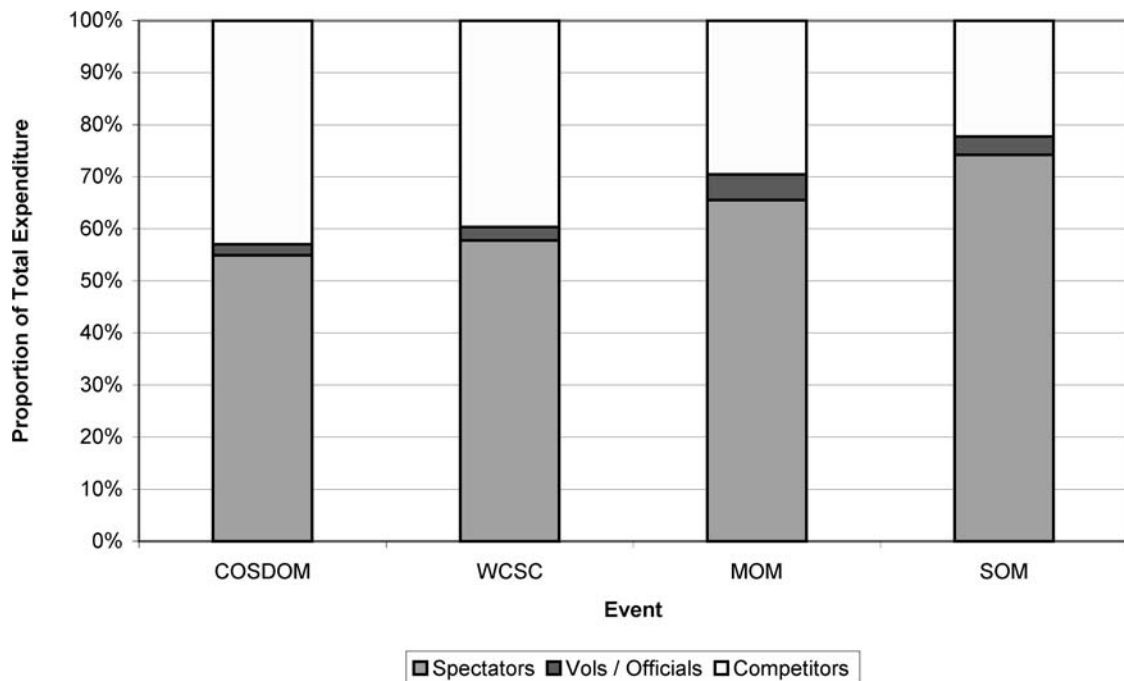


Fig. 3. Proportional expenditure by group and event

age of 16, are almost certainly economically inactive and live at home with their parents (Shibli and Gratton, 1998). As a direct result of this finding it is not surprising that the levels of additional expenditure attributed to spectators were greater than those of competitors. The spectators interviewed would be buying food and drinks for the competitors and paying for their accommodation.

The dates when the competitions were staged had an immediate bearing on the economic impact of each event. The COSDOM event was staged at the end of March, the WCSC at the end of April and the MOM and SOM events in June. As the swimming calendar stands National competition is staged during April, therefore only the COSDOM meet allowed qualification to National competition (British Swimming, 2004) and therefore might be expected to have more competitors.

In addition to the aforementioned timing issue, it should be noted that the COSDOM was staged during the Easter break. This presents the opportunity for competitors to travel to the event the day before and leave the day after, thus maximising the potential time to generate additional expenditure. As Shibli and Gratton (1998) suggested, if an event clashes with children attending school or adults going to work it is unlikely that people will be inclined to stop overnight in the host community. COSDOM could therefore be classed as the exception to the rule in terms of what the other events have generated economically. However, it should also be used as a lesson as an event that 'got it right'.

Following on from this point, attendances at the other events were affected by the timing of the National Championships. The COSDOM was responsible for a total of 508 attendees. The WCSC offered the opportunity to compete for district titles (WCSC, 2002) enhancing the overall numbers (396). However, both the MOM (185) and SOM

(233) had notably lower numbers of attendees by virtue of their timing. These numbers can give an explanation to the differing impacts of the events as it is reasonable to assume that the more attendees there are the greater the economic benefit will be (UK Sport, 2000).

Moreover, the size of the facilities can also be pointed to as a possible reason for the impacts. Ponds Forge International Sports Centre, host of the COSDOM, is the largest venue of those studied followed by the Millfield facility (WCSC). These two facilities are not only 50 metre pools but also have large spectator galleries, room for 2,600 and 620 spectators respectively. This is compared to approximately 200 and 300 for Middlesbrough and Macclesfield.

The findings section illustrates the disparity between the four events, in addition to the conclusion that the economic impact generated at each event was directly linked to the number of visitors to the host community. The COSDOM benefited from more than 500 visitors and generated a significant level of economic activity; this can be compared to the other events (WCSC, MOM and SOM) where there were less visitors and therefore less economic activity. The level of attraction to competitors is an important variable influencing the total number of visitors at each event.

The secondary spending opportunities also vary for the events; in other words the potential for respondents to generate additional expenditure through the purchasing of items or services in the six categories. The locations of the facilities are the major contributor to this. The COSDOM was staged in the city centre, whereas the other three events were staged outside what could be considered as the central business district.

Part of this paper has focused on the location of the facilities used to stage the events researched in this study and suggested that the infrastructure in both

Table 3 An addition to the existing typology

Type E	Minor competitor/spectator events, generating very limited economic activity, no media interest and part of an annual domestic cycle of sport events (e.g. Local and Regional sport events in most sports).
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the host community and at the facility had to be located in a good position in order to maximize the economic activity. In addition to this it must also be noted that there needs to be a provision of secondary expenditure opportunities in order to help maximize the economic impact. If someone is hungry and they have not brought food to an event with them they need to buy something to eat (LIRC, 1998). If that something is not available then the potential economic gain may well be lost. It is therefore essential that due to the time constraints faced by competitors, facilities must provide these opportunities for additional expenditure. This provision can be in the form of vending machines, cafes, special catering facilities and swim-shops. Moreover, the local area must also present this provision to cater for the session breaks and after competition.

Overall the four events generated approximately 400 commercial bed-nights. This figure however is dominated by those generated at the Sheffield event (251). In comparison the WCSC generated 106, the MOM 55 and the SOM 0. This finding emphasizes the differences in terms of commercial visitors at each of the events but also the levels of economic activity. Expenditure on accommodation is an important component of economic impacts on host communities, as they tend to spend more on other categories in addition to the standard bed-night tariffs (Shibli and Gratton, 1998).

Unlike the studies conducted by Shibli and Gratton (1998) there is no disparity between the duration of the events as they all took place over a 2-day period. The disparity in the actual number of bed-nights generated

can again be explained by not only the scale of the events, but also the location and timing of the events. However, it is important to point out here that if an event were to last for more than 2 days the number of commercial visitors may well increase. As a direct result it would be consistent to expect an increase in the level of economic activity, highlighting a potential avenue for further research.

These findings challenge Gratton *et al.*'s (2000) typology of events. Although the Type A–D event definitions appear to be accurate, the events in this paper do not appear to fit into the current format. It would be misleading for people to assume that these events fit into the Type D category by virtue of their economic worth and regularity. There was no specific driver of additional expenditure at any of the events as the competitor and spectator groups are inter-related. The disparity in economic terms would indicate that an event that attracts a national competitor base could generate some meaningful economic benefit, in this case the COSDOM. An event of this size could therefore match that of a National Championship and fit into the Type D category. However, the remaining three events do not attract such an audience. Consequently they generate much more limited impacts. This would point to an additional Type of event—Type E. An event of this nature could be defined as shown in Table 3.

CONCLUSION

Research into the area of non-major events remains limited and this paper has been the

first meaningful insight into them. The events researched have informed the event typology by showing that it does not recognize the regular events such as those studied in this paper - hence a Type E category has been proposed. Moreover, the paper offers quantifiable data and economic impact estimates relating to Type E swimming events. It is apparent that the gap between Type C, Type D and Type E events is significant as the results recorded at the Short Course (£314,513) and Junior Swimming (£257,802) recorded significantly higher levels of additional expenditure, however, the chance of staging Type C events is limited for many towns and cities, whereas staging Type D and E events will be a feasible goal. The evidence highlighted in this paper can only act as a catalyst for towns and cities to stage Type D and Type E events that attract a national competitor base, as they can be responsible for a genuine level of additional expenditure, albeit much more limited than that generated at a Type C.

Each of the events studied should be maintained in the annual calendar of events, although a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the provision of secondary expenditure opportunities so that host communities can benefit from the potentially significant amounts of additional expenditure. These so called small scale events, generating limited economic benefit can, in fact, produce some worthwhile gain to host communities.

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