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Value, Values and Evaluation

Learning objectives

- Be able to distinguish between 'value' and 'values', and learn how cultural and personal values affect evaluation.
- Learn the common meanings of 'evaluation' and the meaning of the following terms in the context of evaluation: worth, merit, probity, significance, feasibility, equity and safety .
- Be able to conduct evaluation that aims to solve problems, inform decisions, prove cause and effect, and establish the merit, worth and significance of events, policies, programmes and event tourism.
- Understand how intrinsic and extrinsic approaches affect evaluation.
- Understand the various justifications of public-sector intervention in events and tourism and how these generate evaluation questions, including: public good; social equity; market failure; economic efficiency; and sustainability.
- Appreciate that there are different perspectives on the value of events.
- Be able to define success and explain why evaluation is critical to success, however it is defined.

2.1 Introduction

Value, values, and evaluation: These terms hold different connotations and their proper usage is vital both in theory development and management. This chapter also discusses intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to valuing events, and looks closely at different ways in which events can be valued by stakeholders.

The published paper by Brown et al. (2015), illustrates the ways in which these terms are used, with event-related examples. *The Value of Events* (edited by Lundberg et al., 2017) provides an overview of concepts and definitions, contributed articles on different perspective on event and event-tourism value, and an ontological perspective on theory development.

2.2 Value and values

The noun and verb 'value' are commonly defined this way (drawing from multiple dictionaries):

- ◆ *Value* (noun): the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something; the material or monetary worth of something
- ◆ *Value* (verb): to estimate the monetary worth of something or someone; to be important or beneficial; to hold a high opinion of something or someone

Note that 'value' or 'worth' is different from the values, beliefs or ideals held by people and groups.

- ◆ *Values* (noun): Important beliefs or ideals shared by individuals or cultural groups about what is good or bad, or has merit; principles or standards of behaviour; judgment as to what is important in life.

Values are generally based on religion, philosophical positions, and social norms; they have major influence on behavior and attitude and therefore influence politics and management. This is particularly true when a 'value set', such as those based on religion, culture, or perhaps social-economic status, influence's one's perception of an event's worth.

Figure 2.1: Value perspectives and challenges (continued)

Value perspective	Major evaluation challenges
<p>Personal value Individuals can gain from attendance or other forms of involvement at events, such as volunteering, and this has been studied in the context of 'personal and social identity' formation and reinforcement, health, personal development or 'self actualisation', and hedonism – or just plain having fun.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Subjective well being' refers to a self-assessment of the effects arising from events or travel on happiness or satisfaction with life. 	<p>Theoretical foundations in social-psychology are required for meaningful evaluation of personal value. Established scales for involvement, serious leisure, wellbeing, and self development can be used.</p>
<p>Psychic value: This term is sometimes used to describe the benefits or value that people believe or perceive - whether true or not. They might include happiness, wellbeing, satisfaction, enjoyment, hedonism or fun. These are closely related to 'personal development'.</p>	<p>Evaluation of anything that occurs in the realms of perception and cognition requires theoretical foundation and special skill to ensure validity (that is, are you really measuring value?).</p>
<p>Family value: The family links personal with social value. Stadler and Jepson (2017) evaluated the effects of events on family socialization and 'quality of life'.</p>	<p>Members of families can hold different perspectives on value.</p>

2.3 Evaluation

There are several widely recognized meanings of 'evaluation'. The first two are adapted from: *www.socialresearchmethods.net*, but altered to reflect events and event tourism contexts:

- 1 *Evaluation*: the assessment of the worth or merit of events or event tourism.
- 2 *Evaluation*: the technical process of obtaining information to learn, and to provide useful feedback about solving problems and improving management processes and event experiences.

Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014, 14) provided an operational definition:

- 3 "...*evaluation* is the systematic process of delineating, obtaining, reporting and applying descriptive and judgmental information about some object's merit, worth, probity, feasibility, safety, significance and/or equity."

Definition 1 stresses worth or merit, and these are defined below. Definition 2 stresses the decision-making and problem-solving roles of evaluation, these being the most common.

The third definition includes the main steps in evaluation, emphasizes that evaluation provides information and makes a judgment, and that it can be applied to a variety of end purposes.

- ◆ *Probity* in this context means integrity and being above reproach; it also covers legality and ethics.
- ◆ *Worth* and *merit* can be used synonymously, but some commentators make a distinction. Based on Scriven (1991a) in the *Evaluation Thesaurus*, consider these distinctions:
 - ◆ *Merit*: a subjective interpretation, as in an event deserving of support owing to its intrinsic value; merit can also mean the programme does what it is supposed to, or it meets its goals, without reference to context such as cost or political support.
 - ◆ *Worth* implies a quantitative and usually comparative measure of value, usually expressed in monetary terms. Context is always considered.

Consequently, in this language of evaluation, an event or programme can hold merit, but is not necessarily worth the price of admission or of being subsidized! Worth and merit entail different evaluation questions.

- ◆ *Significance* is also used in a specific way, referring to underlying values and meaning attached to evaluation. The significance of an event can be based on symbolic meaning, as in *iconic events* that represent the very best or toughest challenge to amateur athletes. Significance is not based on merit, so an iconic event might be a failure, or cost too much, or not be worth subsidizing by public authorities.

The Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014) definition of evaluation also refers to three more terms: