ABSTRACT

Purpose – Our objective is twofold: First, to identify what can cause local residents dissatisfaction with events and tourism in rural communities. Second, show that the level of happiness of the local residents can mitigate their dissatisfaction with the tourism industry and event development.

Design/methodology/approach – In terms of methodology, this paper is based on primary data collected using a questionnaire. SPSS has been used to run some descriptive analysis.

Practical implication – Existing literature discuss mainly the contribution of events and tourism to destinations and local residents as a one-way contribution or impact with events and tourism impacting or contributing to the local community and destination overall. We are arguing that in some cases, the direction of the impact or contribution goes the other way round. It is the resilience of local residents that enable events and tourism to grow and remain. Quality of life or happiness should systematically be used as a metric by DMOs to assess their performance.

Originality / value – Happiness and/or Quality of Life and tourism are very topical at the moment and still poorly researched. This research paper is therefore going to contribute to the meta-literature in the area. Last but not least, there is absolutely no research paper on tourism and events based on Winchester (UK).

Keywords - Tourism; Events; Winchester; Antitourism; Sustainability

Introduction

Events have always been an important and integral part of every society (Andrews and Leopold, 2013). They are part of the national identity of a group (Miller and McTavish, 2013; Bladen et al., 2012; Foley et al., 2012).

Additionally, events are a way for a group to demonstrate their values and celebrate their culture (O’Toole, 2011); preserve and renew cultural identities and practices (Bladen et al., 2018). When a line of parallelism is set to tourism, it would seem that event and tourism have a close link. As tourism developed, many sub-sectors also found their ways to join this lucrative industry. Along with the accommodation, hospitality, transportation and entertainment sector, event organizers and managers also realized the potential of the event industry and this
realization gave birth to the event tourism industry. Events and tourism are therefore both important for individuals and for a society (Getz, 2008; Getz and Pike, 2016). They are both meeting individuals and groups’ needs. That said, events and tourism also have some negative impacts on the society. More recently, it is the negative impacts of both sectors on local residents’ quality of life (or happiness) that have been pointed out (Campion, 2018; Leadbeater, 2017; Richardson, 2017; Seraphin et al., 2018). The Janus-faced character of the tourism (and event) industry (Sanchez and Adams, 2008), explains why every positive impact comes with a negative one. On that basis, it is very important to understand both sectors in order to maximise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts.

In this research paper, our objective is therefore twofold: first, to identify what can cause local residents dissatisfaction with events and tourism. Second, show that the level of happiness of the local residents can mitigate their dissatisfaction with the tourism industry and event development.

So doing, Winchester (England), a rural and Special Interest Tourism and Event destination, is used as a case study. In terms of methodology, this paper is based on primary data collected using a questionnaire. From a practitioner point of view, the findings of this research might help the Winchester DMO (Destination Management Organisation) to review its approach in terms of tourism and events development. Equally important, Quality of Life and level of happiness of the locals are probably going to be factors that the DMO is going to consider when reviewing its performance.

From an academic point of view, if it is proven that the level of happiness of the local residents can mitigate their dissatisfaction with the tourism industry and event development, we will be able to say that there is a one-way direction between local residents’ happiness and the development of the tourism industry and events organisation. Namely, that it is the level of happiness of locals that leads to satisfaction with events and tourism, and not the other way round, in other words, the satisfaction with events and tourism leading to improving the level of happiness of local residents. If we are proven to be right, it means that Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and other national bodies, should give the priority to foster local residents’ happiness before even thinking of developing tourism and events. This view is supported by Dupont (2009) who used the cointegration and causality theory, but also by Seraphin et al. (2016), based on the Blakeley Model. Happiness and/or Quality of Life in relation with tourism and events are very topical at the moment and still poorly researched (ex. Kim et al., 2013). This research paper is therefore contributing to the meta-literature in the area. Last but not least, there is absolutely no research paper on tourism and events based on Winchester (UK).

From a methodological point of view, this paper is based on quantitative research. A survey (questionnaire) was used to collect the data. As for the analysis of the data, SPSS software was used.

Contextual and Conceptual framework. A Brief Overview

Contextual Framework

The contextual framework sets out the geographic limits of the study. Also, the impacts of an event or tourism can also have different impacts according to the context (Fox et al., 2014). Results from the 2011 Census show that Winchester’s population is 116,600 with a low rate of unemployment. Indeed, it is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England. According to Public Health England, the health of people in Winchester is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average. People in Winchester scored 7.7 out of 10 in the happiness charts compiled by the Office of National Statistics, against a national average of 7.4 (Winchester [Online]).

As for events, Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris and McDonnell (2010), they argued that there are four different types of events: Family, sport, cultural and business events. In terms of size, they also argued that there are four sizes: Hallmark, local or community, major and mega events. In Winchester, all types of events are represented. That said, most of them are either family or cultural events and in terms of size, Winchester only hold local or community events (Table 2).

Conceptual Framework

Once the concepts have been identified, literature is used to establish the relationships between them. The third step is to operationalize the concepts, in other words, turn them into items that can be measured or observed. Finally, once operationalized, the concept becomes a variable. In the case of quantitative research, hypothesis or research question can be developed afterwards (Fox et al., 2014).

- Concept 1 - Dialogical self

During many years, in the western world, a ‘person’ was defined by the sense of being the same person during the course of time. In other words, being a single and unique