

RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACTS OF A MAJOR ARTS FESTIVAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Arts festivals are a growing phenomenon in South Africa and there are various festivals to choose from. The aim of these festivals is to provide unique experiences to both tourists and visitors and they should therefore focus on the development and improvement of the festivals. The major arts festivals in South Africa are annual events and therefore the opinions and roles of residents in the festival are important. The community acts as the host and to sustain their support for the festival it is important to determine their perceptions of the impacts of these festivals. Ultimately, negative attitudes towards the event and the visitors can create problems and endanger the sustainability of the festival. The ideal situation is to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts. Quantitative research was conducted by means of a survey, in September 2010 during the Aardklop National Arts Festival (Potchefstroom). A factor analysis was done to determine the underlying impacts of the Festival on the residents, and t-tests and ANOVAs were used to determine differences between various demographic variables and the impact statements. The factor analysis revealed five factors that were labelled Factor 1: Positive economic impacts; Factor 2: Negative community impacts; Factor 3: Positive community impacts; Factor 4: Community opportunities; and Factor 5: Tourism impacts. This research found very few significant differences between gender, qualification and occupation regarding the factors. However, significant differences were found between the factors and number of times attended and level of interest.

KEYWORDS

Residents, Perceptions, Arts festival, Tourism impacts, Community.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Festivals play a significant role in the lives of communities (Viviers, 2010) and staging events can be beneficial to the host community with positive impacts that often include the stimulation of the local economy and promotion of the region. This may influence future tourism activity and lead to long-term benefits (Fredline, Raybould, Jago & Deery, 2005). Residents need to be enthusiastic about the festival, since it can contribute to the success of the festival. Gursoy, Kim and Uysal (2004) indicated that research beyond economic impacts and motivations were very few. However, triple bottom line reporting has become more important recently as this considers economic, social and environmental aspects. Some of these aspects may be intangible, and understanding them is important, as it can have long-term consequences (Sims & D'Mello, 2005).

Because events increase pride and create cultural identity, cohesion and increased knowledge of the area, it becomes important to understand the perceptions of residents and, in doing so, to try to maximize the positive perceptions (Gursoy et al., 2004). Various studies have been performed on residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005; Chen, 2001; Fredline & Faulkner, 2002; Kim & Petrick, 2005; Ohmann, Jones & Wilkes, 2006; Williams & Lawson, 2001). Knowledge regarding the impacts of festivals on communities though, is limited (Eraqi, 2007; Gu & Ryan, 2008; Jackson, 2008). This especially is the case in South Africa (Ntloko & Swart, 2008).

With Aardklop National Arts Festival being one of the biggest arts festivals in South Africa by hosting 53 963 visitors (Kruger, Saayman, Saayman & Oberholzer, 2009), it is important to determine the impacts of the festival on the community. The purpose of this study is therefore to determine the impacts of the festival as perceived by the residents themselves. This is done by exploring socio-demographic characteristics of residents, determining the impacts and analyzing differences regarding socio-demographic variables.

2. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, quantitative research was conducted by means of a survey, conducted in September 2010 during Aardklop National Arts Festival. Stratified random sampling was used for the total sample frame of $N = 128\ 353$ (Statistics SA, 2001). Krejcie and Morgan (1970:608) recommend a sample size (S) of 384 for general research activities, for a population (N) of 1000 000. Stratification is based on the residential areas close to the festival grounds, including Van der Hoffpark, Potchefstroom Central, The Bult area, The Goue Akker, Mooivallei, Owersig and the Dam area. Krejcie and Morgan (1970:607) indicate that as the population increases, the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains relatively constant at slightly more than 380 cases. Based on the guidelines given it was decided to distribute 500 questionnaires between the strata. However, 451 were used in the analyses. The starting point was randomly selected in the strata, after which every third house was selected in the strata. If the selected respondent did not wish to participate in the survey, either the house on the right or left was selected to participate (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins & Van Wyk, 2005:352). Fieldworkers from North West University distributed the questionnaires. The data was captured in Microsoft Excel and analysed by using the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). The descriptive statistics focused on the demographic profile of the community where frequencies were used to analyse the data. Factor analysis was done to determine the underlying impacts of the festival on the residents, and t-tests and ANOVA's were used to determine differences between various demographic variables and the impact statements.

3. DISCUSSION

The discussion is divided into three sections, namely the demographic profile of respondents, a factor analysis of the tourism impacts and a comparison between certain socio-demographic and festival behaviour information and the factors.

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The residents that participated in this study were mostly females (53%), between ages 26 and 35 (28%) in educational occupations (20%). Respondents in professional occupations (15%) and self-employed

(11%) respondents were also well represented in the sample. Most of the respondents have either matric (grade 12) (35%) or a diploma or degree (33%). Respondents are fairly loyal to the festival with 67% that attended the festival in 2010 and have attended the festival 4 times before.

3.2. FACTOR ANALYSIS OF TOURISM IMPACTS

A Principal Axis Factor analysis with Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization rotation was undertaken. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.889, which is highly acceptable. The Bartlett test was also found to be significant ($p < 0.00001$). The 33 items yielded 5 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. These factors explained 62% of the variance and were labelled Factor 1: Positive economic impacts, Factor 2: Negative community impacts, Factor 3: Positive community impacts, Factor 4: Community opportunities and Factor 5: Tourism impacts. The factor loadings of the 33 items were over 0.29. The variables were also subjected to reliability (Cronbach alpha reliability test) to check the internal consistency of items in each dimension and were higher than 0.77. The mean values for the various factors were very similar with Factor 2 (Negative community impacts) being the most important factor with a mean value of 3.48.

3.3. COMPARISON OF RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT FACTORS AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS

A t-test was done to determine differences between gender and the identified factors. However, no significant differences were found. An ANOVA was done to determine differences between qualification, occupation, number of times visited and level of interest in the festival and the identified factors. Regarding qualification level it was found that significant differences exist between respondents with no formal school qualification and respondents with professional qualifications regarding Factor 1 (Positive economic impacts). Significant differences were also found between occupation and the factors, specifically between respondents in educational occupations and management occupations regarding Factor 2 (Negative community impacts) and Factor 4 (Community opportunities). An analysis of the differences in terms of the number of times attended and the factors revealed significant differences. It was found that respondents that have attended the festival between 0 and 2 times differ from respondents that attended the festival more than 6 times on all the factors. Lastly respondents' level of interest in the festival was also tested by means of an ANOVA, and significant differences were found between respondents that are loyal to the festival and those that are not really interested in the festival regarding Factor 1 (Positive economic impacts), Factor 3 (Positive community impacts), Factor 4 (Community opportunities) and Factor 5 (Tourism impacts).

4. MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

Various studies have been done on the impacts of festivals on the community. However, these studies are limited in South Africa. This research therefore contributes towards understanding the impacts of festivals on communities and how to improve the impacts, especially in the case of non-permanent tourism products such as festivals. This study also revealed more significant differences in terms of festival behaviour (number of times attended and level of interest in the festival) than socio-demographic variables (gender, qualification and occupation) which is different to current literature.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to assess residents' perceptions of the impacts of an arts festival on the community. This was done by analysing the demographic profile of respondents, performing a factor analysis on the impact statements and determining the influence of certain socio-demographic information as well as festival behaviour on the identified factors. The results revealed five impacts, namely positive economic impacts, negative community impacts, positive community impacts, community opportunities and tourism impacts. These results confirmed impact factors identified in previous research studies. This research found very few significant differences between gender, qualification and occupation regarding the factors. However, significant differences were found between the factors and number of times attended and level of interest. It is therefore not necessarily demographic factors that influence the impacts of the festival on the community.

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