

A Critical Review of Sports Events Practice

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Abstract

This paper will illustrate the meaning and importance of sports event management, the typology of sports events, the specialization of sports events, and the model of sport event management. This study used the literature review method to acquire its final results. The relevant sport event management literature review was done according to the purpose of the study. It used the purposive random sample method for selecting relevant literature. This study shows the current typology of the event in the sports industry; the second part of the study critically analyzes the different ways of specializing in sport event management. It also critically evaluates the sports event management model and the reason for some sports failures; therefore, Events also have the power to show sustainability in action, and every sustainably produced event can inspire and motivate others to action.

1. Introduction

The first meaning can be identified in the definition of the event given by Laurence Carter (2007) - "any gathering of people for a specific purpose" while the second in the one offered by Donald Getz (2011) "event: an occurrence at a given place and time". The last three meanings are connected to the form of the event and to the experience created by it. The last signification can be found in the definition given by the Industry Glossary of Terms (2003) "an organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, a special event, gala dinner etc."

Rather than seeking to develop another definition for events or to produce an exact meaning the aim here is to attempt to understand some of the academic views put forward to explain what events are and to draw upon those as a way of explaining what types of occasions are called events. It will also help us to understand what has been the main focus in developing our understanding of events in society and also highlight some key features of definitions. Event management is a relatively new academic subject and so it is reasonably straightforward to trace the emergence of the concepts and definitions of events. An excellent summary of the state of play in defining events is provided by Bowdin, McPherson and Flinn



(2006a) who explain events from both a US and UK perspective and highlight the key terminology that is now used to define events. They draw on the range of sources attempting to define events (Shone & Parry, 2004; Van der Wagen, 2004; Allen et al., 2005; Goldblatt, 2005; Bowdin et al., 2006b; Getz, 2006) and note that, despite this activity, there is surprising, a limited uniformity of accepted terms, concepts, and, definitions.

One of the reasons for this is that events occur throughout all sections of society and across all different types of organizations and so what one individual or group might see as being special and unique (e.g. wedding), another group sees as being ordinary and regular (e.g. meeting). Often those studying events approach it from a particular viewpoint and look for a definition within the context of their own study area that explains the activity they perceive as an event. Such is the problematic nature of defining events that it may not be possible to do so:

It seems at times that special events are everywhere; they have become a growth industry. The field of special events is now so vast that it is impossible to provide a definition that includes all varieties and shades of events. Bowdin, et al. (2001, pp. 15-16)

1.1 Significance of the Study

This article is aimed at individuals, committees and teams, agencies, PCOs (professional conference organizers), promoters, owners, contractors, suppliers and venue management. If you are involved in producing any type of event, of any scale or in any type of location,



this article is for you. Those who are studying event management, are on internships or who plan to be sustainability change agents in the event industry, are prime candidates to read this article too.

1.2 Rational of the Study

Many readers of this article will be students interested in a professional or business career related to planned events. The career potential and entrepreneurship opportunities associated with planned events have grown dramatically, in tune with general trends in the experience economy. Professionals entering public service, or the not-for-profit sector, will encounter events and related issues at some point; they need to know how to relate to events as businesses or as policy instruments. There are more general, educational reasons for studying planned events. Within the ‘experience economy, planned events are a very important and expanding social and cultural phenomenon, which is of considerable interest to students and practitioners in many fields. Events reflect changes in popular culture and continue to make high culture accessible. Whatever one’s cultural interests, from entertainment to opera, planned events are an enduring delivery vehicle.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Define the main types of a planned event in sport (the typology) and key terms used in describing events (e.g., special event; mega, hallmark, cause-related, and media events).



2. What are the different ways of specializing in sport event management? (Refer to the model: “studying event management”).
3. How can the “sports event management system model” be used by managers?
4. . What are the major reasons why some sports events fail?

1.4 Operational Terms

- **Cause-Related Sports Events:** Participants at these events partake in some form of physical exertion while raising money or awareness for a particular cause (Wharf Higgins & Lauzon, 2003)
- **Hallmark Event:** is commonly used to describe an event that becomes synonymous with the location in which it takes place (Getz 1992; Hall 1997; McDonnell, et al. 1999).
- **Media Sport:** provides crucial evidence of a momentous historical transition in modes and systems of communication. In (Castells’s terms 2009, pp. 55-70).
- **Mega Events:** by way of their size of significance, are those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, prestige, or economic impact for the host community, venue or organization (Gammon, S. (2014).
- **Special Event:** can most simply be described as something that happens which is outside the normal routine of organization’. (Badmin, et al. 1992: 109).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Eventology

In the English language, ‘ology’ added to a noun indicates ‘the study or science of’, so ‘eventology’ would mean (and you will not find it in the dictionary) the study or science of events. It’s an awkward term (imagine ‘festivalology’ or ‘meetingology’ and you get the point), and those in established disciplines like biology do not like newcomers, especially in fields of applied study, taking on the veneer of pure science. Goldblatt (2011) uses the term in a specific way, related to his model of how events foster cultural progression through innovation, and this is a very useful conceptualization. Goldblatt (2011: xii) argued that: ‘Eventology is the study of planned events to promote positive societal benefits.’ Bringing together people through planned events is said to make societies healthier, smarter, wealthier and fairer, greener, safer and stronger. These can be considered a worthwhile (or normative) agenda, with events as instruments of policy.

2.2 Sports Event Assessment Methods

According to Carlsen, et al (2001) in event management sector has often ignored measuring social, cultural, and environmental impact. Nevertheless, full cost-benefit evaluations are often undertaken. In addition, Ritchie pointed out that introduced important dimensions of events evaluations such as economic, tourism, commercial, socio-cultural, psychological, and political, using the Delphi technique which is used to systematically combine expert knowledge and opinion to



arrive at an informed group consensus about the evaluation of events. These opinions were identified through successive rounds of consultation and surveys of the expert group (1984, cited in Carlsen, et al., 2001). Carlsen, et al (2001) argued that per event impact evaluation modal, it should be definitely considered certain criteria for better evaluation such as Potential risk exposure, Probability of success, Compatibility with existing venues; Event manager's capability; Potential community benefits, Potential environmental impacts, forecast number of tourists, and Fit with destination image or brand. On the other hand, the post-event evaluation modal should be considered certain criteria such as Economic impact at the state level, Economic impact at the city/ community level, Number of international visitors, Direct visitor expenditure, Value media coverage, Positive community attitudes, Financial results (profit/loss), Problem-free operations, Sponsor satisfaction, Employment creation, Cost-benefit analysis, Environmental impacts, Community (sociocultural) impacts; Yield per visitor; Infrastructure improvement; Urban redevelopment/renewal, Higher voluntarism and event expertise, and Future use of purpose-built facilities (legacy).

Fredline noted the hat "triple bottom line" concept for sustainable event management, which can either create or destroyed values of economic, social, and environment. It is linked the two assessments of sustainable development, similar sports events, in terms of mega-event, can bring sustainable positive and



negative impact for the host community, in that sense, the triple bottom line concept is an important method for evaluation the impact of Sport events (2006 cited in Ma, et al., 2011). In addition, Ma (2011) illustrated that International Academy of sport Sciences and Technology (IAST) has introduced toolkit aiming to practice of domestic and international sporting event as well as National, International Federation and national Olympic committees to making their sporting event more sustainable in the ways of environmental, inclusive and economically smart. This toolkit is illustrated at the Kaohsiung 2009 World Games during its planning stage which is used to qualitative approach to document analysis as well as used to identify the objective of the event and these were then developed into specific criteria to evaluation event, then this was supplemented by observation of what was actually in place on city. In turn these criteria were used to identify the question of interview process with key stockholders. Thereafter, the data were then analyzed against these specific criteria in order to decide whether or not the World Games were on a sustainable path.

2.3 Conceptual Approach: Understanding Mega Sports Event Legacy as a 'Wicked Problem'

Wicked problems are complex, intractable, open-ended, unpredictable social challenges such as global warming, drug abuse, natural disasters, the safety of nanotechnology, refugee migration, and child protection (Alford & Head, 2017).



Wicked problems as a concept draw attention to the complexity of the social world and political processes, but the framework has also been criticized for being prone to totalizing problems, meaning it becomes unclear how to move towards solutions (Lazarus, 2008; Stares, 1996). As we do not solve wicked problems, but rather make progress towards improving them or increasing management effectiveness of them (Head, 2010). A framework is needed to facilitate understanding of the component parts of a wicked problem (legacy in this case), to and allow the phenomenon to be untangled (Alford & Head, 2017).

Disentangling problems should reveal that there are different degrees of ‘wickedness’, resulting in the use of different strategies to tackle them, as opposed to the ‘one best way’ advocated in early thinking (Alford & Hughes, 2008). While the literature offers a variety of strategies for dealing with wicked problems (see: Roberts, 2000; Kotter, 1990; Heifetz & Heifetz, 1994; Durant & Legge, 2006; Kreuter et al., 2004; Termeer, Dewulf, Breeman, & Stiller, 2015; Weber & Khamedian, 2008), Alford and Head (2017) suggest a two-level framework including a typology of wickedness’, which we propose is applicable when conceptualizing legacy as a wicked problem and a more finely grained typology of factors (in particular those relevant to the practical needs of decision makers and managers) underlying the broad categories of wickedness to understand the causal mechanisms that explain the potential solutions.

3. Methodology

This study is based on data from secondary sources; the data were collected using the qualitative research method. The qualitative method is used to gain a better understanding of and provide a reliable investigation for the research question. The literature review method was used for collecting data from relevant journal articles, textbooks, reports, and other academic works. The data that was collected represent all the areas of event management in sports and were collected using the purposive random sampling method, which used key themes, such as typology of sports event management, special sports event, hallmark sport event, mega sports events, models of sports event management, and current issues in event management in sports, for collecting the data for this study. The data were critically analyzed according to the selected themes. Therefore, the academic works that were studied are related to event management in sports and general event management. These included works by Chappelet, J. L., & Parent, M. M. (2017) [2]. Routledge handbook of sports event management. Routledge, Getz, D., & Page, S. J. (2019) [3]. Event studies: Theory, research, and, policy for planned events. Routledge. And Ranjan, W. (2016) [4]. A review of sports events impacts evaluation methods. Thanks to the richness of secondary data available, the study was able to conclude.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 A New Typology of Sports Events

Several authors have proposed typologies for sports events, especially the largest events and those that receive the most media attention



(Ritchie 1984, Hall 1989, Jago and Shaw 1998, Gratton and Taylor 2000, Getz 2005, Parent and Smith-Swan 2013). The following typology is new in that it focuses on the nature of an event, rather than its size. It is based on three dichotomies that are essential from a managerial point of view (for-profit or non-profit, mono-sport or multi-sport, one-off or recurring) and which correspond to three resources - financial, infrastructure, and information - an organizing committee must manage (like any other body) in addition to human resources.

4.2 Special Sport Events

Unsurprisingly numerous sports events have been situated within the special event category (which is a term often used as an umbrella term for all planned events) as sport, for many, imbues loyalty, engagement, identity investment, belonging, and so will be perceived as- 'special'. Of course, as Getz (2007) points out, such events may be special- but special to whom? For example, according to Badmin, et al. (1992: 109), 'a special event can most simply be described as something that happens which is outside the normal routine of an organization. In this case, the specialness is linked to the organization rather than the perception of the participant or spectator, whereas other authors tend to concentrate on how positively the event is perceived by attendees and potential attendees. To what degree any sport event will be taken to be special is purely subjective and can incorporate a diverse and enormous range of events. Work undertaken by Jago and Shaw (1999) has helped to identify key characteristics



of special events by first outlining the attributes highlighted in the literature of what constitutes this type of event, and comparing it with how such events are perceived by the public.

4.3 Mega Sport Events

Some of the more high-profile sports events are those associated with mega-events, obvious examples being the Olympic and Paralympic Game~ and the Football World Cup. But when does an event become 'mega' and what features should it display before being described as such? Similarly, to special events, definitions range in the criteria adopted and in whether they focus upon general attributes and characteristics, or specific quantitative feature. For example, Rooney (1988) believes that mega-events display distinctive characteristics linked to tradition, international media coverage, myth-making, history, and the ability to trigger off additional events such: as parades and festival (particularly pertinent to this is the relatively new phenomenon of fan zones). Rooney (1988) also goes on to note that mega- sports events can occur irregularly or regularly in different places such as the Football World Cup and the Olympic Games; can occur in one of a limited choice of sites such as the British and American Open Golf Championships (Hall 1997); or can take place at one particular Site which over time attains a hallmark status. Roche (2000), on the other hand, outlines the global appeal of mega events, and notes that the organization and management of such events would normally involve national and international bodies. Others such as Marris (1987) propose a more quantitative approach,



suggesting that visitor numbers and event costs should be taken into consideration, though this would be largely dependent upon to what extent new stadia and venue would be needed and where the event took place, especially in terms of accessibility. However, the most widely used criteria adopted in the literature are related to the various impacts that such events engender. In very simple term they revolve around the significance of the economic impacts coupled with irregularity and mass appeal (Gratton, et al. 2001). Arguably the most succinct definition is offered by Getz {2007: 25}.

Mega events, by way of their size of significance, are those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, prestige, or economic impact for the host community, venue or organization (Gammon, S. (2014).

4.4 Hallmark Sport Events

The term ‘hallmark event’ is commonly used to describe an event that become synonymous with the location in which it takes place (Getz 1992; Hall 1997; McDonnell, et al. 1999).

Consequently, it is less about the operational features and more about the outcomes that the event generates over time, particularly with regard to tourism. Usually hallmark event display a distinctiveness that makes them stand out from the event landscape; they have been defined by Ritchie (1984: 2) as:

Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration. Developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal, and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/ or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness,



status. or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.

For Getz, hallmark events are representative of a specific category characterized by its authentic connection with a certain space or culture.

They are recurrent and associated with the image of the community or of the host destination. Mega events are the biggest and most significant type of event generating a high level of tourism, media coverage, and economic impact. For Jago and Shaw as well as for Getz, hallmark events are described by the interdependence with their host destination which evolves into identification and institutionalization. Unlike previous descriptions, (Hall, 1992) does not identify hallmark events with their destination but he mentions their capacity of drawing attention and bringing profitability or to a touristic destination. (Silvers, 2004) has a completely different vision that goes beyond the idea of connection with space: “an event of such significance and/or scope that its image or stature assures national and international recognition and interest”. If for silvers hallmark events are the most significant, {Tara-Lunga, 2012 #105} mega-events the most important in terms of size and scale, participation, and, prestige. (Bowdin, et al., 2003) Bodwil define them as being “so large that they affect whole economies” implying the participation at in the bidding procedure.



4.5 Parameters to Categorize Sport Events

Sports events come in many shapes and sizes, and can be categorized according to a number of parameters:

- **Size:** defined according to a range of criteria such as number of participants, number of venues, budget, or number of spectators and television/internet viewers.
- **Spatial Characteristics:** the event can take place outdoors or indoors, in a public space or a private arena. Competitions can occur simultaneously in several different venues or in one venue but spread out over time.
- **Temporal Characteristics:** the duration and/or the periodicity of the event and the competition calendar. They can recur regularly in the same place (every year, every two years, or every four years) or be one-off events that do not automatically come back to the same place and generally require bids.
- **Sporting Characteristics:** an event can include one or several sports. It can also satisfy different needs, for example, competition (elite) or leisure (mass-participation sport). The popularity of sports varies tremendously, ranging from football (arguably the most popular sport in most parts of the world) to Tchoukball, a sport invented in Switzerland and taken up in just a few other countries.



- **Financial Objective:** an event can be organized by a sport organization whose aim is to break even; if there is a surplus, it will invest it in its other sporting activities, in particular grass-roots projects. But it can also be organized for profit, as a show or entertainment for spectators, sponsors, and television/internet viewers.
- **Renown:** measured by the outreach of the event, which can be local, regional, national, or international. An event's fame and image can also be measured by the number of participants, spectators, and/or sponsors it attracts and by its coverage in the media.

These characteristics can be combined in many different ways, making it difficult to produce a clear classification of sports events. Nevertheless, a simple, if not simplistic, typology of events can be drawn up based only on media coverage: XS, S, M, L, XL and sports events.

- **(Very) Big (XL and L) Events** include the Olympic Games, the Fédération International de Football Association (FIFA) Football World Cup and European Football Championships (UEFA Euro), some world championships (athletics, swimming, skiing, etc.), the Tour de France, the Super Bowl, and a few other hallmark events. These events involve the world's sporting elite, receive extensive media attention, are given international television coverage, and



attract large numbers of spectators. For example, The 1987 World Alpine Ski Championships at Crans Montana, Switzerland.

- **Medium-Sized (M) Events** include some world and continental championships, major tournaments, large sports meetings, and major mass-participation events such as marathons. They can involve a large number of participants and bring together the sporting elite and amateurs. For example the annual European Masters Golf Tournament at Crans Montana (since 1923).
- **(Very) Small (S and XS) Events** receive less media attention. They may involve the public, but they can also involve the sporting elite for world and European championships in ‘small’ sports. For example the 2000 World Handi-Ski Championships at Anzère and Crans Montana.

4.6 Sport Event Management Models

According to the institution management theory as well as sports management theory, the paper divides the sports management models into Flat, Vertical, and, Network.

The three sport event management models: Flat, vertical, and Network have for a long time helped sports event practices. But with the information age coming and new technologies constantly entering major sports the drawbacks of these three models appear obvious Flat, the problem of decision-making power concentration is much prominent. Although the



model is variable and flexible, the organizational structure exposes its disadvantages like simplicity and arbitrary, impossible to bear the sports events management tasks. Because of the small hierarchical organization and simple structure, it is easy to transfer information and communicate within the organization. But in the course of transmission, the lack of knowledge resources is inevitable, and this is the defect of the structure itself that cannot be avoided.

In Vertical, information transfer and sharing are the major problems. The information cannot be accurately and efficiently transmitted in such a multi-leveled structure. This usually results in sorts of errors due to information distortion and poor transmission. The knowledge accumulation, exchange, re-uses and profits generation is even impossible.

The network holds the ay stable vertical and horizontal structure. But such a cross structure can easily cause disorder and confusion of internal information, and even disrupt work. Vast amounts of information within the organization cannot generate benefits, but exert negative impacts and impede the progress of the event organization.

Thus, none of the flat model, vertical model, or network model can meet the needs of modern sport event development, especially when it comes to mass information processing and knowledge sharing, and in considering the diversity of the events and the complexity of the participants’ interests. Therefore, sport event management must also adapt to the changes and



development of the times. It's an unavoidable topic for new subjects, new areas and, new thinking to merge into the event management model establishment.

4.7 Reason Why Sports Events Fail

If we ignore the urgent call of nature, events will surely contribute to the continual devastation of the environment and the diminishing of the earth's natural capital, along with lopsided and far-from-fair distribution of resources, wealth and well-being. Over the last decade, I have seen terrifically creative examples of sustainability management and shining examples by enthusiastic and inspired event planners, suppliers, and solutions innovators: solar-powered wheelie bin-holding sound systems; high-volume reusable pint mugs and washing systems replacing disposables; waste 'eco' bonds encouraging messy campers to keep clean and recycle; free beers for bags of recycling; armies of scouts rescuing abandoned tents; creative souls remaking abandoned materials into clothes and décor; 100-mile conference menus; on-site worm farms; innovative sign and exhibition materials; organic catering; composting toilets; solar, pedal, kinetic and hydrogen power generators; the list is endless.

5. Conclusion

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The purpose of this research article was to examine the meaning and importance of sports event management, the typology of a sports event, the specialization of a sports event, and the model of sports event management. The study was completed by utilizing a literature review method to acquire its final results.

Importantly, the result of this research article has the potential for transferability. It shows the current typology of events in the sports industry, critically analyzes the different ways of specializing in sport event management, it also critically evaluates the sports event management model and the reason for some sports failures.

This article is aimed at individuals, committees and teams, agencies, PCOs (professional conference organizers), promoters, owners, contractors, suppliers, and venue management. If you are involved in producing any type of event, of any scale, or in any type of location, this article is for you. Those who are studying event management, are on internships, or who plan to be sustainability change agents in the event industry, are prime candidates to read this article too.

This research article can also be beneficial to advance the event management understanding of undergraduate students seeking a degree in sports or event management.



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