



Events tourism as a conduit to promote underdeveloped tourist destinations, with specific reference to the Mooiplaas Homecoming Music Event in East London, South Africa

Dr Siyabonga Mxunyelwa* & Khuselwa Busisiwe Kilani
Walter Sisulu University
East London, South Africa
Email: smxunyelwa@wsu.ac.za
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1698-705X

Corresponding author*

Abstract

Events tourism has demonstrated growth over the years, and has been used as a tool to boost local economies. Hosting such events creates benefits, these include the boost in the local economy, improvement of infrastructure on destinations and job creation. The purpose of this paper was to investigate how events tourism could be utilised as a conduit to promote underdeveloped tourist destinations in Mooiplaas. Secondary data sources were consulted to understand the role of events tourism in the local community of Mooiplaas. This paper utilised a survey questionnaire to collect data. The simple random sampling method was utilised to select the respondents. The findings indicate that 70% of the respondents agreed that they are consulted about the events that promote their community. Furthermore, the findings elucidates that 82% of the respondents concur that events can potentially create entrepreneurial opportunities. These findings contribute significantly in developing the local economic strategies of the municipalities in underdeveloped regions .As such it is recommended that events are planned in a coherent, systematic manner in order to achieve local economic development objectives. Furthermore, the paper provided a foundation on how to plan, organise, lead and control events that can potentially unearth tourism demand particularly in developing tourist destinations. Moreover, it is hoped that the paper will serve as the basis to plan future events in the context of regions such as Mooiplaas that are still engulfed with developmental challenges, these contribute to triple threat of unemployed, poverty and inequality.

Keywords: Events tourism, tourism development, strategy, local community.

Introduction and background

Across the globe, events tourism industry has demonstrated a rapid evolution and development since the 1980s, events tourists around the world dedicating large amounts of time and money to attend these events (Gelder& Robinson, 2009). From North America (United States of America) and Europe (France), events tourism is increasingly recognised as a key growth sector within the tourism industry. The benefits of events tourism are increasingly being realised by many developing countries such as South Africa, Brazil, India, Russia and China (Tassiopolous, 2010). These benefits include but not limited to the boost in the local economy, improvement of the destination image and much needed job creation. Some of these countries are utilising events in order to enhance their image as an international reputable tourist destination in an international market. Events tourism is important in driving development in many underdeveloped tourist destinations. The community can benefit from events tourism ranging from socially and economically, thus creating a sense of pride and entrepreneurial opportunities that range from establishing souvenir shops, tour operating companies and tour guiding for the community.

In the context of Europe, events such as the Munich's Oktoberfest, Tour de France, rugby and soccer world cups are events that are becoming more important for urban improvement as



they have an impact on the host city. In countries such as Australia, Kangaroo Island Pro-surf Music Festival is a globally recognised event. This event has demonstrated an ability to bring increasing numbers of tourists to the destination. This event has the potential to grow even further without sacrificing its consumer appeal as Australia's Island. Destinations are exponentially developing an interest to utilise events tourism as a strategy to augment and increase benefits for host communities (Tassiopoulous, 2010:8).As such, countries such as Spain are potentially doing well in events tourism because of sporting events.

Events are considered as an important part of tourism development and marketing strategies for many tourist destinations (Tassiopoulos, 2005:5). These events attract tourists, improve the environment allow the host city to promote its offerings (Liu, 2006). However, the developing destinations still find it challenging to capitalise on events tourism as a draw card in order to unlock the local economic development initiatives. Tourists can have a positive destination image through an event they attend at a destination at a specific moment, therefore the event itself can be an engine that creates the real reason for the tourist to visit. However, events are known to also bring a negative impacts such as overcrowding, pollution and over use of local resources. Events have gained a significant attention and are viewed as a strategy to explore and experience the tourism products (museums, crafts) destinations offer to tourists that brings income. Events have the ability to attract a large number of event fanatics to different host destinations (Mxunyelwa, 2017:1).The hosting of events necessitates infrastructural developments such as improved roads, hotels and information and communications technology (ICT) to ensure readiness to host event attendees. These infrastructural developments help destinations to be easily accessible for tourists. Thus employment opportunities are created for the local community. Entrepreneurs are well poised to benefit in this context (Mxunyelwa, 2017:1).

In hosting these events, tourists provide needed financial injections for the hosting city. Events tourism has potential to create tourism demand to the host destinations(Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014). At the host destination the event spending ranges from ticket fees, food and beverages, parking fees and regalia from the vendors in the community. Consequently, it is important to analyse visitor's motives to attend events in order to position the event to be able to meet the visitor's needs. This enables the event organiser to understand the preferences of attendees in order to cater for their needs. In this context, entrepreneurs of small towns ought to align their local economic development initiatives to events that are hosted in their communities. These events can accrue some entrepreneurial benefits such as for example, accommodation establishments and restaurants which can potentially get fully booked during the period of hosting these events (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014).

In South Africa, events are still growing in number and in size. Events tourism plays a major role on the economic contribution of host communities, as domestic and international attendees of these events utilise facilities such as accommodation, restaurants and communities creates employment and stimulates the local economy. These events attracts tourism investments and improve the positive image of the host destination. Weed and Bull (2004) assert that spin-offs from events have boosted the pride and the economies of the host countries. South Africa often hosts major events, including sports events, musical festivals and carnivals events. Events such as the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, the Durban July horse race, Woza Durban, Grahamstown National Arts Festival and the Johannesburg Joy of Jazz contribute to the cities' Gross Domestic Product (Business Day, 2016).

East London hosts a number of events, ranging from the Ironman Tri-Athlon, the Buyel'Ekhaya Pan-African Music Festival, and the African Golf Challenge and all these events contribute towards East London's economy (SA, 2014). The Buyel'Ekhaya Pan-African Music Festival contributed R25.8 million to the country's GDP (Business Day, 2016). The stated events boost the economy of the host community through the revenue they make. Events of a smaller scale such as the Mooiplaas Homecoming music event, achieve similar domestic coverage, which attracts future tourism investments and further economic growth to the area.



Problem statement

Events tourism has been recognized around the world as a strategy to draw tourists to destinations. The influx of tourists provides the much needed financial injection through spending on the local economy. Thus, events tourism creates an enabling environment for the entrepreneurial activity for the local entrepreneurs. However, there appears to be a scarcity of research that addresses events tourism as strategy for Local Economic Development in the context of the Mooiplaas, Home coming music event. Furthermore, there are no known studies that have been undertaken to understand how events are utilised as a strategy to unlock a small town's economy. Thus, this study seeks to investigate events tourism as a strategy for Local Economic Development.

Methodology

Research methodology is the specific procedures used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013), defines Research methodology as a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic

The research design of this study incorporated quantitative technique. A structured questionnaire with questions pertaining to biographical information, social impact and economic impact of the event was utilised to collect data from the community of Mooiplaas. The village of Mooiplaas has approximately 150 inhabitants. The questionnaire was handed out to 90 community members that attended the event and 50 usable questionnaires were received For the purpose of the current paper the community of Mooiplaas formed part of the survey population. A simple random sampling was utilised because it has the advantage of being time effective, and it is viewed as the most straight forward method of probability sampling.

Ethical clearance

The permission to undertake this research was granted by the traditional leaders of the community and the University. Furthermore, the participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. None of them were coerced or incentivised to participate.

Reliability and validity

Validity is described by Babbie (2011) as an extent to which research findings would be the same if the research is to be repeated at a later stage or with a different sample of subject. Furthermore, Bobbie (2011) adds that validity can be viewed as a model taken from the natural sciences where conditions are properly controlled or a duplicate of an experiment should produce same results. However, validity focuses on the consequences of interpretations made that should be appropriate and suitable. Joppe (2000) defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of the paper can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.

Results and finding

Biographical profile summary: It is important to understand the biographic profile of the respondents because it helps in identifying the actual target population of the study.

Table 1. Biographical profile summary

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	26	52.0



	25-35	12	24.0
	35-45	8	16.0
	45-55	4	8.0
	Total	50	100.0
Gender		Frequency	Percentage
	MALE	20	40.0
	FEMALE	30	60.0
	Total	50	100.0
Population		Frequency	Percentage
	AFRICAN	50	100.0

Table 1 demonstrates that 52% of the respondents were in the age category of between 18-25, whilst those that were in the age group of 25-35 accounted for 24%. In addition, those that were in the age of 35-45 were 16%. Furthermore, the respondents that were 45-55 years were least represented at 8%. These findings underscore that the population of Mooiplaas is generally youthful. The findings elucidates that 60 % of the respondents were females, however the male respondents were represented at 40%. These findings could be attributed to the fact that females are most likely to be involved in the events industry. The study found that 100% of the respondents were black Africans. These findings confirm that Mooiplaas community predominantly comprises of a black population.

Social impacts of the Mooiplaas Homecoming Events in the local community

It is imperative to understand how events impact on communities from a social context. These events have potential to change the life of community members with their positive spin-offs conversely, these events can bring about negative impacts. The study sought to determine the social impacts of the Mooiplaas Homecoming Music event.

Table 2. Social impacts of the Mooiplaas Homecoming Events in the local community

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Were you involved in planning?	10	20	11	22	5	10	7	14	17	34	50
Were you consulted about the event?	13	26	22	44	4	8	4	8	7	14	50
Does this event bring social pride in the community?	27	54	18	36	2	4	0	0	3	6	50
Is there any interaction between the locals and the event national performers?	22	44	19	38	2	4	2	4	5	10	50



Does this event support the community?	26	52	20	40	0	0	1	2	3	6	50
The event improves the livelihoods of the community	20	40	20	40	1	2	1	2	8	16	50

The findings shows that 42% of the respondents agree that they were involved in planning of the event, while on the other hand 34% disagrees that they were involved in planning. The findings demonstrate that the event organisers need to improve the level of community involvement when planning events in the future.

The findings revealed that 70% of the respondents agreed that they were consulted about the event. Only 14% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed. The findings could be attributed to the fact that the community is the centre of any tourism developments that are likely to take place.

The findings further demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (90%) agrees that the event brings social pride to the community of Mooiplaas, surprisingly, only 10% disagrees. Therefore these findings underscores that the community is impressed with the social pride the event brings to the community.

The study shows that 82% of the respondents interacted with the event national performers, while 18% totally disagrees with the statement. The findings clearly stipulates that the respondents were appreciative of the fact that they were granted an opportunity to interact with the event national performers.

Table 3. The economic benefits of events tourism on local community of Mooiplaas

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The event creates entrepreneurial opportunities for the local community	26	52	15	30	2	4	2	4	5	10	50
The event creates temporary jobs	21	42	17	34	3	6	2	4	7	14	50
Events help in developing new businesses	15	30	19	38	7	14	3	6	6	12	50
The event benefits locals businesses through increased profit during the event	28	56	15	30	2	4	3	6	2	4	50

The findings elucidates that 82% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that identify events as creators of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, 10% of the respondents disagrees. The findings underscore that 4% of the respondents were undecided. Moreover, 4% strongly disagreed. The findings depicts that the majority is in agreement that events improve entrepreneurial activities.



The study highlights that 76% of the survey participants seem to be satisfied with the job opportunities created as a result of hosting events. On the other hand, 14% disagrees with the statement. 6% were undecided, and 4% strongly disagrees. It can be therefore determined that, according to the findings, the respondents perceive this event to be creating temporary jobs for the local community.

It is evident from the findings as presented above in the study that 68% of the respondents agree that the events help in the establishment of new businesses, however 4% were undecided about this statement, while 12% disagrees and 16% strongly disagrees. The respondents were asked if the event benefits local businesses. The findings depicts that 86% agrees with the statement, while 12% strongly disagrees. On the other hand 4% is undecided, and 6% disagrees with the statement. The finding highlights that the local businesses that operates around the Mooiplaas benefits from the event.

Recommendations

The researcher further recommends that event organisers and relevant stakeholders must focus more on strategically looking at direct new business establishments, investment, and employment opportunities that the event creates. Moreover, this will ensure that the benefits accumulated through hosting of events will impact positively on all relevant stakeholders, such as local entrepreneurs, traditional leadership and the community at large.

Future research studies

Future research can be conducted on how events tourism can be utilised as image-makers for destinations, which will add value to the existing literature pertaining to events tourism. It is crucial that future research should look at investigating the importance of residents' value and involvement in events held in their areas.

Conclusions

In light of these findings, it could be concluded that events are the key drivers of economic development in host destinations. Event organisers in Mooiplaas need to take advantage of their geographical location and use it as an opportunity for improving tourism and expanding it as well as tourism product packages. This could be accomplished by adding the characteristics that reflect cultural and heritage elements within the event.

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