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## **Traditional Academic Talks**

# RESILIENCE AND INCLUSIVITY IN SPORTS EVENTS: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF THE AFCON 2022 CAMEROON

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Extant research postulates that hosting sports events is becoming increasingly susceptible to crises such as social unrest, high levels of criminality, extreme weather unpredictability and communicable diseases such as COVID-19, among others. The African Cup of Nations (AFCON) is a binary sports event held on a binary basis by countries on the African continent. This study uses the case of the AFCON 2022 competition hosted by Cameroon to (i) illustrate the number of shocks that posed a threat to success of the sport event, and (ii) argue that adopting a more community-centered approach would make the AFCON sports tournament more inclusive and increase its resilience to crises.

## ABSTRACT

Previous studies have dwelt on the general challenges that African countries face in organizing and hosting sports events. In the context of AFCON 2022, however, the government of Cameroon was engulfed in crises – notably, the armed separatist insurgency in the two Anglophone regions of the country, the COVID-19 pandemic, and apprehension arising from the fact that the country last hosted a major sports event more than fifty years prior to 2022. Considering the unprecedented nature of the crises that threatened to derail the tournament, this study sought to explore the extent to which the respondents shared the aspirations of the government in hosting the tournament. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 1683 respondents in all five host cities (Bafoussam, Douala, Garoua, Limbe and Yaoundé) during the competition. Using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the key finding from this study was that even though some respondents were optimistic about the development opportunities presented by the sports event, they were demotivated because of the government's approach in not engaging and involving local communities in the planning or organization of the sports event. Culture also revealed statistically significant differences because most respondents in the dominantly Muslim northern regions were males (>90%). The main conclusion from this study is that meaningful consultation and involvement of local people in the planning and hosting of sports events such as the AFCON has several potential benefits, such as spreading economic benefits, increasing social benefits through recognition and the feel-good factor, and educating local residents in how to avoid the spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19. Hence, increasing the participation of local residents could both reduce the possible impacts of any negative occurrences and increase the resilience of the sports event. Practical and policy implications are elaborated on, including the need for government and sports event organizers to include community representatives as part of the planning and delivery committee.

## KEYWORDS

Sports Events; Community; Resilience; Inclusivity; AFCON; Cameroon

# MAINTAINING BRAND IDENTITY AND HERITAGE IN THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT: THE CASE OF KNOTT'S BERRY FARM'S BOYSENBERRY FESTIVAL

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

There are a few problem questions this work connects to. First, how does an organization differentiate brand identity in the midst of a corporate environment? Second, how does a regional or local theme park maintain community connection in that standardized corporate ecosystem, especially when there is a local fanbase with long-term memories of the place? It also tackles the major loss of revenue and visitation during the infectious disease crisis of COVID-19. Though commercial spaces, theme parks like Knott's Berry Farm connect to our cultural heritage, and discussing strategies to maintain identity and uniqueness of place is beneficial when considering the significance of events and festivals in communities.

## ABSTRACT

Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, California, is one of the pioneers of the theme park form. They began in the 1920s as a location for Walter and Cordelia Knott's farming business and then a popular restaurant. Knott's built the famous Calico Ghost Town in the early 1940s, creating a paragon of a thematic space that would influence Walt Disney, who built his industry-changing park 6 miles away. The Knott family ceased being involved with the park when they sold it to regional operator Cedar Fair in 1997, and the jams and cookies part of the business was sold to Smuckers a decade later before it was discontinued. Local dialogues over the years worried about the theme park becoming too standardized or corporate, potentially losing its identity. The Knott's brand has long had a community following, with many who see it as a part of Southern California heritage and have nostalgia for individual histories in relation to the park. Several ventures under more recent leadership teams have tried to reclaim the park's traditions through refurbishing classic rides and landmarks, creating retro merchandise, or the contemporary reimagining of Knott's Bear-y Tales, one of the classic older attractions at the park. One of the most successful ways they have encouraged the unique, place-based history of the theme park is through seasonal events, particularly Ghost Town Alive! (2016), a summer entertainment event, and the Boysenberry Festival (2015), a springtime tribute to Knott's Berry Farm's past. This case study focuses on the Boysenberry Festival, a food and wine festival that allows them to gain revenue while recalling the community's past, which Knott's finds itself a significant part of despite being a commercial site. In the festival, they leverage the mythos of the founder of the park (who has an "American Dream," rags-to-riches type story) in their discussion of the boysenberry that "started it all," even utilizing the berry's history as a metaphor for the success of Walter Knott and the theme park itself. The festival helps the park emerge as a distinct property with its own image, apart from the Cedar Fair chain that purchased them, or the Six Flags corporation Cedar Fair is merging with. It brings guests back to why Knott's existed in the first place, with the berry business and the creation of the boysenberry, teaching new guests and reminding returning visitors. In addition to lots of boysenberry-based food, drinks, and crafts, the festival includes a museum about the history of the boysenberry and a show tributing the park's evolution. A limited version of this festival, titled Taste of Calico, was employed as a strategy to re-engage visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic when the theme park was still closed for regular operations. The Boysenberry Festival speaks to the ability to utilize the power of place, as this festival would not make sense anywhere else. It also illustrates the impact of nostalgia and cultural heritage as impetuses for sustainment and differentiation in business, especially in a saturated market such as Southern California.

## KEYWORDS

Theme Parks; Food Festivals; Branding; Cultural Heritage

# JOURNEY OF THE SOUL: PARTICIPANTS' EVENT EXPERIENCE, SATISFACTION, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING DURING A RELIGIOUS TOURISM EVENT

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Within the tourism industry, religious tourism events stand out as an increasingly crucial and diverse sector in the global market. A pilgrimage is a physical journey undertaken by individuals, which offers them the chance to gain knowledge about themselves and their identities. Beyond its religious aspects, pilgrimages provide participants with opportunities for spiritual growth. However, event experiences can be defined by varying levels of cognitive, conative, and affective aspects. Different scholars utilized different combinations of sub-constructs when examining tourists' event experiences regarding to religious or spiritual tourism events.

## ABSTRACT

In the context of the global pandemic and its profound impact on mental health, activities aimed at promoting stress relief, well-being, or relaxation have gained increased attention. Within the tourism industry, religious tourism stands out as an increasingly crucial and diverse sector in the global market. A pilgrimage is a physical journey undertaken by individuals, which offers them the chance to gain knowledge about themselves and their identities. Beyond its religious aspects, pilgrimages provide participants with opportunities for spiritual growth. Specifically, spiritual tourism experiences refers to a pursuit of experiences involving transcendence and connectedness, aimed at personal transformation, whether it be spiritual or physical healing. Researchers suggest additional benefits might be needed to attract tourists from other countries, which is important for event organizers. Hence, the spiritual aspects of religious tourism events are worth exploring. The current study adopts the concept framework of the center for health promotion model (CHP) and bottom-up spillover theory within the context of the 2023 Dajia Mazu Pilgrimage (DMP). One research objective is to test theoretical constructs in the context of the event experience, while another objective is to examine the theoretical relationships among event experience, satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Using purposive sampling, 346 valid questionnaires were obtained. The questionnaires included scales measuring event experience scale, event satisfaction, psychological well-being scale, and demographic backgrounds. The data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, independent sample *t*-test, one-way MANOVA, and hierarchical linear regression. Based on the results, there is a significant difference in gender to event experience. Event experience significantly explains psychological well-being with a total variance of 34.1 %. The results also revealed that in the second level, incorporating both event experience and event satisfaction exhibits an improved explanatory power in psychological well-being ( $R^2=.35$ ,  $F(1,339)= 4.580$ ,  $p< .05$ ). To conclude, from the individual explanations at each level, the increase in explanatory power for both tiers has reached statistical significance. This study provides insights by testing and confirming the applicability of both the CHP model and spillover theory in the context of the DMP. Specifically, physicality, interacting & belonging, and *communitas*, spirituality) emerged as potential sub-constructs of event experience in the background of DMP. Notably, male participants had more agreement in both physicality and spirituality than females toward the pilgrimage. In line with previous work, a versatile event portfolio allows participants to collaboratively shape their event experience and appeals to diverse niche markets. Hence, the local government may promote the event from a spiritual-growing perspective while promoting DMP. Future research could further expand this framework, based on the event experienced this study proposed and, by probing other variables such as re-visit intention or actual support behavior.

## KEYWORDS

Hierarchical Linear Regression, Spiritual Tourism, Recurring Event, Cultural Tourism

# UNDERSTANDING EVENTS FROM A SENSE OF PLACE AND TIME

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

From a resident perspective, event sector bears the risks of changing a place physically and its meanings, temporarily or permanently. One may not be in favor of certain changes of such and acts individually or in group against them, explaining anti-tourist and tourismphobia phenomena in overtourism scenarios driven by mega-events. From an event visitor perspective, event sector bridges to a destination with a mechanism of interactions and experiences. The discrepancy in event visitors' sense of belonging to and ownership of their home place versus an event destination leads to a discrepancy in perceived social and environmental responsibility to places. This calls for investigations in understanding the dynamics of sense of place affecting relevant pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors, in terms of identities, physical and social contexts, and interactions with people and places.

## ABSTRACT

Place is one fundamental (if not the most fundamental) concept in geography and sociology in understanding human psychology and behaviors, while time plays another crucial role in any process between people and places. In event context, majority issues are deeply related to understanding the interactions between people and places in time. For instance, tourism is by its nature about voluntarily leaving one place for another for a limited period. Among many concepts tackling the fundamental human-place interaction and relationship, sense of place reflects the nature of connecting an individual to a place, whether in the real or virtual world, to natural or social environment, and is highly dynamic. Sense of place can be built from a genealogical, narrative, economic, ideological, and/or cosmological relationship to a place, and drives various other place-related psychological outcomes such as sense of belonging, sense of ownership, place authenticity, nostalgia, and solastalgia, etc. Many of these concepts, along with sense of place, have strong indication to individual and collective behaviors of pro-social and environmental behaviors, such as active participation in community and tourism development and environmental protection. From a resident perspective, event sector bears the risks of changing a place physically and its meanings, temporarily or permanently. One may not be in favor of certain changes of such and acts individually or in group against them, explaining anti-tourist and tourismphobia phenomena in overtourism scenarios driven by mega-events. Interacting with visitors within their resident place also provides a different and unique perspective for locals to rebuild their connections to the place. From an event visitor perspective, event sector bridges to a destination with a mechanism of interactions and experiences. These purposely crafted experiences induced by events often meet participants' expectations from their sense of a specific destination for events, which may not represent the authenticity of that place. The potential discrepancy often sets apart between the same place as the locals' home and as an event destination. This leads to the complexity and difficulty in discussing event related regional development and public management matters, such as balancing the needs of locals and event visitors in public transportation. The discrepancy in event visitors' sense of belonging to and ownership of their home place versus an event destination leads to a discrepancy in perceived social and environmental responsibility to places. Event visitors (unless niche groups e.g. environmental groups) often behave less socially and environmentally responsibly at an event destination compared to their home places. This calls for investigations in understanding the dynamics of sense of place affecting relevant pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors, in terms of identities, physical and social contexts, and interactions with people and places. Sense of place is dynamic, as place changes and people change. How fast and frequent of changes and what they are changed to, has a significant impact on individual and social well-being. Events with celebrations are often seen as therapy to fight against mental and physical challenges. However, how to control and manage any potential undesired change derived from these activities is another.

## KEYWORDS

Event; Sense of Place; Place Attachment; Pro-Environmental Behaviour

# PROPOSITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE LEGACIES OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS FOR DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS - A CONSENSUS STATEMENT

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The attraction of hosting major sporting events commonly rests on the assurance of long-term legacies and benefits for the community. Yet, an expanding body of research suggests that these gains are not uniformly allocated; rather, communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds often experience the impact in a disproportionately negative manner. Given the significant financial and social commitments involved in staging these events, the uneven distribution of legacies intensifies existing social inequalities, warranting critical examination.

## ABSTRACT

This consensus statement is the outcome of comprehensive collaboration through an international working group on the disparities in the legacies of major sporting events, specifically for communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (CIDBs). The workshop brought together scholars to discuss current challenges and develop four propositions and recommendations for event leveraging, policy stakeholders, and researchers. It aims to shed light on the issues at hand, and advance policy-making to maximize inclusivity for CIDBs in major sporting event hosting, rather than assigning blame to any parties. The workshop brought together scholars to discuss current challenges and develop four propositions and recommendations for event leveraging, policy stakeholders, and researchers. The propositions included (1) the nature of 'disadvantage' needs to be recognized and the specific targeted CIDBs in each event context must be carefully identified or clearly defined; (2) CIDBs should be considered as an integral part of the whole event hosting cycle to ensure legacy inclusivity; (3) dedicated event leverage, sufficient financial backing and resource commitments for CIDBs are needed; and (4) it is critical to establish a system of legacy governance for CIDBs. The recommendations aim to inform change in practice and ensure lasting positive legacies for the communities that need them most.

## KEYWORDS

Disadvantage; Major Events; Inequality; Leverage; Legacy

# NAVIGATING INTERSECTIONALITY AND RESILIENCE ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS FOR BLACK WOMEN IN EVENT MANAGEMENT

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Historically, black Americans have faced severe underrepresentation in corporate leadership, a pattern reflected in the hospitality industry. This disparity is exacerbated for black women, evidenced by their limited presence in higher leadership tiers. In hospitality, the intersection of race and gender compounds challenges for Black women in leadership. They encounter obstacles in obtaining, sustaining, and excelling in roles due to lesser support, limited interactions with senior leaders, and heightened microaggressions. The struggles underscore resilience as a vital mechanism for black women navigating workplace systemic barriers. The “bouncing beyond perspective” of resilience highlights how resilience aids in future crisis management and growth.

## ABSTRACT

Recent investigation has been given to the lack of women's representation in leadership roles within the hospitality industry, particularly within the event industry. However, understanding gender dynamics alone is insufficient in comprehending women's barriers to pursuing leadership opportunities. Adopting an intersectional lens becomes imperative as it acknowledges the intricate interplay of various identities in shaping individuals' workplace experiences. Black Americans have been historically underrepresented in corporate leadership, a phenomenon also observed in the hospitality industry, and for Black women is even more concerning, with evidence suggesting a disproportionately adverse experience compared to men. The intersectional dynamics of race and gender within the hospitality industry are particularly pronounced for black women at every level of leadership. Research has demonstrated that Black female leaders often face challenges in attaining, maintaining, and succeeding in leadership roles due to receiving less managerial support, having fewer interactions with senior leaders, and encountering a wider range of workplace microaggressions than their white and male counterparts. The documented challenges confronting Black female leaders underscore resilience being an idealized virtue for black women as they navigate structural barriers rooted in racism and sexism. A more recent conceptualization of resilience is the “bouncing beyond perspective” - the development of personal resilience at a particular moment catalyzes managing future crises, establishing a pathway toward the future that, in turn, supports the preservation and potential growth of existing individual resources. However, there is a limited understanding of how resilience relates to black women attaining leadership positions, and even more so within the event industry. Using the frameworks of intersectionality and resilience, this study aims to examine resilience as a facilitator for the achievement, advancement, and success of black female event industry leaders despite the challenges they face due to their intersectional identities. This two-phase exploratory qualitative study includes the thematic analysis of 166 responses to the exploratory prompt: *Please tell us about your work experience regarding any barriers to leadership roles, inequality, discrimination, or simply your experience, in general, working in the event industry* provided to members of an international event association. Findings highlighted the need for an intersectional approach to be applied to examining black women's leadership advancement in the event industry, prompting the development of the current study in progress. The second phase will utilize focus groups and individual interviews with black female event leaders during the summer of 2024 to investigate their resilience in achieving event leadership positions. A constant comparison approach will be applied to analyze the semi-structured interviews. Findings from this study will offer guidance to black women aspiring for leadership roles in event management, serving as a blueprint for their success.

## KEYWORDS

Resiliency; Glass Ceiling; Critical Race Theory



# REVOLUTIONIZING THE EVENT HORIZON: NAVIGATING SOCIETAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES THROUGH EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The event industry stands as a pivotal contributor to global economic and societal fabric, acting as an engine for cultural interchange, entrepreneurial innovation, and communal engagement. Despite its significant impact, the sector grapples with formidable challenges: environmental degradation, barriers to inclusivity for diverse communities, and an intensifying demand for personalized, immersive event experiences. The emergence of cutting-edge technologies heralds unprecedented opportunities to address these complex issues, though their integration poses substantial hurdles.

## **ABSTRACT**

This investigation delves into the transformative potential of nascent technologies—namely, Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Blockchain—to surmount these challenges. VR technology offers the promise of immersive environments accessible to an inclusive audience, including individuals with physical disabilities, thus democratizing event participation. AI technology is poised to customize event experiences to individual preferences, significantly enhancing participant engagement. Meanwhile, Blockchain technology is set to overhaul ticketing and financial transactions, bolstering transparency and curtailing fraudulent activities. Our research meticulously outlines the current societal and economic challenges afflicting the event industry, focusing on the environmental impact of large-scale events, accessibility issues for people with disabilities, and the demand for increasingly personalized event experiences. These challenges not only hinder the industry's sustainable progress but also affect a wide array of stakeholders, including event organizers, participants, local communities, and related businesses. Employing a mixed-methods research design that blends quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study aims to thoroughly examine the integration of emerging technologies in the event industry and their capacity to address these prevalent challenges. This methodological approach facilitates a holistic assessment of the technologies' effects, implementation barriers, and stakeholder perspectives. Semi-structured interviews with a targeted selection of industry experts, technology providers, and policymakers will offer profound insights into the practical deployment of these technologies, exemplar case studies, and strategies to navigate adoption obstacles. Furthermore, surveys targeting event organizers, participants, and industry stakeholders will collect data on the industry's current dilemmas, the perceived efficacy of emerging technologies, and barriers to their implementation. The proposed methodology promises a nuanced comprehension of how emerging technologies could revolutionize the event industry by tackling its societal and economic challenges. It aspires to furnish stakeholders with actionable insights, best practices, and policy recommendations to adeptly maneuver the complexities of technology integration. Through this methodical investigation, the study seeks to chart a comprehensive roadmap for harnessing emerging technologies to drive sustainable and inclusive growth within the event industry.

## **KEYWORDS**

Event Industry; Emerging Technologies; Societal Challenges; Economic Impact; Sustainable Development

# UNIVERSITY CLUB EVENTS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Student attrition is an ongoing problem for universities across the globe. Attrition has been linked to a lack of sense of belonging. Can engagement with events run by university clubs and societies build sense of belonging and impact student retention and success?

## **ABSTRACT**

Sense of belonging is a concept that has been positively linked to the experiences of event attendees, and also to student success at university. University clubs and societies engage with their membership primarily through events. In this study, large national events such as University Games through to hundreds of small networking and leisure events were run and attended by thousands of university students. The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of engagement with university clubs and societies via measures of student experience (including sense of belonging) and student success (including student retention, and employment after study completion). Primary data were collected in 2021 via an online survey with 389 student members of Australian university clubs and societies and 20 of these students subsequently participated in in-depth interviews. Secondary data were drawn from the Australian Student Experience Survey (SES) and Graduate Outcome Survey GOS and were used to draw comparisons between university students based on club membership and non-membership. Findings indicate that engagement with club events supported students to form friendships at university and develop a sense of belonging to both their clubs and their university. Students who were engaged with clubs and societies felt supported by networks and friendships, confident and connected to the university community, took on other roles, and became more active and engaged in class. Club engagement, helped students to develop work-ready, transferable and interpersonal skills; and this was enhanced if students were club leaders (Presidents, Treasurers, Event Managers, etc.). As a result of their club experiences students report they are more likely to continue with, and do well in their studies, and obtain employment in their field. Findings from secondary data indicates that students who are club members, on average, score slightly better than students who are not club members in student experience, sense of belonging and success factors, and these results align with the primary data findings. However, it remains unclear whether the results are due to the expected variance of sample and population results, differences in the sample or actual differences in student experience, sense of belonging and success. As such, more research is required to investigate these differences and corroborate the findings.

## **KEYWORDS**

Sense of Belonging; Student Retention; University Clubs and Societies

# THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARIS 2024 ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES AND ITS SATELLITE HOST CITIES IN ILE-DE-FRANCE

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**Karina Mukanova**, *Université Paris-Saclay*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The challenge of our topic is what social legacy will be left for Paris and its satellite host cities after co-hosting Paris 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. Our presentation will contribute to the ex-ante social legacy measurement during the preparation stage of Paris 2024 between satellite host cities.

## **ABSTRACT**

As the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has been systematically allowing their events to go beyond one host city concept, there is a need to study the legacy across those territories such as the upcoming case of Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (POPG). Therefore the purpose of our research is to study the social legacy of POPG by all host locations in Ile-de-France region (Paris, Saint-Denis, Saint Ouen, L'Île-Saint-Denis, Le Bourget, La Courneuve, Dugny, Nanterre, Colombes, Versailles, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Vaires-sur-Marnes). This study is of exploratory nature to develop different typologies of collaboration that exist between the host locations. The legacy outcomes of Atlanta Committee for Olympic Games and its satellite host organizing committees as well as the collaboration outcomes of co-hosting between multiple countries will be used to frame our results. The hypotheses of our study are the following: The organization of the Games will have a positive impact in terms of collaboration between satellite host cities; The preparation of this mega-event creates a desire to collaborate between satellite host cities; and Rivalries may arise between actors. This research is based on a qualitative methodological approach which includes semi-structured interviews with the representatives of host locations of the POPG in the Ile-de-France region. It also includes event planning documents from the City of Paris, the POPG organizing committee and satellite host cities. Preliminary results show that the relationships between the actors and their collaboration depend on their work themes (e.g. accessibility, transport, international delegation hosting). Collaboration tends to take place within the same organization (e.g. sport division with POPG division and/or cultural division from Seine-Saint-Denis department) or between organizations in the same location (e.g. the intermunicipality of Plaine Commune with the townhall of Saint-Denis) rather than with those of neighboring host locations. Collaboration is easier where several satellite host cities are located in the same area (such as the different towns in Seine-Saint-Denis). However, despite the desire to collaborate at the start of the preparation for the Games between Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis, many of these types of collaboration have not seen the light due to a change in priorities for these actors (e.g. health crisis, competition venue change). As a result, exchanges between the main host city and satellite host cities are less frequent, and low levels of action are observed, despite the good levels of understanding between these territories.

## **KEYWORDS**

Satellite Host Cities; Legacy; Co-Hosting; Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

# THE ROLE OF IN-PERSON EVENTS IN PROMOTING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN ESPORTS

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The International Olympic Committee recognized esports as a competing event in 2021, a significant milestone that increased its acceptance and popularity. Esports, competitive video gaming in a structured environment, has seen considerable economic growth. The global esports market, worth \$3.96 billion in 2023, is expected to reach \$5.43 billion by 2030. Esports presents a double-edged sword. On one side, it provides substantial opportunities for societal well-being, promoting community and youth engagement. Conversely, the virtual gaming environment is infamous for a multitude of social issues, including harassment, bullying, racism, and sexism, exemplified by instances of high-profile female players being harassed by online spectators. The anonymity inherent in video games appears to intensify these problems, particularly for children and adolescents who are susceptible to having their rights violated. This study aims to understand how in-person esports event experiences influence attendees' views and intentions toward diversity equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues.

## ABSTRACT

Esports, defined as competitive video gaming in a highly organized environment, has experienced substantial economic growth. The global esports market, valued at \$3.96 billion in 2023, is projected to reach \$5.43 billion by 2030. Esports presents a double-edged sword. On one side, it provides substantial opportunities for societal well-being, promoting community and youth engagement. Conversely, the virtual gaming environment is infamous for a multitude of social issues, including harassment, bullying, racism, and sexism, exemplified by instances of high-profile female players being harassed by online spectators. The anonymity inherent in video games appears to intensify these problems, particularly for children and adolescents who are susceptible to having their rights violated. This study aims to explore how in-person esports events can influence attendees' perceptions and behavioral intentions toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) issues. It seeks to shed light on how esports events can serve as platforms for societal benefit in terms of DEI, from the perspectives of various stakeholders. Drawing on relevant theoretical frameworks such as the Self-Determination Theory and the Theory of Generative Interactions, this research seeks to identify DEI issues within the esports community, understand their underlying causes, and explore how esports events can address these issues. The findings are expected to provide esports event organizers with a holistic approach to making a broader societal impact. The purpose of esports event design is anticipated to evolve from merely gathering esports fans to becoming a more inclusive platform where diverse DEI topics are addressed. This could encourage participants' intrinsic motivation factors such as self-consciousness, sense of belonging, and self-esteem, leading to behavior intention. This study contributes to esports literature by examining DEI issues, their causes, and the role of esports events in driving change. It aligns with the Theory of Generative Interactions, which underscores the importance of active engagement in fostering positive interactions. Practices such as community-building activities and frequent opportunities for interaction during in-person events can transform attitudes and behaviors, leading to a more inclusive esports environment. By advocating for DEI in esports, we could create a ripple effect that extends beyond the video gaming community into broader society.

## KEYWORDS

Esports; Events; DEI; Theory of Generative Interaction

# EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ATTENDEE SATISFACTION AT MUSIC FESTIVALS IN DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

There is growing dissatisfaction with music festivals in Dunedin, New Zealand. This research addresses this problem by identifying and analyzing factors that contribute to attendee satisfaction at these events.

## ABSTRACT

This research focuses on identifying and addressing factors that contribute to attendee satisfaction at the music festivals in Dunedin, New Zealand. Key aim is to provide event managers with recommendation to improve future events. A case study methodology is used as study focuses specifically on music festivals in Dunedin. Mixed-methods were used for collecting data. An online survey was distributed to past event attendee's using Qualtrics and semi-structured interviews were conducted with event managers in Dunedin area. Necessary ethical approval for the project were obtained before starting any data collection. Interviews were recorded with participants consent. Statistical analysis was performed on survey data. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was performed to identify themes. Survey results highlighted factors such as crowd management, security measures, overall ambience and atmosphere, venue and layout, food and beverages, and ticketing processes as the key factors of importance. ANOVA analysis was performed to rate these factors. The key themes from qualitative thematic analysis further emphasized the significance of these factors. These expert views further strengthen the key factors identified. Key results suggests that the organizers reputation play a key role, the theme of event is also indicated as an important factor. Organizer's responsiveness to feedback is highlighted as significant managerial factor. A key managerial recommendation is that an effective post-event analysis should be completed by organizers. Based on the findings it was suggested that organizers should look at variety of acts and performances, this may as well mean to often invite performers from overseas. A potential challenge with venues also emerged from this, where a recommendation is that there are venues available in the city if the scope of festival becomes larger and move from traditional venues was suggested.

## KEYWORDS

Music Festivals; Attendee satisfaction; Crowd Management; Event Ticketing; Post-Event Analysis

# **SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND RESOURCES REQUIRED BY UNDER-REPRESENTED RESIDENTS TO CAPITALIZE ON MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS AND THEIR LEGACIES: THE CASE OF BIRMINGHAM**

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The primary challenge addressed by the abstract is the inequitable engagement of under-represented residents in major sporting events within cities like London, Paris, and Birmingham. Despite the potential benefits of these events, individuals from deprived areas remain marginalized, with limited participation due to a lack of necessary skills, knowledge, and resources. This situation perpetuates existing inequalities and overlooks the opportunity to leverage such events for social inclusion and community empowerment. The study aims to identify and understand the specific requirements—comprising life skills, event-related knowledge, and access to resources—that these under-represented groups need to engage effectively with major sporting events.

## **ABSTRACT**

Previous research in event management has largely focused on identifying the general needs of individuals and facilitating their participation in major sporting events. However, host cities of major sporting events, such as London, Paris, and Birmingham, face challenges in ensuring equitable engagement among all residents. This is due to the presence of deprived areas within these cities, whose residents are under-represented and often marginalized in wider society. Recognizing and addressing the unique needs and challenges these individuals face is essential for mitigating existing inequalities. Therefore, this study aims to explore the specific skills, knowledge, and resources that under-represented residents need to effectively engage with and benefit from major sporting events. It will also assess how these three crucial elements interconnect and collectively impact the engagement capabilities of under-represented groups with these events. Guided by the strengths-based approach, this study employs a mixed-methods strategy, integrating the survey responses of 707 residents from 17 wards within Birmingham's underprivileged areas, followed by qualitative interviews for in-depth insights. The findings highlight the critical role of life skills—including interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and goal-setting—coupled with event knowledge (i.e., event planning and the event industry) and access to resources (i.e., transportation, ticketing, and business platforms), in facilitating effective under-represented groups engagement with major events. This study also explores the interplay among skills, knowledge, and resources, which is crucial for designing interventions and support mechanisms that effectively empower under-represented residents. It demonstrates that efforts to enhance one component (skills, knowledge, or resources) should be mindful of the others, ensuring that initiatives are holistic and address the multifaceted needs of these communities in the context of major sporting events. This research not only highlights the critical interplay among these elements but also proposes significant implications for social inclusion, economic empowerment, and policy development. The study advocates for leveraging major sporting events as catalysts for inclusivity and resilience in under-represented residents, through targeted support and resources. Recommended policies focus on fostering inclusivity, supporting skill development, funding underrepresented group initiatives, engaging communities in event planning, and evaluating the events' impacts on under-represented groups. These contributions aim for a fairer event management model, ensuring benefits reach all societal sectors, especially the historically marginalized.

## **KEYWORDS**

Event engagement; Under-represented; Inequality; Sport; Inclusivity

# CLIMATE IMPACTS OF AMATEUR SPORT EVENT PARTICIPATION – COMBINING LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT WITH MEASUREMENTS OF INVOLVEMENT AND BEHAVIOR

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Amateur sport event participation has been a fast-growing event sector over the last decades and is now back to pre-pandemic levels again. Amateur athletes prepare and travel far to participate in for example marathons, triathlons, or bike races. The preparation and participation entail considerable climate impacts related to the purchase of gear and services to perform at events, as well as transport to and from events. This transdisciplinary study assesses these climate impacts and relate them to amateur athletes' level of involvement in sports and behaviors.

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to analyze climate impacts of amateur sport event participation and to identify different segments of participants based on climate emissions. Their levels of serious leisure, frequency of event participation, and subjective well-being are used to profile the segments. Our understanding of sport event participants' climate impacts is growing, but often limited to direct impacts of hosting the event and transport emissions to and from the event destination. Moreover, focus has mostly been on elite sports and large professional sport events. The current transdisciplinary study extends our knowledge as it combines life cycle assessment (LCA) of event participants' consumption to prepare for event participation with measures of their level of involvement and behavioral measures. Participants of two large amateur sport events (a bike race and a half-marathon) in Sweden were surveyed (n= 1546). Their purchases of e.g., bikes, running and cycling shoes, training clothes, smart watches, and dietary supplements, in preparation for the events, were registered, and climate impacts were calculated using LCA. Preliminary results show that, for an average participant, running shoes (for the half marathon) and indoor bicycle trainer (for the bike race) are the individual items with the highest climate impacts. The latter cause impacts corresponding to the impacts of transportation to and from the event. Moreover, bike event participants, in general, causes higher climate impacts than runners. The analysis shows different dimensions of serious leisure that drives consumption and climate impacts. The empirical insights of this study can help event managers prioritize between strategies to decrease climate impacts, by targeting high-emitting items (such as indoor bicycle trainers and road bicycles) and high-emitting segments of event participants. One such strategy is to facilitate circular business models for reuse and renting, since close to 100% of all consumption linked to event participation is brand new items. Another strategy is to encourage less consumption of products in general. These strategies might conflict stakeholder interests of e.g., the sport retail sector and event sponsors, or the norms within the amateur athlete community itself but are vital in order to decrease climate impacts of amateur sports and amateur sport events.

## **KEYWORDS**

Climate Impacts; Participant Events; Serious Leisure; Sports

# REGIONAL FESTIVALS AS INFRASTRUCTURES OF CARE

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The benefits of festivals and events for community wellbeing are numerous and include the creation or strengthening of sense of belonging, identity and community. However, a problem exists in demonstrating the intangible outcomes of festivals and events and, despite anecdotal evidence of these outcomes, few frameworks exist to underpin any assessment or measurement of them.

## ABSTRACT

Festivals and events are of significant importance to regional and rural communities, both in terms of their economic contribution to local businesses and their socio-cultural contributions to individuals and communities in these areas. The benefits of festivals and events for community wellbeing are numerous and include the creation or strengthening of sense of belonging, identity and community. However, a problem exists in demonstrating the intangible outcomes of festivals and events and, despite anecdotal evidence of these outcomes, few frameworks exist to underpin any assessment or measurement of them. We argue that positioning festivals and events as 'social infrastructure' may be a useful conceptualization in this regard. While infrastructure refers mostly to physical structures and systems that underpin and support the economy, previous work has extended views of infrastructure to include those institutions, facilities, spaces, and groups enabling social connection. Such places include libraries, parks, gyms, community halls, and town squares. Such 'spaces of sociality' make up the infrastructure of social life. Festivals and events also seem to offer the ingredients required for a place to be considered as social infrastructure – they offer opportunities to catch up with friends, meet new people, undergo a collective experience and become more engaged in civic life. However, to date, there has been little research to assess the appropriateness and usefulness of this conceptualization of festivals and events. This presentation will outline our conceptual arguments for why we consider festivals and events to represent elements of social infrastructure and will discuss the benefits that this conceptualization may have, particularly with reference to providing support for, and possibly evidence of the individual and community benefits of rural and regional festivals and events.

## KEYWORDS

Festivals; Event Impacts; Community Wellbeing; Social Infrastructure



# **CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND EVENTS REPUTATION: THE MODERATOR ROLE OF THE DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

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**Lee Miles**, *Bournemouth University*

**Ahmed Abdullah**, *Abertay University*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Research on sport and events leadership has already shown that there is a relationship between team leadership and a variety of positive outcomes. There is, however, a need for more refined research on what kind of leadership is specifically required to deal with crises, particularly in sports events at the national or international level. Furthermore, research has yet to explore the role of distributed leadership in coping with the impact of a crisis on organizational reputation in sports events settings. Sports events environment has witnessed a significant increase in the number of complex crisis situations. As seen in the literature, there are two basic perspectives on the relationship between team leadership communication and organizational reputation. The individualistic perspective centers responsibility for the crisis on key people (such as a board members or chief executive) to prepare to, cope with, or/and reduce the possible effects of the crisis. However, they argue, 'inappropriate' people will respond to the crisis and may harm organizational reputation. The collective perspective, defined in this paper as "distributed leadership communication" emphasizes the role of the whole organization in countering any unethical practices by top management. Empirical evidence supports the importance of this "shared leadership" in deterring corruptive tendencies by providing checks and balances and hence reducing the potential for corrupt Behaviour. In the context of Situational Crisis Communication Theory, leadership is associated with a set of positive attitudes and interpersonal processes, including sharing of knowledge, promoting collective learning, and supporting less experienced members in a team. The distributed leadership role in creating cohesive teams can positively impact stakeholder' perceptions of organizational reputation. It would seem, therefore, that positive and effective leadership communication between team members in a crisis can be important in protecting against events damage.

## **ABSTRACT**

Sports events, plagued by crises including corruption, violence, drug problems, discrimination, sex trafficking, and more, have witnessed a dire impact on their reputation over the last four decades. This heightens the urgency for effective leadership to successfully navigate and manage these multifaceted challenges. However, we still know little about how team leaders shape behaviors in the sport events industry. Drawing on the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), this article produces novel theoretical insights and test a model in which distributed leadership foster conditions to minimize the impacts of crisis responsibility on the event reputation. Attribution of crisis responsibility, distributed leadership, and event reputation were assessed based on data collected at one time point over 2 months from multiple events of managers in Saudi Arabia.

## **KEYWORDS**

Crisis Responsibility; Distributed Leadership; Events Reputation; Saudi Arabia

# **LEADERSHIP-ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTERACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE MEGA EVENTS: RETHINKING THE CURRENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICES**

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**Katherine Baxter**, *Liverpool Hope University*

**Arnt Kyawt Ni**, *Liverpool Hope University*

**Yanguo Jing**, *Leeds Trinity University*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The cost of hosting Olympics, FIFA World Cup, Commonwealth Games and other mega events has rapidly increased over the last 30 years. Although the extraordinary capabilities of artificial intelligence technologies in bolstering contemporary organizations, we've yet to fully harness their power for facilitating events organizing committee and driving sustainable development in mega-event settings. We offer a comprehensive model of leadership-AI interaction and several directions for future research. This conceptual paper aims to encourage future research to emphasize the significance of AI technologies in facilitating the hosting, organizing, managing, and leading of mega events. More importantly, it seeks to explore how AI can replace certain human tasks to achieve high-quality outcomes at lower costs.

## **ABSTRACT**

Mega events have witnessed a significant development in terms of content, methods, system, policy, and funding alongside technology development. This study brings clarity to the role of leadership-artificial intelligence (AI) interaction by reviewing and synthesizing the current literature on leadership and AI technologies. We propose a new definition of leadership-AI interaction in mega events and suggest a model using particular questions of what leadership-AI interaction does, what it needs, why we use leadership-AI interaction, how we use it, what influences its use, and what benefits of its use. We attempt to answer these inquiries by reviewing previous research on the following variables: functions, perceived needs, reasons, methods, influencing factors, and outcomes.

## **KEYWORDS**

Leadership-AI Interaction; Functions; Needs; Reasons; Methods; Influencing-Factors; Outcome

# INVESTIGATING THE IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORT EVENTS ON COUPLES' RELATIONSHIP

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Iryna Sharaievska, *Clemson University*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

This study explored the effects of participation in sport events on couples' relationships. A qualitative inductive approach was adopted to investigate how participation in sport events either actively (e.g., running a marathon) or passively (i.e., spectatorship) impacts romantic relationships for better or worse.

## ABSTRACT

Despite the popularity of sport event participation as a family pastime, there is little empirical evidence on how participation affects couples' relationship. Previous studies have focused on either active (e.g., marathons) or passive (i.e., spectators) participation, and mostly assessed the impacts on individuals, family units, or communities. Therefore, this study aimed to describe couples' active or passive involvement in sporting events and the impacts thereof on their relationships. In-depth interviews were conducted with  $N=40$  cisgender and heterosexual adults who participated in sport events for leisure purposes ( $N=22$  active,  $n=13$  women,  $n=9$  men;  $N=18$  passive,  $n=13$  women,  $n=5$  men). Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit the interviewees. Participants were asked to talk about different aspects of their sport event participation in regards with their relationship. Data were analyzed inductively using a thematic content analysis approach. The analysis indicated substantial differences in the impacts of active and passive participation. *Active participation.* Some interviewees always participated without their partner because they considered their sport as their personal interest/time, and/or part of their identity that they did not want to share with their partner. Others stated that their partner was not interested, or their motives/participation habits were different which made joint participation difficult. Most of female interviewees indicated that their partners were more competitive which made participation less fun and thus, they preferred to partake alone or with other women. For some couples, it was an opportunity to spend time together in an environment that both partners enjoyed. All interviewees indicated that their partner was supportive of their participation and if they did not actively take part in the event with them, they stood on the side to cheer for them. *Passive participation.* Neither of the interviewees attended spectator events alone nor did they consider it their personal activity/time. For many, passive participation was considered a family outing, a family tradition that has been passed through generations, a way of celebrating special occasions, an excuse to meet the extended family, and an opportunity to educate the children. Some incorporated sport events into their family trips as a tourist activity, and some planned family vacations and weekend trips around big sporting events. Findings contribute to the gap in the knowledge on sociology of sport event participation and its influence, as a shared or individual leisure activity on couples' relationships. While previous research on this topic is inconclusive, this study suggests that active sport event participation, as individual leisure, may be viewed as an important part of contemporary couples' lives. Like previous research, couples in this study appreciated partner's support when it came to participation in sporting events, however, they did not strive to include their partner as an active participant because they viewed the activity as a part of their own identity. Implications for practice will be discussed.

## KEYWORDS

Sport-Events; Couples; Relationships; Active/Passive Sport-Event Participation

# **GOLD MEDAL ECONOMICS: UNVEILING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

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*Athanasios Strigas, University of Peloponnese*

*Konstantinos Koronios, University of Peloponnese*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The economic impact of the Olympic Games has been a subject of extensive debate and analysis, but a comprehensive study specifically addressing the event management aspect is conspicuously lacking. The paper aims to fill this gap by delving into the intricacies of "Gold Medal Economics," unveiling the nuanced relationship between the Olympic Games and economic outcomes, with a keen focus on the management of the event itself. The financial data utilized in this study spans both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games from 2014 onwards. Additionally, our analysis incorporates a forecasting of the repercussions on the French economy subsequent to the Summer 2024 Olympic Games. This research seeks to identify key challenges and opportunities in the realm of event management, shedding light on the potential for optimizing economic benefits while addressing logistical hurdles.

## **ABSTRACT**

The pursuit of hosting the Olympic Games involves multifaceted investments and aspirations, presenting both a significant opportunity and a formidable challenge for cities worldwide. This paper, aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the economic dimensions associated with this global spectacle, with a specific emphasis on the critical aspect of event management. The problem at hand stems from a notable gap in the existing literature a lack of a dedicated examination into how event management strategies influence the economic outcomes of hosting the Olympic Games. While extensive discussions surround the economic impact of the Olympics, a nuanced analysis of the event management component remains conspicuously absent. This research addresses this gap by delving into the intricate relationship between effective event management and the economic success of hosting the Olympic Games. The present study utilizes financial data that comprehensively encompasses both the Summer and Winter Olympic Games, commencing from the year 2014. This inclusive dataset provides a comprehensive foundation for our analysis. Furthermore, our examination extends beyond the retrospective analysis of historical financial information, as we incorporate a forward-looking approach by providing a forecast of the potential ramifications on the French economy subsequent to the conclusion of the Summer 2024 Olympic Games. This dual temporal perspective not only enhances the depth of our investigation but also enables a more holistic understanding of the economic dynamics associated with the Olympic Games. The significance of this investigation lies in its potential to inform and guide future host cities, policymakers, and event organizers in optimizing economic benefits while navigating the logistical complexities inherent in hosting such a monumental event. The economic stakes are high, with host cities making substantial investments in infrastructure, security, and promotional efforts. However, the impact of these investments on the overall economic health of the host community remains unclear, especially in the context of event management. By focusing on event management, the paper seeks to unravel the intricacies of orchestrating a successful Olympic Games. Through an in-depth analysis, the research aims to identify challenges and opportunities within event management that directly contribute to the economic legacy of the Olympic Games. The investigation draws attention to the need for a strategic approach to event management, emphasizing efficiency, sustainability, and innovation. Effective event management not only enhances the overall experience for athletes, spectators, and stakeholders but also plays a pivotal role in shaping the economic footprint of the Olympics on the host city. Furthermore, the paper explores the significance of sustainable event management, acknowledging the environmental and social responsibilities associated with hosting the Olympic Games. By understanding the economic implications of adopting environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the sustainability of mega-events. Through a detailed examination of the challenges and opportunities within event management, this research aspires to provide a valuable resource for stakeholders involved in planning and organizing future Olympic Games, fostering a legacy that extends beyond the sporting arena to positively impact the economic well-being of host cities.

## **KEYWORDS**

Olympic Games; Event Management; Economic Impact

# EXAMINING EVIDENCE OF A TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT IN MULTIPLE HOST COUNTRY CONTEXTS: THE CASE OF UEFA EURO 2020

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Evidence of TDE to date has been mixed, and the phenomena has yet to be examined in contexts where there are multiple cities or nations hosting a single major sport event. The current study responds to calls for more robust investigations of TDE across multiple jurisdictions, using consistent and reliable participation data. The purpose of our study was to examine TDE in the context of UEFA Euro 2020, which was staged across 11 different host European countries. To achieve this purpose, we utilize secondary data from the 2017 (pre-event) and 2022 (post-event) waves of the Special Eurobarometer Public Opinion Survey on Sport and Physical Activity to examine whether any population-level changes in sport/exercise participation observed over time are associated with event hosting and the level of success achieved by national teams in the tournament.

## **ABSTRACT**

Trickle-down effects (TDE) refer to an international sport event's capacity to inspire increased sport and/or physical activity (PA) participation in host and non-host communities. Outcomes of TDE include increases in participation frequency; participating in sport after a long hiatus; switching of participation between activities; and/or, an increased number of new participants in a sport (Weed, 2009). Several mechanisms have been identified that have been thought to underpin TDE, including event hosting, sporting success, and role modelling. Sport scholars and practitioners have proposed that sport participation can be stimulated through hosting major sport events. For example, recent evidence supports that there was an increase in sport participation in London following the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Moreover, it has been suggested that success at a major sport event could influence sport participation among the residents of the successful nation. For example, researchers have previously found that when the men's national team won a FIFA World Cup title, there was significant increase in German football club membership. Similarly, research recently found that there was an increase in leisure time physical activity among youth in hometowns of Canadian athletes who medaled at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. However, evidence of TDE to date has been mixed, and the phenomena has yet to be examined in contexts where there are multiple cities or nations hosting a single major sport event. The current study responds to calls for more robust investigations of TDE across multiple jurisdictions, using consistent and reliable participation data. The purpose of our study was to examine TDE in the context of UEFA Euro 2020, which was staged across 11 different host European countries. To achieve this purpose, we utilize secondary data from the 2017 (pre-event) and 2022 (post-event) waves of the Special Eurobarometer Public Opinion Survey on Sport and Physical Activity to examine whether any population-level changes in sport/exercise participation observed over time are associated with event hosting and the level of success achieved by national teams in the tournament. Two types of analyses are conducted. First, we assess the extent to which sport/exercise participation rates changed over time among the cohort of seven host countries for which comparable data were available in both waves. Each wave has a sample of around 1,000 adults (aged 18+) per country. Second, we conduct a comparative analysis of hosts and non-hosts to understand whether the magnitude of any change among the former group ( $n=7$ ) differs from the latter group ( $n=17$ ). Team performance is also considered in this comparative analysis. The data analysis is ongoing, and the findings will be disseminated at the conference. We will also present the case for interrogating previous iterations of the Eurobarometer that capture data on sport and physical activity in European Union member states to examine TDE in relation to a wider portfolio of major sports events.

## **KEYWORDS**

Trickle-Down effects; Sport Participation; Eurobarometer

# **SOCIAL MEDIA, MENTAL HEALTH, AND EQUESTRIAN EVENTS**

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**Raphaela Stadler**, *MCI Austria*

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Over the last two decades event outcomes have predominantly been documented as positive to continue their growth, foster positive feelings and semantic memories from attendees, performers, or competitors, or to satisfy stakeholders from an economic perspective. We must be more critical of events if we wish them to be useful for human and community growth. As event impacts are intertwined with our psychological, sociological, and ultimately our longitudinal physiological health it is important we examine them carefully and critically. This research begins to unravel the potentially uneven relationships and thus the problems in respect of social media, mental health, and equestrian events.

## **ABSTRACT**

Equestrian sport provides an interesting context in which to explore the connections of mental health and social media usage. Equestrians have been shown to engage with social media for knowledge sharing and community building. However, this can sometimes lead to the spread of misinformation and reinforcing boundaries and hierarchies within equestrian subcultures. The issue of bullying has come to the fore in the equestrian world in recent years, with the international sport governing body – the Federation Internationale Equestre (FEI) – considering implementing social media policies for athletes and officials to try and safeguard participants and reduce cyber abuse. Equestrianism is unusual in sporting terms as one of the few sports in which men and women, boys, and girls, compete together on equal terms at all levels of competition. Research shows that female equestrians were less exposed to gendered insults in the media, perhaps in part due to the lack of formal sex-based divisions. Equestrianism also provides opportunity for physical activity across the lifespan: riding is popular with both children and older people, particularly women. The reported prevalence of online bullying is therefore worrying in that it detracts from other, more positive, aspects of equestrian sport and exposes participants to negative experiences which may affect their mental health. We used convenience sampling to recruit equestrian competitors aged 18-65 who had at least one personal social media account (Facebook, TikTok, Twitter/X, Instagram or YouTube) and regularly posted or interacted with others' posts about competing in equestrian events (dressage, eventing, show jumping), we then employed a mixed methods survey (quant>QUAL) (n=229) to achieve the following objectives of the study: i) to establish whether there is a link between social media and mental health of the participants of equestrian events; ii) to identify the factors within social media that may contribute to a decline in participants' mental health and whether there is a specific demographic that may be more susceptible to the effects of social media; and iii) to make recommendations on improvements to support participants throughout their sporting events. Findings from this study provide insight into the ways in which amateur female equestrian athletes are using social media and the impact it is having on their mental health. As a new behavioral code of conduct for social media usage of those involved in all areas of equestrian sport are set to be introduced by the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) in the new year, identifying negative and derogatory comments as one area where the medium is being used negatively, there is a need to further understand the other ways in which the use of social media can be damaging to the mental health of equestrian athletes. This study therefore adds timely and much needed insight into the use and subsequent consequences of social media on sport event participants and has the potential to inform debates on the topic, which are currently ongoing within the FEI.

## **KEYWORDS**

Social Media; Mental Health; Amateur Sport Participation; Equestrian Events

# **“I NEED TO JUST KEEP RUNNING” – NAVIGATING THE FIELD IN COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EVENT RESEARCH**

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

While the benefits of using ethnographic and autoethnographic methods in event research have been highlighted by many, we make visible the complexities encountered in the field using such reflexive methods. We draw on collaborative autoethnographic fieldnotes from participating in a trail running event in Austria, and specifically focus on developing sense-abilities for the event when navigating the field in our different researcher positions. We argue that the complex affectivities, embodiments and atmospheres we encountered are not obstacles or limitations but rather provide new possibilities for researchers to explore previously hidden phenomena.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to critically reflect on the ‘doings’ of collaborative autoethnographic fieldwork in events. Ethnography and autoethnography have become popular research methods in critical event studies. The benefits of using these research methods in events have been stated by many, however, the intimacies and vulnerabilities of the process are rarely made explicit. When studying short-term, intense event experiences, immersing oneself in the field and becoming part of the event community is hardly ever a linear process. The complexities within the field are shaped by the rhythm of the event, the roles taken on by the researchers and the many decisions we have to make along the way: when and where to observe, how to behave, who to talk to and how, and what to (intentionally or unintentionally) leave out given that each researcher can only be in one place at a time. We draw on individual and collaborative fieldnotes from our autoethnographic perspectives in a community-based trail running event in Austria. The first author thereby took on the role of event volunteer, the second author participated as a runner in the event, and the third author acted as an outsider and critical friend throughout the data collection and analysis process. Building on this fieldwork we reflect on 1) getting immersed in the field, 2) attuning to the atmosphere, and 3) developing sense-abilities for the event. These methodological reflections allow us to make sense of our honest accounts of navigating the field. We uncover previously hidden moments of how complex affectivities, embodiments and atmospheres shape the research experience, and argue that these are not obstacles or limitations but rather provide new possibilities for researchers to critically reflect on the ‘doings’ of research and hence contribute new insights to the events body of knowledge.

## **KEYWORDS**

Reflection; Researcher Vulnerabilities; Attunement; Atmosphere; Sense-Abilities

# THEY CAME FOR THE NIGHT, BUT STAYED FOR THE LONG HAUL: THE ROLE OF EVENTS IN ATTRACTION IMAGE AND REVISITATION

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**Juliana R. V. Tkatch**, *UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Events often act as the initial contact individuals have with destinations and attractions. However, not much has been studied on the long-term consequences of these first interactions. When observing the industry, theme parks for example, have been hosting their popular seasonal events for decades, with a growing number of visitors attending such holiday festivities every year. Despite the obvious success in attendance and revenue, no academic empirical evidence has been established, including intangible and broader outcomes of those events that go beyond economic measures. Thus, this study is based on the premise that events have been found to contribute to destination competitiveness and destination image on a macro scale. It hypothesizes and aims to understand whether such positive effect is also true and can be observed in a micro scale, within attractions.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study proposes that events can have a positive impact on attractions competitiveness and attraction image, similarly to what has been observed within destinations. Both natural attractions such as state parks, and man-made such as theme parks that host events are studied. Considering the literature, it is possible to hypothesize that a first visitation motivated by an event can influence re-visitation. Similarly, re-visitation with different motivations, in this case to attending an event, can impact attraction image. Previous research indicates that events have been used for marketing and development of tourism destinations since the 19th century. Events can lead to increasing visitation, livability, and attractiveness, which contributes to destination competitiveness. Events can have a positive effect on destination image considering they help increase awareness and familiarity with the destination, while also reducing negative images. This is why this quantitative study adapted scales developed to measure destination images to measure attraction images. Further, it tests whether the proposed relationships through a structural equation model. A self-selected sampling technique was adopted. The data was collected using MTurk in April 2024. US residents over 18 years old who had attended an event in a tourist attraction, such as theme parks, national parks, and other tourist attractions were selected to participate. The attraction image was measured using an adapted scale. Visit intention used three questions. EFA was conducted to test the validity of measurement followed by CFA to validate the scale used for data collection. Data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and was conducted in a two-phase procedure. Results will be presented at the conference.

## **KEYWORDS**

Destination Image; Attraction Image; Event Marketing



# SEARCHING FOR SEX IN MAJOR EVENT CITIES

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**Michael Duignan**, *University of Central Florida*

**William Davies**, *Anglia Ruskin University*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

This study investigates the impact of major events like the Olympics or FIFA World Cup on the demand for sex work, exploring "situational sex tourism" where visitors engage with sex workers as a secondary activity. Literature reveals a divided discourse: some argue these events temporarily boost demand for sex work, supported by increased online ads and reports of sex trafficking. Others contend these claims are overstated, leading to harmful consequences for sex workers, such as displacement and heightened law enforcement actions. The debate suffers from a lack of concrete evidence, challenged by the secretive nature of sex work and data collection difficulties. This research contributes to the understanding of the relationship between major events and the demand for sex work by providing empirical evidence from an analysis of 18 major events over a period from 2006 to 2018. It sheds light on the previously underexplored area of "situational sex tourism," where event attendees engage with sex workers as a secondary activity. The findings indicate an increase in demand for sex work during major events, suggesting the need for policy consideration and intervention. This study is important for policymakers, event organizers, and law enforcement, offering a basis for developing strategies to address the social impacts of major events, particularly concerning sex-related human trafficking. It also proposes a methodological approach for future research into visitor behaviors, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the legal and social contexts of sex work across jurisdictions.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the relationship between major events and the demand for sex work, navigating through the complexities of visitor Behaviour, including that of business professionals, cultural tourists, and event spectators. Previous literature has identified a phenomenon known as "situational sex tourism," where visitors engage with sex workers not as a primary motive but as an ancillary activity. Despite the acknowledged existence of this Behaviour, the extent to which major events such as the Olympics or FIFA World Cup influence this demand remains insufficiently explored. The discourse on this subject is polarized. One perspective suggests that such events lead to a temporary increase in the demand for sex work, evidenced by a rise in online advertisements and anecdotal reports of increased sex trafficking. Conversely, critics argue that these claims are exaggerated and result in negative repercussions for sex workers, including displacement and increased law enforcement scrutiny. The debate is hampered by a lack of robust empirical evidence, partly due to the clandestine nature of sex work and the challenges inherent in data collection. Addressing this gap, our research utilizes data from 18 major events over a period from 2006 to 2018 to investigate the impact of these events on the demand for sex work. Our findings indicate a discernible increase in demand during major events, suggesting a need for targeted policy interventions. This paper will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing a more substantial evidence base on the topic and proposes a methodology for future research into deviant visitor behaviors. The paper concludes with a discussion around the implications of our findings for policymakers, event organizers, and law enforcement, considering the diverse legal and social landscapes of sex work across different jurisdictions. Our research also underscores the importance of developing informed and nuanced approaches to managing the social impacts of major events, particularly in the context of sex-related human trafficking and the global sex work industry.

## **KEYWORDS**

Major Events; Sex Work Demand; Situational-Sex-Tourism

# **TED Style Talks**

# THE STRESSFUL NATURE OF EVENT MANAGEMENT: A SCOPING REVIEW TO UNCOVER UNDERLYING CAUSES

Angelika Bazarnik, *University of Nevada Las Vegas*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Event professionals are ranked as one of the most stressful jobs, and most jobs ranked higher pose a risk of injury or death. Although the stressful nature of event management is commonly recognized, research on this topic is limited. Little attention has been paid to causes and ways of minimizing the stress levels of this industry. A scoping review aims to find underlying causes of the stressful nature of this profession based on current literature available.

## ABSTRACT

The events industry is rapidly growing and has a significant economic impact in many regions of the world. Event management is commonly recognized as one of the most stressful professions. This scoping review aims to identify literature addressing the causes, impacts, and stress mitigation strategies within event management professionals. The review will encompass all academic literature and trade publications, focusing on the topic. This review seeks to inform future research directions and interventions aimed at mitigating stress and promoting the well-being of event management professionals. A comprehensive search strategy was employed across multiple electronic databases and event management journals. The search results were screened for relevance, and eligible articles underwent full-text assessment for data extraction. Data was charted using an extraction form, capturing information on key stressors, the impact of stress, and mitigation strategies. Extracted topics were organized into categories to identify common themes and patterns across the literature, with findings synthesized and summarized in tables and visualizations.

## KEYWORDS

Stress; Events; Wedding Meeting Planner; Burnout

# ARE YOU READY FOR IT? CONCERT TOURISM AS A DIVERSITY STRATEGY: THE CASE OF TAYLOR SWIFT'S THE ERAS TOUR

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Denver Severt, *University of Central Florida*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Tourism and event spaces, at times, struggle with bringing in diverse clientele. The nature of some of these places tends to limit the tourists that find the location interesting. Potentially, the homogeneity of a narrow visitor base can result in economic and relevancy challenges while attracting a broader base of tourists can provide more stability and diversification in the mix of offerings. Thus, it is in the location's best interest to find events to host that bring in a diverse subset of the population. While there are many types of events out there to choose from, this paper suggests and considers concert tourism as a means to increase diversity to an area owing to the diverse nature of fans that concerts bring in. In particular, this paper approaches the problem through an examination of Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" as a case study.

## ABSTRACT

Concerts and concert tourism are a subset of the event industry ripe with implications for diversification of tourists to a location. Concerts, themselves, bring a group of people from diverse backgrounds and interests to one location, with many concert goers financially supporting the area hosting the event. Additionally, concerts span a broader range of genres and interests only furthering the diversification of visitors to the host area as compared to sporting events focused around one particular sport. This research explores the beneficial nature of concerts as a strategy towards tourism growth and diversification through a case study approach of Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" and an understanding of image transfer theory. The study primarily employs secondary data analysis with additional support from narrative and content analysis. First, the concerts are compared to major sporting events hosted by the same host city. In particular, this study compares accommodation demand (Airbnb) across selected sporting events and concert events to provide evidence towards the relevancy of concert events as a viable form of tourism growth and economic benefit. Then, the diversification of concert goers - with specific emphasis on Taylor Swift's fanbase - is discussed. Due to the diverse nature of concerts to a location based on genre as well as the general diverse nature of concert goers, there are opportunities for locations to utilize concerts as diversification strategies regarding tourism to an area as well as a means to improve destination image. Finally, the output of this paper lends support to the validity of concert events, such as "The Eras Tour", as means for locations to introduce more diversification to its population of tourists while also benefiting the local economy and subsequent destination image.

## KEYWORDS

Concerts; Image Transfer Theory; Diversity; Taylor Swift

# EVENTS, CRISES AND ELEGANT SOLUTIONS

Claire Drakeley, *University of Northampton*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Every day, events professionals are faced with critical decisions to make, often with limited or no time or information, limited resources and potentially thousands of stakeholders involved. The decision made can involve essential safety aspects as well as considering the customer experience and brand reputation, which requires the decision maker to draw on their knowledge and experience across financial, marketing, operations and strategic aspects of the organisation, using heuristics to make these decisions quickly. There are sadly thousands of examples where these decisions have failed such as Hillsborough, Manchester Arena bombing, Roskilde, and thousands of near misses.

## **ABSTRACT**

Given the importance and frequency of on-event crisis decisions, there is surprisingly little written about this kind of situational judgement. My PhD research focuses on understanding and modelling this decision process using behavioural economics, with specific application to the events context, to mitigate the risk of these situational decisions failing and the associated consequences. Exploring the challenges of decision making in practice starts with application of the Ecological Rationality Model to events and hospitality and considers the development of the Recognition-Primed Decision Model as a potential framework for supporting effective decision making. The research seeks to evaluate practitioner strategies, heuristics, and attitude to risk using a multi-stage, mixed methods approach. The research methodology integrates literature review, survey, descriptive statistics, regression analysis, Policy Delphi, on-event observations, and modelling in an iterative development process, intertwining qualitative and quantitative analysis to gain relevant, robust and useful insight to this core function of event management. This methodology reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of critical decision-making in the events context where, as research shows, we sit between art and science, matching creativity with order. This session will explore the context and methodology for the research as well as the initial findings from phase 1 (survey), initial analysis and the first iteration of the applied Ecological Rationality model. This session will give attendees an awareness of the complexity of situational judgement in events, existing strategies being used in practice, and the development of good practice models using mixed methods approaches. There will also be consideration of how this research may inform practice-based skill development for students, enabling graduates to be effective decision makers in complex situations.

## **KEYWORDS**

Decision-Making; Situational Judgement; Risk; Crisis management; Mixed-Methods Research

# LEARNING DESIGN IN EVENT MANAGEMENT TO ENHANCE STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY

Hibbins, Meg, *University of Technology Sydney*

Foley, Carmel, *University of Technology Sydney*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Students often finish their university degree with trepidation about the transition to employment despite having studied every facet of event management. Gaps between theoretical knowledge and practical skills required in professional settings can lead to feelings of uncertainty. Students may lack confidence in their professional skills and ability to create impact in the community, feeling underprepared for the complexities of real-world event project management. Event management is a field where professionals are expected to create meaningful experiences and make a positive impact on their clients, attendees, and communities. If students doubt their ability to create such impact, it can affect their motivation, job performance, and ultimately, the success of the events they are involved in.

## ABSTRACT

An important measure of the success of any tertiary education program is the ability for graduates to transition into successful, rewarding careers. Graduate attribute frameworks provide students with opportunities to develop and demonstrate a range of capabilities related to employability. In this paper we aim to demonstrate how work integrated learning design developed within a graduate attribute framework can enhance employability, by building student ability to contribute effectively to their professions and communities in ways that drive social impact, as well as confidence in their own professional skills. We will share with you the design of a practice-oriented capstone subject for final year students in event management, where teams of students collaborate to design and stage events. The student teams partner with industry and community on a social justice platform, creating events with social impact that influence community attitudes for positive social, economic and environmental outcomes. Students are centered in the learning design with student teams having ownership of their events, and teaching teams scaffolding the student learning journeys as 'guide[s] on the side'. Students report that the subject is a "rollercoaster ride" of creativity and excitement, stress and problem solving, hard work, and ultimately, pride and satisfaction. A work integrated learning approach influences, motivates and inspires the students to develop graduate attributes in the areas of social responsibility, communication and collaboration, creative problem solving, and professional and technical competence, preparing them for transition from this capstone subject to graduate employment. Our graduates in event management are the future leaders in our field and there is demand for their skills as ethical, creative, and agile thinkers with vision for new possibilities in a future of work that will continue to be disrupted by challenges and opportunities.

## KEYWORDS

Graduate Employment; Work Integrated Learning

# IT'S A MATTER OF TRUST IN AUSTRALIAN MUSIC FESTIVALS

Hibbins, Meg, *University of Technology Sydney*

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Edwards, Deborah, *University of Technology Sydney*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

On any typical weekend across Australia, festivals of all types are taking place, and in 2017–18, 82% of Australians attended at least one cultural venue or event. However, Covid-19 notwithstanding, the music events sector has been impacted by ongoing issues. Examples include the collapse of industry staple the Big Day Out, for which ticket sales plummeted when other less expensive and less cumbersome festivals entered the market; the award-winning Peats Ridge Festival leaving hundreds of performers and production crew unpaid; Wine Machine evacuating 11,000 attendees into a storm in 2019; and, tragically, the drug-related loss of six young lives following festival attendance in New South Wales between December 2017 and January 2019. These issues will have an impact on the trust that exists between the various stakeholders that support the success of music festivals.

## ABSTRACT

In the five years preceding this research, there have been global issues across the music festival landscape. Disruptions, failures of safety, irresponsible operators, and the outright failure of many high-profile music festivals in the past decade indicate that the continued breaches will damage trust in this sector. Trust is recognized as key to success in business. There is a need to better understand soft factors i.e., those which exist with the presence of people, in business/events, such as trust and the dynamics of stakeholder relationships, confirms the necessity of this research. This research explores the role of trust in the music festival sector. Trust is vital for organizations and enterprises, and has previously been studied extensively in management and psychology. However, in the realm of events, tourism, hospitality and sport literature, coverage of trust has not been extensive, and trust in the context of music festivals has received very little attention. Trust theory is used to understand the role trust plays among stakeholders in Australian music festivals. Data were collected via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with festival organizers, government venue teams, and festival suppliers, and analyzed using NVivo12. Key themes identified included the meaning of trust; the need for trust in music festivals; issues and distrust for the festival community; and the antecedents or trust builders for music festivals. Key findings include that trust is a vital and valuable resource in the music festival ecosystem. Two types of trust dominate the music festival ecosystem: interpersonal trust is evidenced through the willingness of stakeholders to take action based on the actions and decisions of another. Resilient trust arises cumulatively between stakeholders that produce satisfactory outcomes for multiple parties. Conversely, distrust occurs when there is a breakdown in communication and transparency. Distrust disrupts the success of music festivals in multiple ways. This research has implications for industry in that it is crucial for festival stakeholders to understand the importance of trust in the festival ecosystem. A reputation for trustworthiness means other stakeholders will want to continue to 'do business' with a trustworthy individual and their organization. Trusting other stakeholders supports engagement and progress in the event management process. Collaboration is the cornerstone of creating great festivals and festival experiences and so, trust is vital. New entrants into the festival ecosystem will need to invest in building the relationships for ongoing success and a good reputation. The study contributes to trust literature and establishes empirical trust-focused research in the event and festival context.

## KEYWORDS

Trust; Music Festivals; Stakeholders; Relationships; Ecosystem

# PROOF OF DISEASE-CAUSING STRESS IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

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Susanne Otta, *Any Colour You Like Event Management*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The events industry imposes higher stress levels compared to the average industry. This not only makes this sector unattractive for workers but also leads to more frequent and more serious diseases like depression and heart attacks. This represents, among others, a significant economic disadvantage. Based on a sample of over 1,000 people from event staff, we were able to prove both the higher stress levels in the events industry and significantly more diseases compared to the average population. Due to the large sample size and the distribution of person-related variables, the findings can be generalized for the Germany-Switzerland-Austria market; transferability to comparable markets like the hospitality industry should be reviewed in the near future. A particularly severe impact on the health of the respondents was identified. This means that the events industry as a major economic sector imposes stress levels that are endangering health. Accordingly, countermeasures should be initiated immediately.

## ABSTRACT

The events industry is a major economic sector with events-specific characteristics. These include, among other things, regular time pressure, as events usually take place on fixed dates and postponements or delays can be directly associated with high losses. In addition, possible preparation times are limited. At the same time, it can be observed over the past decade that set-up and dismantling times are becoming shorter and last-minute changes are increasing.

These characteristics justify the hypothesis that the events industry induces significantly higher levels of stress compared to the average of the economy. However, working in the events industry has been identified as a cause of stress with very little scientific proof so far. If this hypothesis is confirmed, it would inevitably raise the question of the possible effects of increased stress levels in the events industry. The follow-up hypothesis is therefore that the increased stress levels lead to an increased level of illness and to diseases that are known to be the result of increased stress dominate. In a mixed methods research design, the German industry (and the German-Swiss-Austrian respectively) have been studied in terms of stressors, resources, stress-levels and stress-related diseases. In an exploratory qualitative approach, twelve key positions were examined using semi-structured interviews on stressors and resources. Stressors identified were, for example, responsibilities and work areas, working methods and structures, a gratification crisis and unfair assessments as well as angry reactions, and not being able to clear ones head after work. Identified resources include variability and meaningfulness of the work, and good teamwork. In the quantitative part of the mixed methods design the identified stressors further included time pressure, not having enough time for family, friends, and/or hobbies, long working hours and overtime. Those stressors could be linked to elevated stress levels throughout the survey group. The average Perceived Stress Scale-level was 16,96 compared to 12,57, the average found in the general German population. These stress levels could further be linked to an above average occurrence of stress-related diseases like heart attacks, depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD), and Burnout Syndrome. Both the original and the follow-up hypothesis were thus confirmed. A particularly severe impact on the health of the respondents was identified based on a sample of over 1,000 people from the Germany-Switzerland-Austria region. This identifies a stress level in the events industry that is endangering health. Accordingly, countermeasures should be initiated immediately in order to limit stress and the resulting health risks. Limiting stress is possible either by reducing mental strain, e.g. by distributing responsibility among several people, or by providing resources, e.g. by providing personnel or technical assistance. There are also many other ways to reduce work-related stress.

## KEYWORDS

Events Industry; Stress; Stress-Related Disease; Stressors; Events



# CHEERLEADING'S LEAP INTO TRADITION: NAVIGATING NEW FRONTIERS IN BRAZILIAN VARSITY SPORTS

William F. Santana, *University of Florida*

Kyriaki (Kiki) Kaplanidou, *University of Florida*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The abstract addresses the need to understand the journey and impact of competitive cheerleading in Brazil from 2019 to 2023, mainly focusing on its role in community development. It explores the organizational challenges faced by cheerleading during this period and highlights its potential for broader acceptance within the sports framework. Through an autoethnographic approach, the study aims to uncover insights into the hurdles encountered by cheerleading, including event management issues and the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it examines how cheerleading in Sao Paulo has catalyzed community engagement and social capital enhancement. Ultimately, the research seeks to shed light on the positive contributions of cheerleading to local communities and offer valuable insights for policymakers, sports organizers, and scholars interested in sports development and community engagement initiatives.

## ABSTRACT

Competitive cheerleading has evolved significantly from a sideline activity to a globally recognized sport. This evolution is exemplified in a particularly prominent trend in Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest city, where the sport's inclusion in significant varsity sports events such as JUBs SP and the Sao Paulo State University Championship (CPU) in 2019 marked its rising acceptance and prominence within the university sports framework in Brazil. This study aims to explore the journey of competitive cheerleading in Brazil from 2019 to 2023, focusing on its impact on community development. Adopting an autoethnographic approach, the study delves into the firsthand experiences and insights of the researcher, who actively organized these events, to investigate the organizational challenges and milestones encountered by competitive cheerleading during this period. Cheerleading has faced significant hurdles despite its growing popularity, reflecting broader challenges in the action sports landscape. These challenges include event management, athlete participation, and logistical support. However, the sport's inclusion in national JUBs in 2019 and subsequent acknowledgment in the Olympic realm in 2021 mark pivotal milestones, showcasing its potential for broader acceptance. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic presented an additional hurdle, briefly disrupting activities within the cheerleading community. Despite this setback, efforts remained focused on addressing organizational issues, underscoring the importance of resilient and adaptable sports management strategies in navigating adversity. Beyond its athletic and competitive dimensions, cheerleading in Sao Paulo has emerged as a catalyst for community development and social capital enhancement. This sport fosters team spirit, cooperation, and mutual support, creating a robust network among athletes, coaches, families, and spectators. This network is characterized by trust, reciprocity, and shared values, serving as essential components of social capital. Preliminary findings suggest that cheerleading has played a significant role in fostering community engagement, strengthening social networks, and promoting sports participation, thereby contributing positively to the local community's social fabric. This autoethnographic research provides valuable insights into the intersection of sports, community development, and social capital, offering practical implications for policymakers, sports organizers, and scholars interested in enhancing community engagement through sports initiatives.

## KEYWORDS

Cheerleading; Sports Management; Community Development

# CHARTING NEW TERRITORIES: RETHINKING RESIDENT SUPPORT FOR SPORTS EVENTS

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Existing research often uses social exchange theory to analyze resident support for sports events, with a primary focus on one-off mega events. However, this approach oversimplifies the complexities of resident attitudes, particularly in smaller communities and in the context of small-scale or grassroots sports events. There is a lack of scientific insight into the dynamics of resident attitudes and support for these types of events. Recognizing the limitations of current research approaches in comprehensively understanding residents' preferences, concerns, and support for sports events, there is an opportunity to pioneer a fresh paradigm. Our contribution aims to address this gap by proposing new angles to a conceptual framework tailored to smaller community and non-mega sports events settings.

## ABSTRACT

The predominant theoretical framework guiding the examination of resident attitudes and support for sports events is social exchange theory, with a notable concentration on large-scale mega events hosted once-off in prominent global cities. However, this approach overlooks the nuanced dynamics of resident attitudes, especially within the tapestry of smaller cities or communities and the domain of grassroots or small-scale sports events. There is a significant gap in understanding resident preferences, concerns, and support for such events within this context. This research aims to address a dual objective. Firstly, it seeks to evaluate why the traditional framework of social exchange theory may not fully capture the complexities of resident support amidst the rapidly evolving global landscape, characterized by significant shifts towards sustainability and other contemporary concerns that impact sports events. Secondly, it underscores the urgent need for more in-depth studies elucidating resident attitudes and support for small-scale and grassroots sports events, which essentially form the backbone of the sporting event ecosystem in urban and regional settings. Acknowledging the inherent limitations of current theoretical paradigms and methodological approaches in studies on resident support, this research proposes the development of a novel conceptual framework. This framework aims to offer a holistic understanding of resident attitudes towards smaller community and non-mega sports events. By exploring the perceptions and concerns of residents, event organizers and policymakers can tailor strategies that align with community priorities, promoting greater social cohesion and support. Additionally, empowering residents in the realm of sports events and customizing event planning to suit local contexts holds the potential to create enriching experiences for all stakeholders involved. From a theoretical and methodological standpoint, this research presents a prime opportunity to transcend traditional frameworks. By embracing innovative solutions, it aspires to deepen our comprehension of residents' preferences, concerns, and behaviors concerning various types of sports events. In doing so, it seeks to facilitate more inclusive, sustainable, and community-centric approaches to sports event planning and management.

## KEYWORDS

Resident Support; Small-Scale Events; Conceptual Framework

## **Roundtables and Workshops**

# WHEN EVERYTHING IS NEW, WHAT DO WE DO? SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR NEW EVENT PROGRAMS, COURSES AND INSTRUCTORS

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Julaine Rigg, *Morgan State University*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The work of instructors is crucial because students' initial exposure to event planning as a profession has a strong bearing on their attitudes, learning, and aspirations. Still, not all student cohorts, courses, programs, and instructors are created equal. It is therefore pertinent to gain insight into understudied subsets to improve the overall experience and ensure the success of all involved. As hospitality programs that offer event courses endeavor to incorporate more practical components, they are oftentimes confronted by challenges, including a less-than-desirable student mentality and neophyte instructors who may have minimal exposure to events. This study will offer strategies to be implemented at specific phases to develop students' conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills, while maintaining a smooth pace, a balanced workload, a sense of direction and ownership, as well as a high level of performance from instructors.

## ABSTRACT

Instructors and students are often overlooked as event stakeholders because their contributions are chronologically detached from the work that goes into planning events in the industry. Both students and instructors must strive to invest the effort required to derive maximum benefit from event management courses. The work of instructors is crucial because students' initial exposure to event planning as a profession has a strong bearing on their attitudes, learning, and aspirations. Still, not all student cohorts, courses, programs, and instructors are created equal. It is pertinent to gain insight into understudied subsets to improve the overall experience and ensure the success of all involved. One such subgroup is that of fledgling hospitality programs that offer event courses. As they endeavor to incorporate increasingly more practical components, they are confronted by numerous challenges: a less-than-desirable student mentality and neophyte instructors who may have minimal exposure to event planning and management. For programs wherein a well-established culture of event hosting is yet to flourish and/or there are early career instructors who have not acquired an enviable event repertoire, what are some strategies that can be deployed to help instructors deliver a flawless course experience, and appropriately temper student expectations and earn their unwavering cooperation? This ethnographic case study will be underpinned by theories of competence, novice thinking, uncertainty reduction, and realism of confidence judgments. The researchers from two universities will interview two cohorts of non-event management major students who for the first time have completed an event course with a practical component. This post-experience study aims to investigate the instructors' and students' uncertainty tolerance, competence appraisal, and confidence assessment at the pre-course, in-course, and post-course stages, which serve as proxies for their mentality. It will also hone in on strategies that instructors may use to ameliorate the manifestation of the undesirable extremes of the above-mentioned spectrums while guaranteeing their own high level of performance. This study could not be timelier as the event industry is growing exponentially. Evidence of this is the posting of more faculty job openings for event management in the last year than at any time in the preceding 5 years. As more universities introduce event courses and event management as a major and seek to increase the number of graduates pursuing a career in the industry, it is prudent to delve into the dynamics of the student and instructor mentality to ensure a mutually beneficial experience. This study will offer strategies to encourage students to embrace perceived shortcomings to enhance their event management competence despite the budding nature of their event competence, department's program, or instructor's repertoire. This includes strategies to be implemented at specific phases to develop students' conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills, while maintaining a smooth pace, sense of direction and ownership, and balanced workload. Consequently, the effort of instructors could be channeled into offering value-added experiences that necessitate students who are fully engaged.

## KEYWORDS

Event Instructors; Courses; Challenges; New Strategies

# **COMPETITIVE COLLABORATION: STRATEGIES FOR TEAMWORK, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND EXCELLENCE IN EVENT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION**

*Jessica Wiitala, High Point University*

*Brianna S. Clark, High Point University*

## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Competition often triggers conflicts, necessitating a framework for effective team conflict resolution in educational and industry settings, especially given the imperative role of teamwork in the event industry. Presently, there is no known comprehensive framework addressing this need. The proposed opportunity lies in adapting the GROW Coaching model to team conflict resolution, particularly within project-based learning (PBL). The proposed approach aims to create a cooperative environment amid competition, addressing the overarching goal of minimizing inter and intra-team conflicts by adapting the GROW Coaching model. The unique framework seeks to promote a cooperative mindset within competitive educational settings, leveraging the benefits of competition without eliminating it entirely. The current research project strives to establish an innovative approach that accommodates competition within a cooperative educational setting, is suitable for various team-based project learning scenarios, and offers a framework if a conflict occurs.

## **ABSTRACT**

Team dynamics are an essential function within the event management profession, evidenced as core competencies by Meeting Professionals International (MPI), which identifies communication and working with project teams while promoting teamwork as core subskills of an event professional. Event planning requires collaboration. Furthermore, fostering a skillset in teamwork has been identified by the National Association of Colleges and Employees as preparing students for their careers, equipping them with skills to navigate the workforce, as such, team projects to promote the learning of student team dynamics and being effective group members are incorporated in academic settings. Due to the nature of the event industry, working in teams is often a more efficient and collaborative way of working, tenets of group learning. In addition to collaborative learning, cooperative learning also supports active engagement in group learning. Prior research on cooperative learning has found this approach results in heightened student engagement. By and large, the benefits of cooperative learning are well-documented and allow students to work together to achieve common learning goals. In a competitive business-like environment, some classrooms have the opportunity to provide a chance to cultivate teamwork and cooperation. Being cooperative and focusing on competitive activities are aspects of our social behavior. However, as a result of certain competitive approaches, conflict can arise. Group learning has been well-established, as are the numerous benefits for students as a result of implementing group work in higher education; however, there remain negative associations and attitudes by students and faculty alike. Cited among the greatest adverse effects on student motivation is conflict within groups. Conflict resolution techniques and training in team settings are essential to enhance the quality and effectiveness of collaborative practices among team members. Conflict resolution has been investigated through a multitude of lenses, including self-guided training, motivation, emotional intelligence, and the role of team mindfulness. However, limited studies have explored the GROW model, which, is one of the most popular coaching models, as it could relate to conflict resolution. The proposed solution transcends traditional approaches by envisioning the GROW Model not solely as a coaching tool but as a mechanism for enhancing teamwork dynamics. Through seamless integration at both operational and instructional levels, this study aims to equip students and instructors with structured frameworks for navigating conflicts and fostering excellence in event management education.

## **KEYWORDS**

Event Education; Conflict Resolution; Competitive Collaboration; GROW Model

# Posters

# THE EFFECT OF FLOW AND BRAND LOVE ON FAN'S BRAND LOYALTY IN SPORTS EVENTS

Evelina Avleeva, *University of Central Florida*

David Kwun, *University of Central Florida*

## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The challenge addressed by this study lies in the intricate dynamics between brand self-congruity, engagement, commitment, and their collective impact on flow experience, brand love, and loyalty within the sports industry. Despite the recognized importance of brand loyalty for the economic success of sports organizations, a gap exists in understanding how deeply fans' emotional and psychological connections with a brand influence their loyalty. This research explores the structural relationships among these constructs to reveal how they contribute to the development of brand love and loyalty among sports fans. Theoretically, it will enrich marketing and consumer behavior literature by offering insights into brand loyalty's emotional and psychological drivers, potentially advancing frameworks on consumer-brand relationships. Practically, empirical evidence will guide sports organizations in developing targeted marketing strategies that resonate with fans' identities and values, enhancing fan experiences and fostering loyalty through authentic, engaging brand communications and stronger fan communities.

## ABSTRACT

Many sports fans display a unique behavioral pattern while engaging with their beloved teams. As the popularity of sports continues to grow, sports organizations need to maintain more authentic and engaging brand management to foster economic success. Hence, loyalty among their spectators is an integral part of the overall success of sports organizations. Brand loyalty is defined as consumers' commitment to consistently repurchase the same brand products or services regardless of other brands. In sports events, brand loyalty is evident when sports fans have a psychological connection to their team, resulting in consistent positive behaviors and attitudes. Brand love is an emerging concept in consumer-brand relationships that robustly affects brand loyalty. It is identified as one of the main dimensions of consumer-brand relationships. Brand love is considered a genuine emotional relationship with a richer, deeper, and longer-lasting feeling rather than a simple preference or transient feeling for the brand. It is the degree of passionate, emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name. Customers encounter brand love through emotional bonding, frequent use, a sense of fit, and positive qualities. The concept of flow is related to the optimal state of consumer experience relevant to sports events' hedonic and recreational aspects. The flow experience as a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it at a price premium. Many people who experience flow also experience harmony and optimal experience. In the context of a sports event, flow experience refers to fans' immersion and full engagement while watching a sporting event that is intrinsically enjoyable and interesting. This study considers brand self-congruity, engagement, and commitment as the leading indicators of flow experience and brand love among sports fans. Individuals tend to choose products and services that align with their self-image. Self-congruity helps consumers affirm and enhance their identity or how they see themselves. In sports, fans can express themselves by supporting, consuming, or purchasing specific sports brands. Sports engagement is evident through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels. In summary, this study will examine a structural association between self-congruity, engagement, and brand commitment in the sports fan consumption experience and their influence on flow and brand love and, consequently, on brand loyalty. Addressing these relationships among identified constructs in the conceptual framework within the sports event context is theoretically and practically vital. The results of this study will provide additional insights into brand loyalty's emotional and psychological drivers, potentially advancing frameworks on consumer-brand relationships. Furthermore, this study may provide empirical evidence to guide sports organizations in developing targeted marketing strategies.

## KEYWORDS

Sport Spectators; Brand Loyalty; Brand Love

# **“WE JUST DON’T WANT IT IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD”: A STUDY OF INFLUENCES ON COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE F1 MIAMI GRAND PRIX**

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

During large scale events that garner major media attention, a major focus will be put on the host city and community surrounding the event. In addition, local community members will directly interact with visitors during the event weekend. In such an event context, it is critical for the organizers to cultivate community support for the event, in order to generate positive publicity and word-of-mouth, rather than negative backlash in the community and media. This work highlights the organization of the Miami Grand Prix, which was met with much controversy and resistance. First for its original plan to be held in downtown Miami, and later by its eventual host community, Miami Gardens, FL, located 16 miles North of Miami. The researchers interviewed residents of Miami Gardens to better understand their perspective of hosting the event.

## **ABSTRACT**

This project centered around community resident’s psychological processes in deciding whether or not to support a major sport event being held in their community, through a relational perspective grounded in social exchange theory (SET). In particular, the presentation highlights the organization of the Miami Grand Prix, a Formula 1 race hosted in the community of Miami Gardens, Florida. SET contends that residents’ attitudes and willingness to support such an event is dependent on their cognitive evaluation of the potential costs and benefits of the event. According to SET, residents will cognitively consider hosting the event in their community as an exchange that is evaluated based on potential benefits and costs. However, there are a number of context-related factors that can influence the cognitive exchange process. Based on a review of literature applying social exchange theory to sport and tourism development, the following additional influences were considered: Trust in key stakeholders, power dynamics in the decision-making process, and attachments to the community and event. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with five residents of Miami Gardens, FL. Interview transcripts were then coded in NVivo through a two-step process: 1) Values coding to gain a holistic understanding of how Miami Gardens residents felt about the event, and 2) line-by-line coding to identify potential patterns and emerging themes. These themes included determinations of support for hosting the event in Miami Gardens, based on perceived costs, benefits, trust in key stakeholders, power dynamics, and personal attachments, as predicted above. Additional themes that emerged in the interviews pertained to the transparency of the planning process, accusations of corruption among local stakeholders, and perceptions of the exchange of benefits between the event organizers and local community. Ensuring host community support for large-scale events is critical for the public image of an event, and experience of event attendees. Not to mention the altruistic or idealistic motivations for responsibly developing such an event, as research has shown that when tourism-driving events are supported by the local community, the event can be a memorable and enjoyable experience for both hosts and visitors, and promote sustainable community development. This presentation accentuates the importance of the relationship between event organizers and their host community, through the lens of SET. Finally, the presentation highlights potential solutions to community concerns presented in the interviews, including strategies for grassroots marketing and involvement of the community in planning processes.

## **KEYWORDS**

Event Host Communities; Community Support; Formula 1



# **CRYING FOUL: AN EXAMINATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SAFETY CONSTRAINTS AS A BARRIER TO ATTENDANCE**

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

After the 2019 season, Major League Baseball saw its overall attendance drop for the fifth straight year. In recent years, fan violence inside and outside professional baseball stadiums captured national media attention. Moreover, recent deaths and injuries from foul balls led to legislators calling on Major League Baseball in 2019 to extend stadium safety netting to keep fans safe. With Major League Baseball playing its games in empty stadiums through the 2020 season, MLB and its teams approached an uncertain 2021 season due to safety concerns around COVID-19, prompting questions about how fans viewed safety at events and to what extent safety predicted guest satisfaction. The outcome of the study hoped to provide new insights into aspects of leisure behavior not investigated and assist sport practitioners in better understanding their guests' feelings about safety and to what extent feelings of safety impact decision-making.

## **ABSTRACT**

After the 2019 season, Major League Baseball saw its overall attendance drop for the fifth straight year. In recent years, fan violence inside and outside professional baseball stadiums captured national media attention. Moreover, recent deaths and injuries from foul balls led to legislators calling on Major League Baseball in 2019 to extend stadium safety netting to keep fans safe. MLB and its teams approached an uncertain 2021 season due to safety concerns around COVID-19, prompting questions about how fans viewed safety at events and to what extent safety predicted guest satisfaction. Leisure constraint research has served as a foundation for examining and understanding barriers that prevent sport participation or consumption. A gap in constraint research has been the exploration of new constraints to participation, particularly guest safety. The study aimed to introduce and test an organizational constraint safety model to examine guest safety constructs as barriers to event attendance. The outcome of the study confirmed three statistically significant safety constructs as predictors of feelings of safety: Extended Netting, Flying Objects and Venue Location. Further, statistically significant interactions were found between "feelings of safety" and "good relationship with the team" and "poor communication by team" and large and significant positive correlations between "feelings of safety" and one's "satisfaction with attendance", "2021 attendance intentions", and the "likelihood of attending more games." The study's outcome shed light on new constraints to participation, identified safety constructs relevant for practitioners to consider, and the impact feelings of safety have on satisfaction, intent, and likelihood.

## **KEYWORDS**

Constraints; Venue; Fan Safety; Violence; Injuries

# EXPERIENCES OF MASS PARTICIPATION SPORT EVENTS: A GENDER DIFFERENCES PERSPECTIVES

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of gender in experiences of participation in Mass Participation Sport Events (MPSEs). A qualitative inductive approach was taken to delve deeply into experiences of men and women who participated in MPSEs such as marathons, triathlons, cycling, etc. Since gender is a prominent determinant of sport experiences, we explored how men and women experienced MPSEs based on their interactions with other people, involvement with the activity, and perceptions of places.

## ABSTRACT

With the tremendous growth in popularity of MPSEs over the last couple of decades, a line of research has been developing fast to assess different aspects of participants' experiences. Scholars have highlighted the significance of gender as a variable in shaping sport experiences. However, our knowledge of how different genders experience MPSEs is still limited. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore women and men's experiences of participation in MPSEs. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals ( $N = 23$ , men  $n = 10$ , women  $n = 13$ ) that participated in at least one MPSE such as cycling, marathon, triathlon over two years prior to the data collection. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants. Qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti was used to analyze the data with a thematic content analysis approach. The analysis started by inductive incident-to-incident and then selective coding. When the researchers agreed on the trustworthiness and consistency of the codes across all interviews, the triangle of activity, people, and place that define humans' experiences was used to organize the codes into categories. Finally, within each category, themes and subthemes were identified that explained gendered experiences of MPSEs. The analysis revealed that the interaction of activity, people, and place within MPSEs enhanced all participants' perceptions of their physical health and wellbeing regardless of their gender. This supports previous studies on MPSE participation experiences. *Activity* (i.e., sport) appeared to be "therapeutic," cleared participants' minds from day-to-day stressors, increased their self-confidence, and allowed them to challenge their physical and mental abilities. Finishing a race translated into overcoming such challenges and created a sense of accomplishment. No gender specific theme was found related to activity. The first theme related to *people* was camaraderie within sport communities that had several sub-themes: a-friendships were created, and/or strengthened based on common interest in sports, b-the hardship experienced in some races (e.g., difficult routes) provided opportunities for bonding, c-collective achievement encouraged accountability and regular participation. The second theme regarded support from family/friends outside of the sport circle: a-loved ones supported the interviewees' participation, b-race trips were extended to family/friend vacations. Two gender-specific themes were found related to people: a-women were constantly wary of men and feared potential sexual assault at races, b-women supported other women, but men were focused on their personal experience and competition. *Place* included participants' statements about the location of races and/or the course. Beautiful course, pleasant weather, and touristic destinations appeared to create enhanced MPSE experiences. Women expressed fear of "sketchy areas," isolated areas, and countryside. Both men and women were anxious about unfamiliar places, however, women's anxiety, again, related to potential assault which was not the case for men. Findings contribute to the literature on experiences of MPSEs, and help practitioners address gender specific concerns and create more inclusive experiences.

## KEYWORDS

Participatory-Sport-Events; Event-Experiences; Gender; Marathon; Cycling; Sociology

# **BLENDED TRAVEL BLISS: ENHANCING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND REPEAT ATTENDANCE AT BUSINESS EVENTS WHILE TRAVELING WITH FAMILY**

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## **PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

The research project aims to explore the phenomenon of combining business and leisure travel, known as blended travel, within the context of event tourism. Responding to the call for further investigation on this under-investigated concept, the proposed study focuses on understanding event attendees' motivations through the theory of seeking and escaping and self-determination theory (SDT). It aims to determine if offering blended travel opportunities to fulfill various motivations can enhance well-being, self-enhancement, and revisit intention. Specifically, the research will examine whether seeking or escaping motivations and self-determination motivations are key determinants of these outcomes. Within SDT, the study will assess if attendees, amid blended travel, can achieve flow and active engagement in an event program despite potential distractions from their significant other or family. Ultimately, the aim is to understand how the interplay between motivations impacts the overall experience of event tourists engaging in blended travel.

## **ABSTRACT**

Blended travel is an emerging trend in travel that involves an evolution of business trips extending to encompass leisure activities, blurring the boundaries between business and leisure travel. Despite its prevalence, this phenomenon remains largely unexplored in research. This study aims to delve into the multifaceted aspects of blended travel, shedding light on the motivations, self-determination, and experiences of individuals engaging in this evolving travel pattern. Specifically, the research will delve into whether motivations of seeking or escaping and self-determination act as determinants of well-being, self-enhancement, and revisit intention for individuals engaging in blended travel. A crucial aspect of this investigation lies in identifying solutions to optimize attendee satisfaction and well-being. By tailoring blended travel offerings to align with the nuanced motivations of self-determination theory (SDT) and the theory of seeking and escaping, event organizers can enhance attendee psychological well-being and self-enhancement. Customizing event programs to foster a state of flow, characterized by complete absorption and enjoyment, is identified as a key solution to ensure active engagement despite potential distractions. Furthermore, the integration of ancillary programs is advocated as a means to effectively address escaping motivations and promote a holistic experience. By providing opportunities for attendees to disconnect from their everyday environment and fostering well-being, ancillary programs contribute to the success of blended travel experiences. This research aims to guide event organizers in creating tailored blended travel offerings that strike a balance between various motivations. By optimizing attendee well-being and self-enhancement, these solutions contribute to the success of future events and enhance the overall satisfaction and well-being of participants. Through a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of blended travel and the implementation of targeted solutions, event tourism stands to benefit from the integration of business and leisure activities, fostering enriching and fulfilling experiences for all involved.

## **KEYWORDS**

Blended Travel; Event Tourism, Motivation, Self-Determination Theory, Psychological Well-Being, Self-Enhancement

# IDENTIFYING CRITICAL JOB PROFILES AND SKILLS IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY BEFORE AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The events industry necessitates a comprehensive understanding of critical job profiles and essential skills. However, previous studies do not adequately reflect the current state of the events industry, which is experiencing a resurgence post-COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, it is challenging to determine whether these skills are actually reflected in current job search activities in the events industry or if there are other critical job profiles and skills that event companies require. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the current critical profiles of jobs and skills across various job titles demanded in the events industry. In particular, by analyzing the similarities and differences between before and after the pandemic, this study will reassess aspects that have been considered important and identify new elements to be focused on to supplement and develop the changing labor market in the events industry.

## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic presented numerous challenges to the events industry's labor market. Travel restrictions, budget cuts, health concerns, revenue plunge, and job instability led to a painful experience for the events industry, such as cancellation or postponement of many events. The events industry's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic once again confirmed its direct susceptibility to changes in the macroenvironment. This implies that many event companies need to reassess the abilities or skills that managers and employees must possess to flexibly respond to the dynamic and complex event environment. The events industry necessitates a comprehensive understanding of critical job profiles and essential skills. Previously, there were few attempts to analyze job advertisements to identify the desired skills and attributes in the events industry. However, these studies do not fully capture the current state of the events industry, which is experiencing a resurgence post-COVID-19 pandemic. Recent research concerning skills, knowledge, and future perspectives required for events-related education programs after the pandemic. However, it is challenging to determine whether these skills are actually reflected in current job search activities in the events industry or if there are other critical job profiles and skills that event companies require. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the current profiles of jobs and skills across various positions demanded in the events industry, based on interviews with event professionals in upper management. In particular, by analyzing the similarities and differences between before and after the pandemic, this study will reassess important aspects that have been considered previously and identify new elements to be focused on to supplement and develop the changing labor market in the events industry. To achieve the objectives of the study, a semi-structured interview will be utilized. Participants will be event professionals in upper management (e.g., supervisor, manager, director) in the United States, who will be selected using both purposive and snowball sampling. After the first interview, future respondents will be identified through recommendations from the network of existing participants. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face or online individually, depending on the location of participants, and will take up to an hour. For data analysis, leveraging WordStat 9, the researchers will analyze the most frequent phrases. Additionally, cluster analysis will be used to identify patterns related to industry-specific knowledge. The analysis would reveal distinct knowledge areas and skill sets that vary across job titles within the events industry. By understanding these nuances, upper management event professionals can tailor their job position training and recruitment strategies. The study results will also help educators better prepare event management students for the workforce. The implications extend beyond individual job seekers to the industry as a whole, ensuring a skilled workforce capable of navigating its evolving landscape with the knowledge needed to thrive in this dynamic field.

## KEYWORDS

Job Profiles; Job Skills; Labor Market; Events Industry

# **Video-Documentary**

# IN THEIR SHOES: EXPERIENCING AN EVENT AS A PERSON WITH DISABILITY

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## PROBLEM / OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Have you ever imagined how attendees experience your event if they are blind or deaf? Event management students had an experiential learning opportunity that showed them firsthand, shifting their perspectives on how events should be planned. The CDC estimates that 1 in every 4 adults in the U.S. lives with some type of disability. Hearing and vision disabilities together represent almost 11% of all disabilities, similar to cognitive and mobility disabilities. As the population ages, is forecasted that 82 million U.S. residents will live with a disability by 2040. These individuals are part of the workforce and constantly attend conferences and other professional and leisure events. Thus, it is important to understand their needs and plan events that consider their experiences, going beyond the ADA physical requirements. This action research answers a call for a culture of inclusion, proposing an educational activity promoting experiential learning among future decision-makers.

## ABSTRACT

This study adopted critical reflection participatory action research. As future event planners, the event management students participating in this research were led to critically reflect on their role as professionals responsible for improving accessibility practices currently observed in the industry. Critical reflection encourages action and change, and is connected to interactivity and academic achievement. Event management students from a U.S. public university participated in a workshop about accessibility. Upon arrival, they were assigned to experience the event as blind or deaf, either wearing blindfolds or noise-canceling headphones, so they could experience what a person with these disabilities would face in a similar event. Different speakers either catered to disability needs or not. The first speaker did not use any accessibility resources. The second speaker incorporated best practices such as verbal descriptions and captions. The demonstrations were made purposefully to demonstrate to the students how minor changes can make a remarkable difference in the experience of people with disabilities at an event. At the end of the event, students answered three open-ended questions. They were required to describe their feelings and thoughts, discuss a deeper understanding of the significance or relevance of the issue, and finally, reflect on the future impact of the learnings on their thinking and behaviors. The results of this study contribute to the academic knowledge in participatory action research within the event management field. Further, it advances the understanding of event experience among individuals with disabilities. Pedagogically, this research is a replicable example of experience learning recognized as a recommended teaching strategy for applied learning. Managerially, the study contributes to the development of a new generation of event managers who are sensitive to the needs of the population with disabilities and are likely to improve their future events.

## KEYWORDS

Event Management; Education; Disability; Inclusion; Experience