Residents' perceptions of municipality-organised events as catalysts for tourism development in rural areas

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Abstract

The objectives of the study in this article were to determine respondents' attitude toward municipality-organised events as well as to ascertain their perceptions regarding municipality-organised events as catalysts for tourism development in rural areas. Data was randomly solicited from 64 participants who resided in close proximity to the venue that hosted the municipality-organised event. A case study design was utilised within a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 23 and presented through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analysed thematically through content analysis. The study found that residents held positive views about the events, but also voiced concerns in relation to negative economic, social and environmental impacts; and lack of local involvement in the planning, organising and management of the event. This study concluded that depending on planning and organisation, municipality-organised events could be catalysts or disablers of tourism development in targeted rural areas. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that could enhance rural tourism through municipality-organised events to promote social and economic development.

Key words: Events, Impact, Residents, Rural areas, Tourism development

Introduction

Countries have in recent times touted tourism to be a catalyst in increasing residents' incomes, employment and living standards against the dependency on limited range of primary products for international trade (Chuang, 2010; Fleisher & Felsenstein, 2002). According to Jurowski and Gursoy (2004), the development of tourism has been encouraged by many communities with an objective to improve the quality of life for residents. The focus of such development activities often lie in the pursuit of economic benefits associated with the industry such as tax revenue, employment and additional sources of income. Rivera, Croes and Lee (2015) further assert that the development of tourism often affects the allocation of resources and their use, as it requires investment and capital formation to build the required resources. This is undertaken with the ultimate purpose of ensuring the well-being of residents of a destination, thereby ensuring positive effects and mitigating against negative effects.

Tourism Development

Citing Murphy (1985), Kieti and Magio (2013) cite indicate that tourism can only be afforded merit with regard to its pseudonym of the 'hospitality industry' once the industry assumes responsibility to look beyond its own doors and employees and place consideration on the

impact it has on the host community. The findings of Stylidis, Biran, Sit and Szivas (2014) indicate that the effects of tourism go beyond the economic realities of communities in also enhancing the quality of life from a social perspective.

Local governments, policy-makers and businesses need to understand the crucial antecedents of support by local residents towards tourism, because the success and sustainability of any development depends on active support of the local population, with active opposition being able to hinder or stop development (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2014). Residents' support for tourism development has in recent times increased due to the growing importance placed on studying impacts from the destination's perspective, thereby affording policy-makers an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for the community (Hritz & Ross, 2010; Chen, 2001). Furthermore, the centrality of public interests in tourism development should be placed above the self-interests of politicians and elite members of the society by a tourism leadership with an objective of a fair and transparent governance of tourism aimed at improving the lives of the residents and trust in institutions of authority (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Managing residents' perceptions towards tourism plays an important role in the development and planning of tourism and provides relevance to the measurement of tourism impact. Furthermore, this enable destination managers and the rest of the tourism destination stakeholders (local government, tourist companies, associations/ institutions or intermediaries) to alleviate or harness the potential of the negative or positive effects on residents' predisposition, especially with regard to shared facilities and space, fragile environments and contact between locals and tourists or tourism outcomes (Garau-Vadell, Diaz-Armas & Gutierrez-Tano, 2014). This makes the participation and support of local residents vital for the sustainability of tourism at any destination (Gursoy, Chi & Dyer, 2010). Furthermore, an understanding of the perceptions of local residents can assist the development and facilitation of policies that can minimise costs and maximise benefits, leading to community development and greater support for tourism (Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo & Alders, 2013).

Effects of events

Research into events has thus far focussed on the economic and tourism impacts of mega-events. This has left an unclear gap on how or whether small- to medium- sized events actually affect the overall well-being of host communities from a non-monetary perspective such as social life, urban regeneration or rural development, environmental stewardship or infrastructure (Taks, Chaplin & Green, 2015). Events are also likely to provide benefits for individual residents such as recreational opportunities and inspire interest in the event. These social benefits are often seen to be just as important or even more important than economic benefits (Mao & Huang, 2015; Huang & Zhang, 2012). The staging of events directly impacts the quality of life of people living in the host community (Taks, Chaplin & Green, 2015). This study was aimed at investigating the effects of municipality-organised events on residents of host communities

The growth of events as a mechanism to increase tourism and tourist arrivals in the developing world has been spurred on by positive economic benefits such as increased tax revenues, increased trade (amplifying opportunities for local businesses to develop) and employment opportunities (Chen & Tian, 2015; Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2012). This has encouraged many governments (national and local) to view tourism and events as a vehicle for development in the country because of their ability to generate additional benefits for host communities, such as the construction of infrastructure and facilities that are usually available to local citizens long after the hosting of the event and also assist in their mandate of service delivery (Ziakas & Costa, 2011). Moreover, the hosting of events by an area also enhances the area's image, with a potential to attract potential investors (Rose & Spiegel, 2011), while affording the host community other non-economic benefits such as improved sense of pride and cohesion within the community and an advanced quality of life (Gursoy &

Kendall, 2006). This is further evident in attempts by destinations to host events with the intention to redefine the area's prominence and status on a national and international scale; while presenting themselves as hospitable, joyful and modern nations as was done by Germany and South Africa hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2006 and 2010, respectively (Florek & Insch, 2011; Cornelissen, 2008; Swart & Bob, 2008).

Despite the aforementioned benefits, events have the potential to generate negative social impacts on the community (Mao & Huang, 2015; Kim & Petrick, 2005), which requires caution to be exercised as benefits associated with tourism events often lead to gross mismanagement and misappropriation of public funds (Chen & Tian, 2015). This is further compounded by criticism and scrutiny resulting from perception of inequality in the distribution of benefits (including the limited access and opportunities afforded to local business) and social costs to host communities often associated with events and tourism development as development options (Chuang, 2010; Rogerson, 2009; Simpson, 2008). Moreover, societal problems such as traffic congestion, difficulty in law enforcement and increased crime rates can arise, thereby decreasing tourism and events' appeal to the host community (Nedvetskaya, 2015). These events may even go so far as to engender conflict between local residents and tourists due to their differences in cultural, social and economic status. This is frequently attributed to cultural commercialisation and challenges mounted against traditional family values associated with contact between hosts and tourists (Yang, Ryan & Zhang, 2013). In addition to the socio-economic conflict mentioned above, hosting events often tend to increase inequalities in host communities events' failure to deliver on promises often made by boosters (Pillay & Bass, 2008). Furthermore, events can also pose a threat on the physical and natural environment with consequences such as destruction of natural resources, pollution and the deterioration of cultural and historical resources (Mao & Huang, 2015; Gursoy, Chi, Ai & Chen, 2011). Moreover, Bob and Swart (2009) and Jackson (2008) cast a shadow on events and tourism development's requirements of infrastructure, leading to inconsiderate use of public funds, further placing an added burden on the public purse.

Hosting tourism events can have both economic and socio-psychological impacts on the host community. Yet a great deal of attention is placed on the economic side, leaving the intangible social impacts unattended or with very little attention (Kim, Jun, Walker & Drane, 2015). Unlike economic impacts, quantifying social impacts of or performing social impact assessments can be difficult and are often conducted in an ad hoc manner, which therefore yields inconsistent results (Kim & Walker, 2012; Kim, Gursoy & Lee, 2006). These events are temporal and can trigger impacts which can lead to positive or negative outcomes, and if properly managed, these outcomes can lead to legacies that can have far reaching benefits for people living in the host community (Taks, Chaplin & Green, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The development, successful operation, and sustainability of tourism is largely dependent on the support of the indigenous population. Favourable community support for tourism is a goal that can only be achieved through a sound understanding of how residents formulate their attitudes and perceptions of tourism (Jurowski, Uysal & William, 1997). The Social Exchange Theory, credited to Homans (1958) who aimed to analyse human behaviour (Shiau & Lou, 2012) underpins this study. The theory advances that reciprocal benefits such as personal affection, trust, gratitude, and economic returns are often expected by individuals when they act according to social norms (Shiau & Lou, 2012). This brings to the fore the realisation that factors that determine the community's acceptability of changes brought by tourism development to an area often rely on the perception of benefits residents can accrue in exchange for the cost they observe. This is based on the theoretical construct of the social exchange theory that examines the relationship between and among the perceptions of the benefits, costs, impacts and support for tourism (Jurowski & Gursoy,

2004; Jurowski, Uysal & William, 1997). The theory postulates the participation of the local residents in the exchange if they believe the benefits from doing so will outweigh the costs, further inclining them to support future developments in their community (Lorde, Greenidge & Devonish, 2011; Allen, Hafer, Long & Perdue, 1993). Hritz and Ross (2010) and Andriotis and Vaughan (2003) assume the exchange to involve resources valued by hosts and tourists, while the hosts (residents and business community) are more than likely to be aware of the implications of tourism and will either support or not support tourism development based on their perception of the benefits and costs.

Sustainable development in rural areas has become a topic of interest in the academic world. Many rural areas continue to lose critical human resources to more urban and affluent areas due to the continued decline of rural industries and lack of opportunity. This has led to tourism and events being earmarked by governments and development agencies to assist in the development of rural areas. This phenomenon has not been without limitations as great focus and emphasis has been placed on economic impacts of mega-events, leaving small- and- medium- sized events on the periphery of the development agenda and with little or no support from governments, development agencies and local communities. In the context of small-sized events, this study, therefore, solicited views of one host community's residents regarding the influence of the municipality-organised events on the development prospects of the area.

The objectives of the study were to determine respondents' attitudes towards municipality-organised events as well as to ascertain their perceptions regarding municipality-organised events as catalysts for tourism development.

Research Methodology

Research design: A case study design which utilised a mixed-method approach was adopted. This method is best used for the purpose of combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a way that is best for a specific research project (Matthews and Ross, 2010) with one method being predominant over the other (Jennings, 2002).

Sampling: Data was solicited from 64 participants who resided in close proximity to the venue that hosted the municipality-organised event. A random sampling technique was used to target the respondents who were approached by two trained fieldworkers at their homes.

Research instrument: The formulation of the survey instrument relied on Fredline and Faulkner's (2000) questionnaire with permission being granted for the use of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also previously used in the South African context by Arrey (2006), Ntloko and Swart (2008), Bob and Swart (2009), Chain (2010) and Setokoe (2015). Accordingly, some of the questions were changed to suit the local context. Closed questions facilitated the quantification of the information obtained, whereas open-ended questions provided qualitative data.
Reliability and validity: The findings of the study were submitted to a colleague with expertise in the field of research and tourism for peer debriefing and recommendations thereof were instituted to the study.

Data analysis: Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 23, while content analysis was utilised to analyse qualitative data.

Ethical considerations: Permission was obtained from the municipality to conduct the study, while verbal consent was obtained from participants before the commencement of data collection.

Results and Discussion

Results were presented in three parts namely demographic profile of respondents, respondents' attitude toward the event and respondents' perceptions of the influence of the municipality-organised event.

Demographic profile of respondents
Respondents included 47% males and 53% females, indicating a moderate balance of gender. The majority of respondents were 21 to 30 years (37.5%) and 31 to 40 years (42.2%). Respondents were mostly black Africans (82.8%) and whites (15.6%). Most respondents (64.1%) did not disclose their incomes, with 29.1% saying they did not have fixed incomes while 7.8% earned an average monthly income of R7500. Respondents had completed secondary education (29.7%), were holders of undergraduate degrees (26.6%) and postgraduate qualifications (42.2%). Most respondents were working class consisting of 15.6% employed as general labourers and administrators, 20.3% as professionals- doctors, lawyers and educators, 7.8 % as self-employed artisans/ technicians, 14.1% were students, 9.4% were unemployed while 3.1% were retired.

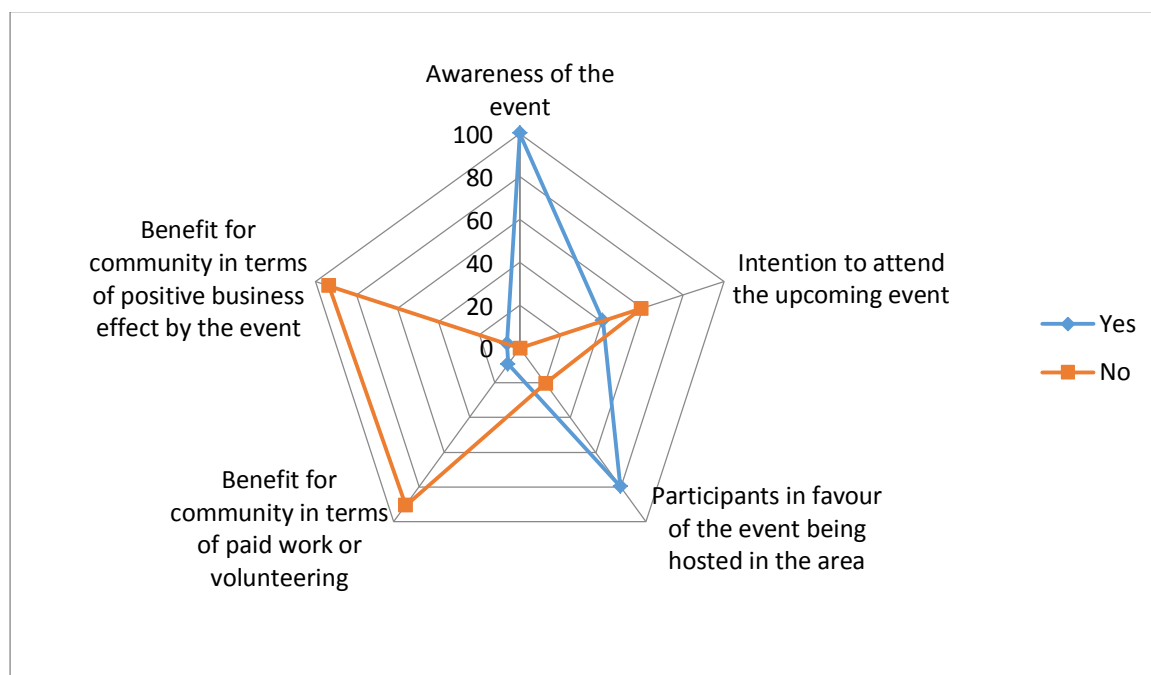**Respondents' attitude toward the event**

Figure 1: Respondents' attitude toward the municipality-organised event

Figure 1 depicts that all respondents were aware of the event happening in the area but 40.6% of them intended to attend while 59.4% had no intentions of attending the event. Reasons for non-attendance were that 57.9% (n=38) could not afford to purchase a ticket, 39.5% of the respondents had no interest in the event, while 1.6% had other reasons such as hectic work schedules. Qualitative findings revealed some participants alluded to the cost of the tickets being a deterrent of locals from attending local events, *'Ticket prices need to be lowered in order to generate more revenue and ensure full attendance'* (Participant 20). Whereas 79.7% favoured the event being hosted in the area, 90.6% indicated no personal benefits and 93.7% indicated no benefits in terms of businesses. Qualitative results also had some participants suggesting that, *'Provisions should be made for local entrepreneurs to sell their goods and services'* (Participant 12). Participants further were opposed to views that the event be hosted in its current location, such as: *'The event should be located in a place where everyone can access the venue by public transport'* (Participant 61). *'The event*

*should be hosted at the local University' (Participant 42), and 'The event must be moved in
terms of location, like be hosted at Msobomvu grounds in the local township'* (Participant
43). These results confirm the findings of Lorde et.al (2011) indicating that residents'
perceptions of positive impacts from the events are often significantly greater than their
perceived negative impacts. Furthermore, 89.1% said the event was not associated with
problems. The findings, however, fall short of recommendations of Taks, Chaplin and Green
(2015) indicating the importance of the event's ability to engage local businesses for the
purpose critical contribution to the local economy, the community and the satisfaction of
event visitors.

It emerged in the qualitative section that participants revealed the need to extend the event
with the aim of benefits to community at large. *'Try to extend the event to a week as
opposed to one day. In that way there can be an accumulation of more benefits for the
community'* (Participant 17)*.* The results further give credence to Rogerson's (2009)
enunciation of little attention afforded to local businesses and access to opportunities
associated with the events. The results corroborate the findings of previous research (Lorde
et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2006) regarding the realisation of benefits generated by hosting events
to be less than what had been anticipated, with economic benefits being particularly
disappointing.

Respondents' perceptions of the influence of the municipality-organised event

Table 1 indicated that the majority of the respondents viewed the event as social
entertainment value. 79.7% agreed that the event provided an opportunity to attend an
interesting event and 71.9% agree that the event provided an opportunity to have fun with
family and friends. 89% and 87.5% of the respondents agreed that the events increase
entertainment for locals and provided an opportunity to meet new people, respectively. 13%
of the respondents, however, disagreed that the event was associated with any aspect of
entertainment while 10.9% were undecided. Thus, respondents had a positive impression
about the event with respect to its entertainment value. The findings concur with the
assertions by Mao and Huang (2015) that events often correlate with personal leisure
opportunities and new experiences and also affirm the contentions of Huang and Zhang
(2012) about the events' likeliness to provide recreational opportunities and improvement of
recreational facilities.

Table 1: Respondents' perceptions of the impact of municipality-organised event

Statement	Responses									
	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The event provides an opportunity to attend an interesting event	3	4.7	4	6.3	6	9.4	28	43.8	23	35.9
The event provides an opportunity to have fun with family and friends	4	6.3	4	6.3	10	15.6	17	26.6	29	45.3
The event provides an opportunity to meet new people	1	1.6	1	1.6	5	7.8	18	28.1	39	60.9
The event increases entertainment opportunities for the local community	1	1.6	1	1.6	6	9.4	24	37.5	32	50
The event is a complete waste of money	16	25	9	14.1	19	29.7	13	20.3	7	10.9
Too much is spent on the event that could have been spent on other activities	8	12.5	4	6.3	14	21.9	16	25	22	34.4
The event assists in increasing public spending on tourism and events	3	4.7	2	3.1	13	20.3	16	25	30	46.9
The event is good for the economy, since it stimulated job opportunities	9	14	7	10.9	10	15.6	14	21.9	24	37.5
The event is good for local businesses (increased turnover)	3	4.7	4	6.3	8	12.5	17	26.6	32	50
The event disrupts the lives of local residents, and caused inconvenience	13	20.3	11	17.2	14	21.9	14	21.9	12	18.8
The event causes traffic congestion and parking difficulties	5	7.8	2	3.1	6	9.4	19	29.7	32	50
The event causes excessive noise	6	9.4	2	3.1	11	17.2	9	14.1	36	56.3
The event increases the crime rates	8	12.5	5	7.8	13	20.3	15	23.4	23	35.9
The event is associated with in drinking and drug abuse	11	17.2	2	3.1	8	12.5	17	26.6	26	40.6
The event has a negation on the environment, as a result of excessive littering	5	7.8	1	1.6	3	4.7	17	26.6	38	59.4
The event has a negative impact on the environment, as a result of pollution	5	7.8	3	4.7	7	10.9	15	23.4	34	53.1
The event negatively impacts the environment, as a result of damage to the natural areas	10	15.6	6	9.4	15	23.4	11	17.2	22	34.4
The event showcases the area in a positive light	4	6.3	5	7.8	16	25	16	25	23	35.9
The event attracts tourists to the area	3	4.7	4	6.3	13	20.3	19	29.7	25	39.1
The event attracts future business to the area	6	9.4	5	7.8	15	23.4	14	21.9	24	37.5
The event increases media coverage of the area	5	7.8	6	9.4	10	15.6	20	31.3	23	35.9
The community directly benefits from the event	7	10.9	8	12.5	18	28.1	13	20.3	18	28.1
Only some members of the community benefits from the event	4	6.3	12	18.8	15	23.4	18	28.1	15	23.4
The event increases existing levels of social inequalities	8	12.5	6	9.4	23	35.9	16	25	11	17.2
The event increases the amount of interactions between locals and tourists	2	3.1	4	6.3	15	23.4	16	25	27	42.2

The results also indicate that 39.1% of the respondents disagreed that public money was wasted in planning for the event, while 59.4% agreed that that too much money was spent on the event that could have been spent on other activities. 71.9% viewed the event as increasing public spending for tourism. In contrast, 31.2% viewed the planning and organisation of the event as a waste of public money. Resident perceptions on public spending further yielded neutral responses with 29.7% being neutral about the waste in public money, 21.9% being neutral about whether the money spent could have been utilised on other activities and 20.3% being neutral about the event assisting in increasing public spending for tourism. Sentiments echoed in qualitative findings revealed participants indicating that the event was a waste of public funds that could have been spent on other much needed development in the area, as Participant 50 notes:

I find it unnecessary because there is little benefit for the local community from the hosting the event. The money spent on the event could help build schools and even support local charity organisations such as Cingela Home for the Elderly and Siyakhana Childrens' Home.

In views of such findings, Jackson (2008) provides mixed feelings regarding public spending on tourism and events. These are stated in terms of the considerable contribution of events towards tourism in relation to provision of recreational activities made available to residents; the consensus regarding residents' positive feeling around the deployment of state money to improve public tourist facilities; and the inconsiderate use of public funds that could have been utilised constructively elsewhere. Bob and Swart's (2009) indication of the burden placed on the public purse by infrastructure requirements of hosting events further affirms the finding. Furthermore, the results support Ziakas and Costa (2011) confirmation of tourism and events' ability to generate benefits such as the construction of infrastructure and facilities that are usually available to local citizens long after the hosting of the event and also assist in their mandate of service delivery.

In economic terms, the majority of the respondents (59.4%) indicated the event creates job opportunities, while a further 76.5% were also positive about the event's ability to increase turnover for local businesses. On the other hand, 25% of respondents disagreed that the hosting of the event and the development of tourism created employment opportunities and 11% were also sceptical about the event's ability to increase local business turnover. Results indicate a positive outlook in relation to economic benefits of events and tourism. This is ascertained in the work of Deery et al. (2012) that indicate the increased numbers of visitors often bring with the occurrence of increased trade, thereby offering an opportunity for local business to develop, ultimately stimulating the local economy and increasing employment prospects for locals. Moreover, caution is also advised in relation to the short-term nature of economic benefits of hosting events, such as employment significantly impacting the economy before and during the event and not after the event (Tien, Lo & Lin, 2011).

The results in Table 1 indicate that 40.7% of respondents agree that the event was disruptive to the life of the local residents, while 37.5% had an opposing view. The results also indicated respondents' concerns over traffic congestion and parking difficulties (79.7%), excessive noise levels (70.4%), the event's association with inappropriate behaviour (67.2%) and crime (59.3%). Deery et al. (2012) concur with the results stating that the way of life of locals is often impinged upon by congestion and also increased noise levels and crime rate (often associated with inappropriate behaviour).

Not all residents, however, held a view of the event disrupting the lives of the residents. 37.5% disagreed that the event caused inconvenience in the lives of residents, while residents also disagreed with the event's association with increased crime and inappropriate behaviour (20.3%), increased noise levels (12.5%), and traffic congestion and parking difficulty (10.9%). The results further indicate that some residents had no opinion as far as the event's effects of the in terms of disruption (21.9%), traffic congestion and parking difficulties (9.4%), increased noise levels (17.2%), increased crime rate (20.3%) and

association with inappropriate behaviour (12.5%). The above results support the assertions of Twynam and Johnston (2004) as cited in Bob and Swart (2009) that the expressed support for events and associated developments by the community does not disavow concerns of the disruptiveness of hosting events in terms of traffic congestion, crime and overcrowding. Furthermore, this support is often viewed in relation to locals rarely identifying these disruptions to be key, as they are habitually seen to be part of the atmosphere (except for crime) created by the event (Ohmann, Jones & Wilke, 2006; McKenna & Bob, 2010 and Chain, 2009). This is further affirmed by Deery et al. (2012) stating that residents often find that increases in the number of people as a result of tourism and events provide social interaction opportunities and may add to the atmosphere.

In relation to environmental impacts, the results indicate that 86% of respondents agreed that the event had a considerable impact on the environment with regard to littering in the area, whereas 76.5% and 51.6% agreed that the event impacts negatively on the environment with regard to pollution of, and damage to, natural areas, respectively. The results support the contentions made by Mao and Huang (2015) and Gursoy, Chi, Ai and Chen (2011) regarding a threat posed on the physical and natural environment resulting from the destruction of natural resources and pollution due to new developments and an increase in the number of people coming to the host area. Furthermore, a considerable number of respondents cumulatively disagreed (25%) that event had a negative impact on the natural resources, while 23.4% remained neutral. These contentions may be better elaborated on using the findings of Prayag, Hosany, Nunkoo and Alders (2013) stating the host community's inability to fully quantify the environmental impact of the event because residents are not fully exposed to the consequences until after the event has passed.

In terms of the event serving as a regional showcase, results indicated that 60.9% of respondents agreed that the event showcased the area in a positive light, with 68.8% of residents agreeing that the event attracted tourists to the area. The results also showed 59.4% of respondents agreeing that the event attracted future business to area, with 67.2% of the respondents agreeing that media coverage of the area increased due to hosting of the event. Qualitative findings, however, enunciated participants' concern about infrastructural challenges in terms of access to the event venue. Participant 7 said, *'They improve accessibility, such as roads,'* and *'There should be upgrading of infrastructure such as roads and road signs'* (Participant 49). The findings are supported by Cornelissen's (2008) argument that hosting events is integral to redefining an area's status on a national and international scale. This was also affirmed in the findings of Florek and Insch (2011) that indicate Germany's use of an event (2006 FIFA World Cup) to present itself as a hospitable, joyful, and modern nation; and Swart and Bob's (2008) findings citing Africa's intention to establish higher international prominence by hosting the same event in 2010. Moreover, the hosting of events by an area also enhances the area's image, with a potential to attract potential investors (Rose & Spiegel, 2011).

Respondents' views regarding community benefits from the event indicated that while 48.4% agreed that the event benefitted the community in one way or another, 23.4% disagreed. 51.5% indicated that the event only benefitted a few members of the community, with 25.1% disagreeing. The results also showed a favour (67.2%) regarding the respondents' view of the event's ability to increase interaction between the host community and the tourists, while 42.2% agreed to the event perpetuating existing social inequalities. 21.9%, however, disagreed the event to further accentuate existing social inequalities with the community. 28.1% were neutral about the event benefiting the community and 23.4% were neutral about the event increasing interaction between the host community and tourists. The findings support Pillay and Bass' (2008) assertion that the hosting of events often tend to increase present inequalities in host communities due to the shortcomings of events to manifest into widespread development benefits frequently touted by boosters. This is further compounded by criticism and scrutiny resulting from perception of inequality in the distribution of benefits

and social costs to host communities often associated with events and tourism as a development options (Chuang, 2010; Simpson, 2008).

In the qualitative responses, a common thread through the various narratives of the participants was their implicit and explicit reference to the event's shortcomings with regard to the involvement in the planning, organising and management of the event; participation of local entrepreneurs; and the partaking of local artists in the event. *'Local people should be involved in the planning, organising and management of the event in order to ensure transparency in the utilisation of public funds'* (Participant 2)*. 'It is important to involve the community'* (Participant 13)*. 'The local community must be involved in order to ensure maximum benefit from the event'* (Participant 31)*. 'Locals must be involved in the festival'* (Participant 33, Participant 46, Participant 53)*. 'Locals should be involved and it should be a bottom-up approach' (Participant 36). 'Locals must have a say in the planning of the event and their views must be implemented'* (Participant 51)*.

The involvement of the community, students and artists on developing learning skills and as marketing platforms were also urged through such sentiments as, *'Local residents and tourism students from a local University should be involved in the organising of the event'* (Participant 22)*. 'Tourism students from the local University must be involved in the development of the event in order for them to gain experience'* (Participant 54)*. 'The event must focus on the promotion and development of local artists'* (Participant 11)*, 'The event must promote local artists'* (Participant 15)*, and 'Local artists must be invited to perform so that they can be known'* (Participant 35)*.* These findings concur with results of the work of Lorde et al (2011) indicating the need to involve locals in order to build support and also take cognisance of the fact that such events are likely to be financed with public rather than private funds, making this a requirement for organisers to solicit local participation.

Conclusion

The study concludes the existence of an overall positive perception of events and tourism in terms of entertainment value, economic benefits and regional showcase. The study further concludes mixed views by residents with regard to the use of public funds (often viewed that the funds could have been use constructively, elsewhere), disruption of local lives and environmental impacts; with less than favourable outlooks on direct benefits to individuals and local entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations for practice and further research.

- The involvement of locals and local businesses in the planning, organisation and management of the event should be afforded serious consideration. This can be achieved by the municipality affording local businesses at least 60% trading space at the venue of the event.
- Furthermore, local residents should be afforded an opportunity to enjoy festivities in the form of a free pre-event staging at a local facility to enable those who cannot afford to purchase a ticket to share in the revelries organised utilising the public purse.
- The study also recommends that the management of negative impacts should be tasked to the local people in terms of garbage collection, cleaning of the areas surrounding the venue and restoration of damages suffered by the environment as a result of the hosting of the event. This will serve a double purpose of mitigating the negative environmental impacts such as littering, pollution and damage to the

environment, while increasing benefits to local people in terms of providing employment and involvement in the management of the event.

- Recommending for further research, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of the findings as the study utilised a small sample (n=64) that reside in the immediate proximity of the event venue due to the limited budget (monetary, time and other resources) available to the researchers. This provides an opportunity for future studies that can incorporate the greater municipal area, which can allow for more successful outcomes in ensuring the maximisation of benefits and minimisation of costs for the host community by endeavouring for a greater level of engagement with local residents (Lorde et al., 2011).

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