



# THE IMPACT OF A MEGA EVENT ON IMAGE CHANGE: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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## Introduction

Mega events such as the Olympic Games (a.k.a. “the Olympics”) are known to result in direct and indirect economic benefits to host cities and countries such as tourism revenues and job creation as well as intangible benefits such as promotion, national pride, prestige, enhanced destination image, and positive visitor attitude and behavior (Chalip & McGuirty, 2004; De Groote, 2005; Florek & Insch, 2011; Hahm, Tasci, & Terry-Breiter, 2018; Tasci & Gartner 2007). Researchers are in consensus on the potential impacts of mega events on destination image due to enhanced media coverage of these events (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Florek & Insch, 2011; Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Many studies have been conducted to test the bidirectional influences among mega event image, destination image, and country image (e.g., Deng & Li, 2013; Florek, Breitbarth, & Conejo, 2008; Hahm et al., 2018; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Martínez & Alvarez, 2010; Xing & Chalip, 2006). However, it is not well established whether these image changes are long lasting.

## Purpose of Study

This study proposes to measure the country and destination image of South Korea, the host of the 2018 Winter Olympics, and the Olympics image at multiple points in time including before, during, and several times after the mega event.



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## Methodology

### Research Design

A longitudinal survey design conducted online

### Survey Instrument

- 7-point Likert scales (1 = Extremely Poor, 7 = Excellent) to measure:
  - Country Image (9 items from Kim, Kang, & Kim, 2014)
  - Destination Image (13 items from Tasci & Gartner, 2007)
  - Olympic Games Image (10 items from Deng & Li, 2013)
- Information about respondents' familiarity with and Interest in the Olympic Games, past experience with the country and the Olympic Games, and information sources
- Sociodemographic Questions (gender, age, education level, marital status, residence state, annual income, and race)

### Data Collection

- A random sample was acquired from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk)
- One month before, during, one month after, three months after, and six months after the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea.
- Another set of data will be collected early next year to capture the one-year after images.



Source: Visit Seoul  
([http://english.visitseoul.net/tours/PyeongChang-2018--Get-Into-the-Olympic-Spirit\\_/24208](http://english.visitseoul.net/tours/PyeongChang-2018--Get-Into-the-Olympic-Spirit_/24208))

## Implications

Destination image is an integral part of tourism studies. The findings of the study have the potential to increase our understanding of how mega-events affect destination image over time. Since a destination's decision to host a mega event is premised in part on positive or improved image creation, this knowledge will allow for a better analysis of whether or not destinations should bid to host mega events and make the considerable economic investments required to support them.

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