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**Distinction in locals' support
for a major and mega event -
case of EXPO 2020 and F1 in UAE.**

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Title:

Distinction in locals' support for a major and mega event – case of EXPO 2020 and F1 in UAE.

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the present research is to examine and explain any possible variance in the perception of local Emiratis towards hosting a major and a mega event. A Grand Prix Formula One was considered for a major event, which is organized yearly in Abu Dhabi and EXPO Dubai 2020 was researched as an example of a one-time mega event.

Methods: Data of local Emiratis living in UAE were collected in-person. A self-administered questionnaire was developed that consisted of tourism perception, negative and positive impacts, and individual support. The questionnaire was adjusted to each event and N=360 were collected for EXPO 2020 and N=533 were received for F1 questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and t-test were used to administer the differences in events' perception.

Findings: Our results show that significant differences exist in locals' perspectives towards a major and mega event, especially in positive impacts and individual support.

Practical and social implications: The current study provides governments and event organizers with results about locals' support towards different types and sizes of events, which is critical when seeking for a community support in event organization.

Originality: This work contributes to the academia with proposing a model for comparing locals' perception in hosting a major and a mega event. Moreover, it confirms a need to specifically and independently approach a different level event.

Keywords: major event, mega event, locals' attitude, hosting community, Emiratis, United Arab Emirate, Formula One, EXPO

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