Event Impact Assessment:
Theory and Methods for Event Management and Tourism

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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 Impact Assessment

Aims of this book:

☐ To inform students and practitioners on impact assessment (IA) theory and methods, as applied to events and tourism.
☐ Develop professionalism for IA and evaluation in the event management field.
☐ Position impact assessment within sustainability and responsibility paradigms.
☐ Recommend goals, methods and measures for planning, evaluation and impact assessment pertaining to events and tourism.
☐ Encourage the adoption of standard methods and key performance indicators in evaluation and impact assessment in order to facilitate valid comparisons, benchmarking, reliable forecasts, transparency and accountability.
☐ Provide concepts and models that can be adapted to diverse situations.
☐ Connect readers to the research literature through use of Research Notes and provision of additional readings.


Organisation of this book

Three foundation chapters precede five thematic chapters on types of impacts. This first chapter explains the need for applying generic IA theory and methods to event management, encompassing consideration of event venues and tourism, then provides core concepts and definitions. Chapter two examines IA theory, including the conducting of impact assessments, and Chapter three explains measurement issues and generic methods that can be adapted to events and tourism.

The thematic chapters, four through eight, are based on the proposition that tourism and events are agents of change, resulting in social, cultural, built-environment, ecological and economic impacts. These are called the “objects” of impact assessment. The Economic Impacts chapter is longest, not because it is more important but because of the availability of so much material and the consequent need to ensure that readers understand the available methods and learn of additional, vital sources.

The impact “subjects” we consider are major categories of people or things that are likely to be changed by events and tourism, and we use seven categories that reflect major IA themes: individuals and families; groups and sub cultures; events and event organisations; businesses; communities and cities; tourist destinations, and politics and government. “Residents” are important in all of these categories.
In the Conclusions chapter there is a discussion of traditional Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) with emphasis on its limitations, and a suggested short-form using Key Impact Indicators. A description follows of my recommended approach to comprehensive IA and evaluation of impacts, the BACE model. It stands for Benefits and Costs Evaluation and is intended to be a planning framework within which all impacts can be compared and evaluated.

At the beginning of each chapter are Learning Objectives, and each of these can be readily reformulated as exam questions, in whole or in parts. Students are encouraged to prepare short answers for questions based on these learning objectives. At the end of each chapter are Study Questions more appropriate to essays, or possibly projects. Recommended Readings and Additional Sources are provided, all of which are cited within the text.

I have incorporated a lot of information in various chapters about Edinburgh, Scotland, as they are a leading event city internationally and have made available to the public a number of very useful planning and research reports (see www.EdinburghFestivalCity.com).

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