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EVENT PLANNING AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR CREATING AWARENESS OF CULTURE DURING CALABAR CARNIVAL

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to investigate event planning as a tool for creating awareness of culture during the Calabar carnival. The research design adopted by the researcher was the survey research design with the questionnaire as an instrument for primary data collection. The choice of survey design was considered appropriate for the study. The Yaro Yamene method was used to determine the sample size, while the statistical tool used for data analysis was the Simple Regression Analytical tool. The findings revealed that proper event planning has a significant effect on creating awareness of culture during the Calabar carnival. From the findings made, the study concluded that proper event planning plays a critical role in achieving the purpose of an event. It is therefore recommended that event planners should always be guided by the predetermined event objectives while promoting the events.

KEYWORDS

Event Planning, Tourism, Tourists, Awareness Creation. Culture



Introduction

For several organisations, event planning and management has become an important aspect of strategic public relations management, especially for those that appreciate the significance of strategic communications (Akgöz & Engin 2016). This implies that, there is always an objective to be achieved by each event that is hosted. The event's objective coupled with other characteristics such as complex nature of events and resources (finance, time, and personnel requirements) makes it imperative for organisations to outsource event planning to professional event planners.

In the tourism industry, the hosting of tourism events such as cultural festivals is quite demanding especially because of the quest to satisfy the interests of various stakeholders. To achieve success that is sustainable in this regard, cultural events need modern management techniques. It is argued in extant literature that with the help of strategic marketing actions, the interests of various stakeholders could be achieved including the overall cultural event objective.

Events especially social events involve enormous resources, the absence of which could hinder the achievement of the event's primary objective. The enormity of the resources depends on the type, style and scope of the events and they are faced with different setbacks. Event planning is faced with several problems especially in developing countries like Nigeria, with its attendant consequences such as inability to achieve the event's objective. It is based on the foregoing that this current study was designed to determine the effect of event planning on creation of awareness of culture during Calabar carnival.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Literature

The Concepts of Events Planning and Management

Events are wide in nature, scale and size and every event is unique and demand requirement, (Wagen, & Carlos, 2005). Managing major events is complex and involves many role players, resources and technical support facilities. Wagen, and Carlos, (2005) states that the planning and management of an event well depend on the size and the type of the events.

An event manager is generally supported by a planning team, some of the activities are contracted to base the smooth operation of the events. Some of the activities that can be contracted to other managers include venue, stage, lighting, audio and video companies, decorations and florist, entertainers, employments agencies, rental companies, security and catering, (Wagen & Carlos, 2005, p.120).

Wagen, and Carlos, (2005) claims that for some events, the manager is also required to liaise with the government. Local council deals with event planning and approval, state government provides approvals for traffic and policing and the federal government gives advice on protocol for international dignitaries. According to Van der Wagen (2005), environmental scanning of the competition is very essential at the initial planning stage coupled with others aspect such as regulations, marketing, community impacts, risk management, revenue and experience as thus can severely limit creativity.

Turco et al (2002, p.14) claims that, there are many reasons cities and nations need and want to host tourism events. Hosting a sport event could be developmental for the community, which means that hosting a sport tourism event of providing sport-facilities that are developed in the communities. Wagen, and Carlos (2005, p.45) states that many issues should be taken into consideration when organizing any event of festivals to ensure the smooth success of the event. She further indicates that the event manager should ensure that the following requirements are in place before the actual time of the event. Such facilities include safety and security, adequate infrastructure and capacity of the event venue, as well as proper marketing at different levels (local, regional, national and international). Communication prior, during and even after the event is crucial to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and misunderstanding. Sufficient resources and staff training in event management are important to service quality.

Well programmed cultural events will impress customers and affect the events' success, some of which may face resources sponsorship problem. Therefore, it is essential to arrange them accordingly before the events are actually held. For the event to be successful, it requires good planning and design decision. These might include space for exhibition and pavilion, supply of essential services from parking to sanitation facilities, modification of the transport system to handle the traffic created by the event, anticipated revenue from admissions and sales, human resources requirement and the capital and operational budget of the event (Mules & McDonald, 1994).

Event Concept Development

There are numerous elements which need to be considered in developing an event concept. They include the type of event, size of the event, purpose/objective of the event and the skills of the team. The most important of these is the purpose, although the purpose is strongly linked to both the theme and the venue.

Types of Events

In terms of type, events may be categorized as follows,

- (a) **Sporting:** The success of the Rugby World Cup (2003), following the success of the Olympic Games (2000) has established Australia as one of the world's leading event destinations. The professional image of the country's event organizers is firmly established following flawless planning and implementation of these and other mega-events. The Times special correspondent and author Bill Bryson was like many other overseas correspondents, lavish in his praise of the Olympic Games organization: 'I don't wish in my giddiness to overstate matters, but I invite you to suggest a more successful event anywhere in the peacetime history of mankind (Sydney Morning Herald, 5 October 2000). Similar praise was heaped on organizers of the Rugby World Cup Australian Rugby Union (ARU) chief executive John O'Neill said that revenue had also exceeded expectations and eclipsed past tournaments, with \$80 million divided between the Australian Rugby Union and the world body.

Sporting events are held in all states and territories and they attract international sports men and women at the highest levels. Tennis, golf, rugby and car racing are just a few examples.

These major events are matched at the local level by sporting competitions for players at all levels. For example, the Pro Am, held annually at most golf courses, allows members to play with professional golfers. This event is usually the highlight of the golfing calendar and requires considerable effort by the team supporting it, including the PGA, the dub committee, the club manager, the club professional, ground staff, dub administration and catering.

- (b) **Entertainment, arts and cultural festivals:** Entertainment events are known for their ability to attract large audiences, in some cases, the concerts are extremely viable from a financial point of view; in others, financial problems can quickly escalate when ticket sales do not reach targets, Timing and ticket pricing are critical to the financial success of such events. A survey of festivals conducted by the Australia Council showed that over half the attendances were at main art festivals followed by popular music festivals, and that females were more likely than males to have attended a festival. Of all international visitors aged 15years and over 14 percent visited museums or art galleries (Bureau of Tourism Research, 1998).

Wine and food festivals are becoming increasingly popular nowadays providing a particular region the opportunity to showcase its products. Small towns such as Tumbarumba in New South Wales and Morington in Victoria attract interest with their food and wine festivals. Many wine regions hold festivals, often in combination with musical events such as Jazz or Opera in the Vineyard. Religious festivals fall into this category, too, and Australia's multicultural community prides rich opportunities for a wide range of festivals, Chinese New Year and Carols in the Domain are good examples.

About 300 festivals devoted solely, or partly, to cultural activities are staged every year in Australia. Among the biggest are Adelaide's biennial arts festival and the annual arts festivals held in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Each lasts festival several weeks and attracts many visitors.

- (c) **Family events:** Weddings, christenings, bar mitzvahs and, these days, divorces and funerals all provide opportunities for families to gather. Funerals are increasingly becoming big events with nr traditional coffins, speeches and even entertainment. It is important for the event manager to keep track of these changing social trends. For example, Asian tourists are a big market for the wedding industry, with many couples having a traditional ceremony at home and a Western wedding overseas.
- (d) **Fundraising:** Fetes and fairs are common in most communities, and are frequently run by enthusiastic local committees. The effort and organization required for these events is often underestimated, their general aim is raising funds, it is important that children's rides and other such contracted activities contribute to, rather than reduce, revenue. Sometimes the revenue gained from the operations is limited. There is also the risk that attendees will spend all their money on these activities and ignore those which are more profitable to the charitable cause.

Size of the event

Classification of events can be done on the basis of size or type as follows

(a) Mega-Events

The largest events are called mega-events and these are generally targeted at international markets. The Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, World Cup Soccer and Super bowl are good examples. The Super bowl, for which in 1967 there were 30 000 tickets unsold, now sells out before the tickets have been printed and attracts 100 000 visitors to the host city. It is televised to an audience of 800 million and adds US\$300 million to the local economy.

All such events have a specific yield in terms of increased tourism, media coverage and economic impact. While some cities are continuing to meet a legacy of debt after hosting an Olympic Games, Sydney was fortunate in meeting its budget due to a last-minute surge in ticket and merchandise sales, returning \$10 million to taxpayers. However, as with all events of this size, it is difficult to calculate the costs accurately with so many stakeholders (mainly government) involved. The budget for the Athens Olympics Games did not include a new train network and a suburban rail line, which were both funded by the European Union's Third Community Support Framework.

While the size of the Olympic Games in terms of expenditure, sponsoring, economic impact and worldwide audience would undoubtedly put it in the category of mega-event, it is worth comparing its size with, for example, that of the Maha Kumbh Mela (Grand Pitcher festival), the largest religious gathering in history. During 2001, approximately 70 million Hindu pilgrims converged on the Holy River Ganges for a sacred bathing ritual. The gathering takes place every 12 years and the 1989 Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad was attended by 15 million devotees. The 2001 festival will no doubt hold the record as the world's largest assembly of people for some time to come.

(b) Hallmark Events

Hallmark events are designed to increase the appeal of a specific tourism destination or region. The Tamworth country Music festivals, the Melbourne Cup and the Adelaide Festival of Arts are all examples of tourist destinations achieving market positioning for both domestic and international tourism markets through their annual events. The annual Floriade in Canbaerra also fits into this category. Internationally, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the carnival Rio are international festivals with significant event tourism impacts. In fact, Edinburgh has 16 key festivals that form the basis of their event tourism calendar. The events and their host cities become inseparable in the minds of consumers.

(c) Major Events

These events attract significant local interest and large numbers of participants as well as generating significant tourism revenue. The Robbie Williams Live Summer 2003 concert attracted a record audience in the UK of 375 000 people over five days. In Australia, 100 000 fans enjoyed his two performance. The Australian Open, Gold Coast Marathon, Royal Easter Show and the celebrations are held in most capital cities. The three-week festival

in Sydney includes market stalls, food stalls, exhibitions, street entertainment, parades and dragon boat races. Friends and relatives of the Chinese community often visit at this time.

ICMS Australia, an event management organization has an outstanding reputation for management of such events, as indicated by the extent of commitment of ICMS and their clients.

(d) Minor Events

Most events fall into this last category and it is here that most event managers gain their experience. Almost every town and city in Australia runs annual events. For example, the Broome area promotes the Pearl Festival, the Battle of Broome and the Mnago Festival. A count of special events and festivals meticulously researched for the Reader's Digest Book of the Road reveals that nearly 2000 festival-type annual events are held around Australia. In addition to annual events, there are many one-off events, including historical, cultural, musical and dance performance. At one such event, parents were proudly watching their tap-dancing offspring performing in their experience, colourful velvet outfits. Their proud expression turned to dismay when several dancer landed on their rear ends having slipped on the stage. Quick-thinking organizers covered the stage in a mixture of soft drink and clearing powder –all in a day's work for the event teams.

Purpose of the event

The purpose of the event should drive all the planning. For example if you were running a conference for financial planners, there could be two quite different purposes:

1. To facilitate an exchange of information bringing participants up to date with the latest changes in financial planning software products.
2. To achieve a memorable out-of-body experience for financial planners in order to develop a positive association with a new software product.

To achieve the first purpose would be quite straightforward, as this would require a fairly standard meeting or convention. Fulfilling the second purpose however, would be more difficult. For this unforgettable experience you would need a unique venue and carefully planned activities that the participants would enjoy. At the same time. the product would need to be reinforced constantly so that attendees would leave with an inescapable association with it. To have the fun without the positive association would defeat the purpose. The focus of the first of these purposes is information, while that of the second is entertainment.

Events as a means of creating awareness

As people formally exchanged their commodities for what they produced, so event planner organized events with sponsors buying it with the view of spreading information about the culture and tourism Calabar vis-a-vis Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial forces are relatively strong in Nigeria as lack of jobs and the rise in poverty level leave a few options for the Nigeria citizens. Although difficult due to lack of resources, they are profit making organizations such as the fate foundation in Nigeria and a whole lot of other events planning industry that are dedicated to promoting events apart from the information about the culture, tourism and Nigeria that is so widespread and often negative there appears to be a recognition of the critical role and place technology plays in the development and encouragement of entrepreneurs events planners in the nation, (Olusoye et al, 1991), like providing the digital equipment for a show or a carnival or a crane camera to cover massive events.

Event planning has grown tremendously over the years, in the sense that that is used to be a group thing where only the host family or community knows about events or festival but these days, the whole world is always aware of when any event wants to take place. With the invention of radio, television and the internet which wiped out the town criers information can now reach every part of the world. A typical event planner is one who is ready and willing to pull his resources together for the greater purpose of achieving his aim.

Ajala (2001) determined the relationship between awareness creation and event management. The study was carried out using some selected tourism destinations and survey method was used as the research design. The statistical techniques that were used for data analysis include; Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Simple regression with the aid of 15.0 version of minitab software and 20.0 version of statistical package for social

sciences (SPSS) respectively. From the Minitab output, positive relationship between awareness creation and event management was found. It could be inferred from the foregoing that;

H1: Event planning has significant effect on creating awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Saunders et al (2007), defines research design as the general plan of how the research questions would be answered. It is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes a blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. A survey is a method of collecting data in which people are asked to answer a number of questions (usually in the form of a questionnaire). The research design for this study was the survey research design which was considered appropriate since the opinion of the respondents was required.

Population of the Study: The population for this study consists of the people living in the community. These people are made up of the adult male and female living in the community who has an idea of what is happening in the community. The researcher selected this population based on convenience.

Sampling Plan: Anyanwu (2003) defined sample plan as that part taken from a whole to show how the rest look like. It is also ideal to differentiate sample from

Sampling: Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of a population considered to be adequate to represent all the characteristics of that population for the purpose of generating the findings from the sample itself, and target population. Hence, the sites taken are believed to be representative of all other sites in Cross Rivers State. Furthermore, Anyanwu (2000) noted that sample answer these questions under the following headings:

- i. Sample unit (who is to be surveyed?)
- ii. Sample size (How many are to be surveyed?)

Sampling Unit: The sampling unit is defined as the working non-theoretical population. It simply states the list or quads-list of elements from which a probability sample was selected. The data for this study were obtained from a random sample of the participants at the event. The various department sector of the event were considered so as to acquire relevant and reliable information to use in this study.

Sample Size: The calculation of the sample size (n) required for the estimation of an event in an infinite population is based on the following formula according to Egbulonu (2007), which is given by;

$$n = p(1-p)z^2$$

P is assumed prevalence of the event in the population under study.

Z is the critical value obtained from a standard normal distribution. For each level of confidence there is a corresponding value of z. The level of confidence frequently used in most studies are 90%, 95% and 99%. The corresponding z values are 1.64, 1.96, and 2.58 respectively.

e is the maximum absolute error that the user is willing to accept. In general, the relative error should be ≤ 0.20 in this study, we shall use 7.8% level error tolerance.

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)z^2}{e^2} = \frac{0.5 \times (0.5) \times (1.96)^2}{(0.078)^2} = \frac{0.9604}{0.006084}$$

=157.88=158

Data Analyses

To ascertain the effect of event planning and creating awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival. The only hypothesized relationship was subjected to statistical analysis using Simple regression analysis.

H1: Event planning has significant effect on creating awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival.

Table 1 Simple Regression analysis showing the effect of event planning and creating awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival.

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Table 1 Simple Regression analysis showing the effect of event planning and creating awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.856 ^a	.733	.730	.65819

a. Predictors: (Constant), Event Planning

Table 2 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	129.554	1	129.554	299.049	.000 ^b
	Residual	47.221	109	.433		
	Total	176.775	110			

a. Dependent Variable: Creating Awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Event Planning

Table 3 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.970	.310		-6.347	.000
	Event Planning	1.196	.069	.856	17.293	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Creating Awareness

Simple Regression Analysis

Table 1, 2 and 3 shows the simple regression analysis which shows that standardized beta (β) of event planning and creating awareness for culture during Calabar carnival is: ($\beta = 0.856$), while value of R square = 0.733, F = 299.049 & $p = .000 < 0.05$. This specifies that event planning explains 90.7% variation in creating awareness for culture during Calabar festival. The result of the regression analysis shows that event planning made significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable ($\beta = 0.830$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) (see ANOVA output in Table 2). The model suggest that event planning in the context of Calabar Carnival, the empirical model can increase the level of awareness creation for the culture of the people.

Testing of hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Decision Rule

- If $PV < 0.05$ = Hypothesis is supported
- $PV > 0.05$ = Hypothesis is not supported

Hypothesis one: The outcome of analysis show that event planning had significant effect on creation of awareness during Calabar Carnival ($\beta = 0.830, p=0.000 < 0.05$).

Discussion of Results

The results shown in Table 1,2 and 3, provide support for the hypothesis (H1) conceived for the study. Hypothesis 1 showed a significant effect of event planning on creation of awareness of culture during Calabar Carnival ($\beta = 0.830, p=0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, H1 is supported. This finding is consistent with Getz (2008) who noted that the interesting side of events, is that each event is created for a purpose, and only the attendees enjoy the unique experience of the event. For the Calabar Carnival, the purpose remains the marketing of the cultural heritage of the people which has proven to be successful.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the findings made, it is safe to conclude that proper event planning plays a critical role in achieving the purpose of an event. It is therefore recommended that event planners should always be guided by the stated event objectives while promoting the events.

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