

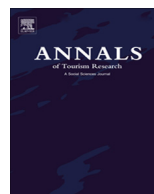


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Impacts of festivals and events on residents' well-being



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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how residents' participation in local festivals may influence their subjective-well-being and their quality of life. Using data collected from local attendees of a film festival, this study examined the relationship between socio-cultural impacts of a festival and subjective well-being of local residents. Findings revealed that while community benefits and cultural/educational benefits are positive predictors of subjective well-being of residents, quality life concerns were found to have negative impact on the well-being of residents. Findings also revealed no significant relationship between community resource concerns and subjective well-being of residents.

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Introduction

Residents' subjective well-being is considered to be one of the most critical determinants of their overall quality of life (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2012; Uysal, Perdue, & Sirgy, 2012). As a result, residents'

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well-being has been the focal point of many public policy discussions and developments. Local authorities and central governments continuously *initiate* policies to improve residents' well-being and assess the success of those public policy actions based on how much those actions improve the well-being of their residents (Dolan & Metcalfe, 2012). Woo, Kim, and Uysal (2015) note that policy makers are gradually getting more involved in resident well-being issues through regional, community, and neighborhood development and assess the success through utilizing both objective and subjective indicators of the community quality of life. Furthermore, there is an increasing interest among academics from different disciplines on subjective well-being and its influence on quality of life.

Improving individuals' well-being to a meaningful level has been the fundamental goal for all modern societies because well-being is an indicator of how residents perceive their lives to be going (Chen, Lehto, & Cai, 2013; Taniguchi, 2012). While several factors can influence residents' well-being, many studies have shown that activities that provide opportunities for enhancing social interactions and relationships are positively correlated with subjective well-being (Chang, Wray, & Lin, 2014; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014; Torres, 2015). Enhanced social relationships improve individuals' well-being by enabling them to gain a sense of belonging and by lessening depression (Cohen, 2004). Since festivals and events provide a number of opportunities for enhancing social interactions and relationships (Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, & Probert, 2015), they are likely to play a unique role in improving residents' well-being and quality of life.

In addition to having positive economic impacts on local communities, festivals can also generate positive socio-cultural benefits to host communities (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002) such as community cohesion (e.g., Chwe, 1998; Yolal, Cetinel, & Uysal, 2009), group/family togetherness (e.g., Formica & Uysal, 1998; Kim, Borges, & Chon, 2006; Yolal, Woo, Cetinel, & Uysal, 2012), socialization (Saayman, Kruger, & Erasmus, 2012), cultural recovery (Iwasaki, 2007), and entertainment (Baez & Devesa, 2014). Moreover, local residents participate in local festivals for a variety of hedonic and functional reasons (Gursoy, Spangenberg, & Rutherford, 2006) such as entertainment, curiosity, learning, aesthetic appreciation, socialization, personal improvement, self-expression, and others' acceptance (Derrett, 2003). Participants' positive experiences with festivals are likely to increase their personal satisfaction (Gursoy, Bonn, & Chi, 2010; Hede & Jago, 2005), which is likely to result in increases in their overall happiness and consequently their subjective well-being.

Although festivals can enhance the subjective well-being of local residents, we have little understanding of how participating in a festival may positively influence residents' subjective well-being and their quality of life (Diener, 2009). Therefore, this study aims to examine how residents' participation in a local festival may influence their subjective well-being and quality of life by focusing on the relationships between socio-cultural impacts of a festival and residents' well-being. More specifically, this study attempts to examine the relationships between residents' perceptions of socio-cultural impacts of community benefits, cultural/educational benefits, quality of life concerns, and community resource concerns and their well-being in the context of a festival.

Findings of this study are likely to make significant contributions to the theory and practice by furthering our understanding of the factors that may influence individuals' subjective well-being and their quality of life. While a large number of studies have examined the impacts of festivals on local communities, the role of socio-cultural impacts of festivals on residents' subjective well-being has not received much attention. This study will fill this research gap by mainly focusing on the examination of residents' perceptions of socio-cultural impacts of a given festival on their subjective well-being. By examining subjective well-being as an outcome variable, findings will enable us to identify the magnitude and direction of the relationships between socio-cultural impacts and residents' subjective well-being.

Festival impacts and subjective well-being

Festivals are organized by communities for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, showcasing their cultural heritage, promoting their city, attracting tourists, and providing additional cultural entertainment offerings to local residents, thereby providing opportunities to improve their quality of life (Cudny, Korec, & Rouba, 2012). Festivals can also create economic benefits to host

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