

Event Evaluation:

**Theory and Methods for
Event Management and Tourism**

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The Events Management Theory and Methods Series

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Introduction to the Events Management Theory and Methods Series

Event management as a field of study and professional practice has its textbooks with plenty of models and advice, a body of knowledge (EMBOK), competency standards (MBECS) and professional associations with their codes of conduct. But to what extent is it truly an applied management field? In other words, where is the management theory in event management, how is it being used, and what are the practical applications?

Event tourism is a related field, one that is defined by the roles events play in tourism and economic development. The primary consideration has always been economic, although increasingly events and managed event portfolios meet more diverse goals for cities and countries. While the economic aspects have been well developed, especially economic impact assessment and forecasting, the application of management theory to event tourism has not received adequate attention.

In this book series we launch a process of examining the extent to which mainstream theory is being employed to develop event-specific theory, and to influence the practice of event management and event tourism. This is a very big task, as there are numerous possible theories, models and concepts, and virtually unlimited advice available on the management of firms, small and family businesses, government agencies and not-for-profits. Inevitably, we will have to be selective.

The starting point is theory. Scientific theory must both explain a phenomenon, and be able to predict what will happen. Experiments are the dominant form of classical theory development. But for management, predictive capabilities are usually lacking; it might be wiser to speak of theory in development, or theory fragments. It is often the process of theory development that marks research in management, including the testing of hypotheses and the formulation of propositions. Models, frameworks, concepts and sets of propositions are all part of this development.



The diagram illustrates this approach. All knowledge creation has potential application to management, as does theory from any discipline or field. The critical factor for this series is how the theory and related methods can be applied. In the core of this diagram are management and business theories which are the most directly pertinent, and they are often derived from foundation disciplines.

All the books in this series will be relatively short, and similarly structured. They are designed to be used by teachers who need theoretical foundations and case studies for their classes, by students in need of reference works, by professionals wanting increased understanding alongside practical methods, and by agencies or associations that want their members and stakeholders to have access to a library of valuable resources. The nature of the series is that as it grows, components can be assembled by request. That is, users can order a book or collection of chapters to exactly suit their needs.

All the books will introduce the theory, show how it is being used in the events sector through a literature review, incorporate examples and case studies written by researchers and/or practitioners, and contain methods that can be used effectively in the real world. Online resources will include annotated bibliographies, additional resources, and for teachers an instructor's manual and set of power-point slides.

Preface To Event Evaluation

Key objectives of the book:

- 1 Inform readers on evaluation theory and methods for events and event tourism, including key concepts and definitions.
- 2 Discuss key evaluation challenges for events and event tourism.
- 3 Provide a comprehensive evaluation system that can be fully integrated into event and tourism organisations.
- 4 Develop professionalism for evaluators in these fields.
- 5 Recommend the goals, key performance indicators and methods for evaluation.
- 6 Connect readers to the research literature pertinent to evaluation.

Event and tourism organisations and event managers need to implement a continuous process of evaluation in order to become learning organisations, to achieve their goals, and to meet all standards that are applicable. Some funding bodies insist that event organisers meet performance standards in order to qualify, while others demand comprehensive evaluations and public accountability. In these environments, a comprehensive evaluation system becomes essential, as does professionalism by evaluators.

Most evaluation at the level of a single event is related to problem solving and support for decision making, and these require fairly straightforward data collection techniques. More complex policy and programme evaluations that require determination or evidence of goal attainment can be approached through theory-based evaluations or logic models, and these are covered in this book. The biggest challenge of all is to determine the worth or value of an event, programme or policy, and a great deal of advice is provided on that challenging task, with emphasis on clarifying various perspectives on value.

In this book impacts and impact assessment are introduced, but a separate impact assessment book will provide details on methods for measuring and evaluating social, cultural, ecological, and economic impacts of events, as well as those relating to the built environment. That is where most of the tourism issues arise.

What this book is not

This book is not about research methods, it only introduces the methods and measures needed by evaluators; statistics are completely avoided. Evaluation has to be based on good research much of the time, so the evaluator's skills have to include research methods. On the other hand, people and organisations evaluate qualitatively all the time, in making judgements, giving advice on how things can be improved, and basing decisions on available information. Many events and programmes are valued intrinsically, based on cultural and personal values, for which research and metrics are not necessarily wanted or required.

The simple techniques explained in this book, such as checklists and systematic observation, can be used by any evaluator, but the more complex ones require a foundation in research methods. Several books are available specific to tourism, sport, leisure and events.

Some relevant books on research and methods

Getz, D. and Page, S. (2016). *Tourism Studies* (3d.ed). London: Routledge.

Getz, D. (2013) *Event Tourism*. NY Cognizant.

Long, J. (2007). *Researching Leisure, Sport and Tourism* (2d ed). Sage.

Richards, G., & Munsters, W. (2010). *Cultural Tourism Research Methods*. Wallingford, UK: CABI.

Smith, S. (2010). *Practical Tourism Research*. Wallingford, UK: CABI.

Veal, A.J. (2017). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism*. Pearson.

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Some ideas and material are based on a major, two-year research and development project funded by BFUF – the research and development foundation of the Swedish Hospitality and Tourism Industry. The project was directed by and for RF, the Swedish Sport Confederation, to improve competency, sustainability and competitiveness in the sport events sector. However, the recommendations arising from this project, in the form of guidelines, can be applied to all events and event tourism situations.

My previous books have provided inspiration and material, all the way back to the first one entitled *Festivals, Special Events and Tourism* (1991). *Event Studies* (third edition, co-authored with Stephen Page in 2016), *Event Management and Event Tourism* (Cognizant, 2005) and *Event Tourism* (Cognizant, 2013) provide a considerable amount of background and elaboration.