



What about the event? How do tourism leveraging strategies affect small-scale events?



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Leveraging strategies' effects vary with event size.
- Grant funding that encourages tourism leveraging diverts attention from events' core purpose.
- Effects of tourism leveraging strategies are contingent on event-related factors.
- Collaboration between tourism organisations and event managers is critical.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 12 July 2016

Received in revised form

7 September 2017

Accepted 8 September 2017

Keywords:

Event leverage

Small-scale events

Tourism gain

Contingency theory

Event managers

ABSTRACT

This study draws on contingency theory to investigate whether tourism leveraging strategies designed for mega-events are applicable to small-scale events. In-depth interviews conducted with eight event managers of small-scale events revealed that the managers perceived grant funding offered to promote tourism leveraging to be a diversion from the core purpose of staging the event. Restrictions on grant funding directed the event managers' focus to increasing the number of tourists and their length of stay and their spending in the destination. While event managers acknowledged that engaging in tourism leveraging expanded the event's target markets and increased the size of the event, they believed that tourism operators were the key beneficiaries of the leveraging. Mutual benefits between event and tourism organisations occurred when the funding partner(s) and the event collaborated. A grounded theory model was developed to show the impact of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events. The findings are consistent with the tenets of contingency theory, which suggest that managerial solutions are not automatically scalable.

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1. Introduction

The utility of deriving tourism benefits from hosting events has long been acknowledged (Burns, Hatch, & Mules, 1986; Chalip, 2004; Getz, 2007, 2008; Mules & Faulkner, 1996). The tourism benefits flowing from hosting events are multifaceted and include destination competitiveness from offering a diversified tourism product (Getz, 2007, 2008; Sant, Mason, & Hinch, 2013), upgraded event facilities and transportation infrastructure (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2005; Hiller, 2000), and an increased influx of visitors (Mules & Faulkner, 1996). Further, event tourists whose primary motivation is to attend or participate in an event spend more, stay longer

in the destination, and often travel in a group, suggesting that event tourists are a lucrative target market (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Tang & Turco, 2001; Yoon, Spencer, Holecek, & Kim, 2000).

While tourism benefits from events were initially expected as a matter of course (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Shipway, 2007), recent research has suggested that the outcomes of events are maximised only if strategies are designed to reach the stated tourism objectives (Chalip, 2014). Ensuring maximum gain from an event is known as "event leverage" (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007a), and focuses on the strategies used to achieve the stated outcomes (Chalip, 2004; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007a). Destinations seek to leverage events to secure a competitive advantage in the marketplace and to achieve destination goals (Jago, Dwyer, Lipman, van Lill, & Vorster, 2010). For example, destination marketers can use leverage to optimise limited resources (Hall, 2009; Kellett, Hede, & Chalip, 2008; Stokes & Jago, 2007), distribute benefits of the event over a wider area

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(Fairley & Kelly, *in press*; Fairley, Cardillo, & Filo, 2016; Kellett et al., 2008), or create opportunities for local businesses and stakeholders to benefit from and create associations with the event (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Chalip & Leyns, 2002).

Much of our knowledge of event leverage is based on research regarding mega-events such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Boukas, Ziakas, & Boustras, 2012; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Grix, 2012; Karadakis, Kaplanidou, & Karlis, 2010; Smith, 2014; Tichaawa & Bob, 2015; Tripodi & Hiron, 2009), and to a lesser extent hallmark and regional events (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; O'Brien, 2007; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007b). However, destinations and tourism organisations adopt event leveraging strategies into their marketing mix for events of all scales. While Higham (1999) notes the relative benefits of hosting small-scale events over mega-events, little research has examined the effects of leveraging strategies on small-scale events. Chalip (2017) suggests that instead of one-size-fits-all thinking, leveraging strategies should be designed specifically to target a particular host destination.

Chalip's (2017) proposition compares to the principles of contingency theory. Contingency theory suggests that a specific strategy cannot be applied to all circumstances and organisations with the expectation of similar results (Otley, 1992), and particularly with respect to organisations of different sizes (Neilsen, 1974). Thus, the tenets of contingency theory would suggest that leveraging strategies devised for mega-events may not be appropriate for small-scale events. While leveraging strategies for a mega-event are not likely to affect the event itself, use of those same strategies for small-scale events may have consequences for the event, and by extension affect the optimisation of tourism outcomes. Therefore, this study uses contingency theory to explore the impact of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events.

2. Literature review

2.1. Event leverage

Leveraging theory has its antecedents in the disciplines of strategic management (Collis & Montgomery, 1995) and finance (Misener, 2015). Event leverage is a strategic and proactive approach for formulating, maximising, and distributing the potential benefits from an event (Chalip, 2000, 2004, 2014; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Kellett et al., 2008). Specifically, event leverage is "the phenomenon of strategically planning for the maximization of both short-term and long-term event outcomes" (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007a, p. 297). This approach views events as the "seed capital" from which further benefits are derived (O'Brien, 2006, p. 258). The benefits from events can be economic or business (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; O'Brien, 2006), social or community (Kellett et al., 2008; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007b), sport participation (Misener, 2015; Weed et al., 2015), or tourism (O'Brien, 2006). While events can be leveraged for a multitude of reasons (cf., Smith, 2014), we focus on the leveraging of events for tourism gain.

2.2. Leveraging events for tourism gain

Events have been touted as a useful means of generating tourism in destinations (Boukas et al., 2012; Chalip, 2000, 2002; Getz, 2008; O'Brien, 2007; Ziakas, 2014b), and a growing body of literature has highlighted the tourism benefits associated with leveraging events (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Chalip, 2002, 2004; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Kellett et al., 2008; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007a). Destinations therefore employ leveraging strategies to maximise the event's tourism impact (Ziakas, 2010, 2013, 2014b; Getz, 2007, 2008; Ziakas & Costa, 2011a, 2011b).

Much of the work on event leveraging for tourism gain has been based on mega-events (Chalip, 2000, 2002; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Kellett et al., 2008; O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006). The first explicit use of event leveraging for tourism gain was Australia's attempt to capitalise on the projected gains from the hosting of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games (Chalip, 2002; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; O'Brien, 2006). However, not all large scale events are successfully leveraged successfully for tourism gain (cf., Agha, Fairley, & Gibson, 2012).

Although research has focused on the benefits from leveraging mega-events, it may be useful to consider the potential benefits that could be obtained from leveraging small-scale events. According to Higham (1999) small-scale events can be more advantageous to host destinations as they often operate within existing infrastructure, require minimal public investment, and avoid crowding and congestion that is often associated with mega-events. Destinations have sought to leverage events of all sizes, with the anticipation of similar success. However, despite destinations' adoption of event-leveraging strategies, negligible research has examined leveraging theory in the context of small-to medium-scale events (Misener, 2015). Drawing on contingency theory, this study examines the applicability of tourism leveraging strategies devised for mega-events to small-scale events.

2.3. Contingency theory

Contingency theory was developed as a response to criticisms of other managerial theories that were believed to make universalist assumptions (Luthans, 1973). Contingency theory (Burns & Stalker, 1961) posits that no managerial solution is equally suited to all organisations in all circumstances (Otley, 1992), as the components of a solution or strategy depend on the specific circumstances of the organisation (Otley, 1992; Van de Ven & Drizin, 1984). In particular, the situational factors and environment in which a managerial solution is applied must be considered (Luthans, 1973). There are four key tenets of contingency theory. Contingency theory postulates that there is no single or universal strategy to address management challenges; and that the design and management of an organisation and its subsystem must 'fit' or rely on the interplay between the environment. Further, contingency theory suggests that clear-cut and formal differentiation of subsystems is necessary to achieve optimal performance; and the needs of an organisation are better satisfied when the prevailing conditions or environment are assessed. These tenets are then used to assess the most appropriate approach to resolve a challenge (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Luthans, 1973).

Thus, contingency theory posits that the application of managerial processes or solutions in varying situations may lead to varying results (Schreyögg, 1980). One situational influencer of a managerial solution's effectiveness is the size of the business or organisation (Neilsen, 1974). Small businesses obviously differ from their larger counterparts in scale and scope, and as a result strategies designed for one size of business do not perform similar to a business of a different size (Shenhar, 2001). Thus, tourism leveraging strategies devised for mega-events are not likely to be equally applicable to small-scale events. Therefore, contingency theory can be usefully applied to understand the environmental, situational, and management considerations that influence the leveraging of small-scale events. Understanding the impact of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events will provide insight for event managers and policymakers as they devise leveraging strategies to optimise tourism outcomes.

3. Method

3.1. Qualitative approach

As little is known about the impact of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events, a qualitative method was used. A qualitative method is appropriate as there are no preconceived notions (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of how tourism leveraging affects small-scale events. To understand the impact of event leveraging strategies on small-scale events, face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with eight event managers across seven events. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents (Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002a). All of the events were located within the same geographic region in Australia, and received funding from a tourism organisation that was specifically for tourism generation around events. The specific grants provided by the state DMO are available to events that occur within regional areas within the state. The criteria for the grants are based on tourism objectives. Events are also able to access grants from the local council; however, the criteria for council grants are based on showcasing or building capital within the local community, rather than generating tourism. The grants from the tourism organisation are awarded on the basis of a competitive application process and have strict directives as to how the funds can be spent. The events included one arts and cultural event, one food festival, two music festivals, and three sport events. The event managers from each event were identified and contacted to determine their willingness to share their experiences around leveraging their events for tourism gain.

In-depth interviews are a powerful means to comprehend the viewpoints of respondents (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To understand the impact of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events, semi-structured interview questions were developed to guide the interviews (Yeo et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). These items included “Please describe how your event is leveraged for tourism gain,” “How does your event benefit the region’s tourism?” and “How have tourism leveraging strategies influenced or impacted your event?” The items provided the opportunity to probe and explicate the subject under investigation (Neuman, 2012; Yeo et al., 2014). The interviews ranged from 50 to 90 min, and each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Small sample sizes are appropriate in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002a; Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant, & Rahim, 2014). While there are no strict rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002b), the seven events represent events within a particular destination that received tourism grant funding through a particular initiative of a tourism organisation. Further, the sample size is consistent with McCracken (1988) who suggests that eight interviews are sufficient for the generation of themes and categories in qualitative research. Data saturation was reached as no new information was gained in the last interview.

3.2. Data analysis

An inductive process was used to identify themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). On completion of the data collection the two authors read the transcripts several times to become familiar with the data. Data were coded independently by each author to enhance reliability and then the authors conferred to refine the themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Consistent with the process of constant comparison, thematic coding was used to develop concepts and themes from the interview data through a process of open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Open coding was used to identify overarching themes relating to the impact of leveraging strategies on small-scale events, thus allowing the

authors to focus on the core phenomenon. Axial coding then followed, relating concepts/categories to each other by exploring causal conditions, identifying the context and intervening conditions, and delineating the consequences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). Selective coding further refined the relationships and interrelationships among the codes.

The authors conferred until there was mutual agreement on themes and theme names. The authors referred to the raw data when disagreements occurred. To illustrate the coding process, one author developed a theme titled *grant funding as a diversion for event managers*. The other author developed a similar code titled *restrictions on grant funding excludes core activities*. When both authors convened to discuss the results, it was decided that this theme could best be described as *restrictions on funding as a diversion from core business*. The logic behind the coding example is further elaborated in Fig. 1. The results were used to develop a grounded theory model of how small-scale events are affected by tourism leveraging.

4. Results

From the coding process, the ways in which tourism leveraging strategies have an impact on small-scale events emerged in six key themes: the primary purpose of the event, adopting a tourism agenda, restrictions on funding as a diversion from core business, collaboration with funding partners, expanded event agenda, and beneficiaries of tourism outcomes. Below, we discuss each theme and illustrate it with representative quotations. Pseudonyms protect the identity of the event managers. Further, the results were used to develop a grounded theory model, which can be seen in Fig. 2.

4.1. The primary purpose of the event

Event managers consistently noted that the primary purpose of each event related to the interest or subculture that sparked the event’s original activity or core. For example, the manager of an ocean swimming event stated, “We’re really passionate about ocean swimming. That’s why [the event] started, to get more people ocean swimming. To grow the sport” (Daniel). A manager of an active lifestyle event suggested, “Our main goal is around creating healthy lifestyles and promoting health and fitness” (Leah). Similarly, the manager of a surfing event stated:

[The event] brings people to [the destination]. Part of the purpose is to bring surfers here to enjoy the experience. The event ... was primarily, in my mind, positioned first and foremost as something by surfers, for surfers, to celebrate the fact that you can still [surf] Appreciate the environment, respect the environment and honour what’s gone before. All these aspects [make] this ... a culture, it’s not just a sport. (Paul)

Note that in the quote above, the event manager began by discussing the benefit of the event for tourism – it brings people to the destination. However, the event manager then goes on to highlight that the event is not inherently about tourism, but about celebrating the subculture of surfing. The event manager himself is an insider in the subculture of surfing and created the event as an opportunity for the surfing community to celebrate the activity. Indeed, most of the events were founded by individuals who had a specific interest in the activity the event featured. For example, a food event in the region was established by an organic farmer. She stated:

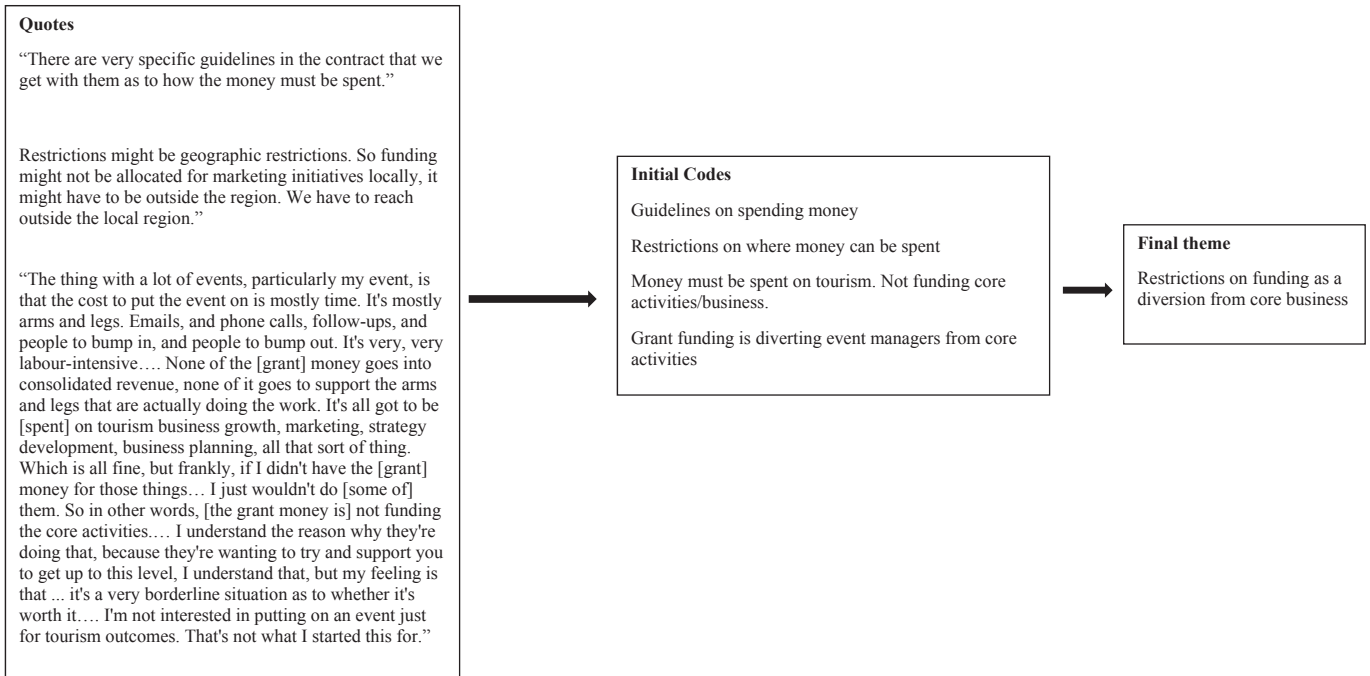


Fig. 1. Coding example.

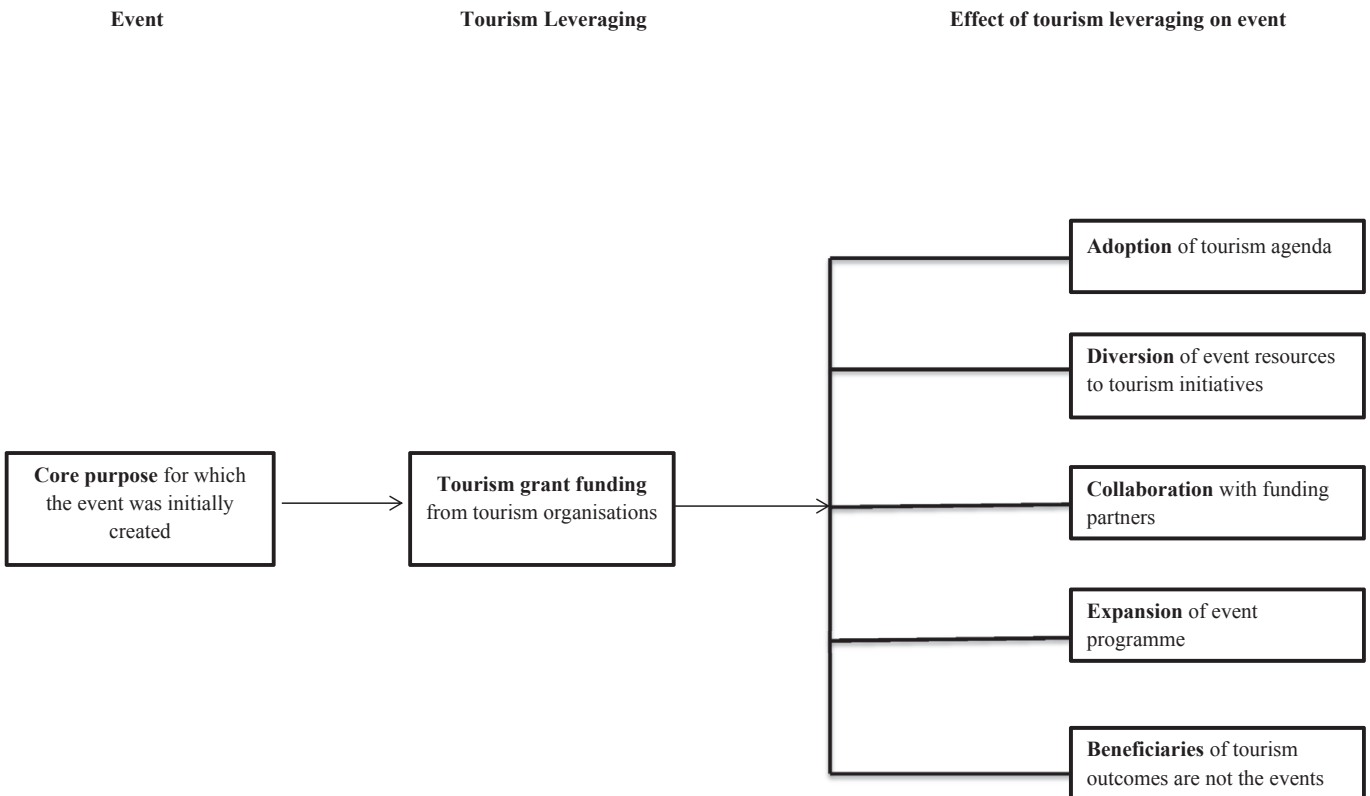


Fig. 2. Effects of tourism leveraging strategies on small-scale events.

I ran an organic farm for quite a while, and I was involved with a lot of regional initiatives around this area. I became very aware that local food and food producers generally needed to get some support. It was really about supporting our local food producers. I started looking at what I could do ... to make a difference....

What made sense to me was to have an event that brought everyone together from the food supply chain, so I know it's not tourism-specific, but it's where it [the event] kind of came from We [the event] celebrate food in the local region; from farm

to table, paddock to plate, seed to sauté pan, whatever you want to call it. (Judy)

Thus, the event originated primarily to support and celebrate local food producers and their product. Similarly, the manager of an arts and culture event noted that the main purpose of the event was to provide unique experiences in the genre. She stated:

Per se I don't care about tourism. It's not the driver. The driver is to bring a wonderful product to the town, so the major driver is that we can bring fabulous events, fantastic performances, wonderful artists, amazing theatre experiences into [the destination] and the by-product is that the tourism trade benefits. Really what we're saying is that by producing this wonderful event which is a multi-cultural arts event – there's very few national events like us in Australia – it's quite a unique kind of event. That has always been the initial, primary, strategic objective, and so in that respect, we are slightly different [from] some other events who see themselves primarily as being strongly a tourism driver. (Janice)

In the above quote, the event manager repeatedly stressed that the most important purpose of the event was not tourism. Instead, the event was about celebrating the arts, with tourism as a by-product of hosting the event.

In summary, event managers emphasised that the primary purpose of their event was about parading and celebrating a particular activity. The activity was an interest that the event manager was passionate about.

4.2. *Adopting a tourism agenda*

While the principal purpose of each event was to celebrate a particular activity, all of the event managers referred to the need for external funding to ensure the financial viability of their events. One event manager put it this way:

Events are expensive to run. We need [financial] support to be able to deliver the event to the standard that people are expecting, to make sure that we get repeat visitation and [that] we're attracting new people to the market as well. (Leah)

The availability of grants from tourism organisations offered one source of funding for events. Event managers noted that tourism funding was particularly relevant given their regional location:

Any event or activity that is held in a regional area needs to draw participants from the main population source, which in essence is tourism If the same event is held in a metro area we do not need to employ any tourism principles to drive participation. Funding is considered when developing a concept, but only as one of many revenue streams. (Daniel)

Although the events often were held principally to celebrate a particular aspect of the region, to secure grants from tourism organisations event managers needed to frame their event in terms of tourism goals and benefits:

[Grant funding] probably makes organisers, ourselves included, look at the bigger picture. We're not just focused on getting people on the start line, it's about getting people to the region, and in turn if they enjoy their experience in [the destination] for a weekend, there's more of a chance of bringing their friends,

family next year. It prompts us to look long-term, and look at our strategies long-term, it's not just about short-term gain. (Daniel)

Thus, while the event managers all noted that tourism was not their core business, they realised that their events could benefit from tourism:

[Tourism is] not what I started this for. But at the same time, it's in my best interest to consider the tourism element very carefully, because that's also how I can get more people to come to my event. But not only just for my personal benefit as the event organiser, but to expose the [regional] food products and my producers, and exhibitors, and other stakeholders to a fresh new audience. I've had to learn very quickly about [tourism], and I don't know very much about it ... for it's not where I came from. (Judy)

Notice that in the above quote the event manager does not have background knowledge in tourism. Instead, the event manager had to learn about tourism because it opened up a new target market for the event. Another event manager put it this way:

Clearly my event would not exist without tourism, because [even though] we do get locals ... the majority of people that come to our event travel here. We get over forty percent that are inter-state and international, so tourism is extremely important for our event, which feeds back again to me in my job. Without that I wouldn't be in this job, in this role. I'm passionate about [the destination] in general, and [the destination] thrives on tourism. Without tourism, [the destination] really wouldn't exist. The majority of the income in this economy is tourist income, so I think that overall, is very important to me, and especially to our event Keeping our event going. (Sarah)

In summary, while the primary purpose of each event was to celebrate a particular activity, all event managers had also adopted a tourism agenda because of the availability of grant funding. However, the event managers came to realise that their events could benefit from tourism by opening up new target markets through promotion of the event, especially since the economy of the region in which the event managers are based relies heavily on tourism.

4.3. *Restrictions on funding as a diversion from core business*

Event managers noted that the tourism organisations placed restrictions on how the grant funding could be spent. One event manager noted, "There are very specific guidelines in the contract that we get with them as to how the money must be spent" (Sarah). These guidelines often related to activities that are aimed at generating tourism. One event manager put it this way: "Restrictions might be geographic restrictions. So funding might not be allocated for marketing initiatives locally, it might have to be outside the region. We have to reach outside the local region" (Daniel). While the event managers acknowledged that the tourism-related guidelines were appropriate since they were seeking funding from tourism organisations, they also noted that the guidelines inhibited their event-related spending:

There are a number of restrictions usually placed so you can't use the money for payment of staff. You can't use it for certain administrative returns. Those are all set out in the grant applications. With [local tourism organisation] they have specified pretty well half of the money must go to specific marketing and

activities that they approve. We can't spend it any other way except what they approve They're very tight. They're pretty tight on their restrictions. (Janice)

As the quotes above show, the event managers could not use the funding to support the day-to-day operations of their event. Event managers also noted that they were time-poor and that they believed the funding would be better spent if it were directed to the core activities required to stage the event:

The thing with a lot of events, particularly my event, is that the cost to put the event on is mostly time. It's mostly arms and legs. Emails, and phone calls, follow-ups, and people to bump in, and people to bump out. It's very, very labour-intensive None of the [grant] money goes into consolidated revenue, none of it goes to support the arms and legs that are actually doing the work. It's all got to be [spent] on tourism business growth, marketing, strategy development, business planning, all that sort of thing. Which is all fine, but frankly, if I didn't have the [grant] money for those things ... I just wouldn't do [some of] them. So in other words, [the grant money is] not funding the core activities.... I understand the reason why they're doing that, because they're wanting to try and support you to get up to this level, I understand that, but my feeling is that ... it's a very borderline situation as to whether it's worth it I'm not interested in putting on an event just for tourism outcomes. That's not what I started this for" (Judy).

The event managers saw grant funding as a diversion, changing their focus from staging an event to producing tourism outcomes. Indeed, the event managers viewed the grants' restrictions as pulling them away from the primary purpose for which the core event activity was initiated.

The grant restrictions were not the only influence diverting event managers from their core business, as the application process itself was also burdensome. Event managers noted that applying for funding was a time-consuming and resource-intensive process, and that post-event reporting on the uses of the grant funding was also onerous. One music event manager noted that "[it is] an extensive process in filling out application forms ... we have to go through to receive funding from the [tourism organisation]" (Kathy). The event managers had to apply for funding each year as tourism organisations "don't do multiple-year contracts, so you just have to apply each year" (Sarah). Thus, event managers viewed the effort required to receive funding as a significant undertaking. Additionally, on completion of the event, the event managers were required to acquit the grant by reporting on the funded activities and the expenditures of grant monies. They also found the acquittal process to be labour-intensive, with one event manager stating that "the acquittal process is a nightmare" (Judy).

In summary, event managers found that the process of applying for and acquitting the grant by reporting on the activities they engaged in to adhere to the grant's directives distracted them from the core business of staging their event.

4.4. Collaborations with funding partners

Even though event managers stated that complying with the grant funding requirements side-tracked them from their core business, they acknowledged that they benefitted from engaging in collaborative efforts with the funding partner. Event managers noted that the tourism organisations that provided grant funding were increasingly collaborating with the event managers to cross-leverage the event and destination. One event manager put it this

way:

It is becoming more apparent that [tourism organisations] are becoming more and more involved. They are looking at more and more ways of leveraging from our event, which is something that I think in the last two years has become more apparent, but even in the last twelve months [they] have become a lot more involved in just even discussing ... any marketing opportunities, and they were feeding off our social media network pages, and just speaking to us about ways in which they could get involved They have been leveraging off our event for beautiful imagery to promote [the destination], and not just [the destination] but [the region], and they are taking advantage of that more and more (Sarah).

Another event manager described how she and her staff worked closely with the local tourism organisation:

We work very closely with [the local tourism organisation]. They are a funding body of ours, so we do a lot of cross-promotion, which promotes the event in the destination. The triathlon is as popular as it is partly because of its location. [The destination] is a beautiful destination, and if you ever want to come here for a holiday, the triathlon is a good excuse to do that. We work closely with them in tagging to some of their broader national campaigns that they have going as well [It] opens up [and] gives us access to people and databases that we may not have access to ... it really helps us just hit a wider audience than what we can probably do through our own direct marketing (Leah).

Thus, event managers who actively engaged with the tourism organisations and cross-leveraged the event saw mutual benefits in the relationship: "[The benefits] largely come down to marketing ... it's generally through, sort of various marketing opportunities that ... we leverage off each other" (Leah).

However, some event managers felt that more could be done to foster reciprocal benefits between the events and the tourism organisations:

Without our events, a region is difficult to promote. I think events provide tourism organisations with the perfect platform. You can hang really good campaigns off events, particularly coastal events. Again, I would like to think that events could have more input into development of longer-term strategies around campaigns. (Judy)

One event manager saw the collaboration working in this way:

I actually think that the needs [of regional events] that we see are the assistance to help with the targeting into specific markets, and to do that in quite a collaborative sit-down way. "How can we work with you?" That often can be just helping even to bring up some journalists to town, or to do a media [familiarisation trip] that will result in more interest occurring. (Janice)

Benefits are maximised when the event and tourism organisation (i.e., funding partner) collaborate in mutually beneficial cross-leveraging. Event managers who do not believe that the relationship between the event and tourism organisation is equal and reciprocal seek greater collaboration.

4.5. Expanded event agenda

Efforts to satisfy the tourism-related grant funding result in

changes to the structure of the event to foster tourism benefits. For example, one event manager described how the event had expanded:

[Our participants] want to come and take part in the event, but they're looking for more than just an event to swim in, or surf at, or cycle in. We know that they're looking for a whole weekend of activities. Yeah, so it's in our best interests if we get people to the event ... to stick around and do other things. It's about the whole experience, not just what they do at our event. (Daniel)

Note that the event manager discusses expanding the programme of the events to encourage extended stay within the region. Another event manager put it this way:

We have five days of different events, so we have everything from a golf day to a fun run to a kids' triathlon, a special triathlon for people with mental disabilities. We have an ocean swim, we have about ten or eleven different sporting events, and then the triathlon sort of culminates everything on the final day.... That's sort of why we've grown from a one-day event into a five-day festival, to encourage people to come up and to spend more time.... We extend the programme to make sure there's something for people to do, over several days rather than just one. Then we also make sure there's something that the whole family can be a part of.... We also directly target areas outside of [the destination] ..., so that [tourists] do need to spend two or three or more nights in [the destination]. (Leah)

As the above quotes show, event managers were expanding their event to attract different target markets, especially individuals outside of the region – resulting in an increased number of tourists and an extended length of stay. While some event managers had increased the number of activities that formed the event, others noted that the event expanded as a result of considering the tourism potential:

The first year was just a one-day event ... we had a really big response. And then I was encouraged for the next one, to turn it into a two-day event.... To be honest, I didn't really think of it as a tourism event, a tourist-based event. Obviously we wanted to encourage the public to come, but I didn't look at it in terms of tourism. But very quickly, especially with the second year, we realised that this event had very strong tourism potential, and particularly for agritourism, culinary tourism, and people interested in food prevalence. (Judy)

Adopting a tourism agenda thus resulted in changes to the event, in particular, consideration of additional target markets and expansion of the event to increase the number of tourists and the length of stay in the destination.

4.6. *Beneficiaries of tourism outcomes*

As noted above, event managers stated that adopting a tourism agenda shifted their focus away from their core business. They observed that the key beneficiaries of the event were the local stakeholders in the tourism industry. One event manager described the key beneficiaries this way: "Definitely local accommodations, cafes and restaurants for sure, all sort of benefit from the increase number of the people in town" (Leah). Another manager stated:

[Main] Street people, the restaurateurs and the businesses along [Main] Street, they've been really embracing ... what we're doing. I think they can see the greater good in that if the festival

is successful it's going to have a natural flow-on benefit to them. They absolutely reap the economic benefit from the festival The economic benefit is definitely seen by the [destination] community. (Kathy)

As the above quotes show, event managers believed that the local tourism-related businesses benefit from the event. Another event manager described the benefits this way:

[The local tourism organisation], number one, and [the state tourism organisation], because obviously not only does the event bring people into town to spend money in the economy, but it promotes [the destination] as a highly sought-after surfing destination. I'd say [the local tourism organisation], and [the state tourism organisation], probably tend to be the big stakeholders, but they're also the ones that benefit the most in terms of marketing these destinations. Then you'd have to say that the accommodation houses probably benefit most, because they do book out, and I speak to them regularly. A lot of them do support the event in terms of donating accommodation. There unfortunately are some that reap the rewards so much that they're fully booked and they don't even donate accommodation anymore, which is really hard to combat, and this year we've felt that more than ever. We've had a couple of accommodation houses that previously used to be extremely supportive and donate quite a lot of rooms, and they're just not being able to do so because they're already fully booked from the year prior. (Sarah)

Note that the event manager describes the efforts to increase tourism around the event as successful, but that success means that the event no longer receives support in terms of complementary rooms from some of the accommodation providers. Thus, the benefits that local tourism operators gain from the tourism generated by the event may ultimately detract from the ability of the tourism operators to provide benefit to the event.

While all event managers noted that the tourism organisations and businesses were the key beneficiaries of the event, some also noted that not all the benefits were contained locally:

The tourism industry benefits enormously from all of this because of buying accommodation and the whole thing. Things like the airline.... Accommodation is an interesting one because the people who own the accommodation and there's a ... corporate manager who runs all the units, but the people that own it at Melbourne, Sydney, are all international. They benefit from it because they get rent. The actual money that stays in town is a small percentage of the total amount paid. (Lindsay)

Note that while the event manager describes the tourism industry as benefiting from the event, he notes the leakage of funds from the local economy.

In summary, event managers noted that the primary purpose of staging their events was to celebrate a subculture around a particular activity. However, to receive tourism grant funding the events adopted a tourism agenda. Applying for and acquitting the grant funding proved to be a labour-intensive process that diverted managers' attention from the core business of staging the event. Additionally, the restrictions placed on how funding could be spent limited the ways in which the event could be executed. Some event managers engaged heavily in collaborations with the tourism organisations that provided grant funding and viewed these collaborations as a success – especially as they expanded target markets for the event managers. However, other event managers felt that

the tourism organisations were not providing the support and advice that they needed to enlarge their event. Although by adopting a tourism agenda the events expanded their product offerings and target markets and lengthened the duration of the events, all event managers believed that the tourism organisations and businesses were the key beneficiaries of the event leveraging strategies.

5. Discussion

5.1. Leveraging strategies' effects vary with event size

While the premise that events can be used as a leverageable resource to generate tourism outcomes still applies for small-scale events (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Chalip, 2002, 2004), efforts to leverage small-scale events can alter the direction and scope of the event itself. The findings were used to develop a grounded theory model that explains the impact of leveraging strategies on small-scale events. Using strategies that encourage the event manager to exploit the event for tourism gain may divert the event manager from the core objective of running the event. This effect is unlikely to occur with mega-events such as the Olympics because organising committees remain separate from efforts to leverage the event for tourism, whereas the core focus of the small-scale event manager is to stage an event to bring together an audience that is interested in that core activity.

Small-scale events are often created by individuals who have an interest in a particular activity and use the event as a means to celebrate that particular activity or identity. This finding is consistent with research that showcases events as vehicles for parading and celebrating the norms and rituals of a particular subculture (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Green & Chalip, 1998; Green, 2001) or social world (Unruh, 1980). Indeed, event managers were all insiders with respect to the activity on which the event was based, be it a particular sport, a particular genre of music, or the arts (Donnelly & Young, 2005).

5.2. Grant funding diverts attention from events' core purpose

Event managers increasingly seek funding opportunities, including grants and sponsorships, to enhance the viability of their event (Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Molloy, 2002; Whitford, 2005). Tourism organisations offer grant funding as part of an initiative to leverage events to increase tourism (Lamont & Dowell, 2008) and integrate events into their destination marketing strategies (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003). While grant opportunities offered by tourism organisations can be an attractive revenue source for event managers, applying for and subsequently administering and acquitting a tourism-related grant diverts event managers from the core activity of staging the event.

This diversion occurs in three ways. First, providing event managers with grant funding based on tourism leverage places the onus of leveraging the event for tourism gain on the event managers themselves. Second, to comply with the grant rules and regulations, the event manager must redirect time and resources away from the core business or activity around which the event is centred. Third, the structure of the event and the event product change as a result of adaptations that are made to generate tourism benefits. Tourism benefits ensue, but the prime beneficiaries are often the tourism operators within the destination rather than the event.

The diversions are akin to mission drift, which is when an organisation's activities are no longer congruent with its core mission (Copestake, 2007; Weisbrod, 2004). Similar to its impact on non-profit organisations (Augsburg & Fouillet, 2010), conditions

associated with grant funding may place undue pressure on events to focus on external objectives. Mission drift is thought to be severe when a secondary goal is overemphasised at the expense of the *raison d'être* (Ebrahim, Battilana, & Mair, 2014). While it is unrealistic to expect organisations to forgo grant funding opportunities (Jones, 2007), events should be made aware of the potential diversions away from their core mission that may occur when adhering to the conditions of grant funding.

5.3. Effects are contingent on event-related factors

As contingency theory suggests, the components of a solution or strategy depend on the specific circumstances of the organisation (Otley, 1992; Van de Ven & Drazin, 1984). That is, events do not exist in isolation, but instead operate in an environment with other actors that have the ability to influence each other (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). In the management literature this mutual influence is termed the organisation–environment interface (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Through interactions within an environment, the meaning and roles of the organisation may shift toward the goals and objectives of another party (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). Consequently, the allocation of the organisation's resources shifts (Brown, 1984; Håkansson & Snehota, 1989). Applying for and receiving grant funding focused on tourism leveraging shifts the focus of the event to include the goals of the tourism organisation – to use of the event as a means to generate tourism. Event managers reallocate time and resources to apply for funding, and consequently develop a set of objectives that are based on the restrictions placed on the spending of the funds. The new objectives are then adopted as part of the event agenda. In this process, the core business of the event alters to include the objectives of the tourism organisation. Specifically, the event agenda moves from focusing on running an event in celebration of a core activity to marketing destinations for tourism gain.

5.4. Collaboration is critical

While continuous organisational change and the ability to change are crucial capabilities of organisational survival (Eisenhardt, 1989), the changes adopted by event managers are not tactics they have carefully considered. Instead, the changes are the direct result of the stipulations on how grant funds can be spent. The process of event leverage should be consultative, coordinated, and collaborative and should be driven by analysis, weighing costs and benefits and selecting outcomes that are the best fit for the event and the destination (Ziakas, 2014a). Event leveraging requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders, who often have competing agendas (Chalip, 2000; Misener, 2015; Smith, 2009; Stokes, 2006). The tourism organisations' providing of funding could be viewed as latent coercion, since the funding manipulates the event managers to make certain changes to their event that are not congruent with the core focus of the event. A common assumption is that stakeholders collaborate voluntarily and share common goals and equal power (Hardy & Phillips, 1998). However, by serving as a funding source, tourism organisations are able to impose their objectives on the event managers. When organisations expand to include activities that are not central to their existence, substantial managerial effort is often required (Penrose, 1959). For example, expansion comes with its own complexities, such as an increase in the administrative and managerial tasks associated with the expansion (Penrose, 1959). Indeed, event managers noted that focusing on the tourism benefits often took them away from other tasks that were essential to the actual staging of the event.

The relationship between a tourism organisation and an event is

useful when collaboration and co-branding occur (Dredge, Ford, & Whitford, 2011; Hede, 2008; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Stokes, 2006). To establish and develop this framework of relationship, inter-organisational relationships must have a “mutual orientation” (Ford, Hakansson, & Johanson, 1986), which is achieved through “active and reciprocal involvement of both parties” (Håkansson & Snehota, 1989, p. 191). Collaborative efforts are key to successful leveraging (Ziakas, 2014b), as a leverage strategy requires a cross-functional team (O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006) and co-ordination among various stakeholders (Misener, 2015; Smith, 2009; Stokes, 2006). Event managers who perceive that equal and reciprocal benefits are received are satisfied with the relationship. However, where the manager perceives the relationship as one-sided, primarily producing benefits for the tourism organisation, the relationship and the need for the grant funding are questioned. One-sidedness is often perceived when collaborating partners have different goals and values (Waddock, 1989) or when the distribution of power is unequal (Gray & Hay, 1986).

Importantly, integrating the objectives of the tourism organisation changes the event itself. Events often seek new target markets that generate tourists, and add extra activities to increase visitor stay and spending (Mules & Faulkner, 1996; Telfer & Wall, 1996). These benefits are consistent with those expected when leveraging events for tourism gain (Chalip, 2004). While event managers assume the risk of producing the tourism outcomes, the tourism-related businesses in the region often benefit (Brown, 1984).

5.5. Limitations and future directions

The results of this study were derived from an analysis of small-scale events in one particular region. The events within the region were encouraged to engage in tourism leveraging through grant funding opportunities provided by the local and state tourism organisations. As the findings here suggest, grant funding significantly influenced the event managers to engage in tourism leveraging. As the event managers reported, the process of applying for and acquitting the grant funding, along with the grant funding rules and regulations, significantly influenced the activities of the event managers. Further types of tourism leveraging for small-scale events should be examined in other regions and under different funding or no funding conditions.

The research was also conducted at one particular time. Longitudinal research could examine how tourism leveraging strategies change small-scale events over time and also explore how adopting a tourism focus can influence the event over time. Further, the current research examined multiple types of events (sport, music, the arts). Future research should examine whether the adoption of tourism leveraging strategies differs with the type of event.

While previous studies of event leveraging have focused on the tourism outcome and the impact of leveraging strategies on the tourism system, this research highlights the importance of considering the impact of those strategies on the events themselves. Rather than viewing the event as seed capital for tourism gain, further research should consider the impact of leveraging strategies on event managers as a key stakeholder. This study considered tourism leveraging strategies from the perspective of the event managers. It would be useful to consider the perspective of the tourism organisations as the agencies that provide the impetus for tourism leveraging.

Finally, this research also highlights that tourism leveraging may have negative implications when the strategies are not collaborative efforts involving all stakeholders. Future research should consider potential negative outcomes of leveraging events for tourism gain.

Contribution

Donna designed and conceptualised the study, collected data, and led the analysis of the data. Donna also drafted the first version of this paper.

Sheranne revised and rewrote subsequent versions of the paper.

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