

Understanding the relationship between organizers and other key stakeholders of local festivals

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Abstract: How festival organizers relate to other stakeholders influences the attractiveness and success of a festival. This study examines how local festival organizers evaluate their relationship with other stakeholders, and vice versa. Based on mean values, organizers engage in social exchange and collaboration; local residents, volunteers, and visitors engage in direct social interaction; and vendors face increased financial risks. To effectively use festivals to increase their appeal and attract visitors, festival committees must involve representatives from all identified stakeholder groups, specifically vendors, who should be part of different committees before the start of a festival. Direct interaction between organizers and the media should be improved, as the media are crucial in marketing and enhancing the image of local festivals. Moreover, media outlets can serve as sponsors.

Keyword: Festival; stakeholder, Ghana, social exchange, collaboration, organizer

1. Introduction

Now that festivals are significant events, tourism destinations incorporate them into their tourism development strategies to create a new tourism product (Ralston et al., 2005). Moreover, festivals and events are increasingly used as marketing tools to enhance destination image (Buch et al., 2011) and reposition the destination (Gursoy et al., 2004). Festivals also represent a microcosm of tourism's interrelated system of stakeholders, reflecting the interdependency of public and private sectors, hosts, and guests in a unique temporal and spatial event. In the middle of involvement of diverse stakeholders, they generally encompass organizers, volunteers, government agencies, local residents, visitors, the media, sponsors, and vendors (Hede, 2007; Presenza & Iocca, 2012; Reid & Arcodia, 2002; Van der Wagen & White, 2010). Given that festival stakeholders interact with one another, effective collaboration, mutual understanding and trust are essential among these actors (i.e., organizers and other stakeholders) (Buch, Milne, & Dickson, 2011).

Notwithstanding the importance of festival stakeholder relationships, limited research attempts to examine these rapports (Adongo et al., 2019; Chang & Hsieh, 2017; Getz & Andersson, 2010). Specially, an understanding of them in the diverse cultural, geographical, and managerial contexts is fundamental. The nature of stakeholders and their relationships in the West African context present interesting and unique dynamics that advance the discourse on festival stakeholder relationships. In the West African (Ghanaian) setting, most local festivals emanate directly from local traditional chiefs and councils rather than from government authorities, as may be the case in other contexts (e.g., Kim et al., 2002; Yaghmour & Scott, 2009). In Ghana, organizers are mostly traditional leaders (Lentz, 2001). In Western settings, vendors often need to negotiate with organizers for stall spaces. However, such is not the case for festival vendors in Ghana, where they simply arrive and sell their goods and services without any prior arrangement with organizers.

Volunteers are untrained, and volunteering is more activity-based than administrative. Furthermore, out-of-town festival visitors are mostly indigenes who reside elsewhere in or outside the country, though the number of international visitors is growing (Mensah, 2013). In addition,

Citation: Adongo, R., Badu-Baiden, F., & Lee, M. L. (2021). Understanding the relationship between organizers and other key stakeholders of local festivals. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, 20(1), 40-60.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 12 October 2021

Accepted 26 January 2022

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sponsors often include alcoholic beverage manufacturers, especially those that produce spirits used in festival rituals. Such sponsors often “donate” beverages to organizers as part of sponsorship packages. Given that sponsorship is not strictly contractual, from the perspective of other stakeholders, sponsors often appear to be “donating,” thereby making them seem socially responsible (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008). These stakeholder dynamics and relationships offer new insights into how festival organizers relate to other stakeholders in this West African setting.

The goal of this study is to ascertain the relationships between festival organizers and other stakeholder groups based on the tenets of social network theory, stakeholder theory, collaboration theory, and social exchange theory. Specifically, this study seeks to investigate different perspectives on the relationships between festival organizers and government authorities, sponsors, vendors, volunteers, local residents, visitors, and the media.

2. Literature review

2.1 Stakeholder relations: theories and applications in festivals

The relationships among stakeholders and success of a festival cannot be overemphasized. The largely social nature of these relationships, the networks created, and the collaboration that occurs have not been emphasized in the literature. Theories have been applied in numerous disciplines to explain social interactions between individuals and groups; however, empirical application in the festival setting is limited. This study focuses on four such theories, namely, stakeholder, social exchange, collaboration, and social network theory, as they provide useful means for examining the multidimensional and multidirectional relationships among festival stakeholders.

2.2 Stakeholder theory in the festival context

Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997) is premised on the notion that an organization’s stakeholders (internal and external) are crucial to its success and therefore should be considered important and managed effectively. The key concepts in stakeholder theory are power, urgency, and legitimacy (Mitchell et al., 1997). Power examines how a stakeholder can have greater control over a relationship and exert more influence than other(s) in the relationship. Urgency is the degree to which a stakeholder’s requests, demands, or wants are addressed swiftly. Meanwhile, legitimacy indicates how desirable or socially acceptable the actions of a party are to an organization or society. A stakeholder’s level of legitimacy can be inferred to affect the extent of power wielded (Mitchell et al., 1997).

In the festival context, an organization or firm can be seen as the festival, and the rest can be considered as its stakeholders. However, in festivals, organizers are often considered weightier than other stakeholders. The urgency with which festival stakeholder demands are addressed and the legitimacy of certain stakeholders over others are vital considerations for festival success. For festivals to succeed, various stakeholder interests must be considered (Wood & Grey, 1991).

The extent to which stakeholder interests are considered in decisions concerning festivals, that is, the descriptive subdivision of stakeholder theory as specified by Donaldson and Preston (1995), is relevant. The use of this theory is vital for establishing how various festival stakeholders consider their interests accounted for in the planning and execution of a festival. For example, Anderson and Getz (2008) borrowed from stakeholder theory in their analysis of event stakeholders, as the theory focuses on power, legitimacy, and urgency. However, these studies are mainly conducted in Western contexts.

2.3 Social exchange theory

The second theory, that is, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958), has been applied variously to explain social interaction. Social exchange theory is premised on the notion that social interaction is essentially an exchange of rewards and costs between individuals and groups, with exchanges weighed based on benefits obtained and costs incurred. The assumption is that people enter relationships with the highest benefits and lowest costs (Molm, 1991). Key components of social exchange theory include power, trust, reciprocity, altruism, and dependence.

Power is regarded as relational, that is, power is created as relationships continue (Foucault, 1982). Stein and Harper (2003) considered power as vested, with each party's perception of the power it assumes to have over other parties in a relationship dictating the extent of the party's use of that power. Trust is generally believed to reduce social conflicts, because most social interactions are voluntary (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Although social exchange theory is premised on the weighing of benefits and costs, social interactions can also be altruistic in that rewards are not necessarily anticipated (Emerson, 1976). Control and dependence underscore the desire for independence in that any one party in a social interaction will avoid dependence on another party if possible (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959).

Social exchange theory has been applied in tourism to explain local community support and perception of the impact of tourism (Andereck et al., 2005; Ap, 1992). Festivals clearly imply social exchanges between stakeholders. Several studies (e.g., Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Getz, 2012; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006) have examined support from local residents for mega events using social exchange theory and concluded that residents who identify with and benefit from events tend to be supportive and overlook costs. A degree of power and dependency is evident in the relationships among stakeholders in a festival (Getz, 2012). Understanding what stakeholders gain and lose from festivals and how this exchange differs among stakeholders is useful to festival organizers and other stakeholders

2.4 Collaboration theory

Collaboration is essential in virtually any human relationship. Collaboration can occur at the individual, group, or organizational level, and festivals are no exception. Gray (1989) popularized collaboration theory by considering it a means through which stakeholders work together to solve a "problem." The definition of "problem" is not necessarily adverse in this context. Collaboration entails the sharing of common interests, negotiating, consensus building, and in certain cases, mediating by a third party/parties (Strauss, 1978). Stakeholder collaboration can be exploratory, in which stakeholders build trust and define issues to resolve differences; advisory, in which a problem is examined by a party/parties to provide a solution for another or all parties; confederative, in which a draft agreement among parties is often the intended outcome; or contractual, in which a certain type of legal agreement is anticipated (Gray, 1989).

At the interorganizational level, collaboration involves and requires communication, trust and respect, incentives and value, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders, which in certain respects can be assumed for individual- and group-level collaboration (Harley & Blistmas, 2010). Collaboration is often associated with long-term relationships. For festivals, where collaborative efforts and outcomes may be episodic and not necessarily long term, collaboration is likely to exhibit characteristics that are not entirely akin to conventional forms.

Collaboration among festival stakeholders is essential owing to the multiplicity of stakeholders and the interwoven nature of the relationships among them (Quinn, 2013). Getz (2008) recognized that festival stakeholders differ in their interests, power, and degree of influence, which are expected to influence how they collaborate with other stakeholders. However, the extent of the differences among specific stakeholders has not been properly examined. How stakeholders

negotiate the aims, goals, outcomes, and resources of a festival as well as come to an agreement and resolve disagreements present useful insights into collaboration in the festival setting.

2.5 Social network theory

The fourth theory, that is, social network theory (using social network analysis), offers a way to examine social interaction by identifying the linkages and patterns that form when actors interact. A pattern of direct and indirect linkages is formed when various actors are involved (Tichy et al., 1979). The relationship pattern created is essential to establish the density of the network, which in turn reveals the strength of the relationships among actors (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011). Whether a social network has high centrality, in which one actor serves as a key link to other stakeholders, or low centrality, in which actors relate without a central actor, would result in different decision-making and resource distribution outcomes (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The density of a network (the number of linkages and actors and the other actors with whom they relate) also reveals its strength. Establishing the density of a festival network, the extent of centrality, and the pattern of association among stakeholders is useful in planning and decision making for stakeholder inclusion and can reveal the ease or difficulty of connections among stakeholders, especially in cases where potential festivals are developed for tourism purposes. However, this study does not conduct a social network analysis of festivals but rather uses aspects of social network analysis relevant to establishing, for example, the centrality and type of network that is prevalent in festivals.

2.6 The nexus between organizers and other key stakeholders in the festival context

A festival is a centralized network where one actor (in this case, organizers) serves as a key link to other actors (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). How these relationships function in festivals is crucial to festival success. Therefore, the following subsections examine how festival organizers relate to other key stakeholders, that is, government authorities, sponsors, vendors, residents, and the media. Further details are provided as follows.

2.7 Organizers and government authorities

In many places, local authorities organize festivals; however, in some cases, festivals are organized by local communities (Quinn, 2013). In the latter case, festival organizers expect local government authorities to support the festivals (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003). Festival organizers often prefer funding from the local government owing to the leverage to explore new ideas without strict measurable outcomes, as may be the case with corporate sponsorships (Gardner, 2006). However, tension between organizers and local authorities regarding dwindling financial support and increasing demands for festivals to demonstrate financial viability in exchange for funding is not uncommon (Finkel, 2010; Kim et al., 2010). This type of situation often results in increased negotiation.

Local government authorities are a vital collaborative partner for most festivals. Emergency services, such as fire and ambulance services, are considered crucial (Reid, 2011). In certain cases, the local government, specifically local and regional tourism agencies (Buch et al., 2011), feel obliged to support festivals because such events promote the locality. Thus, they may provide festival organizers office space, promotions, and other resources (Chacko & Schaffer, 1993). Such entities may also provide services such as parking, garbage collection, and security (Mossberg & Getz, 2006). Moreover, some local or city authorities and convention and visitor bureaus market local festivals to assist organizers (Chacko & Schaffer). This notwithstanding, there is little understanding about this relationship in the literature. Hence, the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and government authorities.

2.8 Organizers and sponsors

Reasons for sponsoring events include creating, increasing, or altering brand awareness; increasing merchandising opportunities, especially for beverage-related companies; gaining media attention; interacting directly with the market; and maintaining a public image (Crompton, 1994; Raj et al., 2013). Event sponsors often “enter partnerships with event organizations to secure benefits, but there are risks associated with such investments” (Crompton, 1994, p. 71). A festival is rarely sponsored for altruistic reasons (Van der Wagen & White, 2010). The organizer–sponsor relationship is built and based on communication, commitment, and trust (Bowdin et al., 2006). This relationship also reveals an aspect of social exchange, especially when sponsors are allowed to promote their products at the event in return for sponsorship.

Festival organizers seek sponsorship to obtain resources or boost a festival’s image through association with a well-known brand (Presenza & Iocca, 2012). “Festival organizers commit many resources to obtaining and maintaining sponsors” (Finkel, 2010, p. 247). Given that sponsors and festival organizers seek different things from each other, negotiation is often necessary to reach a consensus on what is given and received (Strauss, 1978). Compatibility between a festival and sponsors is also vital. Disagreements between organizers and sponsors arise when producers of similar products sponsor the same event. According to Crompton (1994), festivals may risk experiencing conflicts with sponsors when sponsors insist on altering the event to suit their demands. Thus, the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and sponsors.

2.9 Organizers and vendors

Organizers must generally deal with vendors, including stallholders, exhibitors, food and beverage sellers, and transport providers (Mosley & Mowatt, 2011; Reid, 2011). In the context of community-run festivals, vendors are crucial stakeholders. Organizers often charge vendors for allocated stalls during festivals. At festivals, most vendors, especially in the context of this study, sell food and beverage items at stalls or carry them around. Vendors and stallholders often negotiate and pay festival organizers, which leads to demands and expectations from both parties (Mosley & Mowatt, 2011). Vendors expect organizers to effectively promote a festival to make paying fees and bringing their goods to the festival worthwhile. Low attendance poses a significant challenge to vendors (Griffin & Frongillo, 2003). Moreover, vendors expect organizers to provide certain basic services, including water and electricity.

Organizers often view vendors as part of the festival product or core product of a festival (Salem et al., 2012). For example, festival organizers consider food and beverage providers a crucial part of the festival experience. (Mosely & Mowatt, 2011). Vendors are mostly profit-oriented, as they are often charged a fee by organizers. Vendors are dependent on organizers, and organizers rely on them to satisfy the needs of other stakeholders (especially visitors). However, level of dependence is conceived as high for vendors, as they must approach and negotiate with organizers (Reid, 2011). Organizers also have a greater responsibility in overall festival planning and execution compared with vendors (Getz, 1997). Organizers affirm the legitimacy of vendors, but this affirmation may also occur in the opposite direction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and vendors.

2.10 Organizers and volunteers

Volunteers, who serve as a vast source of unpaid labor, are extremely important to organizers (Solberg, 2003). Most mega events, such as the Olympic Games, rely heavily on volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Event organizers attest to the impossibility of running certain events without volunteers (Rolfe, 1992). What volunteers seek (motivation) and what satisfies them affect their relationship with festival organizers and subsequently, the outcome of an event (Molloy, 2002). The most common motivations for volunteering include excitement, meeting interesting people, doing something useful for the community, team participation, using one's skills, and supporting the community (Ralston et al., 2005). Research on volunteerism tends to favor sporting events (Solberg, 2003). For local festivals, volunteers may be guided by selfless internal values rather than career or personal goal fulfillment (Hoye et al., 2008). How volunteers are treated affects their availability and the readiness of potential volunteers to join future events (Williams et al., 1995). Volunteers who spend a considerable amount of time volunteering are highly satisfied and mainly seek recognition in exchange for their time and service (Pauline, 2011).

The varying expectations of individual volunteers present a challenge to organizers. Communication between organizers and volunteers is likewise a significant challenge. Effective communication (especially face-to-face interaction) is considered vital to volunteer satisfaction and the overall success of an event (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). Given that most volunteers are recruited from local communities, determining how volunteers view and work with event organizers in the context of traditional festivals and the differences between them in terms of trust, collaboration, and dependence is essential. Thus, the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and volunteers.

2.11 Organizers and local residents

According to researchers, "without the support of the local community, the success of any event cannot be ensured, so it is a matter of urgency and even common sense to get the local community on board from the outset" (Raj et al., 2013, p. 354). Festival organizers rely more on the support of local communities than on the physical infrastructure or natural features of event destinations (Janiskee, 1994). In addition, numerous community members participate in community-driven festivals (Okech, 2011). Therefore, festival organizers must gain the support of local residents for a festival to succeed (Acordia & Whitford, 2006; Getz, 2005). Striking a balance between the interest of organizers and the impact and involvement of local communities is essential (Small, 2007).

The expectations of organizers and local residents differ, as organizers shoulder greater responsibilities in festivals. Consequently, different viewpoints and underlying differences are crucial to the support that each party gives to festivals, especially local communities. Such differences also determine the extent to which local community members will collaborate with organizers. In certain cases, rifts occur between community members and organizers when the former are not in favor of a festival being celebrated (Mossberg & Getz, 2006). Some residents fear lack of authenticity or loss of community control if festivals adopt a commercial and professional approach (Quinn, 2005; Kim et al., 2002). However, festival organizers may consider the viability, financial sustainability, and wide economic implications of festivals (Quinn, 2005). According to Fredline & Faulkner (2000), another reason for lack of local support is the lack of involvement of

host community members in festival planning. When local community members feel alienated from the planning of a festival, they are unlikely to support the event. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and local residents.

2.12 Organizers and visitors

Reasons for coordinating festivals and attending them vary among organizers and visitors. For visitors, reasons include family togetherness, socialization and interaction, rest and relaxation, escape, cultural exploration, the thrill of the festival, family reunion, and novelty (Crompton and McKay, 1997; Uysal et al., 1993). Local visitors are interested in the socialization aspect of festivals, whereas visitors from elsewhere tend to be interested in entertainment aspects (Formica & Uysal, 1996). Kim et al. (2002) believed that the key motivations for festival attendees are “escape, excitement, event novelty, socialization and family togetherness” (p. 129). However, organizers have a different view on why visitors attend festivals. In terms of the perception of motivation of festival organizers compared with that of visitors, “organizers thought their visitors inadvertently look for something unknown while the visitors are more inclined to progressively seek something new” (Kim et al., 2002, p. 132). This finding suggests that visitors seek novelty, whereas organizers believe that visitors seek to satisfy their curiosity.

Another significant issue is that the survival and viability of local festivals, especially from a financial perspective, are strengthened by the presence of visitors from outside the community (Frisby & Getz, 1989). To effectively market festivals and events, organizers must understand what motivates visitors to attend festivals or what visitors seek to obtain from attending such events (Kim et al., 2002). This understanding can be achieved by examining the gaps that may exist between organizers and visitors’ perception of the same issue. Analyzing visitor perceptions and motivations have been underscored as an important aspect to festival organizers (Ozdemir & Culha, 2009). Thus, organizers differ from visitors in terms of the key tenets of collaboration, social exchange, and networking in festivals. The following hypothesis is, thus, proposed:

Hypothesis 6: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and visitors.

2.12 Organizers and the media

Numerous festivals rely on the media for promotion and marketing. In certain cases, the media do both as a form of sponsorship through free advertising space in print media, billboards or airtime on local radio (Chacko & Schaffer, 1993). However, these relationship and exchanges cannot be considered altruistic. Festival organizers often hope to receive some form of media attention, especially at the local level, which explains why most festival managers try to establish a good relationship with the media. When the media focus attention on a festival, they raise awareness of the event and host community (Getz, 1997). However, a negative media coverage can have a negative impact on a festival. For example, Mossberg and Getz (2006) found that the media tend to write damaging articles or ignore a festival they did not support.

Although festivals need attention and awareness through the media, the media also seek noteworthy stories to report and coverage exclusivity in certain instances. Some media outlets consider this interaction as a form of sponsorship (Mossberg & Getz, 2006). However, a “give-and-take” relationship appears to occur between organizers and media over festival events. Media outfits often want to establish contracts with festivals to promote their brand (Mossberg & Getz, 2006). However, when another media organization, such as a newspaper, sponsors a festival, other media

organizations are likely to reduce the extent of their involvement in and coverage of the event (Crompton, 1994). Based on the preceding argument, the two stakeholders are likely to differ in terms of their views on collaboration, networks, and exchanges in festivals. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 7: There is a difference in perceiving power, urgency, legitimacy, trust, altruism, dependence, risk, negotiation, consensus, social networking between organizers and media.

3. Methodology

3.1 Instrument development

Given that festivals are mass phenomena involving numerous stakeholders, a quantitative approach involving as many respondents as possible was employed. A questionnaire prepared in English was developed by reviewing the literature on the concept of stakeholders, social exchange, collaboration, and social network theory and their application in events and festivals. The items for the tenets of stakeholder theory, including power, urgency, and legitimacy, were developed from various studies (Bourne & Walker, 2005; Clarke & Jepson, 2011; Cook & Rice, 2001; Crosbie, 1972; Emerson, 1962; Freeman, 1984; Getz et al., 2007; Gibson, 2000; Jepson et al., 2014; Kaler, 2004; Larson, 2000; Larson & Wikstrom, 2001; Larson et al., 2015; Nunkoo & Ramkison, 2012; Santana, 2012; Stein & Harper, 2003; Suchman, 1995; Tiew et al., 2015).

Items, including trust, altruism, and dependence, were developed from studies on social exchange theory (Andersson & Getz, 2008; Austin, 2000; Blau, 1964; Cook et al., 2005; Cook et al., 2013; Emerson, 1976; Frooman & Murrell, 2005; Homans, 1958; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Molm, 1991; Molm et al., 2000; Monroe, 1994; Nair, 2002; Nunkoo & Ramkison, 2012; Stein & Harper, 2003; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959; Waitt, 2003).

Similarly, items on collaboration, including risks, negotiation, and consensus, were developed from previous studies (Clarkson, 1995; Leiss & Chocioko, 1994; Molm et al., 2000; Cropranzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gray, 1989; Straus, 1978). Social networking items were also derived from previous studies (Borgatti, 2006; Cross et al., 2004; Freeman, 1979; McKellar, 2006; Robins, 2015; Scott, 2000; Tichy et al., 1979; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree,” 3 = “neutral,” and 5 = “strongly agree”). For the organizers, a different stakeholder group was substituted for the evaluation of each stakeholder on the items. For the other stakeholders, organizers were maintained consistently. A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted using 16 faculty and doctoral students researching hospitality and tourism. This exercise was necessary to ensure clarity of the statements in the questionnaire as well as make possible modifications to wrongly worded ones. Finally, a pilot test was conducted at a festival in the research area (i.e., Ghana) on 78 festival stakeholders, thereby arriving at the final instrument for the main survey.

3.2 Sampling and data collection

Festivals in Ghana, West Africa, were selected for the study based on their location in the country, size, and period of celebration. Only festivals celebrated between December 2015 and March 2016 were considered in the study owing to time limitations. Based on these criteria, the Danjua, Damba, Akwasidae, Edina Bronya, Fao, and Aboakyir festivals were selected. Respondents were sampled by contacting regional tourism offices in the respective regions where the festivals were held. Officials aided in gaining access to organizers, who in turn helped contact other stakeholders. Several stakeholders, such as organizers, volunteers, sponsors, the media, and certain local government authorities, were contacted offsite.

However, the questionnaires, which were developed in English, were administered to visitors, local residents, vendors, and some local government authorities onsite. To achieve this objective, the open areas were divided into zones, and trained interviewers stood at specific vantage points to administer the questionnaires to visitors after asking the screening questions and explaining the study. The questionnaires were checked immediately for completeness, and a gift was offered to the respondents. Owing to incomplete responses on 23 of the 1,115 questionnaires collected, 1,092 questionnaires were used for further statistical analysis. Data were first subjected to normality tests to ensure suitability for analysis. Next, frequency analysis was performed to establish frequencies and other stakeholder characteristics. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to compare the responses of the organizers and each stakeholder.

4. Findings

4.1 Stakeholder characteristics

The results of the frequency analysis of the respondents' sociodemographic features according to eight stakeholder groups showed the following: organizers (n = 85), government authorities (n = 68), volunteers (n = 128), local residents (n = 255), visitors (n = 330), sponsors (n = 52), vendors (n = 105), and the media (n = 69). The majority of the respondents attained a polytechnic or university education (41.8%), followed by a senior high school education (40.2%) and a junior high school education (18%). Most of the stakeholders were male (71%), and the age distribution results revealed that those aged 30 years and below accounted for the majority of the sample (65.5%), whereas those 60 years and above constituted the smallest group (2.5%). In terms of occupation, employees (formal and informal) comprised the majority of the respondents (47.4%), followed by students (43%) and retired employees (0.6%).

4.2 Relationship between organizers and other stakeholders

Tables 1–7 present the results of the paired-sample t-tests comparing the responses of the organizers and each stakeholder group. In Table 1, the relationship between the organizers and government authorities shows that the organizers (mean = 3.38) were more powerful. The requests of the organizers were responded to quickly (mean = 3.42), and the organizers were considered to have a right to be part of the festivals (mean=4.04). The dependence of the organizers (mean = 3.03) and their financial risks (mean = 2.74) were also high. The festival organizers (mean = 2.92) also negotiated more actively regarding festival issues and had more direct dealings (mean = 3.06) than the government authorities.

A similar pattern was observed in the relationship between the organizers and sponsors. The organizers were more powerful (mean = 3.33), responded more quickly to requests (mean = 3.45), considered themselves more legitimate (mean = 4.02), and had a higher level of trust (mean = 3.48) compared with the sponsors. Their levels of altruism (mean = 3.38), dependence (mean = 3.02), negotiation (mean = 2.86), and direct interaction (mean = 3.02) were also higher than those of the sponsors. However, with regard to control, the sponsors (mean = 2.44) had a higher mean score than the organizers, but the mean score for control was quite low.

The organizer–vendor relationship revealed high mean scores for the organizers (mean = 3.33) for power, urgency (mean = 3.44), and legitimacy (mean = 4.02). The organizers also had high trust (mean = 3.48) and altruism (mean = 3.38) levels and a high level of dependence (mean = 3.02). However, the vendors (mean = 2.80) experienced more financial risks than the organizers and a higher level of control (mean = 2.59). How the organizers and volunteers evaluated each other indicated that the former had more power (mean = 3.37) and urgency (mean = 3.42). However, level of control was high for the volunteers (mean = 2.37), but the mean level was low. Dependence

was higher for the organizers (mean = 3.01), but the level of direct interaction was higher for the volunteers (mean = 3.13).

As shown in Table 5, the relationship between the organizers and local residents revealed that the organizers had more power (mean = 3.42) and urgency (mean = 3.44). However, the local residents had a high mean score for control (mean = 2.39) and interacted directly (mean = 3.45). The organizer–visitor relationship also showed that the organizers had a higher perception of power (mean = 3.40), legitimacy (mean = 4.06), and trust (mean = 3.50), whereas the visitors exhibited a higher level of control (mean = 2.55). The organizers (mean=3.01) also negotiated more, but the level of direct interaction was higher for the visitors (mean = 3.27). How the organizers related to the media also indicated that the organizers (mean = 3.30) had a high perception of power and legitimacy (mean = 4.07). The media (mean = 2.43) had a higher perception of control, whereas the organizers perceived greater levels of financial risks (mean = 2.52), negotiation (mean = 2.91), and direct interaction (mean = 3.08).

Table 1. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and government authorities

Items	Organizers' evaluation of government authorities	Government authorities' evaluation of organizers	Paired t-value	p-value
	Mean	Mean		
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.38	3.19	4.05***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.42	3.27	4.24***	.000
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.04	3.89	4.30***	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.48	3.44	1.26	.208
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.34	3.28	1.56	.119
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.03	2.68	7.78***	.000
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.74	2.63	3.22**	.001
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.92	2.81	3.19**	.001
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.71	2.72	-.37	.709
<i>Social Networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.06	2.91	3.86***	.000

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

Table 2. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and sponsors

Items	Organizers'	Sponsors'	Paired <i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	evaluation of sponsors Mean	evaluation of organizers Mean		
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.33	2.96	7.62***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.45	3.17	7.16***	.000
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.02	3.86	4.91***	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.48	3.39	2.35	.019
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.38	3.20	4.70***	.000
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.02	2.57	9.53***	.000
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.64	2.58	1.80	.072
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.86	2.75	3.19**	.001
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.67	2.65	.62	.535
<i>Social Networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.02	2.75	6.69***	.000

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

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Table 3. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and vendors

Items	Organizers' evaluation of vendors Mean	Vendors' evaluation of organizers Mean	Paired <i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.33	2.64	12.57***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.44	3.02	9.11***	.000
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.02	3.82	5.95***	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.48	3.38	2.52*	.012
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.38	3.24	3.67***	.000
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.02	2.53	9.83***	.000
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.64	2.80	-3.96***	.000
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.87	2.82	1.18	.238
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.67	2.71	-1.25	.209
<i>Social Networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.02	3.10	-1.86	.062

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

Table 4. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and volunteers

Items	Organizers'	Volunteers'	Paired <i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	evaluation of volunteers Mean	evaluation of organizers Mean		
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.37	3.05	6.58***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.42	3.18	6.50***	.000
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.03	3.98	1.74	.082
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.46	3.46	-.04	.970
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.37	3.39	-.53	.594
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.01	2.84	3.87***	.000
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.64	2.61	.74	.461
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.84	2.83	-.03	.785
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.67	2.64	.91	.631
<i>Social Networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	2.99	3.13	-3.56***	.000

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

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Table 5. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and local residents

Items	Organizers' evaluation of local residents Mean	Local residents' evaluation of organizers Mean	Paired t-value	p-value
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.42	3.24	3.79***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.44	3.32	3.29**	.001
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.06	4.05	.38	.699
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.52	3.48	1.11	.267
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.36	3.43	-1.68	.092
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.12	3.04	1.77	.076
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.73	2.73	-0.04	.972
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.91	2.91	-0.03	.973
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.70	2.71	-0.04	.972
<i>Social networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.08	3.45	-7.98***	.000

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

Table 6. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and visitors

Items	Organizers'	Visitors'	Paired <i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
	evaluation of visitors Mean	evaluation of organizers Mean		
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.40	2.60	12.55***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.48	3.41	1.69	.091
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.06	3.95	3.10***	.002
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.50	3.40	2.40*	.017
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.32	3.29	.59	.555
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.08	2.58	8.55***	.000
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.70	2.69	.16	.870
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	3.01	2.87	3.04**	.002
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.65	2.60	1.12	.264
<i>Social networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.11	3.27	-3.01**	.003

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

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Table 7. Results of paired t-tests: organizers and the media

Items	Organizers' evaluation of the media Mean	The media's evaluation of organizers Mean	Paired t-value	p-value
<i>Power</i>				
I think ___ are more powerful than me in this festival.	3.30	2.82	5.81***	.000
<i>Urgency</i>				
I respond quickly to the requests of ___.	3.46	3.33	1.95	.053
<i>Legitimacy</i>				
I think ___ have a right to be part of this festival.	4.07	3.85	3.76***	.000
<i>Trust</i>				
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.45	3.49	-.770	.442
<i>Altruism</i>				
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.45	3.41	.84	.399
<i>Dependence</i>				
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	2.94	2.48	.63	.528
<i>Risk</i>				
I take financial risks when dealing with ___.	2.52	2.49	6.13***	.000
<i>Negotiation</i>				
I negotiate actively with ___ on festival issues.	2.91	2.76	2.46*	.014
<i>Consensus</i>				
I have experienced some disagreement with ___ in this festival.	2.62	2.60	.42	.672
<i>Social networking</i>				
I interact directly with ___ in this festival.	3.08	2.79	4.46***	.000

Note: ***, **, and * denote $p < 0.001$, $p < 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively.

Figure 1 summarizes the relationships between the festival organizers and each stakeholder group. The figure indicates which tenets are higher for organizers and other stakeholders.

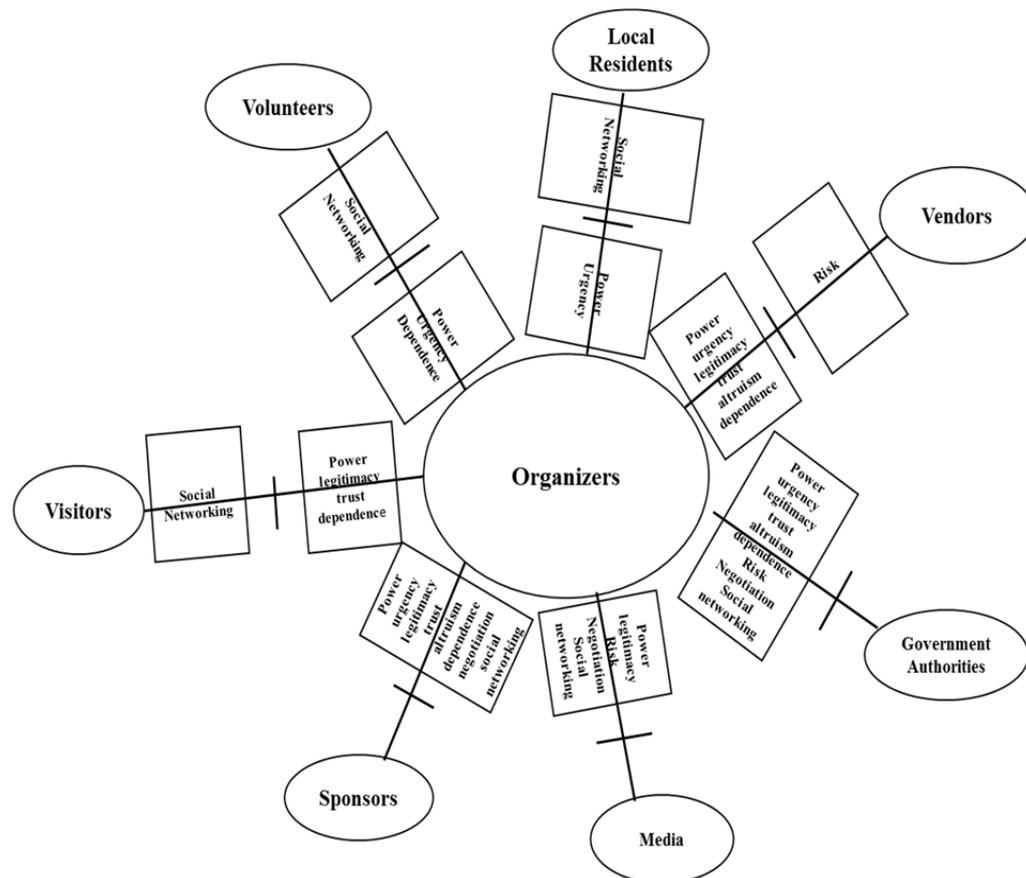


Figure 1. Results of relationships between organizers and other stakeholders in local festivals

5. Discussion

This study attempts to determine differences between organizers and other stakeholders in local festivals based on the tenets of the identified theories. Moreover, this study examines the relationship between organizers and government authorities. Given that organizers are the conveners of festivals, a considerable degree of power is accrued to them, though local authorities are more powerful in society (Yukl, 1998). Ghanaian festivals are organized by traditional councils rather than by government departments, thereby placing organizers at a high power position (Clarke-Ekong, 1997; Lentz, 2001). This power is held, as opposed to produced, during a festival (Foucault, 1982) because organizers, by virtue of being traditional rulers, possess traditional authority, which is brought into the festival (Stein & Harper, 2003).

Organizers then invite government authorities, such as emergency services, the police, and other institutions. The respect given by traditional rulers gives organizers legitimacy and demand urgency in terms of their requests (Clarke-Ekong, 1997). Financial risks are also substantial for organizers, as festivals may have inadequate resources. However, such is not the case for government authorities, as they do not bear the financial burden of the festival. Festival organizers must negotiate for space, security, sanitation, and other financial resources, thereby making their level of negotiation higher than that of government authorities (Mossberg & Getz, 2006). This negotiation also increases organizers’ direct dealings with other stakeholders.

The organizer–sponsor relationship is also vital, especially in terms of rallying resources for festivals. This relationship exhibits high mean values on the part of organizers on all the tenets. Organizers are more altruistic than sponsors largely because sponsors are profit-oriented (Crompton, 1994; Finkel, 2010). Social exchange theory supports the notion that sponsors weigh

costs and benefits before sponsoring (Homans, 1958). However, the desire to see a festival succeed makes organizers act altruistically. Organizers also tend to be dependent on other stakeholders because they need the other stakeholders to play their roles for a festival to succeed.

However, sponsors tend to have a low level of dependence, as they are secondary stakeholders and deal mostly with organizers to reach other participants (Crompton, 1994). Organizers must negotiate with numerous stakeholders, such as volunteers, sponsors, and government agencies, whereas sponsors negotiate mainly with organizers. In Ghana, the level of negotiation is low for the sponsors because sponsorship deals are often less strictly contractual (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008). By virtue of being the central stakeholders in festivals, organizers deal more directly with other stakeholders than sponsors; thus, they engage in a higher level of social networking.

In the organizer–media relationship, though the media are generally powerful, organizers have more power in the festival context because they run the festivals. Similarly, organizers have more legitimacy than the media, especially with the backing of traditional authorities in Ghana (Lentz, 2001). Moreover, organizers have higher risks of financial failure, whereas media staff members are paid to work at festivals. Organizers negotiate more than the media, similar to other stakeholders. Furthermore, organizers deal more directly with other stakeholders than the media. In the visitor–organizer relationship, organizers understandably have high levels of power, legitimacy, trust, and dependence. However, visitors engage more in social networking compared with organizers. Socialization is a motive for visitors to visit a festival (Formica & Uysal, 1996; Kim et al., 2002), which makes them seek interaction with others as part of their festival experience.

Power, urgency, and dependence levels are high for organizers largely owing to their authority and need to work with numerous other stakeholders. However, the level of direct social interaction is higher for volunteers, as they deal more directly with visitors, local residents, and organizers. In the context of Ghana, volunteering is based on activities, such as drumming and singing, which involve direct exchanges with volunteers and other stakeholders (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008).

Local residents also deal directly with more people in festivals than organizers, who often accomplish their goals through other stakeholders. This practice accounts for increased social networking for local residents in the organizer–local resident relationship (Mensah, 2013). However, authority and urgency are greater for organizers than for local residents, who have little decision-making authority in festivals. The organizer–vendor relationship depicts a high level of financial risks for vendors. Vendors run the risk of loss or not having their goods purchased compared with organizers, who are at decision-making and directing levels rather than at the financial risk level (Griffin & Frongillo, 2003).

6. Conclusion and limitations

To effectively use festivals to increase their appeal and attract visitors, festival committees must involve representatives from all identified stakeholder groups, especially vendors, who should be part of committees before the start of festivals. Such stakeholders should also include representatives of local government authorities and security services to clarify issues related to the use of public space and regulations to lessen disagreements during festivals. The direct interaction between organizers and the media must be enhanced, as the media are crucial for marketing and enhancing the image of local festivals (Brennan-Horley et al., 2007). Moreover, organizers must coordinate with media outfits, such as radio stations, television stations, and print media, to promote festivals. Media organizations can also serve as sponsors to strengthen the organization of festivals as well as boosting their corporate social responsibility.

Based on the financial risks that they incur, vendors are important festival stakeholders (Larson et al., 2015). Organizers must reach out to vendors and discuss their participation before

the start of festivals. The minimal involvement of local tourism offices in festivals also lends little power and legitimacy to those festivals. Given that organizers are unlikely to go to tourism offices, tourism authorities must contact festival organizers in each region and provide them with training that will enhance the appeal and sustainability of festivals. This initiative could involve including a member of the tourism authority in the planning committee of each festival.

This study has several limitations. Research is conducted in Ghana; thus, the cultural context in which organizers and other stakeholders operate makes them characteristically unique, thereby implying that the results are influenced by cultural circumstances. The findings of this research must be replicated in other contexts, such as Asia, to establish their universality. Furthermore, this study considers only stakeholder relationships in local traditional festivals; thus, other festival categories should be studied for comparison. Finally, the sample size for certain cohorts, such as the media, government authorities, and sponsors, is not sufficiently large, because only people closely related to the festivals could be included.

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