

## A Comparative Analysis of Financial and Employment Indicators at Volunteer Supported Events in the Western Cape Province, South Africa

Simeon E.H. Davies

*Sport Management Department, Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa, Email, [daviess@cput.ac.za](mailto:daviess@cput.ac.za)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1156-6934>*

*\*Corresponding Author*

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### Abstract

This study objective was to assess and compare financial and employment indicators of volunteer supported sport and festival events in the Western Cape. The study used the Western Cape Event Survey Template to conduct an empirical analysis of selected financial and employment outcomes for 14 sport and 20 festival events. Sport and festival events on average used similar numbers of volunteers. However, volunteer supported sport events created twice the number of temporary jobs and around four times more permanent jobs; sport events also attracted extra private sponsorship, achieved greater income flows and generated more profit when compared to festival events. The study demonstrates the superior business acumen of sport event managers to accrue positive financial and employment outcomes. These findings suggest that sport event coordinators were able to manage volunteers more effectively, whilst volunteers themselves benefited by gaining experience and improved access to work opportunities. The study provides a better understanding of the key financial indicators that directly impact on the success and sustainability of an event and the potential for job creation.

**Keywords:** Events; sport, festivals; jobs; sponsorship; profits; sustainability

### Introduction

Volunteers are one of the most valuable and important human resources to the event and festival sector, because they provide both organizational and economic efficiency, and furthermore bring innovation into an organization by contributing new and fresh ideas. Volunteers minimize the costs involved with the staging of events through their free labour (Shin & Kleiner, 2003); and according to Cuskelly (2004) the operational and financial success of many major events has become highly dependent on their contribution.

The first notable research article that focussed on the theme of volunteer supported events and management was a study by Getz and Frisby in 1988, in which the authors undertook a systems theory approach to ascertain managerial effectiveness in relation to events. The same authors acknowledged the limitations of their work at this time, and indicated that the conclusions they presented were intended as a guide for the development of more refined instruments in larger and more detailed case studies. A recent systematic review of research in the field of volunteer management in events by Kim and Cuskelly (2017) provided an analysis of emergent themes highlighting that volunteer management in events has become the focus of rapidly increasing research that is likely to be related to the growth of the event industry along with increased demand for volunteer labour. The reason for this assertion is linked to the observation that improved volunteer management practices are required, because they are more likely to contribute to the success of an event. Volunteer management within events has increasingly developed as a sub specialization of volunteer management because there are significant differences between the management of volunteers in event settings compared to mainstream volunteer management. Whilst this distinction is important in terms of the role of

the volunteer and the duration of their involvement, Elstadt (2003) makes the point that the vast majority of events are largely dependent on volunteer labour, and therefore many event managers will need to spend considerable resources and time on recruiting volunteers compared to other managers. It is this emphasis on the management of volunteer events and the associated financial and related implications, notably employment opportunities, that provides impetus for the present paper.

An issue that has been highlighted by Power and Nedvetskaya (2022) is the apparent lack of effective planning of volunteer programs invariably impacts on the success or otherwise of the event. The same authors note that the potential negative outcomes for an event can be attributable to limited knowledge about volunteers' characteristics and motivations, along with an inadequate understanding of their lived experiences, which in turn have implications for the processes of volunteering, and the actual volunteer management practices. Additional issues may include: a lack of the right mechanisms (e.g., political will, financial, and managerial resources) in place before and throughout the event lifespan; and the fact that the absence of these factors can also intensify the disconnect between the effective management of volunteers and the overall success and sustainability of an event. In terms of the contemporary challenges faced by event organisers, Power and Nedvetskaya (2022) contend that effective volunteer management has a crucial role to play in the successful re-emergence of the sport events industry from the COVID-19 pandemic. Another consideration is that the effective management of volunteers at events can have a positive effect on their experiences, performance, and likelihood of continued engagement (Allen & Bartle, 2013; Nedvetskaya & Girginov, 2017). Thus, the effective engagement by event coordinators and improved management of volunteers can enhance the quality of sport events, and by inference festival events through the maintenance of a consistent workforce, increased efficiency, and enhanced spectator/participant experience (Taylor et al., 2008; Hallmann et al., 2018). These associated benefits directly influence the planning of the event, the organisation structures, as well as the overall management of volunteers at events. It is contended that these factors have direct implications for financial viability, along with the potential for mid to longer-term sustainability of the event and the opportunity for job creation.

It is also germane at this juncture to mention the important role that volunteering has for events in communities and businesses located in developing countries; this is especially so given the focus of this study in the Western Cape, South Africa. Furthermore, it is relevant to highlight the magnitude of volunteering in the region. The World Values Survey (WVS, 2020), which included 67 countries, presented volunteering participation rates around the globe. The survey indicated that while China has the highest volunteer participation rate this must be balanced against the fact that ironically volunteerism is mandatory in that country. The United States rated second and, interestingly, South Africa third. In terms of the reported importance of volunteerism within the South African context, Niyimbaniraa (2015) notes that volunteer work is of significance in a time when social safety nets are weak and there are ever increasing demands on welfare organizations. Volunteers according to Niyimbanira can make a difference in affected communities and the entire society in general, which means that if they are understood better, it may be possible to harness their power for the greater good. Thus not only do volunteers provide financial and efficiency benefits for event managers, but they also vindicate the views aired by Niyimbaira, which translate into realization of many sustainable development goals (SDG's) including the creation of employment opportunities.



## Literature review

### *Financial and employment considerations for event organisers*

The importance of volunteers in sporting events has been extensively acknowledged (Giannoulakis et al., 2008). They are a core component of sport service delivery (Daly, 1991) and an important element of sport event management, because they provide sport administrators with the ability to offer, sustain, or even expand the quantity, quality, and diversity of sport organizations' services (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). The value of volunteers is not simply limited to sport events, as Barron and Rihova (2011) point out many types of festivals all over the world, including arts, cultural and musical events are highly dependent on volunteers. An obvious and major positive effect of volunteer involvement is the reduction in financial costs for the organization. Volunteers at local festivals have therefore been called "the hidden workforce" (Kemp, 2002: 112), and it is a serious consideration for event organisers to recruit, train and maintain the volunteers.

Chinman and Wandersman (1999) emphasize the importance of directly assessing the benefits and costs of volunteer participation, as this information can be used to promote organizational viability across several types of groups. However, research on financial related performance parameters has been less prolific with early journal articles focusing largely on event impact studies (Della Bitta et al., 1978; Davidson & Schaffer, 1980). Researchers have therefore sought to develop a more consistent framework for assessing measurable impacts of events (Dwyer et al., 2005; Sherwood, 2007), although, it has been acknowledged that the majority of these studies have been limited to a focus on single events (Peeters et al., 2014; Saayman & Saayman, 2012). It has been suggested by Getz and Page (2016) that there is a need for a more overarching and integrated assessment tool that has broader appeal, because there is an increasing need by stakeholders and event organizers to have access to more standardized forecasts and post-event impact assessments that would facilitate a move towards adopting a set of key performance indicators. It is argued that access to accurate information around key performance indicators would capacitate event organizers with a cogent appreciation of financial factors that ensure better baseline planning. Furthermore, event managers may structure the involvement of volunteers with training that may result directly in employment within the event organization, thus promoting the sustainability of the event and/or by enhancing the curriculum vitae (CV) and experience of the volunteer, thus capacitating them for future occupational opportunities and also providing potential support for community based projects.

According to Carlsen and Andersson (2011), it has become abundantly clear that event organizers and relevant stakeholders require the application of sound management principles if they are to remain financially viable, while at the same time retain community support and by virtue of these actions continue to occupy a viable space in the tourism and leisure landscape. In their paper on festival innovation and failure, Carlson et al. (2010) place a significant onus on the role of festival managers, who need to be cognizant of their own performance with respect to financing, marketing and programming. These same authors suggest that the extent to which festival (event) managers respond to these challenges and opportunities will determine their ability to innovate and avoid failure. Andersson and Getz (2008) note that the degree to which festivals can function as sustainable attractions, while fulfilling their social and cultural roles at the community level, is an issue of considerable importance. In this context, sustainability, notably in a pragmatic financial sense, will often depend upon political and governmental support, along with the backing of key community stakeholders. It is argued in this paper that such socio-political support is unlikely to be forthcoming unless the event operates within a clear framework of financial benchmarks, which also include actual employment opportunities for the community.

One of the challenges raised by Alfes et al. (2017), alluded to how corporate entities and their human resource (HR) practices have the potential to positively influence the volunteer experience. While this assertion appears to be a logical assumption, namely the effective application of HR practices with a volunteer cohort, in reality the ability of event managers and/or human resource practitioners to facilitate this appears to be more problematic. Alfes et al. (2017) noted that these challenges appear to stem from the obvious differences between volunteers and paid staff, which make it unlikely that HR practices designed and implemented in a paid context can be readily transferred to volunteers. Additional issues in terms of resource allocation for training were raised by Leigh et al. (2020) who noted that financial constraints were a universal and central determinant of resourcing training for event volunteers. This is mentioned because the costs of training volunteers along within a better-structured appointment process will, if effectively implemented, improve the chances of staging successful and sustainable events. However, it remains to be clarified how event managers determine the return on investment (RoI) in terms of the costs related to recruiting and training volunteers and their overall impact on the bottom line, as well as other efficiencies that improve the likelihood of a successful event, its sustainability and its relevance to the local community.

In response to an identified area of concern by Peeters et al., (2014) and Saayman and Saayman (2012), namely the preoccupation of event management research with single events, the present study has sought to provide an overview and comparative analysis of financial factors and related employment outcomes at 14 sport events and 20 festival events. It is suggested that the data accrued from the survey results, which have been separated into sport and festival volunteer supported events, will allow for comparative analysis and the identification of financial and employment trends that inform event managers about the nature of such events. A further factor to consider as identified by Niyimbanira (2014) was a preoccupation by economists to largely attribute the production of economic services either to the private, profit-oriented sector, or to the public sector, generally ignoring the potential of volunteerism. The same author notes that this oversight has led to a predominance of research about volunteering being conducted largely in the field(s) of political science, sociology and social politics, while Roy and Ziemek (2000) argue further and believe that the relevant theories on the role of volunteerism in event management from an economics perspective have not been explicitly identified or have not been sufficiently explored.

### ***Volunteering, employment and the sustainable development goals (SDGs)***

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated and recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability (United Nations SDGs, 2021).

The SDGs were conceived to promote sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity and technological innovation. Furthermore, SDGs encourage entrepreneurship and job creation, as these are recognised as effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. SDGs highlight the need for sustainable job creation, notably in developing countries, which are often characterised by high rates of unemployment and poverty. This is especially pertinent because South Africa has one of the most lamentable unemployment rates in the world, at around 34.4% (Stats SA, 2021). Thus the SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth has special resonance in South Africa, and furthermore the role that volunteerism can have in providing opportunities to tackle the unemployment rate. With this in mind, there is a need to utilise innovative interventions, including the use of volunteers

at events to support the aspiration to achieve full and productive employment and decent work, for all women and men by 2030 as identified in SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth.

It is interesting to note that in the United Nations Volunteering Report (2011), opportunities for people to engage in volunteer action have been expanding in recent years as a result of factors such as globalization and the spread of new technologies and initiatives associated with corporate social responsibility from the private sector. The same report notes that the ethos of volunteerism is infused with values including solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment, all of which contribute significantly to quality of life. However, there is also the acknowledgement that people the world over engage in volunteerism for a great variety of reasons. Within the context of this paper, Surujlal and Dhurup (2008) observed that volunteers themselves also experience benefits notably skill enhancement and a sense of personal enrichment. The recognition of the various benefits accrued by volunteers at events is sometimes overlooked but often plays a significant part in their motivation to involve themselves. Thus, volunteering is a behavior that may seem very self-sacrificing on the surface, but in reality it serves many purposes for the volunteer. People volunteer not only for the good of the cause to which they donate their time and efforts but also for themselves. This is because volunteering is also likely to impact positively on social and career enhancement (Clary et al., 1998).

By its very nature, volunteerism is an important vehicle for sustainable development. Volunteerism lets people and communities participate in their own growth. Through volunteering, citizens build their resilience, enhance their knowledge base and gain a sense of responsibility for their own community. Social cohesion and trust is strengthened through individual and collective volunteer action, leading to sustainable outcomes for people, by people (UN Volunteers, 2020). As Borgonovi (2008) noted, volunteers, develop resilience because they have better health and happiness than individuals who do not volunteer. Binder and Freytag (2013) go on to say that volunteers consistently have a more significant positive sense of well being than those who do not volunteer. A study by Grant et al. (2000) concluded that volunteers personally benefitted from their involvement in youth settings by becoming more experienced at working with youth and by learning skills that could transfer to other settings. The same authors noted that volunteers who served as guides for youth also gained leadership skills and were more likely to give back to their communities. In addition, other benefits for the event manager were organizational improvements associated with the utilization of volunteers, as well as donations of money and supplies, with volunteers serving as ambassadors for youth development programs.

It is important to recognize that within the context of the SDGs various interrelated benefits are likely to accrue. Bakhsh et al. (2021) found that sport events can inspire attendees toward future behavioral intentions beyond the narrow focus of traditional sport event spectators and sport participation intentions. These same authors contend that this finding provides evidence for policymakers and decision-makers that hosting sport events leads to positive social-based behavioral intentions for their community and community members, because volunteers are vital to the operations and survival of sport events globally. Thus by mobilizing capacities and extending the reach of action, volunteers can facilitate and support people's engagement in planning, implementing and monitoring the SDGs, bridging social capital and strengthening social cohesion. They can provide technical support and enhance capacity in all thematic goal areas, such as for sustainable livelihoods, health, education, and importantly employment (UN Volunteers, 2015). In essence it is reasonable to contend that the social benefits experienced by volunteers can also contribute meaningfully to others within a social context, and as Bowe et al. (2020) noted, it is likely that the experience of social connection itself also benefits volunteers. Fundamentally, as articulated in the UN Volunteers

Tool Kit, “They (volunteers) can develop skills and build capacities, thereby enhancing the employability, especially of young people and people with limited access to the employment market (Goal 8 and all Goals)” (UN Volunteers, 2015: 8).

## Methods

This study provides an empirical analysis of data generated by the Western Cape Event Survey Template. The researchers had permission from the Western Cape Government to interrogate the survey data and generate a report about events/ festivals that made use of volunteers. The analysis and conclusions would also inform a provincial strategic planning document on event planning and management in terms of financial benchmarking and job creation, as well as future policy directives.

According to Boslaugh (2007), there are some major advantages of working with secondary data. Firstly, the major advantage is the fact that someone else has already collected the data, thereafter the researcher is well placed to use their resources effectively and focus on the data and conduct relevant analysis. It is also recognised that there is a plethora of theory-driven research available, in which secondary data would be welcome as a shortcut for data gathering (Martins et al., 2018). Boslaugh (2007) also recognised that there are also some disadvantages to using secondary data. These include a lack of control over the content and structure of the survey, which in this study may be seen as a potential limitation. This matter is mentioned due to the fact that the data collection instrument, namely the survey, was not designed to answer specific research questions, which may have strengthened the present study.

The Western Cape Event Survey Template, therefore, was identified as the secondary data resource for this study. The data set was comprised of responses to a standardised survey template during a 3-year window (2016 - 2018). There were 48 questions within the survey, which were designed to elicit information around the logistics of the event as well as social, economic and environmental parameters. The data set included 44 survey responses by event organisers. Of these, 34 events specifically reported that they had utilised volunteers. Therefore the secondary data set analysed was delimited to those events, which reported the use and/or inclusion of volunteers. These 34 events in which volunteers were involved were then divided into sport events = 14 and festival events = 20. The sport events identified included bicycle race events (both mountain bike and road races), running events, duathlon (cycle and run) events and swimming events; while festivals were comprised of dance events, book events, cultural carnivals, handcrafted decor events, fashion, food and wine events and family social community events. The data from these distinctive data sets, namely the sport event data and the festival event data were subsequently analysed and compared in terms of descriptive statistics, the percentage difference between sport and festival financial and employment metric means, the proportional variance between sport and festival means, along with non-parametric statistical analysis of sport and festival event data by way of the Mann-Whitney U test.

It should be noted that this study was based on secondary data utilisation and analysis. It is therefore recognised that a potential shortcoming of the study was the omission of various factors that would have added considerably to a more holistic and complete understanding of the variances between sport and festival events. Perhaps the most obvious shortcoming was the absence of volunteer demographic data, which would have provided an insight about the profile of persons who had volunteered for sport and festival events. A further issue that the researcher acknowledges was that the individuals and organisations that completed the Western Cape Government Event Organiser Surveys may have misinterpreted questions and/or completed the survey inaccurately in relation to the event. These issues are mentioned so that the data and analysis derived from this survey can be rationalised within this context.



The study received approval from the relevant institutional research ethics review committee at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (Research Ethics Certificate: FOBREC671).

## Results and discussion

### Results

The event data generated by the Western Cape Government Event Survey is separated into sport and festival events for comparative data analysis. The data represents responses that were obtained from sport and festival event organisers for the period 2016 - 2018.

The data presented in Table 1 includes mean values for various financial and employment variables for volunteer supported sport and festival events, along with the percentage difference between the means as well as the proportional variation between the means. All monetary values are in South African Rands. Additional analysis is included in Table 2, which includes the Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric statistical tool used for data sets that are not normally distributed. The Mann-Whitney U test is used when a comparison is being made between two independent groups on a quantitative or ordinal variable. Essentially, it is used to examine if there is a statistically significant difference between the medians of the two samples (Harris et al., 2008).

Table 1: Sport and Festival Events: Data metrics including means, percentage difference and proportional variation (all monetary values\* are South African Rands).

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	% difference	Proportional variation
Volunteers	Sport	14	419.64	4.94	1.05
	Festival	20	399.40		
National attendees	Sport	14	51,248.50	116.52	3.79
	Festival	20	13,515.40		
International attendees	Sport	14	1,148.35	48.47	1.64
	Festival	20	700.25		
Permanent jobs	Sport	14	13.14	124.64	4.31
	Festival	20	3.05		
Temporary jobs	Sport	14	645.14	70.58	2.09
	Festival	20	308.55		
Public sponsorship*	Sport	14	823,289.35	29.11	1.34
	Festival	20	1,103,794.05		
Private sponsorship*	Sport	14	7,057,725.67	139.53	5.62
	Festival	20	1,256,837.33		
Salaries*	Sport	14	2,270,024.28	102.58	3.11
	Festival	20	730,850.41		
Event costs*	Sport	14	15,396,843.92	139.77	5.64
	Festival	20	2,728,959.58		
Event income*	Sport	14	18,025,222.00	144.91	6.26
	Festival	20	730,850.41		
Profit*	Sport	14	2,628,378.08	178.40	17.52
	Festival	20	149,986.52		

The comparison between sport and festival events elicits some interesting findings. While both sport and festival events on average recruited similar numbers of volunteers (sport 419.64 versus festivals 399.40) the other event variables measured are quite different (see Table 1). It is clear that sport events on average attract 3.79 times more national attendees (51,248.50 versus 13,515.40, percentage difference = 116.52%) and 1.64 times more international attendees (1,148.35 versus 700.25, percentage difference = 48.47%) than festival events. Sport events on average created 4.31 times more permanent jobs (13.14 versus 3.05, percentage difference = 124.64%) and 2.09 times more temporary jobs (645.14 versus 308.55, percentage difference = 70.58%) when compared to festival events.



Festival events appear to be more dependent on public sponsorship, which was reflected by festivals on average receiving 1.34 times more than sport events (R823,289.35 versus R1,103,794.05, percentage difference = 29.11%). While sport events seem to be more effective in attracting private sponsorship, on average receiving 5.62 time more than festivals (R7,057,725.67 versus R1,256,837.33, percentage difference = 139.53%). In terms of salaries and wages sport events on average were 3.11 times more costly to run than festival events (R2,270,024.28 versus R730,850.41, percentage difference = 102.58%).

The total event costs were made up from the following items, which included capital expenditure (i.e. facilities, equipment, etc.), venue hire, salaries and wages, advertising and marketing, travel and accommodation and other non-specified costs. Sport events on average cost 5.64 times more than festival events (R15,396,843.92 versus R2,728,959.58, percentage difference = 139.77%). However, total event income that was made up of ticket sales, participant/delegate/registration fees, stallholders/exhibitor fees and income from other non-specified sources indicated that sport events on average generated 6.26 times more income than festival events (R18,025,222.00 versus R730,850.41, percentage difference = 169.63%). As a consequence, perhaps the most potent financial finding was that when one takes into account the overall costs and income flows for sport and festival events, it is clear that sport events on average generate 17.52 times more profit than a festival event (R2,628,378.08 versus R149,986.52, percentage difference = 178.40%).

Table 2: Sport and Festival Events: Mann-Whitney U test results (all monetary values\* are in South African Rands).

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	Mean rank	Rank sum	U-value	p-value
Volunteers	Sport	14	419.64	18.36	257	128	0.689
	Festival	20	399.40	16.9	338	152	
National attendees	Sport	14	51,248.50	18.93	265	120	0.496
	Festival	20	13,515.40	16.5	330	160	
International attendees	Sport	14	1,148.35	18.57	260	125	0.610
	Festival	20	700.25	16.75	335	155	
Permanent jobs	Sport	14	13.14	21.07	295	90	0.083
	Festival	20	3.05	15	300	190	
Temporary jobs	Sport	14	645.14	19.14	268	117	0.429
	Festival	20	308.55	16.35	327	163	
Public sponsorship*	Sport	14	823,289.35	18.32	256.5	128.5	0.703
	Festival	20	1,103,794.05	16.92	338.5	151.5	
Private sponsorship*	Sport	14	7,057,725.67	19.46	272.5	112.5	0.347
	Festival	20	1,256,837.33	16.12	322.5	167.5	
Salaries*	Sport	14	2,270,024.28	17.21	241	144	0.904
	Festival	20	730,850.41	17.7	354	136	
Event costs*	Sport	14	15,396,843.92	19.64	275	110	0.303
	Festival	20	2,728,959.58	16	320	170	
Event income*	Sport	14	18,025,222.0	19.79	227	108	0.271
	Festival	20	2,878,946.11	15.9	318	172	
Profit*	Sport	14	2,628,378.08	35.5	1029.5	565.5	0.865
	Festival	20	149,986.52	34.64	1385.5	594.5	

Table 2 provides a non-parametric analysis of the two data sets, namely sport and festival events. Due to the variability in the data and its distribution it was apparent that no significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were identified. However, Mann-Whitney U test does provide further insight into those comparisons between sport and festivals, where sport appears to perform substantively better. Thus the p-values nearest to  $p < 0.05$  indicate a more pronounced difference between sport and festival events, illustrating that sport events when compared to festival events created more permanent jobs (p-value = 0.083) and also generated higher income (p-value = 0.271).

## *Discussion*

Kim and Cuskelly (2017) reflect on the rapid increase in event volunteer management research, which they see as being indicative of the development of a critical mass of both research knowledge and researchers with an increasing level of expertise and specialist knowledge in this field. The same authors propose that there is an increased likelihood of research in this field due to the related growth of the event industry and the increased demand for volunteer labor. A final assertion by these authors notes that improved volunteer management practices, in turn, are required because well-managed volunteers are more likely to contribute to the success of an event. Further, the increase in research in this field is likely to be related to the growth of the event industry along with increased demand for volunteer labor. Improved volunteer management practices, in turn, are required because well-managed volunteers are more likely to contribute to the success of an event. It is apparent that event managers who employ ‘improved volunteer event management practices’ must be mindful of sound financial planning and the implementation of suitable checks and balances to better ensure fiscal success. Also the event manager ought to integrate appropriate human resource protocols, including volunteer training, so that key indicators of event outcomes, which include financial, social and environmental considerations, are met.

Smith et al. (2010: 238) make the point “that in terms of gaining efficiency, there is a need to understand and examine the event organization’s allocation of funds, i.e. the percentage of total budget spent on given categories of expenses. This also relates to the potential benefits for event organizers when considering the inclusion of volunteers in the business plan”. The same authors note the paucity of research in this area and a lack of benchmarking because such data and analysis could assist event organizers. Therefore event managers need valid and relevant data that informs benchmarking so that they can evaluate their budgets and seek to determine whether their expenditure allocations are in line with the decisions being made by similar events elsewhere.

It is argued that the findings and analysis contained within this paper, which emanated from the Western Cape Government Event Survey provide some needed insight into the financial metrics and issues around employment at sport and festival events. McGuire (2003) alludes to the conviction that events, which are characterised by an entrepreneurial culture, are best placed to seize market opportunities and generate added value. In terms of the comparative analysis between sport and festival events afforded in this study, it appears to be quite clear that sport events are more disposed to this “entrepreneurial culture”, which it is argued has resulted in the emergence of a number of internationally acclaimed sport events being staged in the Western Cape, which in turn has also attracted substantial private funding and sponsorship. One must also acknowledge that events form an integral part of tourism and thus have emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry. Events are therefore understood to be part of the tourism system and as such are often used to attract visitors as well as to profile and position a destination in the market (Hemmonsbey et al., 2021;). In relation to the entrepreneurial impact of sport events it was highlighted by Bama and Tichaawa (2021) that in recent times the sport event tourism sector has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the industry, with a relatively recent focus being afforded on planning aspects, especially within the developing context. Given the unique geographic focus for this paper, namely the Western Cape, South Africa the assertion that there has been extensive growth in contemporary times, demonstrates that the sport event and sport tourism industry has become increasingly important for developing nations (Bama & Tichaawa, 2020, 2021; Daniels & Tichaawa, 2021; Higham, 2018; Knott et al., 2017; McKay et al., 2019).

It should also be acknowledged that the development of sport and festival events in the Western Province of South Africa has been facilitated and guided to a significant extent by the Cape of Great Events: Strategy Summary for 2014-2030, which was produced by the Department of the Premier and adopted by the Western Cape Provincial Cabinet in 2011. This strategy addresses issues facing the Western Cape's event industry in an effort to ensure that the destination (Cape Town and the Western Cape Province) remains competitive on the national and world stages in retaining, growing and attracting events. The document emphasises increasing global appreciation for Cape Town and the Western Cape as a desirable and exciting event destination, combined with regional strengths in sport, natural and cultural heritage, creativity, and innovation, which should allow opportunities to host event experiences to be seized across a broad spectrum: tourism, cultural business, sport, etc. (Platzky et al., 2011).

In line with the strategic intent of the Cape of Great Events: Strategy Summary for 2014-2030 the results of this paper have demonstrated that a number of iconic international sport events collectively make a substantial contribution to the regional gross domestic product for the Western Cape Province. These include a number of globally recognised sport events that are held on an annual basis, the most prominent include the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the biggest timed bicycle race in the world with an estimated 35,000 participants (Cape Town Cycle Tour, 2021); along with the Absa Cape Epic the most televised mountain bike race in the world (Cape Epic, 2021), and the Two Oceans Marathon, which is Africa's biggest running event by economic impact, (Two Ocean Marathon, 2021), while the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series Cape Town Stadium, saw the best records for attendance, when compared to all other series venues (Asics, 2022). Bearing in mind the existing success in the Western Cape Province for developing events, as well as attracting events, there is an on-going expansion of bidding for future major events by the provincial government, notably by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport (DCAS), which recognises that the provision of major events promotes sport tourism. Furthermore, DCAS works with sport federations in the Province to support access to major events funding (DCAS, 2021) along with corporate entities in Cape Town and the Western Cape Province. These activities have been rewarded by the successful bid to stage additional prestige sporting events, notably the Rugby World Cup Sevens 2023, Women's Netball World Cup 2023 and Formula E motor racing in 2023.

It is also important to highlight that business naivety and overconfidence can be problematic in terms of event viability. Carlson & Anderson (2011: 96) make the assertion "that there seems to have been an assumption that festivals will continue to exist in their own right and that resources, particularly financial resources, will always materialise. However, the reality is that the event industry is just as much at risk of failure because such operational and logistic ventures need to be premised on sound financial management, and are therefore at additional risk if we do not have reliable benchmarking from the event industry to guide management decisions". Such over optimistic or naïve planning considerations, often fail to take into consideration factors that may seriously compromise the feasibility of an event. In the Western Cape, a historically water scarce region, it was found that many event managers had made little or no contingency plans if a drought occurred. This was the case in 2017, which saw three previous successive years of drought, which nearly resulted in "Day Zero" when the city of Cape Town would have run out of drinkable water (Pascale et al., 2020). The impact on the event industry in 2017 was dramatic with the cancellation of the Cape Town Cycle Tour, the world's largest single cycle race event. The Western Cape Premier, Mr Alan Winde noted, "As we work to position the Western Cape as an international events destination, it is key that we prioritise the safety of the residents and visitors involved. Events contribute to the growth of the economy and the creation of jobs. Over 35 000 riders were set to participate in the race



this year and I hope to see all of them at next year's Cape Town Cycle Tour" (Winde, 2017). As a consequence of various environmental challenges, the Cape Town Resilience Strategy was adopted by the regional government, notably in the aftermath of the worst drought that the city-region had confronted in recorded history (City of Cape Town, 2019).

In terms of the present study, it is argued that the ability of sport event organisers in the Western Cape to develop and attract globally recognised sport events with the attendant benefits of international media exposure, has also ensured more reliable and substantial long-term private sponsorship, thus ensuring realistic and sustainable business models. The high profile examples of successful global sport events, e.g. Cape Town Cycle Tour, Absa Cape Epic MTB race and the Two Oceans Marathon etc. have demonstrated to other regional and national sport event organisers the value of planning and implementation models that are based on sound business principles, which in turn can guide them to stage successful regional and local sport events. A part of the successful integration of volunteer support within these business and best practice models, appears to have been better training of volunteers, which not only improved financial efficiencies, but importantly improved the volunteer experience, employability and also ensured better compliance with statutory health, safety and environment regulations.

Festival events evaluated in this study, which utilised volunteers appear to be less successful in developing events of prominence on the world stage, and by inference festival events appear to have been less able to attract private sponsorship, which in turn resulted on a greater reliance of public sponsorship. Carson et al. (2010) observed that potential event failure is often a result when a festival is wholly dependent on one source of income, such as a single sponsor or funding source and the scarcity of sponsors/suppliers may as a consequence impact on the viability of the event.

As articulated in the Cape of Great Events: Strategy Summary for 2014-2030 the intent going forward is to feed information from post-event impact assessments, such as those presented in this paper, into regional planning decisions in order to ensure that the consequences of events remain directed towards the developmental and growth objectives of the destination and become standard practice (Platzky et al., 2011). To this end the comparative data analysis of financial metrics in this study informs not only event management/organisers, but also provincial government about the financial variables that they ought to consider in order to optimise planning for the improved delivery of events, and to facilitate increased opportunities for job creation. It is maintained that the sound integration of financial premised event plans also improves event viability and sustainability in terms of social and environmental considerations.

## Conclusions

The opportunity to analyse the data generated by the Western Cape Government Event Organiser Surveys provides a unique insight into those events that utilise volunteers along with the financial and employment metrics generated. However, as noted in the methodology section, the study has limitations in terms of the use of secondary data, which meant that valuable information such as volunteer demographics, were not included. Furthermore, the absence of an overarching theoretical model means that the data and analysis has limited application beyond the Western Cape, and is thus not well suited to generalizability.

It was apparent from the findings that, while sport and festival events on average utilise very similar numbers of volunteers, the related financial performance metrics and employment measures are quite divergent. It is abundantly clear that sport events in this study produced substantively better financial performance outcomes, notably a lower reliance on public sponsorship, and a far more effective ability to attract private sponsorship. Even though sport

events may have been more costly to organise and run, they generated more revenue and were able to accrue far higher profits. Sport events also created more jobs, both permanent and temporary, when compared to festival events. It is argued that in order to achieve measured progress with the SDGs, notably those concerned with employment, assessment tools such as the Western Cape Event Survey Template provide valuable insights into the importance of effective event management which in turn can improve planning and the generation of effective solutions. As mentioned the data analysis that compared volunteer supported sport and festival events illustrates that sport events had superior financial outcomes, which in turn have the potential to contribute to the sustainability objectives of SDGs, including interrelated social and environmental development goals. This in turn allows event managers to reflect on existing and successfully organized events, especially those that utilize volunteers and prepare with a better awareness of the factors that contribute to the successful staging of events, their ongoing sustainability and relevance to SDGs, including job creation.

The results and analysis from this study, which focussed on volunteer supported events, illustrate that sport events appear to be characterised by better business planning and overall event implementation when compared to festival events. Furthermore, the ability of sport event organisers to develop and promote globally recognised events has resulted in extensive media exposure, along with well structured and increased long term private funding and support. It appears that the superior business acumen of sport event organisers and the optimal utilisation of volunteers resulted in better financial and employment indicators in terms of, revenue generation, higher profits and job creation.

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