

Wednesday 5th July Abstracts

Break Out Session 1

Consumers, Co-Creation and the Event Experience

Towards 'Strategic Event Creation'; a step change for marketing events

Dr Phil Crowther - Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University

Context

A shifting marketing landscape has fuelled both an explosion and sophistication of live events as a marketing approach. As organisations across the public, private, and third sectors seek platforms to engage with stakeholders, live events emerge as an increasingly established approach with organisations investing more strategically to achieve varied outcomes. This keener focus upon return on investment, return on objectives, or return on opportunity, intensifies the challenge for those individuals, and teams, charged with the creation and management of experiences. The event creation challenge is heightened further by an increasingly competitive marketplace for marketing events and also rising and shifting expectations of event attendees and wider stakeholders.

The event practitioners role, as designer and facilitator, is integral in creating these efficacious settings where the many and varied actors populating an event can extract value. Event experiences and outcomes are multiple, not singular, and event design must therefore be reflective of the varied stakeholders and outcomes sought. These factors combine to indicate that an increasingly strategic mind-set, and approach, is required by those individuals and teams charged with the creation of marketing oriented events. Consequently the presentation culminates in a focus upon the notion of 'Strategic Event Creation' as both an enlightened outlook, and management approach, which is more attuned to the context described. This is articulated through five interwoven aspects: outcome obsessed; stakeholder centric; purposeful design; strategic persona; and reflective appraisal.

Approach

The presentation draws upon literature, and empirical research (qualitative / interview based), which underpinned the authors PhD (by publication) work; and culminates in presenting a challenge to pedagogy. Key literature includes; Ramaswamy (2009), Berridge (2012), Brown (2015).

Significance

The research indicates an evolution in the event creator role and therein lies a danger of a divide between how universities routinely express the challenge of event management (through their programmes, module content, and general tone) and the 'reality' as practitioners experience it. Particularly it signals transition from the conventional, and in some cases entrenched, operational view. Strategic Event Creation is therefore presented as advancement in how we perceive and articulate the present day challenge of event creation.

Sensorial Experience: Insights on how Attendees at a Food and Wine Event Perceive Sensory Experiences

Dr. Graham Berridge - University of Surrey

Attending an event is participating in a unique experience where attendees are engaged in a personal way (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Experience has become a valuable attribute and in the consumption process it may determine the success or failure of the product or service (Getz (2008). Furthermore, these engaging experiences can be planned or unplanned and, in the case of events, the interaction with the five senses plays a key role.

A number of studies have been carried out on the different ways of delivering an experience and the functions that the five senses play in it, but only a few have focused on sensory experiences at events. Furthermore, not many studies provided insights into how attendees perceive sensory experiences and whether and to what extent it affects the experience of the event. Sensory experience has raised interest, being subject of several studies (Krishna, 2011). There are numerous theories regarding the structure of the five senses (Krishna, 2011), the perception and influence of the senses on consumers (Krishna and Schwarz, 2013), and the emotions elicited by sensory experiences (Desmet and Hekkert, 2007). The interest in understanding sensory experiences derives from the fact that senses are the preferred way for humans to perceive the world (Krishna and Schwarz, 2013).

This research aims at shedding light on the use of sensory experience by event planners and exhibitors and the influence it might have on attendees. Using the Eliciting Emotion Process (Desmet and Hekkert, 2007) to frame the research, data was collected through interviews with key informers and a questionnaire with attendees. It was found that there is a quite significant influence derived from the involvement of the five senses with attendees and, at the same time, it emerged that exhibitors were aware of the potentialities of designing sensory experiences.

Aid or barrier: Social media as a tool for immersion in mega event opening and closing ceremonies

Libby Carter - Coventry University

Current literature shows social media as a tool for enhancing the experience of watching a mega event whereas this research aims to investigate if in fact social media can instead be an experience distraction. Many forms of entertainment, including sports can produce an experience defined as flow (Chen 2007:33) where “people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990:4). Current literature on “flow” in a sport context has centred on sports psychology, and primarily the flow experience of athletes (Jackson 1996; Vealey and Perritt 2015), largely ignoring spectators and their experience of sporting events, especially mega event opening and closing ceremonies. Such ceremonies, by creating an immersive flow, have a role to play in contributing “the lived, enduring memories and experiences” of a mega event, in other words its social legacy (Holt and Ruta 2015). In this research spectators’ experiences of mega event ceremonies are captured through the analysis of social media data, a platform that is argued can potentially positively enhance flow experience or negatively disrupt it. By analysing 400 social media posts generated in real time (live audience and TV audience) during opening and closing ceremonies of the Invictus Games in London 2014 and Orlando 2016, an exploratory study aims to conceptualise whether tweeting can interrupt flow and in turn can negatively affect the social legacy of a mega event. If so this has important implications for event organisers seeking to create an enduring legacy.

Event Education and Pedagogy

Experiential learning: a professional pathway to the stars

Jennie Randall- Lecturer in Event Management - Coventry University

Educators today are tasked with developing lifelong learners who can survive and thrive in a global knowledge economy – learners who have the capability to effectively and creatively apply skills and competencies to new situations in an ever-changing, complex world (JISC 2012a).

A primary function of the higher education sector is to increase access to higher level skills and prepare learners for the world of work; to positively fulfil this purpose; adjustments within the curricula provided will always be required. As JISC (2012b) suggest that to effectively meet the needs of learners, institutions now need to collaborate more with employers to align curriculum design in higher education programmes with the requirements of employers and the workplace.

Many employers in the events industry are now seeking individuals with a range of attributes besides academic ability and subject specialism, such as communication skills, team working, interpersonal skills, problem solving, flexibility, digital literacy and, above all, an ability to evidence practical skills (QAA 2016). Graduates need to be commercially aware, creative, entrepreneurial and numerate.

It has been recognised that to achieve this desired vision, professional bodies and corporate organisations have a role to play in embedding standards of ethics and practice in the curricula, with a large proportion of employers stipulating that more graduates should undertake professional qualifications since these provide the evidence of practical skills that employers require (Bladen and Kennell 2014, Holmes 2013).

This research aims to draw upon these pertinent issues by presenting a case study of such an example where a professional pathway has been embedded within the curricula to better reflect the demands of the business sector and the requirements of event management graduates. The educational partnership has successfully combined experiential learning with workplace opportunities, giving students a unique opportunity for exposure to live industry projects, and client case studies.

The purpose of this research is to explore student perceptions of the experiential learning journey employed within the curricula, through a professional pathway. It will examine the value perceptions and journey of those students who have engaged with the professional pathway and successfully achieved the professional certification. This research is important because it offers an insight into the benefits such learning pathways can exhibit to students from business and management disciplines. A mixed method approach of surveys and focus groups is the methodological path employed within the study. Preliminary results indicate that significant value is attached to such experiential learning experiences in helping institutions to develop graduates who are business ready and desirable to employers, as well as positively influencing the student learning experience (Laurillard 2002, Lee and McLoughlin 2007, Robertson et al. 2012).

'Suitability and Employability' - prospects of Southampton Solent event management graduates

Sheridan Easton and Isabelle Maile

As the event management industry grows, it will be increasingly important for universities to examine the trends and adapt their curricula accordingly. Students are more likely to compare graduate employability from potential universities.

Event management graduates have a choice of multiple career paths in the industry. On the other hand it may be limited if graduates do not have the necessary skills to go down certain career paths. Research is therefore important to provide information to academics and graduates on their likely career paths.

This study analyses the range of skills required by industry, allowing for a comparison and analysis of employability prospects of event management graduates from Southampton Solent.

The study conducted by Khanh (2002) found that a reason students choose to learn at university is to attain their future career goals and increase their employability. Using the units of Southampton Solent Events Management course curricula this research will analyse the units with the professional requirements of relevant job advertisements. The findings of this research will help to evaluate whether the content of the units fulfils the current needs of the industry.

Research conducted by Fletcher et al. (2010) highlights that event professionals have led to defining events management as an industry and a career field. Their research concluded that there are a range of skills which Event Managers should have gained from higher education in order to enter the industry and continue its development. This research will build on this research and evaluate the current percentage of job advertisements which seek to employ event management graduates.

To collect the relevant information 100 job advertisements in the London region were considered using job websites to reach the research objectives. Arcodia and Barker (2003) similarly used keywords to fine tune their search. The key words and options used for the coding analysis of the job roles included: Event Manager, EM, Events Assistant and Events Co-ordinator. No salary band was used in the search criteria.

The study was conducted to examine any synonyms of the skills from the existing course units and optional units (see attached appendix) and to draw out recurring skills which were not listed on the university website.

The findings of this study allow course planners at Southampton Solent University and other Universities to improve their graduate employability and possible marketing for their events management course.

How can a professional box office system be utilised as a learning vehicle for events management students?

Adrian Bossey and James Randell - Falmouth University

This case study considers the extent to which a professional box office facility can aid undergraduate student learning and employability.

The Academy of Music & Theatre Arts ('AMATA') at Falmouth University purchased an industry standard digital box office system from Ticketsolve in 2015 and have been working with the company to test it's value to BA(Hons) Creative Events Management and BA(Hons) Music, Theatre & Entertainment Management students wishing to administer and/or reflect upon a combination of student & public events at AMATA and trends in audience development nationally.

Members of the AMATA Production Team have delivered embedded training on the system within the curriculum and students have used it during their assessed events (on and off campus). Furthermore, academic staff have encouraged it's use as a research tool for dissertations. Falmouth are currently the only HEI using the Ticketsolve system as a vehicle to enhance student learning.

The significant investment in industry standard AMATA Box Office provision aimed to support student employability and provide a better understanding of the audience profile for the public programme to facilitate future marketing and audience development planning. The CBI and Universities UK define employability as '*A set of attributes and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy*' Sheldon (2009)⁸. Furthermore, the Future Fit report stated that '*Universities and employers must continue to invest in employability skills development*'. Sheldon (2009)⁸.

Since Autumn 2016, surveys have been carried out across all public facing performances to gather base data for the current audience of the AMATA Public Programme. Data is also fed into the Audience Agency's (Arts Council England funded) Audience Finder project and this enables reciprocal access to data from other venues and organisations across England. The integration of the Ticketsolve system with Audience Finder opens up research possibilities on a local, regional and national level for AMATA Students.

Students are introduced to the system in their first term (inductions in class, volunteering on public programme) and then encouraged to engage with the system throughout their studies at Falmouth (usage on own assessed events & data for dissertation).

The Ticketsolve system asks customers for information when they book online, including contact information and address (including post code) and gathers data on each performance or event. When a customer books by phone or in person, a lower amount of data is collected, so an automated email is sent to the customer asking them to activate their account online and submit the details. Additionally, audience members are asked to complete a supplementary post event questionnaire at the venue. This is to capture the visitor experience and visitor data on attendees who have not booked their own ticket.

We are in the process of analysing the impact of piloting the system on student learning and will consider a range of feedback/metrics including student rep feedback, module evaluation forms, NSS feedback and DHLE results.

During the period 1st October 2016 till 20th February 2017 215 survey responses have been collected across an audience size of 1,106 over 12 different events. This represents around 20% (approx.) of the total audience. During the financial year ending March 2017; the most popular day to book was Friday with 19% of the total booker data and closely followed by Wednesday with 18%. This is comparably higher than the organisations within the South West region and nationally that also feed into the Audience Finder system. Within the Audience Agency 'Audience Spectrum' for the same period our highest customer profile fits the 'Experience Seeker' category.

Our aspiration for future data analysis will include post code research on the booker data through Ticketsolve, how this aligns with our surveying as well as the regional and national picture of data within Audience Finder.

Event Stakeholders, Impacts and Evaluation

The economic impact case study of a year long tourism event: Homecoming Scotland 2014

Daniel Baxter - Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom

Events can offer cities, regions and nation states the opportunity to establish and position themselves on the world stage (Hall, 1992; Dredge and Whitford, 2010; Smith, 2012; Raj et al., 2013). Homecoming Scotland 2014 is an example of a year long tourism marketing initiative that was commissioned by the Scottish Government to position Scotland on the international stage as a dynamic and creative nation (VisitScotland, 2014). The coordinated event programme delivered a year long celebration of 1,049 festivals and events, achieving attendances of more than 4.6 million people at a wide range of branded events. This plethora of events was geographically dispersed across islands, cities, towns, highlands and lowlands and celebrated the very best of Scottish arts, culture, food/drink, nature activities, history and ancestry. The Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Business Development at Glasgow Caledonian University was commissioned by the Scottish Government and the Scottish national event agency; EventsScotland to evaluate the economic impact of the event. Rojek (2013) and Lenskyj (2015) identify that there are significant issues with existing economic impact studies, postulating that they are too descriptive in nature and lack critical analysis. This positivist study used detailed surveys and collected data from 2700 attendees at 19 of the 132 partner events. These findings combined with Event Organiser Outcome Reports (EOOR's) enabled a detailed economic analysis to be carried out. The sophisticated methodology allowed the research to only account for spending by those from outside Scotland who were motivated by Homecoming Scotland 2014 and indicated that the net additional revenue in Scotland attributable to Homecoming 2014 was £136m. This represented net additional spends by visitors, businesses and supply chain spending as a direct result of the Homecoming.

Does Subvention Work? Exploring the Relationship between Subvention and Destination Success.

Emma Nolan - University of Winchester

Subvention is the practice adopted by destinations of offering a grant of money or other form of support to attract event bookings. Although the practice is widely disliked by the events industry (Rogers 2013) research undertaken by the Business Visits and Events Partnership (BEVP) identifies subvention as the “single most important factor for attracting many types of conferences” (BVEP, 2011 [online]). Conversely, there is a growing body of literature to suggest that it is the quality of the conference venue and the infrastructure in the destination which are now the most important criteria for meeting planners when choosing a destination (Park *et al*, 2014). The purpose of this paper is to discuss the results of an exploratory investigation aimed at understanding the success of destinations competing for international association conferences and their attitude towards subvention. Secondary data from convention bureaus will be collected in order to produce inferential statistics on the availability of subvention. Additionally, industry and academic reports will be analysed in order to begin to understand convention bureaus attitudes towards subvention. Specific cities will be profiled to include established conference destinations such as Barcelona, Vienna and Paris and emerging destinations including Hiroshima and Kuala Lumpur. This inductive research forms part of a broader investigation to test and update Comas and Moscardo’s (2005) conceptual model for the convention planner decision process.

What does the event industry want to know from their customers when conducting evaluation?

Jonathan Fry - Event Rater Ltd.

This paper explores customer satisfaction criteria prioritised by event organisers and venue managers and how linking consumer attendance motivations enables more effective and meaningful evaluation. Evaluating event outcomes is vital to long-term sustainability (Brown *et al.*, 2015). However, barriers must be addressed including resources, objectives and respondents (Schlenker *et al.*, 2010; Goldblatt, 2011). This paper proposes a range of approaches to provide insights into the event experience.

Reviewing event questionnaires and conducting an event organiser questionnaire established their prioritised consumer satisfaction evaluation criteria. The broad criteria themes being service, venue, event, sound quality and technical, booking, information, merchandise and promotion.

The research findings indicate a need for organisers to take greater account of the motivations of event attendees to customise their evaluation practices. Organisers seem to value functional, operational and managerial measures, based on tangible aspects of the event experience; whilst the motivations for attending events are often based on experiential, social and intangible elements.

The main motivational dimensions which stimulate event attendance can be classified under the headings: socialisation, family togetherness, event novelty, escape and relaxation, excitement and enjoyment, cultural exploration, event specific characteristics (Schlenker *et al.*, 2010; Hixson *et al.*, 2011; Abreu-Novais and Arcodia, 2013). Additionally, venues or their attributes can act as a motivator in terms of age, location and size (Hassanien and Dale, 2011). Through understanding the range and complexity of influences acting upon event audiences and their relationship with individual events, organisers can better shape events to fulfil expectations and desires of attendees.

Break Out Session 2

Inclusivity and Accessibility for Events

Integrated diversity and accessibility within live festivals

Mandy Curtis - University of Brighton

As a lecturer and practitioner the paper presents practical findings drawn from work in progress with case studies in South-east England that reflect the aim to demonstrate good practice in diverse mainstream programming. The presentation will introduce findings of concept design (Bowdin et al 2012, Berridge 2012), through the consideration of lower socio-economic community participation at 18 Hours' festivals and events; using examples of St Leonards Festival and Hastings Storytelling Festival. Gardiner's (2005) 'deliverables' are explored through the demonstration of both culturally diverse programming and mainstreaming of artists with disabilities through Journeys Dance Festival to reflect good practice. Finally, future research is planned in partnership with Carnival Network South into accessibility in parades that will consider some advantages and challenges of a mixed ethnographic approach working with learning disabled communities in the UK and Brazil (Jaimangal-Jones 2014). This upcoming study is tabled at this early stage for feedback and comment.

*Why should we care about implementing diversity and social inclusion in the curriculum?
The case of Cardiff Metropolitan University Tourism, Hospitality and Events students*

Dr. Vicky Richards - Cardiff Metropolitan University

Participation in events, be they conferences, sporting events or festivals is considered a right of citizenship and each will aim to enrich people's lives. Many have lauded the benefits of these events to educate, encourage a sense of community or belonging and to define and redefine identities. Despite these positive outcomes, some citizens encounter barriers to their full participation resulting from a range of diverse needs (e.g. disability, age, gender and ethnicity) that are often misunderstood or homogenised by the events sector; refused entry to a nightclub because of ethnicity or denied access at major sports stadia because of disability.

Whilst some events are staged in established built venues that may or may not meet many of the requirements as laid out in the Equalities Act 2010, others require the building of temporary venues which present a whole host of different challenges in terms of accessibility. Inclusion of all sectors of society is also a significant issue that this sector should be aware of, in terms of age, gender and ethnicity of not just customers but also staff and the wider stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of the events.

But what do 'diversity' and 'inclusion' really mean to the event management student? This presentation discusses how a new level 4 module for tourism, hospitality and events students, instigated in September 2016, has been implemented and delivered. Specifically the presentation describes the content, methods of delivery, assessment, student feedback as well as explaining how students are encouraged to be proactive through the use of social media and cross-departmental training. It encourages thought-provocation and reflection through a number of assessment techniques, workshop activities and guest speakers.

The module is an opportunity to challenge the students' perceptions and ideas of societal groups and individuals' experiences and if higher education plays a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society (Dearing, 1997) then this curriculum development has a significant role to play.

Events and social justice – correspondence or conflict?

Dr Judith Mair - University of Queensland

Social justice is a complex construct that is multifaceted and dynamic. Social justice is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society”; however, within that relatively straightforward definition lies a web of conflicting ideologies. Festivals and events have been argued to contribute to social justice objectives, particularly those of local authorities, but the main challenge for understanding, identifying and measuring the impacts of events on the local community is the intangibility of social justice (Mair & Duffy 2015). It does not appear to be in doubt that festivals have the potential to make significant contributions towards community building and other social cohesion processes. However, there has been very little research on how festivals respond to specific social justice issues as they are articulated in local government policy (Pugh & Wood, 2004).

Research suggests that festivals make positive contributions to some of the key domains of social justice, particularly in terms of improving equity of access (e.g. Mair & Duffy 2015; Laing & Mair 2015). Examples include festivals which are free of charge, and festivals held in locations easily accessed by public transport. However, other aspects of social justice may not appear to be so well addressed. For example, even where the community is recognised as culturally plural, festivals often reiterate an ideal notion of community, rather than reflecting how the community is actually constituted. Even when a festival is expressly designed to celebrate cultural diversity, the ideals of social cohesion and community identity are given meaning through local government policies, and through this official discourse, an ‘imagined’ community is produced (Smith and Brett 1988). Such outcomes are arguably unlikely to increase mutual respect, encourage increased civic and political participation or achieve a range of social justice goals.

Taking a qualitative approach, this paper reports on documentary analysis of local government events policies and social justice policies, seeking correspondence or conflict between these two important policy issues.

Event Education and Pedagogy

The Social Capital of Festival Internships: Links and Lingo

Mr. Dan Lomax - Leeds Beckett University

The strand of social capital theory developed by Coleman (1998) and Lin (1999), which sees individuals as investing effort into building relationships that they can exploit later, is a useful tool in explaining why students undertake extensive and often underpaid work. Whilst there are no studies as to how social capital is developed in the festival context similar entrepreneurial settings of retail (Manning 2015) and TV (Antcliff, Saundry and Stuart (2007) suggest the importance of building two distinct networks, 'knowledgeable insiders' and 'regular work partners, friendship and support groups'.

This research is based on interviews with 3 students who completed a music festival internships in the summer of 2016 and intend to return to work at festivals in 2017. Key themes identified are the development of important relationships within the industry as well as expanding their network amongst their peers.

The festival industry is typical of the 'new economy' identified by increasing self-employment, freelancing and temporary jobs. There is an increasing need to understand how new entrants can take ownership of their own career and personal development and the barriers they face in trying to do so. This study identifies what, in practice, students value in attempts to develop structured high value work experience programmes and where there is more to do.

The professional journey from events practitioner to higher education academic

Dr John Perry - Sheffield Hallam University

There is a growing argument that events management education, linked to the employability agenda, should be grounded and professionalized (Jiang and Wood Schmader, 2014). Consequently there exists an impetus for universities, in areas such as event management, to strengthen their lecturing teams by employing practitioners (Brown, 2014). New academics directly from industry contrast with more conventional and 'established academics', creating a more heterogeneous grouping, and consequently presenting a challenge to university management when considering transitional arrangements (Boyd and Smith, 2014). Particularly when we consider the view of Garrison (2005) who argues that 'new academics' enter higher education institutions with a certain corporatist new managerial perspective which can be at odds with the substantive rationality of established academic practices (Ritzer, 2001). This author's longitudinal study investigates the professional journey of four 'new event academics' as they transitioned from industry practitioner to higher education academic. The outcomes of the study identified problematic journey's whereby 'new academics' found the transition challenging for a series of interrelated reasons such as, feelings of inadequacy, isolation, lack of support and a shortage of belief in academic management practice and strategy. Specifically the findings identify how these new academics progress through what can be described as three key overlapping phases -The Reciprocal Phase; The Fragile Phase and The Engaged Phase - within the academic milieu. The presentation will expand on the three phases and pose the question whether the new event academic is on a potential collision course with the established academic, academic practice and institutional policies?

Engaging Employers in Events Management Education Through Innovative Teaching Practices

Dr. Jenny Flinn - Glasgow Caledonian University

There is little doubt that UK universities are under increasing pressure to develop and strengthen university-employer cooperation in order to prepare graduates with the skills, knowledge and attributes to work in their chosen industry (Melhuish, 2017). This is particularly true for events management education (EME) where despite an increasing recognition of the need for knowledgeable, skilled and well trained professionals (Lee, Lee & Kim, 2008), HE providers often face accusations of failing to deliver graduates with the relevant skills and attributes to work in this dynamic and ever changing industry. Thomas and Thomas (2013) suggest that developing links with practitioners can help to overcome these challenges and can also act as a means to establish a knowledge base, validate the utility of courses and ensure the future viability of EME.

This paper will seek to examine and evaluate the differing ways in which events practitioners can be engaged through innovative teaching practices, drawing upon a case study of an SCQF Level 8 module delivered at Glasgow Caledonian University as part of the BA (Hons) International Events Management programme. Having been delivered in collaboration with an industry partner since 2015 this case study will be used to identify the benefits and challenges of adopting such an approach from the perspectives of the HE provider, industry partner and students who have studied the module. Recommendations will be made as to how mutually beneficial relationships which enhance the student experience and future employability can be developed.

Consumers, Co-Creation and the Event Experience

The Consumer Experience of Agricultural Shows; 'What's the big attraction'?

Mrs. Caroline Westwood -Sheffield Hallam University

This paper contributes to the debate around event design and consumer experience seeking to aid our understanding of the role design plays within successful event management. Agricultural shows were historically designed to, more functionally; showcase, for the farming fraternity, 'best in breed' livestock. Nowadays, they are used more strategically to create links between the farming community and the non-farming public (Holloway, 2004; Gray, 2010), therefore resulting in proliferated attendees and therefore more varied expectation. Inevitably this increases the challenge for the events creators

By attending these events members of the public are becoming more aware of UK farming; developing a greater appreciation and seeking out their own (however insignificant) connection with the countryside. Such events also reflect changing consumer habits, with a focus on health, well-being and greater transparency in food origins, with 86% consumers wishing to purchase more traceable food produced on British farms (NFU, 2015). Agricultural shows offer an ideal platform to educate attendees, change the future image of agriculture, by facilitating knowledge transfer between farmers, food producer and consumers, it is therefore fundamental agricultural shows continue to evolve and change over time to ensure their appeal remains.

Limited studies have looked at rural events and in particular agricultural shows; moreover many have focused on rural tourism and place making. Certainly very few have investigated the consumer. Logically, in order to develop an informed and strategic approach to the events design it is fundamental to gain a holistic understanding of the expectations of the attendees.

The untold story: the creativity of events

Dr Caroline Jackson - Bournemouth University

Dr James Morgan and Chantal Laws - University of Westminster

Whether academically or professionally, events are emerging as a distinct area of study, research and practice. Like anything that grows, it is difficult for events not to be the result of its roots. The courses that have been developed have their roots in, for example, leisure, tourism, hospitality and performing arts. Some sit in Management Schools and Faculties and others in stage and theatres or stand alone departments. The academic base is just as broad and has chartered a similar course to tourism where there has been a positive tension between management and critical theories. One area that has had limited attention is the nature of creativity in events and this article will take an applied focus to this interest. The positioning of the events industry is something that is important for its identity but more importantly, it will shape event education, research and professional practice in the future.

Events have been identified as experiences (Getz 2005; Berridge 2007) and studied as such (Jackson 2006, 2015). However there has been little research undertaken about the creative nature of this experience, especially in how they are created. Models of the Creative Sectors depict a relatively blank circle that is titled 'Experiences' (NESTA 2006; British Council 2010). Events could be positioned within the creative industries because of this. This article is formed of different stories that illustrate the nature of creativity in the production of outdoor event experiences. These stories are narrated to add insight into the elements that are important for creativity, that of fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, risk-taking, complexity, curiosity and imagination (Guilford 1956, 1965, 1988; Sternberg 2012). This research is also novel in that it focuses more on the process (Stuhlfaut and Windels 2012; Tsoukas 2005) and environment of creativity (Amabile 2006) in the production of an event experience and less on the personal characteristics required for creativity or on the effectiveness of the creative experience itself. It aims to aid our understanding of creativity not just in outdoor events but in the creative industries as a whole (de Propis 2013; Freeman 2008).

Beyond Words: Video ethnography of spectacular folk experiences.

Dr. John Follett - Cardiff Metropolitan University

Video-based research is accepted as a research method in a variety of academic disciplines, such as travel research (Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken, 2016), humanities (Pink, 2014), and marketing and consumer research (Schembri & Boyle, 2013).

It has been recognised as a helpful research tool in situations where there is a depth of richness of data (Holm, 2008) which cannot be adequately analysed or depicted, due to the complexity of the activity or to the ephemeral nature of the activity (Paterson, Bottorff, & Hewat, 2003).

In this paper this method has been used to gather data from extraordinary co-created communal experiential consumption activities, where attendees of the event take an active role in it (Pongsakornrungrsilp & Schroeder, 2011). The spectacular consumer experiences used include Stonehenge solstice events and a Mari Lwyd festival, the method allows for themes and concepts to be identified which would have been missed using other forms of data collection.