An integrated model for cultural events

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Abstract

Festivals and events, also referred to in the context of this article, as events tourism, are widely recognised as one of the fastest growing types of tourism attractions and there are more cities than ever before bidding to host events globally. It has been suggested that the magnitude of events now justifies their recognition, along with ambient attractions (climate, scenery, culture and wildlife) and permanent attractions (theme parks, historical sites, sports facilities and convention centres) as one of the three major categories of tourism attractions. Although events have started many years ago, what is new today is the scale of event tourism with many cities seeking to specialise in the creation and hosting of events due to the economic and marketing benefits they bring. The aim of this paper is to develop an integrated event tourism model that can assist regions/destinations in utilising cultural events as growth catalysts. Findings indicated that it is crucial for tourists/visitors, the business sector, the local community, government, sponsors and the event organisers to be integrated in the strategic planning and management process.

Keywords: tourism, tourism industry, event tourism, events, growth catalyst, tourism planning, festival, sustainable tourism, sustainable events, integrated tourism model.

1 Introduction

Festivals and special events serve as important attractors for destinations, provide unique experiences for visitors (Kim and Uysal [1]) and have the ability to offer significant benefits to any city or destination. At the same time are likely to entail considerable resource utilisation and enormous risk (Emery [2]) if not managed properly. According to Crompton and McKay [3] festivals are widely
recognised as one of the fastest growing types of tourism attractions and there are now more cities than ever before bidding to host events (Emery [2]; Light [4]).

Event tourism in South Africa has developed in the recent years and various events have been hosted in different cities. Cities such as Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, have established themselves as the event destinations of the country. South Africa has positioned itself upfront on the global stage and entrenched itself as the events capital of Africa (SAT [5]). It is important to ensure that events are developed in a sustainable manner in, but as events are currently brought to South Africa on an adhoc basis, there is no clear long-term strategy and organisational capacity is not being sustained (Anon [6]). Therefore it is necessary to develop an integrated tourism model for cultural events assisting in planning and decision-making of such events. The purpose of the paper is to develop an integrated tourism model for cultural events to assist in planning and decision-making of such events.

2 Problem statement

Events provide impressions of a host country to spectators from foreign cities, local areas and users of information media. Along with the event itself, a variety of social and cultural activities supporting the events offer powerful opportunities to promote the host country’s culture and traditions (Getz [7]).

Event tourism denotes travel to festivals, special events and gatherings staged outside the normal program of activities. Those events’ success as tourism generators relies mostly on their distinctiveness and timing. The event is the focal point around which tourism is encouraged by using existing facilities or adding accommodation, transportation, and other tourism-related infrastructure. Although they are transitory, events may be construed as additions to a destination’s/city’s inventory of attractions and, accordingly, they are instrumental in augmenting both the range of markets relevant to the destination/city and its critical mass of attractions (Fredline and Faulkner [8]). In view of the proliferation of events in various parts of the world and their implications for the tourism sector, event tourism has been subjected to rigorous empirical examination and analysis in recent years (Gnoth and Anwar [9]; Kim and Uysal [1]).

Sustaining events over the long-term is problematic. The adoption of the principles of sustainable development to tourism has been rapid and widespread, although implementation of the practice has been much more limited (Butler [10]) especially in the case of events. Sustainability involves the management of all resources in such a way that one can fulfill economic, social, and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological process, biological diversity and life support systems (Murphy [11]; Briassoulis [12]).

Various studies have focused on specific elements of event tourism. These include studies focusing on the relationship between the community and the event (Getz [13]; Turko and Kelsey [14]; Frisby and Getz [15]); studies focusing on the growth of the event tourism industry (Crompton and McKay [3];
Getz [7, 13], Thrane [17]; studies focusing on the economic impact of events (Crompton and McKay [3]; Kim et al. [20]; Thrane [17]); studies focusing on the reasons for people attending the events (Crompton and MacKay [3]; Formica and Murrmann [18]; Formica and Uysal [19]). The literature review did not reveal any study that has been done concerning the development of an integrated approach towards event tourism, by means of an integrated cultural event tourism model.

By integrating all the necessary elements, focusing on the key role players and their functions, one can secure more sustainable events attracting tourists to a specific area over a longer term. An integrated model can also serve as a measure or indicator to developers as to what is necessary to host events successfully, not only for the short-term but for the long-term as well. This will not only lead to growth in the event tourism industry but also growth in that particular city or destination. Therefore an integrated cultural tourism event model can provide guidelines as to the successful management of the key role players to ensure sustainable growth of the event.

3 Methodology

Three different methods were used for this analysis: namely a literature study, a qualitative and quantitative study. In the collection, classification and analysis of the literature, emphasis was put on event tourism and events as growth catalysts for tourism destinations.

The quantitative study (survey) included the Aardklop National Arts Festival, held in Potchefstroom in the Republic of South Africa, as a case study, using data of two surveys, one done in 2002 and one in 2003. This part of the study focused on the tourists, the local community and the local businesses as part of the integrated model. A convenience sampling method was used with every person in the study population having an equal chance of selection. In 2002 453 questionnaires were distributed of which 353 under tourists, 50 under the local community and 50 under the local businesses. In 2003 521 questionnaires were distributed of which 375 under tourists, 96 under the local community and 50 under the local businesses.

The qualitative study (interviews) was done in June 2004. Interviews were conducted with the event organisers, the sponsors and the local government. Through the interviews the integrated model was tested and adapted accordingly.

4 Creating an integrated model

According to Figure 1 the following elements are decisive for the development and presentation of sustainable events:

4.1 The key roleplayers

When organising events the following key role players form the core of the events: The event organisers need to integrate all the necessary elements of the event in the planning process and ensure coordination between every part and
partner of the event. It is important that planning for events is strategic and integrative. Tourists/visitors have certain expectations and one needs to adhere to these expectations. The tourist/visitor plays one of the most important roles in the event. If the visitor does not attend or they are not satisfied with the outcome of the event all positive impacts are lost (Black [23]; Scott [22]; Formica and Uysal [24]).

Sponsorship is central to the revenue stream of many new and continuing events. Sponsorships are a key element in the promotion and financial success of many events (Allen et al. [25]; Goeldner and Ritchie [26]; Watt [27]). Governments are, with increasing frequency, using special events/festivals as a platform for industrial and economic development, and therefore expenditure is justified in terms of the economic impacts that an event/festival will bring to the host region (Burgan and Mules [28]).

The local community can only be involved in as far as it wants to and is capable of contributing to a successful and sustainable event. It is, however, imperative to build community support for the event. Members of the community are both suppliers, through community participation and support and the consumers (Molloy [29]; Williams et al. [30]).

4.2 The environmental analysis

Before an event can take place it is important to analyse the internal and external environment in order to determine the status of the current situation and whether is will be viable to organise the event.

When analysing the external environment it is necessary to probe the following: political environment (Hall [33, 34], Allen et al. [25]; Shone [36]); the technological environment (Allen et al. [25]); the natural environment (Murphy [37]; Allen et al. [25]); competitors (Saayman [21]) and the economic environment (Mules [39]; Allen et al. [25]; Hall [33]; Dimmock and Tiyce [38]; Bull [41]).

The analysis of the internal environment includes the following aspects: marketing management (Hall [42]; Richards [43], Saayman [21], and Allen et al. [25]); financial management (Goldblatt [31]; Watt [27]; Betteridge [32]; Allen et al. [25]; Van Oudtshoorn [44]); human resource management (Goeldner and Ritchie [26]; Goldblatt [31]; Allen et al. [25]).

4.3 Planning factors

The planning factors determine the success of the event. If planned properly the event could be a huge success which can lead to a more sustainable event. The following aspects are important when planning events: timing (Goldblatt [31]; Richards [43]; Hall [34]; Watt [27]; Ryan [46]); site considerations (Watt [27]; Wanklin [45]; Goldblatt [31]; Black [23]; Yale [47]; Betteridge [32]; Getz et al. [48]; Page [49]; Garrod [50]); catering, food and beverage (Allen et al. [25]; Gasche [51]); location (Goldblatt [31]); accommodation (Page [49]; Betteridge [32]; Goeldner and Ritchie [26]; Allen et al. [25]; legal and risk management (Allen et al. [25]); authenticity (Xie and Wall [52]).
Figure 1: An integrated tourism model for cultural events.
4.4 Impacts of the event

Events have a range of impacts – both positive and negative – on the host communities and stakeholders (Bowdin et al. [35]). The high-profile nature of events/festivals generate the analysis of consequences in terms of cause–effect relationships such as increases in tourism, urban infrastructural improvements, or the more intangible benefits of civic pride, boosterism, and international image building (Persson et al. [53]). Events/festivals are increasingly promoted as important contributors to the economic, social and cultural well-being of communities (Getz [7]), but hosting events/festivals, especially those that attract large numbers of tourists, can have substantial impacts on a community (McDonnell et al. [54]). Events/festivals do not take place in a vacuum – they touch almost every aspect of living, be it social, cultural, economic, environmental or political (Allen et al. [25]).

The following are important impacts of events: economic impact (Mules [39]; Allen et al. [25]; Hall [33]; Getz [13]; Dimmock and Tiyce [38]; Laws [40]; Bull [41]; socio and cultural impact (Molly [29]; Shone [36]; Getz [7]; Hall [33]); natural impact (Murphy [37]; Allen et al. [25]; Dimmock and Tiyce [38]).

4.5 Outcomes of events

The outcomes (stated as benefits in the literature, but used as outcomes for the purpose of this paper due to the quantified nature of outcomes) arising from positive connections between the social, cultural, economic, environmental and political environments are a large part of the reason for the popularity and support of events/festivals. These outcomes are increasingly well documented and researched, and appropriate strategies developed to enhance event/festival outcomes and optimise their benefits.

The following outcomes were identified: cost-effective means of developing tourist attractions; attract visitors in low season; provide newness, freshness and change, which sustain local interest in a destination and enhance its appeal to visitors; enhance the quality of life of a destination; image builders for a community; reinforce social and cultural identity; opportunity for cultural exchange; urban renewal; extensive media coverage and publicity; economic outcomes; job creation; promotion of specific aims and objectives (Allen et al. [25]; Getz [7]; Gursoy et al. [55]; Saayman [56]; Besculides et al. [16]; Hughes [57]; Light [4]; Molloy [29]).

5 Conclusions and recommendations

The purpose of this paper was to develop an integrated tourism model for cultural events to assist in planning and decision-making of such events in order to be sustainable.

From this research the following conclusions can be drawn:
Effective planning is a prerequisite for the development of sustainable events; Synergy between the key role players are important; Well planned research
should be done through the environmental analysis before any other planning; All planning factors should be considered; The key role players need to consider the different impacts of events and it is important to quantify the outcomes of the event.

Based on the conclusions the following recommendations can be made: The integrated model needs to be implemented when planning events that are held regularly; The development and presentation of events is an integrated effort from the key role players which should then lead to sustainable events; Sustainable events attempt to grow gradually; Limit leakages from the local economy; Grow the number of visitors from outside the area; Use as much as possible local goods and produce; Take the natural environment into consent and remain unique.

References


