THE IMPACT ON DESTINATION COGNITIVE IMAGE PERCEPTION OF TOURISTS BY THE SPORT MEGA-EVENT: A CASE STUDY OF RUSSIA'S FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

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Abstract

Cities and countries compete fiercely to host sports mega-events, believing that doing so will improve their global image and make their destination more appealing to future tourists. According to the change in the global context, it's important to figure out if sporting mega-events, which are increasingly being hosted by BRICS countries, can help them improve their international reputation as attractive tourist destinations. The paper's research examines how visiting fans view Russia and the host cities for the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Is there any empirical evidence that hosting a large sporting event will increase international tourism and enhance a city's reputation?

In the spring of 2022, researchers examined the issue with secondary data and empirical data gathered through survey methods. In this year's survey, 271 Russian and foreign tourists were asked about their impressions of Russia. Non-World Cup-related visitors to Russia have different demographics, motivations, and perceptions than those who travel to Russia for the tournament. According to the study, sports mega-events have an impact on visitors' perceptions of destinations. An event like this can dispel myths and stereotypes that have been spread by the media and entice people to go to a place they might not otherwise consider. A desire to return to the same location after attending a sporting mega-event has also been found by the researchers.

Keywords: destination, inbound tourism, sport events, visiting fans, FIFA World Cup, Russia.

DOI: 10.7176/JTHS/60-01

Publication date: July 31st 2022

1. Introduction

Destination image is one of the most studied issues in tourism since it has the capacity to conjure up certain ideas in the minds of travelers. Due to its ability to draw more tourists to the area, the significance of the destination image to the local destination marketing organizations and other destination advocates is undeniable. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) emphasize that images are crucial to destinations because they have the capacity to alter and rearrange tourists' thoughts and perceptions of a location and "give him or her a pre-taste of the location."

One of the most influential images in recent years has been that of sports tourism. As a result, it's being referred to as a "dynamic economic market for tourism" by experts. Many sports have a strong connection to tourism, and sport is an important part of tourism itself. Both active and passive sports tourism can be done. The term "active sports tourism" refers to a type of vacation that involves a lot of physical activity at the resort. Passive sports tourism can include, for example, attending a sporting event, such as the Olympics or the World Cup, as a spectator (Preuss et al., 2009). One of the most important aspects of the tourism sector has been the development of mega events or sports events (Deery, Fredline, and Jago 2004). Because of its potential to have a significant economic impact, researchers and the general public alike are becoming increasingly interested in this type of tourism (Bruun and Funk, 2007; Wong, 2011; Barajas, 2012). It is important to look at the positives and negatives involved with mega-sports tourism and sports tourism, as well as the impact that sports tourism has on the community (Barajas, 2012; Thomson, 2018). It has been increasingly common in recent years to hold sporting events with the goal of promoting locations. Destination marketing relies heavily on events like these, and they're held to raise awareness of the destination and its country, increase tourism, and boost the local economy. Mega-events aimed at attracting tourists from around the world and the region (Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Cup, etc.). Because of the significantly greater number of onlookers than participants, these events are commonly referred to as "spectator competitions" (Gratton & Taylor, 2000). There is an enormous impact on attendance, target market, public funding,

political consequences, television coverage, facilities, and economic and social well-being when they appear. Because they take place in different cities each time, these gatherings are truly one-of-a-kind. Twenty years ago, academics became interested in the effects of sporting events on the locations where they take place, and that interest has persisted ever since (Gripsrud et al., 2010; Lee, 2014; Alm etal., 2016; Arnegger & Herz, 2016; Lai, 2018; Duignan, 2021; Zouni et al., 2021). Perhaps because of the vast differences in the host countries' positions in international tourism, their conclusions differ to some extent. The authors who study the positive effects of international sports mega-events emphasize both positive and negative externalities in their research. Such events, on the one hand, provide a wide range of opportunities for communities: promoting local products to a global audience, attracting new businesses, and enhancing civic pride (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Improved transportation to and from the event's location is one of the many positive outcomes of this project. Several major sporting events have been staged by Russia in recent years. These include the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, the FINA World Championships (Aquatics 2015) in Kazan, the 2018 FIFA World Cup, and the UEFA Euro 2020 games in St. Petersburg. During these events, the number of tourists visiting the country increased, as well as the amount of media coverage the country received.

Table 1: Large sports events in Russia, 2010–2020

Year	Event	Location
2013	Universiade (International University games)	Kazan
2014	Winter Olympics and Paralympics	Sochi
2015	World Cup Formula-1	Sochi
2016	IIHF World Hockey Championship	Moscow and St.Petersburg
2018	FIFA World Cup	11 Cities

Source: FIFA (2020), www.fifa.com.

In 2018, for example, the FIFA World Cup was held in 11 Russian cities, attracting 6.8 million visitors, half of whom were foreigners. All over the world, this event was broadcast, many articles were written, and several reports were recorded. As a result of the World Cup, Russia saw a significant increase in its GDP. This year's FIFA World Cup has had a positive impact on economic variables such as GDP, unemployment, and balance of trade by generating 315,000 jobs and boosting the country's ability to import and export goods. This year's FIFA World Cup in Brazil has also helped to improve the country's transportation and utility infrastructure, as well as its sports, medical, and housing infrastructure. The event also generated $1.6 billion in revenue from the spending of approximately 5 million tourists (2.7 million tourists from other countries) across the 11 cities where the event was held. The number of foreign tourists visiting cities like Kaliningrad and Yekaterinburg increased tenfold in the last decade (Sziakov, 2018).

Table 2: Economic indicators for Russia for the period 2014-2019

	2015 on 2014	2016 on 2015	2017 on 2016	2018 on 2017	2019 on 2018
GDP per capita (USD) in Thousands	(4.81)	(0.54)	2.03	0.54	(0.13)
Real GDP growth	(3)	2.6	1.3	0.7	(1.2)
Unemployment rate (%)	0.4	(0.1)	(0.30)	(0.4)	(0.2)
Imports (Bil.USD)	(6.96)	2.05	4.63	(1.78)	1.73
Exports(Bil. USD)	(9.3)	2.43	6.04	2.83	(0.48)
Balance of trade	(1.9)	(0.07)	1.41	4.61	(2.21)

Source: the national bureaus statistics of Russia

Table 3: Economic indicators changes for Russia for the period 2014-2019

	2015 on 2014	2016 on 2015	2017 on 2016	2018 on 2017	2019 on 2018
GDP per capita (USD) in Thousands	(34.18%)	(5.83%)	23.27%	5.02%	(1.15%)
Real GDP growth	(3%)	2.6%	1.3%	0.7%	(1.2%)
Unemployment rate (%)	0.4%	(0.1%)	(0.3%)	(0.4%)	(0.2%)
Imports (Bil.USD)	(28.45%)	11.71%	23.68%	(7.3%)	7.72%
Exports(Bil. USD)	(24.41%)	8.4%	19.35%	7.6%	(1.2%)
Balance of trade	(14.23%)	(0.6%)	12.09%	35.27%	(12%)

Source: the national bureaus statistics of Russia.

1.1 Research Aim

When it comes to Russia's image as a tourist destination following the 2018 FIFA World Cup, claims like the one above were the focus of this research. Research also sought to identify differences in destination images based on the types of international tourists and the extent to which they were influenced by their travel destinations. A poll was conducted amongst World Cup goers to get their thoughts on the subject. Surveying actual tourists rather than relying on data from university students or 'potential' tourists, as other studies have done was critical to us in order to ensure that our findings were accurate.

1.2 Research Question

Research Question 1: Does the hosting of a sports mega-event affect the perception of the destination in the eyes of its visitors?

Research Question 2: Could attending a sports mega-event increase the likelihood of the visitor revisiting the host destination?

Surveys and content analysis of secondary data were used to gather empirical evidence. After the introduction, the paper's structure follows. The theoretical foundation for this study is provided in Section 2 by a review of the literature on the image of a tourist destination and the case of Russia's tourism during the 2018 event. Section 3 describes the empirical research design and methodology, as well as the study's research questions and hypotheses. The results of an empirical investigation are presented in Section 4. Conclusions and implications are found in Section 5.

2. Literature review

Regional development is frequently aided by tourism, and it is widely accepted in the academic literature that a destination's image influences visitors' behavior (Baloglu and McClearly, 1999; Etchner and Ritchie, 1993; San Martin, Rodriquez and Bosque, 2007). When it comes to picking a vacation spot, travellers are guided by images of a destination that they have formed in their own minds, as well as by information they have obtained through other means, such as personal experiences with previous trips to that location. According to Chen and Tsai (2006), the quality, value, and overall satisfaction of a destination are all taken into consideration when making a judgment about it. Tourists' future plans to visit and their willingness to recommend the destination can be influenced by the destination's image. Kotler and Gertner (2004) define a destination image as:

" The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place".

Studies show that there are three major components to a destination's image: cognitive, emotional, and conative (Gartner, 1993). (Dann, 1996; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Tasci

& Gartner, 2007; Tasci et al., 2007). As stated in Boulding's work (1956), an image is a combination of what one knows and thinks about an item (cognitive), how one feels about it (affective), and how one acts because of this information (instrumental) (conative). An individual's cognitive (intellectual/perceptual) and affective (emotional) components are linked when it comes to a person's perception of the attributes of a destination and the feelings he or she associates with that location. (Baloglu &Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martn, 2004a, 2004b; Gartner; 1993). Cognitive images of travel destinations have received a lot of study in the field of tourism studies (Chen and Hsu 2000; Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Oppermann, 1996). To date, no universally recognized and dependable scale has been found for a variety of respondents and scenarios due to the scale's elusiveness (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), complexity (Smith, 1994), multidimensionality (Gartner, 1989), and subjectivity (Gallarza, Saura, and Garca, 2002). (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Because cognitive destination images are readily observable, descriptive, and measurable, they may convey more concrete and interpretive meaning regarding the uniqueness of a destination than affective or conative images (Walmsley and Young, 1998).
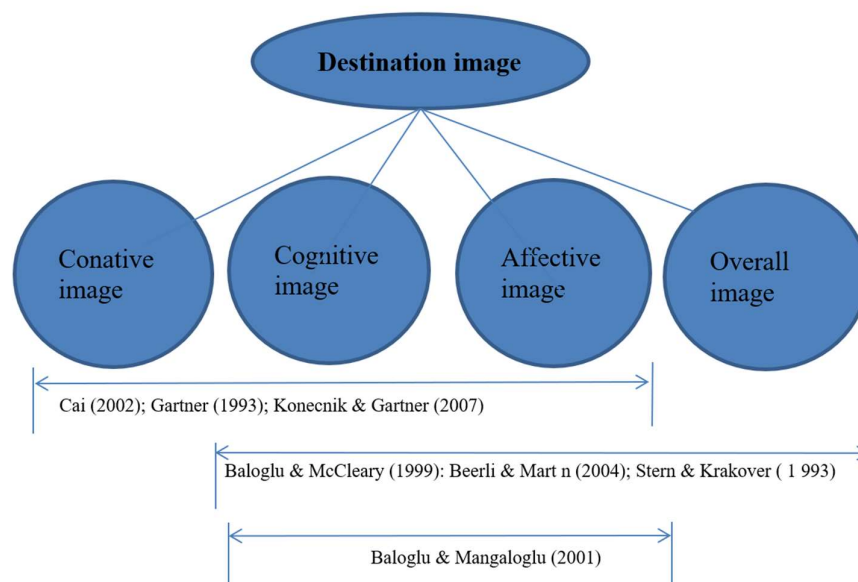

Figure 1: Dimension of image

It has thus gained increased support from experts on the importance of the destination's cognitive image in describing it (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Dann, 1996; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). Product theory states that the cognitive destination image is divided into images of "natural environment," "constructed environment," "socially responsible environment," and local people to complete the ring. Adapted from consumer product design concepts, the four-faceted cognitive destination image fits the goals of this investigation. A review of prior studies on cognitive destination images by Echtner and Ritchie (2003) found that the construct's common attribute-based synthesis includes 34 cross-referenced qualities. For the first time, Hunt (1975) proposed a 20-item attribute scale based on the judgement of tourism professionals and measured on a 5- and 7-point semantic differential scales to represent a multi-item cognitive destination image. However, the cognitive goal picture, comprised of 19 pieces based on prior research, will be used in this thesis (Baloglu,2001; Baloglu& Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chaudhary,2000; Chen, 2001; Leisen, 2001; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1992). An image can be interpreted in two ways in the tourism sector. A product's image might be either a marketing department-created mental image or a consumer-generated associated image (Tuohino, 2002). The image of a tourist location must be carefully managed to ensure that it is regarded in the same way as it is by potential visitors. Destination marketing focuses on promoting a positive image of the area. The World Cup 2018 example shows that some tourists stayed away from Russia because of the country's name (Russia), which they had heard about in the media and seen in Hollywood films. That's why the Russian government worked hard on attracting the World Cup tourists by improving the Russia's image using the documentaries to show how Russia is preparing for the World Cup, how they build the stadiums, hotels, etc. Other documentaries show how kind the Russians are towards tourists, and this helped a lot in changing the tourists perception of Russia as a destination to visit.

Russia's Federal Tourism Agency head Oleg Safonov said that more than 5 million tourists, including 2.9 million foreigners, have visited the 2018 FIFA World Cup host cities. More than 5 million people visited the host cities of

the World Cup (Local and international). More than 2.7 million tourists visited Moscow, followed by 600,000 in St. Petersburg and 500,000 in Sochi. There was an average of 74% gain in visitors to the World Cup host cities, from 19% in Moscow to 1,678% in Saransk. All 11 cities hosting World Cup matches attracted 2.9 million visitors from outside the country on July 5th. When compared to the middle of June, the indicator grew by 20% in St. Petersburg and 235 times in Saransk. Kaliningrad and Yekaterinburg saw a tenfold rise in international tourists, while Volgograd saw a fifteenfold increase in tourists, compared to the other World Cup host cities. As soon as a foreigner thinks about Russia, Moscow and the Trans-Siberian Railway spring to mind. So many things have changed since the 2018 World Cup, especially for the 11 towns that hosted the mega-event. In comparison to previous years, the number of visitors skyrocketed. There were 2,576,584 supporters in attendance for 56 of the 64 matches played at the 2018 World Cup, which works out to an average of 46,010 fans per match based on official FIFA stats.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup: stadiums (the construction cost in billions of roubles)

Source: RBC, 8 June 2018

3. Methodology, Research design and hypotheses

Visitor patterns fluctuate greatly at the event site. When it comes to the perceived value of attending a major athletic event, variables such as the location of the event, transportation issues, and the friendliness of locals all play a role (Kyriaki, 2006; Florek, 2008; Wafi, 2017).

It has been estimated that during the 2013 Universiade, Kazan's tourist flow quadrupled, as well as the average length of a tourist journey and the variety in age groups of visitors (Committee for Tourism Development of Kazan, 2019). Although visitor numbers in the host city grew because of both the Universiade and the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, there was no comparable increase in tourists arriving from outside the country. Study by the European Association of Tour Operators found that no Summer Olympic host city (Seoul, Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney, Athens, or Beijing) had a long-term rise in visitor traffic following the games. Here are a few hypotheses we may make when considering this information:

Hypothesis 1: A positive image of a destination is created in tourists' minds when they attend Mega events.
Hypothesis 2: When a major sporting event occurs, the tourist's impression of the event is shaped by several factors that begin to form even before the tourist arrives in the host country and continue long after they leave the country. Here are a few examples of the cognitive image's 19 items that affect a tourist's impressions of a sporting event:
Item 1: beautiful scenery/natural attractions
Item 2: suitable accommodations
Item 3: various shopping products
Item 4: lack of language barrier,
Item 5: personal safety/security
Hypothesis 3: Visitors who attend a major sporting event are more likely to revisit that location if it hosts more events.
Hypothesis 4: Tourists' perceptions of a destination are formed in large part by what they see on Facebook and

other social media platforms.

In order to examine these hypotheses, the collected data will be analyzed quantitatively (via a survey).

3.1 Quantitative research (Survey Design and Construct Operationalization):

Research into public perceptions of Russia made use of a cognitive image scale (CIS). Research conducted in the 1990s (Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McClear et al. 1999); 2000 (Chudhary), Chen (2001), Leisen (2001); 1992 (Walmsley & Jenkins) determined that the cognitive image contained 19 components. The scale focused on the following cognitive factors such as attractions (beautiful scenery/natural attractions, various shopping products, interesting historical/cultural attractions, suitable accommodations, appealing local food and beverage, various recreational opportunities, variety of interesting events/festivals, good night-life/entertainment), comfort (easy accessibility, convenient local transportation, personal safety/security, lack of language barrier, interesting, friendly and hospitable people), value for money (good value for money, inexpensive travel costs/prices), and exotic atmosphere (refreshing/relaxing atmosphere, good climate, exotic atmosphere, unpolluted and unspoiled environment). Each item was given a five-point agreement scale, with strongly disagreeing (1) being the lowest and strongly agreeing (5) being the highest. Tourist satisfaction is a measure of what tourists are interested in. (Fornell,1992; Gnoth, 1994; Spreng, ManKenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996). For this reason, researchers should be careful when they aim to measure the general happiness and attributes of respondents. Because the study's purpose is to assess overall tourist satisfaction, the construct was assessed using only two items (unsatisfied-satisfied, displeased-pleased) which is similar to that used by other researchers (Andreasen, 1984; Bigné et al., 2001). Other researchers (Andreasen, 1984; Bigné et al., 2001) have adopted a similar approach. Responses were tallied on a seven-point scale, with the lowest score being "strongly disagree(1)" and the highest being "strongly agree" (7).

In order to determine whether or not a person intends to return to a location, two factors were used (revisit for pleasure trip/holiday, revisit again in the next five years), in which Zeithaml et al has mentioned (1996). We employed a seven-point scale defined by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree"(7) to measure our findings. Three questions were used to assess the desire to recommend (recommend to family or friends, say positive things to other people, recommend to those who want advice). A seven-point scale, with strongly disagreeing (1) and strongly agreeing (7) as its anchor points, was used to score the items, which were based on Zeithamlet al too. (1996).

We sent the questionnaire to some Russian experts who had been conducting study on the perception of Russia as a tourist destination. These items were verified with the help of the experts, who also provided advice on whether the items would be appropriate for evaluating Russia's image as a tourist destination during the 2018 World Cup. Respondents were able to better understand the questions because to this advice. The survey instrument was originally prepared in English and then translated into Russian.

3.2 Data collection and data analysis

For a period of twelve days (March 15–27, 2022) the survey was made available on Google in both English and Russian. It was also shared in groups for travelers and football fans (Argentinos al Mundial de Qatar 2022, US soccer, Per a Qatar 2022, etc.) who had attended the Russia's 2018 World Cup (Travel in the world, Traveling in Europe, Solo travelers, etc.). Anketolog.ru and VKontakte, where it was shared in a group dedicated to the 2018 FIFA World Cup, also posted it. Using the snowball method, we asked respondents to share the survey link with their friends on Google. SPSS software was used to organize and analyze the data collected. The results of the data analysis were displayed in the form of tables, histograms, and bar graphs.

4. Results and Discussion of the Quantitative research (Survey results):
4.1 Respondents' Demographics:

Table 4: Gender-specific characteristics of survey participants

Cross-Sample Analysis by Gender			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Why	World cup tourists	Count	132	63	195
		% within Why	67.7%	32.3%	100.0%
		% within Gender	78.1%	61.8%	72.0%
	Non-world cup tourists	Count	37	39	76
		% within Why	48.7%	51.3%	100.0%
		% within Gender	21.9%	38.2%	28.0%
	Total	Count	169	102	271
		% within Why	62.4%	37.6%	100.0%
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: Respondents' Age Distribution.

Cross-Sample Analysis by Age			Age					Total
			16-25	26-45	46-55	56-65	66	
Why	World cup tourists	Count	52	82	42	17	2	195
		% within Why	26.7%	42.1%	21.5%	8.7%	1.0%	100.0%
		% within Age	72.2%	71.3%	87.5%	81.0%	13.3%	72.0%
	Non-world cup tourists	Count	20	33	6	4	13	76
		% within Why	26.3%	43.4%	7.9%	5.3%	17.1%	100.0%
		% within Age	27.8%	28.7%	12.5%	19.0%	86.7%	28.0%
	Total	Count	72	115	48	21	15	271
		% within Why	26.6%	42.4%	17.7%	7.7%	5.5%	100.0%
		% within Age	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Tables 4 and 5.
In a survey of World Cup visitors, men made up 132 of the respondents (67.7%), while women made up 63 (32.3%). Male tourists 37 make up 48.7 percent of visitors, whilst female visitors 39 make up 51.3 percent of visitors when the World Cup is not taking place. Respondents who were World Cup visitors were predominantly between the ages of 26 and 45 years old (42.1%), making up the largest group of respondents. University and higher graduates who's aged between 16-25 made up 26.7%)=, representing the second biggest group of respondents, because the respondents who were less than 18 weren't allowed to travel to Russia and attend the World Cup without a guarantor (Parents or relatives). For the classic "working class football aficionado" who travels abroad to see the World Cup games, this profile is the best place to start. This can be attributed to Russia's low Ruble, especially among travellers from Europe and the United States. South Americans and Africans, on the other hand, made up a smaller percentage of overall travellers. The high cost of travel to Russia couple with expensive lodging could be two reasons for this.

*Why did you visit Russia during the 2018 World Cup period? To... *(Почему вы посетили Россию во время чемпионата мира 2018 года? Чтобы)
271 responses

- Attend the 2018 world cup/Посетить ЧМ-2018
- Traveling for holiday and vacation, business, visiting friends and relatives, religion, conference and seminars/ В отпуск, по делам, в гости к друзьям и родственникам, религия, на конференции и семинары.
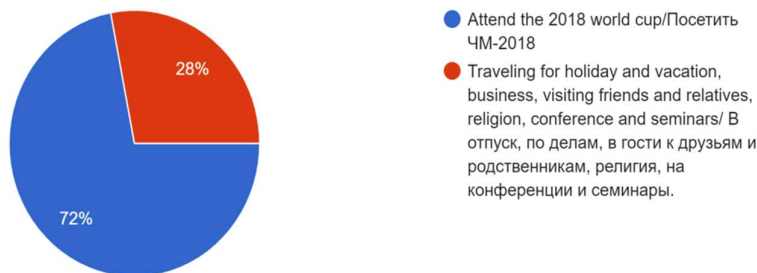
28%
72%

Figure 2. The proportion of tourists that came for reasons related and unrelated reasons to the World Cup

Most of the international tourists (72 percent) in Russia were there for one reason or another associated to the 2018 World Cup. The remaining 28 percent of foreign tourists were there for reasons other than the World Cup.

4.2 Differences in meaning in the image of the goal of visiting Russia
H1 (A positive image of a destination is created in tourists' minds when they attend Mega events) was tested using a correlation analysis, and differences between two groups of tourists were evaluated using the T-value and P value. Researcher examined whether the World Cup's image was affected by the aim of visitors' visits. As a result of these findings, this study divided the respondents into two groups: those who travelled to Russia for the World Cup and related events, and those who travelled to Russia for other reasons, including vacation, business, visiting family or friends, religion, and conference or seminar purposes. Both groups are referred to as "World Cup visitors" and "non-World Cup visitors"

Table 6: Differences in mean between visitors to the World Cup and non-visitors to the World Cup

Group Statistics					
	Why	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Refreshing	World cup visitors	195	3.83	1.158	.083
	Non-world cup visitors	75	4.00	1.090	.126
scenery	World cup visitors	195	3.77	1.241	.089
	Non-world cup visitors	75	4.05	1.038	.120
historical	World cup visitors	195	3.87	1.109	.079
	Non-world cup visitors	75	4.09	1.080	.125
safety	World cup visitors	195	3.64	1.156	.083
	Non-world cup visitors	75	3.83	1.095	.126
Friendly	World cup visitors	195	3.45	1.154	.083
	Non-world cup visitors	75	3.80	1.027	.119
shopping	World cup visitors	195	3.69	1.121	.080
	Non-world cup visitors	75	3.99	.979	.113
environment	World cup visitors	195	3.50	1.095	.078
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.61	1.051	.121
accommodation	World cup tourists	195	3.71	.996	.071
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.95	.868	.100
entertainment	World cup tourists	195	3.70	1.204	.086
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.96	1.019	.118
climate	World cup tourists	195	3.62	1.080	.077
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.87	.905	.105

atmosphere	World cup tourists	195	3.58	1.097	.079
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.87	1.082	.125
accessibility	World cup tourists	195	3.67	1.115	.080
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.93	.890	.103
transportation	World cup tourists	195	3.57	1.188	.085
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.76	.984	.114
opportunities	World cup tourists	195	3.75	1.062	.076
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.96	.951	.110
language	World cup tourists	195	3.01	1.112	.080
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.29	1.010	.117
beverage	World cup tourists	195	3.62	1.040	.074
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.93	.949	.110
costs	World cup tourists	195	3.47	1.146	.082
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.84	.871	.101
events	World cup tourists	195	3.81	1.030	.074
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.95	.943	.109
value	World cup tourists	195	3.56	1.046	.075
	Non-world cup tourists	75	3.81	.954	.110

TABLE 7. Differences in mean in the image by the goal of the visit

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2) tailedP-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Refreshing	Equal variances assumed	3.478	.063>0.05	-1.126	268	.261	-.174	.155	-.479	.131
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.156	141.905	.249	-.174	.151	-.472	.124
scenery	Equal variances assumed	4.467	.035<0.05	-1.760	268	.080	-.284	.161	-.602	.034
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.904	159.260	.059	-.284	.149	-.579	.011
historical	Equal variances assumed	.044	.834	-1.515	268	.131	-.227	.150	-.521	.068
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.533	137.521	.128	-.227	.148	-.519	.066
safety	Equal variances assumed	1.123	.290	-1.232	268	.219	-.191	.155	-.496	.114
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.262	141.107	.209	-.191	.151	-.490	.108
Friendly	Equal variances assumed	3.313	.070	-2.325	268	.021	-.354	.152	-.653	-.054
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.449	149.843	.015	-.354	.144	-.639	-.068
shopping	Equal variances assumed	6.711	.010	-2.033	268	.043	-.299	.147	-.589	-.010

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2) tailedP-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
environment	Equal variances not assumed			-2.159	152.619	.032	-.299	.139	-.574	-.025
	Equal variances assumed	.394	.531	-.787	268	.432	-.116	.147	-.406	.174
	Equal variances not assumed			-.802	139.420	.424	-.116	.145	-.402	.170
accommodation	Equal variances assumed	5.838	.016	-1.828	268	.069	-.239	.131	-.496	.018
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.942	152.874	.054	-.239	.123	-.482	.004
entertainment	Equal variances assumed	4.520	.034	-1.672	268	.096	-.263	.157	-.572	.047
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.800	157.420	.074	-.263	.146	-.551	.026
climate	Equal variances assumed	5.150	.024	-1.788	268	.075	-.251	.141	-.528	.025
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.932	158.942	.055	-.251	.130	-.508	.006
atmosphere	Equal variances assumed	.059	.808	-1.900	268	.059	-.282	.148	-.574	.010
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.911	135.920	.058	-.282	.148	-.574	.010
accessibility	Equal variances assumed	8.000	.005	-1.820	268	.070	-.262	.144	-.544	.021
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.009	166.942	.046	-.262	.130	-.519	-.005
transportation	Equal variances assumed	4.544	.034	-1.204	268	.230	-.186	.154	-.489	.118
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.308	160.865	.193	-.186	.142	-.466	.095
opportunities	Equal variances assumed	5.109	.025	-1.506	268	.133	-.211	.140	-.487	.065
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.582	148.952	.116	-.211	.134	-.475	.053
language	Equal variances assumed	.036	.849	-1.920	268	.056	-.283	.147	-.573	.007
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.004	146.877	.047	-.283	.141	-.562	-.004
beverage	Equal variances assumed	4.587	.033	-2.266	268	.024	-.313	.138	-.585	-.041
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.361	146.255	.020	-.313	.133	-.575	-.051

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports
ISSN (Paper) 2312-5187   ISSN (Online) 2312-5179   An International Peer-reviewed Journal
Vol.60, 2022

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| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2) tailedP-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
costs	Equal variances assumed	13.177	.000	-2.517	268	.012	-.368	.146	-.656	-.080
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.838	175.674	.005	-.368	.130	-.624	-.112
events	Equal variances assumed	2.226	.137	-.997	268	.320	-.136	.137	-.406	.133
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.037	145.858	.301	-.136	.132	-.396	.124
value	Equal variances assumed	3.331	.069	-1.833	268	.068	-.254	.139	-.528	.019
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.909	146.218	.058	-.254	.133	-.518	.009

A 5 point Likert scale was used to measure the mean values.

Using Levene's test, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the variances of the two groups, based on the F value for 10 of the 19 variables in the table 7, which has a Sig. value less than alpha.05 (p 0.05). The assumption of equal variance is not met, in other words. For example, if the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not met, we must use the results linked with the "Equal variances not assumed," which takes into consideration the Satterthwaite and Cochran (1957) adjustments for standard error and degrees of freedom. The bottom line of the t test for equality of means results table will be used, while the top line will be ignored. Ten picture items were statistically and substantially different between World Cup visitors and non-World Cup visitors (p < 0.05) as we see in Table 7. A higher percentage of non-World Cup visitors valued Russia's image more highly than World Cup visitors. The hypothesis 1 of substantial differences between subgroups wasn't confirmed with any certainty. However, when the asymptotic significance value is smaller than 0.05, in this situation, there's a difference between the two groups, and this difference was found in the following indicators where the value is less than 0.05: beautiful scenery/natural attractions, various shopping products, suitable accommodations, good night-life/entertainment, good climate, easy accessibility, convenient local transportation, various recreational opportunities, appealing local food & beverage, inexpensive travel costs/prices.
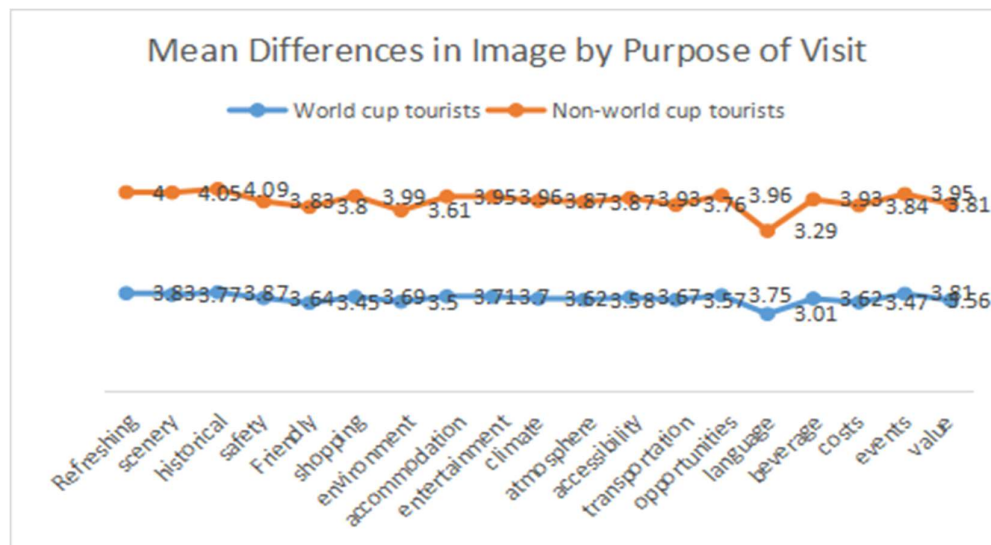

Figure 3. Differences in mean in Russian Image by Visit Goal

Non-World Cup visitors' items had greater image values than World Cup visitors' items. According to Figure 3, which depicts differences in meaning in the image, as a result of this, some non-World Cup tourists have previously been to Russia, which means that they already have a more positive impression of the country than World Cup visitors who have only travelled to Russia for the tournament. Non-World Cup visitors also care more about this stuff than people who merely came to watch the World Cup because of the game. As a result, for a first-time visitor to the country who is only interested in the World Cup, this value was significantly higher.

4.3 Mean Differences in Image between Mild and Strong Influenced Tourists

 To test the H2 (When a major sporting event occurs, the tourist's impression of the event is shaped by a number of factors that begin to form even before the tourist arrives in the host country and continue long after they leave the country) we analyzed the differences between strongly and mildly influenced tourists. Respondents were asked to rate to what degree the 2018 World Cup was an influencing factor in choosing Russia as an international tourist destination. We then classified those who rated the World Cup as an influence at less than 4 on the 7 point Likert scale as "mildly influenced tourists," whereas those who rated the World Cup greater than 5 on the 7 point scale were classified as "strongly influenced tourists" in their destination choice. We tested for any significant difference in image between these two categories of tourists. As we see in Table 8, the results of t-tests indicate that all the 19 image items were significantly different with respect to the two influenced segments ($p < 0.05$). The strongly influenced tourists were more likely to perceive image as highly positive compared to the mildly influenced tourists.

TABLE 8: Differences in mean in Image between Strongly and Mildly Influenced Tourist

	Strongly influenced tourists	Mildly influenced tourists	Mean difference	T - value	P - vlaue
Appealing Local Food	5.9227	4.1333	1.7894	-8.045	.000
Historical attractions	5.9469	3.3281	2.6188	-9.045	.000
Relaxing atmosphere	5.8249	3.3333	2.4916	-6.608	.000
Interesting friendly	5.9574	3.9036	2.0538	-8.95	.000
Good climate	5.7757	3.6491	2.1266	-5.975	.000
Beautiful scenery	5.8303	3.2642	2.5661	-7.561	.000
Suitable Accommodation	5.8937	3.5000	2.3937	-9.126	.000
Various recreational	5.9187	3.3387	2.58	-8.712	.000
Easy accessibility	5.7945	3.3654	2.4291	-7.204	.000
Inexpensive travel	5.9897	3.6623	2.3274	-9.897	.000
language barrier	5.7234	4.9000	0.8234	-5.839	.000
Interesting events	5.8610	2.8542	3.0068	-7.823	.000
Good value	5.8531	3.4833	2.3698	-6.989	.000
Unspoiled environment	5.8794	3.8056	2.0738	-6.585	.000
Shopping products	5.7952	3.7213	2.0739	-6.381	.000
Local transportation	5.8704	3.2000	2.6704	-8.509	.000
Good night life	5.7762	3.7869	1.9893	-6.566	.000
Personal safety	5.8598	3.3333	2.5265	-8.35	.000
Exotic atmosphere	5.8619	3.4918	2.3701	-8.37	.000

A 7 point Likert scale was used to measure the mean values.

 The largest differences between the two segments weren't found in some items like what happened with authors when they studied the previous world cups. For example: The largest differences between the two segments when Choong-Ki Lee, Tracy Taylor, Yong-Ki Lee and Bong Koo Lee analyzed the image of items of World Cup 2002 were found only in these items: appealing local food and beverage, interesting historical and cultural attractions, and refreshing and relaxing atmosphere, but in 2018 World Cup the differences between mildly and strongly influenced tourists were found in all the items, thus confirming the second hypothesis.

Figure 4 shows the differences in image between mildly and strongly influenced tourists when the 2018 World Cup was an influencing factor in choosing Russia as an international tourist destination. The values of World Cup tourists items were higher in everything.
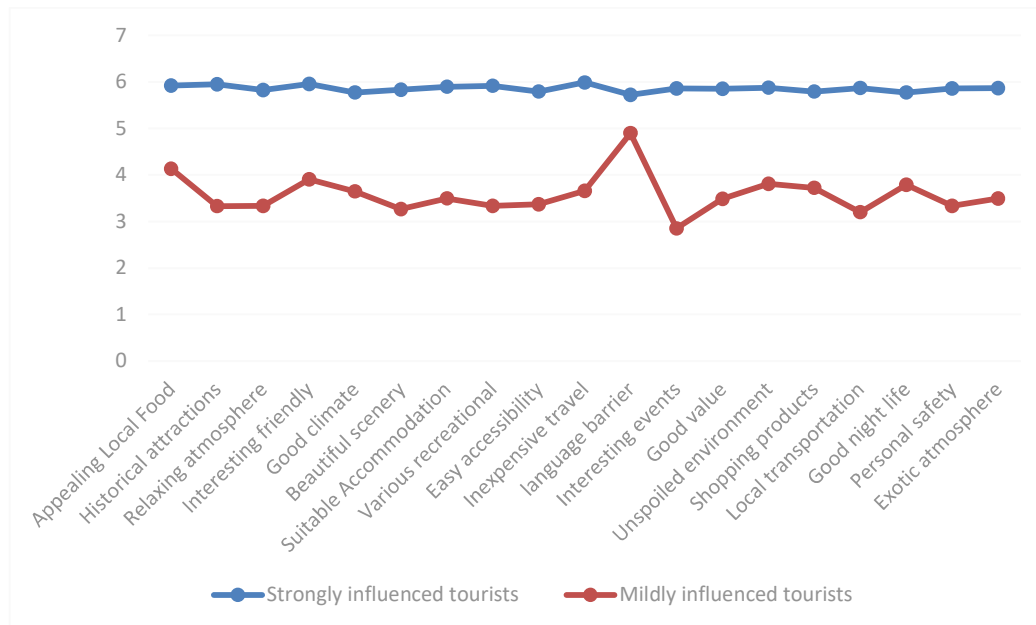
Figure 4: Differences in Image Between Mildly and Strongly Influenced Tourists

4.4 Mean Differences in Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth, Revisit Intentions and Awareness between World Cup and Non-World Cup Tourists

In the questionnaire the respondents were asked to rate how much they thought the 2018 World Cup increased their awareness and enhanced the image of Russia as a tourist destination, if they were satisfied or unsatisfied, pleased, they have any intentions to revisit the country and if they will recommend visiting Russia to other people. This study also explored differences in increased awareness and image between World Cup and non-World Cup tourists.

As shown in table 9, the mean value (P<0.05) of some of the items shows a significant difference between World Cup tourists and non-World Cup tourists. On that basis, we will analyze the data in the second line (equal variances are not assumed). The T-Tests show a difference between the two groups. The P and T values of the rest of the items didn't show that much difference (P>0.05). But for the results of World Cup tourists. For example, not increasing awareness as much as the non-World Cup tourists, or if the World Cup tourist doesn't have intentions like the non-World Cup to revisit the country for holidays or for the next 5 years, doesn't mean they didn't like the country. These positive things might prove something. They might prove that the World Cup tourists are happy and satisfied with the event, so if they will not visit Russia for holidays, then they might visit Russia when it hosts the next big sports event.

The figure 5 shows the differences between the World Cup tourists and Non-World Cup tourists, and the figure 6 justifies the reason. In Figure 5 we can see that the results of some items are very close (being satisfied, increasing the awareness, say positive things and recommend to others), and not so close for rest (re-visit in next five years and pleased). In the Figure 6 we can see the reason, 38% / 28% of tourists Strongly agree / Agree that the host country is important respectively. The non-World Cup and World Cup tourists went to Russia because of different motivations, for Non-World Cup tourists Russia as a country attracted them, but for World Cup tourists the motivation was the World Cup. They went there for the World Cup and, while the host country is important for them, they were attracted by the mega event, and all their impressions were positive. This leads us to discover how the Mega event could change the image of the country in the eyes of these tourists.

TABLE 9: T-tests of Satisfaction, Word-Of-Mouth, and Revisit Intentions,Awareness, And Overall Image between World Cup and Non-World Cup Tourists

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Overall satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	5.297	0.022	-1.512	269	0.132	-0.33772	0.22339	-0.77754	0.1021
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.574	149.016	0.118	-0.33772	0.21458	-0.76173	0.08629
Word-of-mouth Pleased	Equal variances assumed	9.649	0.002	-2.701	269	0.007	-0.66484	0.24618	-1.14953	-0.18016
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.994	172.314	0.003	-0.66484	0.22206	-1.10315	-0.22653
Revisit intentions for pleasure trip	Equal variances assumed	3.027	0.083	-2.388	269	0.018	-0.5442	0.22788	-0.99285	-0.09554
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.43	141.796	0.016	-0.5442	0.22399	-0.98699	-0.1014
Revisit for next five years	Equal variances assumed	2.161	0.143	-2.452	269	0.015	-0.58698	0.23944	-1.05838	-0.11557
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.549	148.567	0.012	-0.58698	0.23031	-1.04208	-0.13188
Awareness, enhance the image of Russia as a tourist destination	Equal variances assumed	0.006	0.937	-1.93	269	0.055	-0.43961	0.22777	-0.88806	0.00884
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.896	132.02	0.06	-0.43961	0.23186	-0.89826	0.01904
Recommend to Family	Equal variances assumed	4.84	0.029	-1.826	269	0.069	-0.38657	0.21175	-0.80346	0.03032
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.927	153.582	0.056	-0.38657	0.20065	-0.78297	0.00983
Say Positive Things	Equal variances assumed	4.182	0.042	-1.519	269	0.13	-0.3442	0.22656	-0.79026	0.10187
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.658	166.033	0.099	-0.3442	0.20757	-0.75402	0.06562
Recommend to Those who ask advice	Equal variances assumed	4.8	0.029	-1.6	269	0.111	-0.34798	0.21742	-0.77605	0.08009
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.703	156.534	0.091	-0.34798	0.20431	-0.75154	0.05559

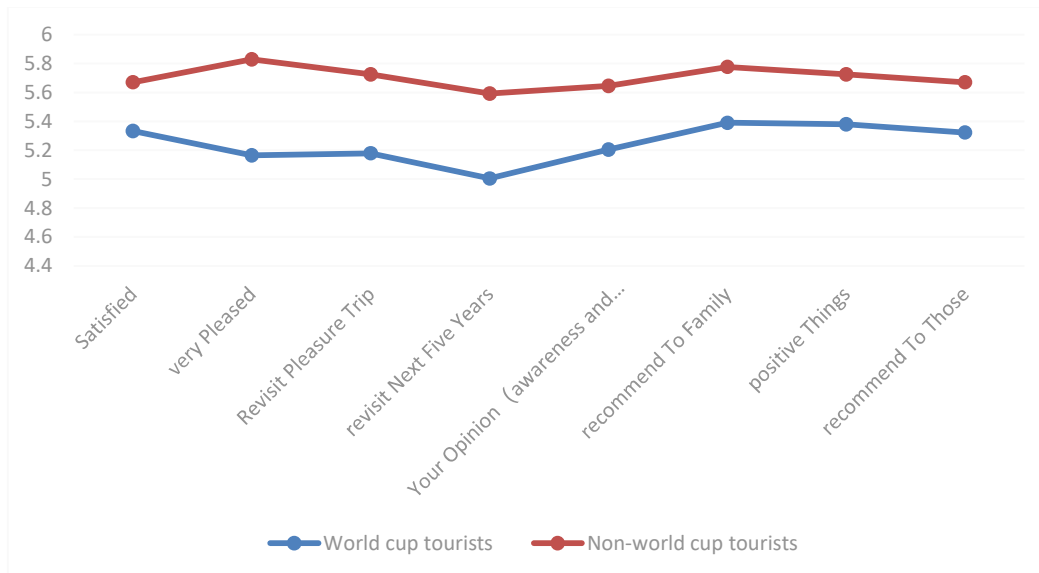A 7 point Likert scale was used to measure the mean values.

FIGURE 5: Differences in Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth, Revisit Intentions, Awareness, and Overall Image World Cup and Non-World Cup Tourists

*The host country important for the decision to attend the world cup/ *Принимающая страна является важным фактором для принятия решения о том, чтобы посетить чемпионат мира.
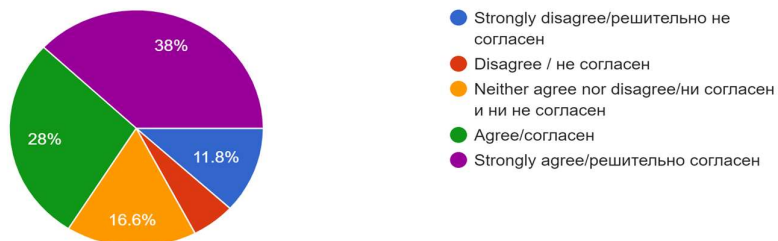271 responses

Figure 6: Differences by percentage between tourists opinions

4.5 Mean Differences in Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth, Revisit Intentions and Awareness Between Mildly and Strongly Influenced Tourists

TABLE 10: T-Tests of Satisfaction, Word-Of-Mouth, and Revisit Intentions, Awareness, and Image between Mildly and Strongly Influenced Tourists

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Satisfied	Equal variances assumed	155.288	.000	-14.946	269	0	-2.60724	0.17445	-2.9507	-2.26379
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.897	69.954	0	-2.60724	0.26344	-3.13267	-2.08182
Very Pleased	Equal variances assumed	45.138	.000	-11.737	269	0	-2.5053	0.21345	-2.92555	-2.08505
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.394	81.173	0	-2.5053	0.2667	-3.03594	-1.97467
Revisit for Pleasure Trip	Equal variances assumed	173.496	.000	-15.885	269	0	-2.76438	0.17403	-3.10701	-2.42175
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.505	69.898	0	-2.76438	0.26314	-3.28921	-2.23955
Revisit for Next Five Years	Equal variances assumed	45.581	.000	-13.476	269	0	-2.65198	0.19679	-3.03941	-2.26454
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.677	80.39	0	-2.65198	0.24839	-3.14625	-2.15771
Your Opinion, Increased Awareness	Equal variances assumed	77.216	.000	-28.417	269	0	-3.42741	0.12061	-3.66487	-3.18994
	Equal variances not assumed			-21.42	76.903	0	-3.42741	0.16001	-3.74603	-3.10879
Recommend To Family	Equal variances assumed	182.1	.000	-14.732	269	0	-2.45661	0.16675	-2.78491	-2.12831
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.547	69.03	0	-2.45661	0.25731	-2.96992	-1.9433
Say Positive Things	Equal variances assumed	47.384	.000	-11.589	269	0	-2.26557	0.1955	-2.65047	-1.88067

	Equal variances not assumed			-8.892	78.085	0	-2.26557	0.25479	-2.77281	-1.7583 3
	Equal variances assumed	58.852	.000	-13.886	269	0	-2.43562	0.17541	-2.78097	-2.0902 8
Recommend To Those who ask advice	Equal variances not assumed			-10.622	77.878	0	-2.43562	0.2293	-2.89213	-1.9791 1

A 7 point Likert scale was used to measure the mean values.

To test the H3 (Visitors who attend a major sporting event are more likely to revisit the location if it hosts more events.), we used the T-test between the strongly and mildly influenced tourists.

As shown in Table 10, the results of t-tests indicate that overall satisfaction was significantly different between strongly and mildly influenced tourists on their choice of Russian destination (p < 0.001). Those who stated the World Cup strongly influenced their choice of Russian tourism were more likely to be satisfied with Russian tourism than those who stated that it mildly influenced their choice of destination. The t-tests also indicate that word-of-mouth was statistically and significantly different with respect to type of tourists and the degree of influence on choice of destination (p < 0.001). The findings imply that strongly influenced tourists were more likely to recommend Russia to their family or friends interested in traveling overseas and to say positive things about Russia to other people, as compared to mildly influenced tourists. The t-tests indicate that revisit intentions were significantly different between mildly and strongly influenced tourists (p < 0.001). Respondents who stated the World Cup strongly influenced their choice of Russia were more likely to indicate an intent to revisit Russia than those who stated it mildly influenced their choice of destination, so the H3 was tested in this point. The results of t-tests also indicate that increased awareness and overall image were significantly different between mildly and strongly influenced tourists (p < 0.001). Strongly influenced tourists registered a substantial increase in awareness of Russia as compared to mildly influenced tourists.
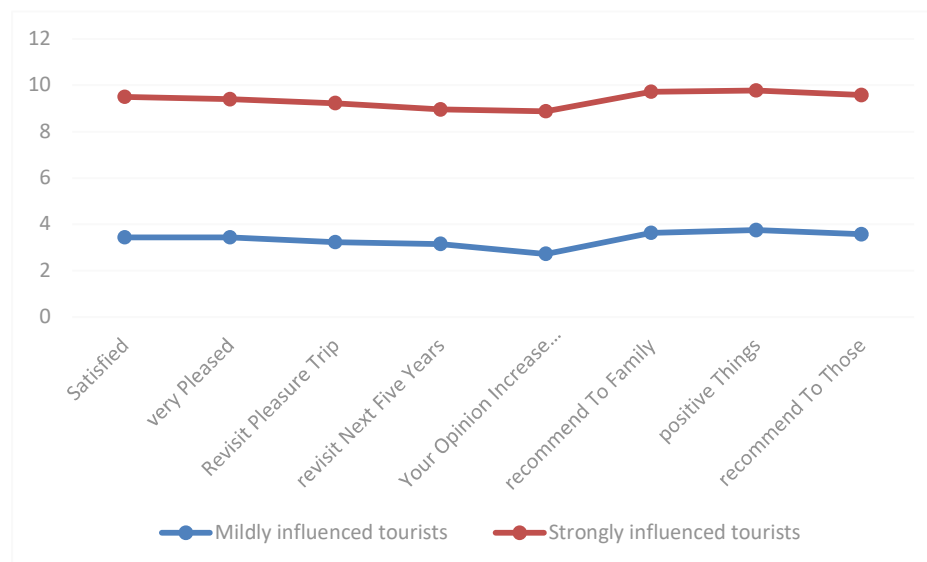

FIGURE 7: Differences in Satisfaction, Word-of-Mouth, Revisit Intentions, Awareness, and Overall Image Between Mildly and Strongly Influenced Tourists

4.6 Social media's influence on the travel decision

Finally, to test the whether the H4 (Tourists' perceptions of a destination are formed in largely by what they see on Facebook and other social media platforms) is confirmed or not, we asked the respondents whether they were influenced by the Facebook regarding the decision to go to the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia and we divided them into two groups (strongly influenced and mildly influenced).

According to the results which we see in the table 11, the Facebook group exerted an influence. P<0.05, we use the second line of data, where is the (t= -4.92) shows a significant difference between respondents indicating that the Facebook influenced their decision before going to Russia. 206 respondents agreed that the Facebook and other social media have strongly influenced their decision, and only 65 said that the social media didn't have that much influence on their decision. The results of the table 11 and the figure 8 strongly confirm the H4.

Table 11: Importance of the Facebook and social media for the decision to travel.

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Influenced By The Facebook	Equal variances assumed	23.17	.000	-5.928	269	**.000**	-0.97819	0.16501	-1.30307	-0.65331
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.92	84.194	.000	-0.97819	0.19882	-1.37355	-0.58283

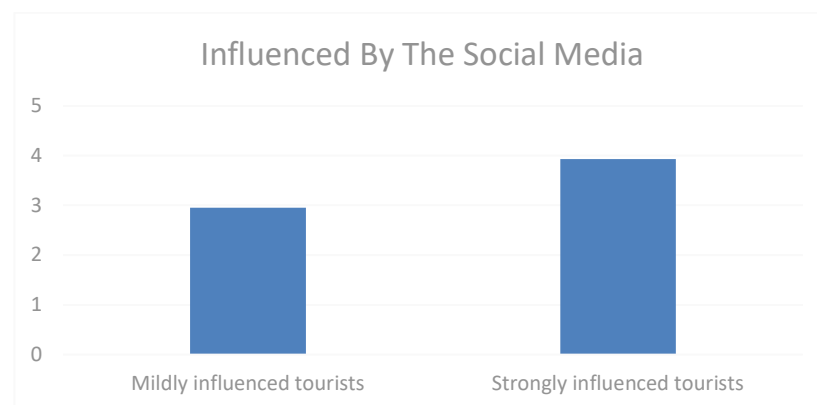A 5 point Likert scale was used to measure the mean values.

FIGURE 8: Differences in influence by Facebook and other Social Media between tourists.

4. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS
5.1. CONCLUSIONS:

In conclusion, the studies aim was to empirically examine the impact of hosting the FIFA World Cup on tourists' perceptions of Russia's image. The research proved that many claims which talked about only a few benefits that the country gains when it holds a mega sports event, such as direct income generation and stimulation of the locality's economy, were not entirely accurate. Benefits could expand to include indirect effects such as improving the image of the host country. The impacts also could benefit the residents through better global profile, post-event increases in tourism and levels of attractiveness to businesses. To test these hypotheses, we studied tourists who were visiting Russia at the time of the World Cup qualitatively and quantitatively, and ensured whether their image of the country had changed during the period of their visit. The research also aimed to know the different responses between the World Cup tourists and non-World Cup tourists. The interviews and the survey were able to show specific results about the impact of hosting a World Cup on the destination's image and provided a profile of World Cup tourists. The tourists who have attended the World Cup 2018 were mostly males, and they were young (i.e. aged between 16 and 45 years) with more than average levels of satisfaction with Russia. Some of them were attracted to Russia for the biggest football event, they went to Russia for the world Cup although were heavily influenced by their perception from Facebook and social media that Russia isn't a safe place and secure destination. Based on the satisfaction of the World Cup Tourists we can put forward these two points:

● The better hospitality from the host country, the more satisfied the tourists are going to be with their journey during the event time, and even after the event.
● The good organization of the event influences the tourists and makes them more satisfied with their

experience at the event, and this will lead to higher and positive changes when they will evaluate the city/country after the trip.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS:

The quantitative results were positive, and they perfectly demonstrate that hosting the World Cup was associated with a positive impact on tourist's perceptions of Russia in all aspects. Moreso, the most important thing is, even if the results for World Cup tourists weren't higher than the results of non-World Cup tourists in some aspects, they are still positive and had an effect on tourists perception. Although foreign visitors who were in the country for non-World Cup related reasons did show some change in their perceptions of Russia, the tourists who travelled to Russia for the World Cup had a more positive image of Russia in specific aspects, were more satisfied with their experiences in Russia, and had a greater willingness to recommend Russia to others.

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