Methodological Considerations in Pretesting Social Impact Questionnaires: Reporting on the use of focus groups

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a shift in focus towards greater recognition of the social consequences of events. Most of this research has resulted in the innovative development of empirical scales to measure resident perceptions of social impacts. The instruments that are used in these studies are well reported within the literature. However, it has been found that there is limited reporting of the methodological tools used for pretesting these instruments. It is argued in this paper that there is a requirement for more detailed accounts of pretesting techniques to be included in methodological reporting. In doing so, the method of data collection can be assured and other researchers can readily replicate the studies. This is important, as an understanding of phenomena will progress more productively if researchers are able to follow, and build on, other empirical analyses.

This paper focuses on the methodological reports of social impact event studies to demonstrate this issue. Therefore the paper has four aims. First, a review of methodological frameworks within the existing literature for pretesting social impact instruments is presented. Second, the paper details the use of Focus Groups as a tool for pretesting social impact questionnaires on two community music festivals. Third, the results of the pretest are presented in terms of the changes made to the questionnaire items based on pretest feedback. Fourth, the benefits and limitations of this technique

Keywords: Pretesting questionnaires, Focus group techniques, social impact studies

Introduction

In the past five years there has been a greater appreciation for the range of social impacts that an event has on its host community. The study of social impacts resulting from festivals and events is necessary because of the important role that these impacts play in the overall success of a festival (McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole, 1999; Hall, 1993). Getz (1997), Delamere Wankel and Hinch (2001), Douglas, Douglas and Derrett (2001) have argued that negative social impacts arising from festivals and events such as, traffic congestion, parking problems, and overcrowded local facilities, serve to disrupt the lives of locals for the duration of the festival or event. While social problems which occur as a consequence of the festival or event, such as crime and vandalism, represent decreasing levels of safety for the host community, and can result in a growing level of local hostility towards festival and event visitors and negativity towards the festival or event (Delamere et al, 2001; Douglas et al, 2001).

In small communities, where the local residents play a significant role, as both host and participant, social impacts can be important in determining the level of support for the festival from the resident population. A lack of consideration given to the social impacts of an event can result in a dissatisfied local community, which is likely to create negative implications for the success and long-term sustainability of the event.

Acknowledging that there are other methods available for studying an event's social impacts, this paper will focus on the use of questionnaires, and the related needs for pretesting. In order to measure resident perceptions of the social consequences of festivals and events research has focused on the innovative development of empirical scales (Fredline, 2000; Delamere et al, 2001; Fredline, Jago & Deery, 2003; Small & Edwards, 2003). These scales are incorporated into questionnaires which seek to measure residents' perceptions of social impacts. It is common for first drafts of questionnaires to comprise ambiguous, loaded, or double-barrelled questions, lack important variables or response options, and be too lengthy (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2004). In order to overcome these problems a pretest of the questionnaire is recommended. The "objective of the questionnaire pretest is to identify and correct these deficiencies" (Aaker et al, 2004, p. 328). Pretesting refers to "a trial run with a group of respondents to iron out fundamental problems in the survey design" (Zikmund, 2000, p. 273). Therefore pretesting becomes an important part of any study to ensure methodological and content validity. Essentially, pretesting is conducted to "ascertain how well the questionnaire works" (Hunt, Sparkman, & Wilcox, 1982, p. 269). It enables the researcher to determine if categories, items, and questions are valid and reliable. Essentially the researcher is checking to see if the tool works (Jennings, 2001).

Pretesting then, is important as without this step, a number of serious problems may arise including poor data collection, wasting of valuable resources, time and respondent contribution and analysis and conclusions will have limited value. Additionally, if others are to replicate and build on existing studies then it is important that they have access to all the information about those studies. This paper argues that equal importance be placed on the reporting of pretest methodologies as for reporting the final instruments used. As Sherwood, Jago and Deery state "this area (social impact evaluation) has not yet reached the critical mass of economic evaluations" (2004, p. 681). Therefore, with social impact evaluations of festivals and events in their infancy it requires researchers to report the full methodological tools and outcomes that were utilised in their studies. Reporting on pretesting methodology will make an important contribution to the development of social impact evaluation tools as other researchers are able to replicate, test and improve on existing methods and instruments. At this point, it is important to differentiate between a pretest and a pilot study. Whilst a pretest examines the functioning of a specific research instrument, a pilot study is actually a small scale test of some aspect of the research design (Zikmund, 2000).

This paper has four aims. First, it presents a review of methodological frameworks reported within the existing literature for pretesting social impact instruments. Second, the paper details the use of Focus Groups as a tool for pretesting social impact perception questionnaires on two community music festivals. Third, the results of the pretest are presented in terms of the changes made to the questionnaire items based on pretest feedback. The changes made to the questionnaire on the basis of the pretest feedback are detailed. Finally the benefits and limitations of this technique as a methodological tool for pretesting social impact questionnaires are discussed.

Pretesting Social Impact Instruments

Although there are a number of methods available for researchers wishing to study the social impacts of festivals and events, a growing area is that which uses social impact scales. This literature was reviewed to identify the types of methods used for pretesting social impact perception instruments, and the level of detail in the reporting of those instruments. Studies on social impact scale development have been conducted and reported by Fredline (2000), Delamere et al (2001), Fredline et al (2003) and Small and Edwards (2003). These scales were developed in response to the growing concern for increased standardisation of methods and measures in understanding residents' attitudes to festivals and events (Delamere, 1997; Sherwood, Jago & Deery, 2005).

Delamere et al (2001) built upon existing tourism impact literature to develop a Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale (FSIAS). This scale was developed with the aim of providing for "the measurement and interpretation of resident perceptions of social impacts of community-based festivals" (Delamere et al, 2001, p. 12). The authors reported pretesting the scale using "63 Recreation Administration and Tourism Studies students from Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, British Columbia" (Delamere et al, 2001, p. 14). They explained that ethics approval was obtained and cover letters and consent forms were distributed to the 63 participants, identified using a convenience sample method. However, the paper does not describe the specific methods used to conduct the pretest, for example, mail survey, personal interview etc. It only mentions that students were instructed to "respond to the scale items in the context of a festival with which they were familiar" (Delamere et al, 2001, p. 14). The authors provided a discussion of the analysis conducted on the pretest data and stated that they were concerned that the pretest sample may be quite different to those respondents who would take part in the final study. Consequently they ran a second pretest on the scale items, using "118 Recreation and Leisure Studies students from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta" (Delamere et al, 2001, p. 17). This sample was given the same instructions and they ran the same analysis on the results, however, again they did not describe the tool that was used to pretest the questionnaire. As a result, future researchers are not informed as to an appropriate method for pretesting the same or a similar instrument in another study.

Fredline (2000) developed an instrument used to investigate "the ways in which local residents react to the staging of a major sporting event within their community" (p. iv). The instrument consists of three parts that measure 1) the overall impacts of the event, 2) the specific impacts of the event, and 3) the independent variables (including contact with tourists, participation, identification with the theme and demographic variables). Fredline (2000) reported on a pilot test of this instrument. "A pilot test of 100 respondents was undertaken using the same sampling methods intended for the main survey" (Fredline, 2000, p. 71). However there is no detail provided on the methodology that was used to pilot the questionnaire. The reader is able to infer details from the method section including: that the pilot study drew its 100 respondents from the state electoral rolls using disproportionate stratified random sampling; and it may be assumed that the pilot was carried out via a mail survey, since this was the intended method for the main survey. There is some discussion of the findings from the pilot test with respondents reporting confusion surrounding the wording of several questions and commenting that the format of the questionnaire was "cluttered and confusing" (Fredline, 2000, p. 71). Based on these findings, changes were made to the instrument, including the wording used and a change in format from portrait to landscape, to address the concern for its cluttered appearance (Fredline, 2000).

Fredline et al (2003) developed an instrument based on Fredline (2000) to compare the social impacts of three medium to large-scale events. This study was undertaken with the aim of testing and validating "an instrument that can be used to compare the social impacts of a variety of events" (Fredline et al 2003, p. 23). Because the 2003 study was replicating Fredline (2000) the authors state that limited attention was given to the pretesting process as their instrument "drew very heavily upon an instrument that was used successfully in previous research (Fredline, 2000; Fredline & Faulkner 2002), and they considered there to be no need to employ an extensive pre/pilot testing phase" (Fredline et al, 2003, p. 30). However, they say that the instrument was pretested with "an appropriate group for comprehension and ease of completion" (Fredline et al, 2003, p. 30). Consequently researchers are not appropriately informed as to the method used to pretest the instrument, who the 'appropriate group' of respondents were, or how they were selected.

Small and Edwards (2003) developed a questionnaire and scale now referred to as the Social Impact Perception scale (SIP). The questionnaire and scale were developed to measure residents' perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts arising from community held festivals and events. The instrument was piloted on a small community festival in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. The method for conducting the final instrument was the Delphi technique and there is extensive detail provided as to the piloting of the instrument. However, little information is provided on the pretesting of the questionnaire. For the pretest they state that the questionnaire was undertaken by "four colleagues, from the tourism program at the University of Western Sydney and a sample of 10 community members from the Southern Highlands" (Small & Edwards, 2003, p. 585). They go on to say that these 10 respondents were not included in the final Delphi panel. Although extensive detail is provided on the development of the questionnaire, they do not say what method was used for pretesting the questionnaire, nor as a result, comment on any changes that were subsequently made to the questionnaire. Again future researchers are ill informed as to an appropriate method that could be used for pretesting an instrument that measures the social impacts of festivals and events.

The review of these studies is not meant as a criticism of each author's work but to demonstrate that there is a lack of reporting of the methods used for the pretesting of these scales. Consequently, it makes it difficult for future researchers to evaluate the usefulness of these methods or to replicate and build on these earlier studies. In support of this argument this paper will now report on pretest methodology which was used for a wider study that examines the socio-cultural impacts arising from two Australian community based festivals; one in Western Australia (A) and the other in Victoria (B).

Pretesting the Social Impact Perception Scale

The aim of this research was to pretest the Social Impact Perception Scale (SIP) developed by Small & Edwards (2003). The pretest was designed to address the five fundamental issues of pretesting as suggested by Hunt et al (1982); (1) what items should be pretested?, (2) who should conduct the pretest? (3) what method should be used for the pretest? (4) who should participate in the pretest? and (5) what is an appropriate sample size for the pretest?

What items should be pretested?

According to Aaker et al (2004) there are two categories of items to be pretested. First, items pertaining to the questionnaire itself, including questionnaire length, layout, format, and readability. Second, individual questions should be tested. Here the researcher should be looking for loaded, ambiguous, and double-barrelled questions, missing response options, relevance, and unintentional biases. The pretest focused on testing for respondent interest and attention; whether the flow of the questionnaire was clear and logical; that the length of the questionnaire was suitable; that instructions were clear; that response formats did not have too high a degree of difficulty; that the formatting and layout of the questionnaire was appealing; and that the wording of questions as well as their intent was clear (Aaker et al, 2004).

Also important, was to test for content validity of questionnaire items. That is, the items were relevant to the particular case being studied. As the questionnaire was developed through a literature review and a previous study (Small and Edwards 2003) there was a chance that some items would not be relevant for these two communities. Therefore respondents in the pretest were further instructed to consider whether the items outlined in the questionnaire were relevant to their festival and community. As the same questionnaire was to be applied across both communities, it was essential for the moderator to be mindful of the possibility that items which applied to one community, may not apply to the other community. Therefore, it required the moderator to monitor all item changes, for potential differences between each community, and if required, to raise them for discussion in the latter part of the focus groups.

Who should conduct the pretest?

It is important that the person who conducts the pretest has knowledge of the wider research study, the specific instrument being pretested, and be the most comfortable with the instrument being pretested. As the study contributes to the fulfilment of a doctoral thesis, the pretest was conducted by the doctoral candidate. They are the most familiar with their own research and the instrument, and are closest to the research study being undertaken.

What method should be used for the pretest?

Hunt et al, (1982) suggest that the pretesting of a questionnaire should be conducted via personal interviews, regardless of the final administration method for the questionnaire. "Personal interviews enable the interviewer to notice reactions, hesitations, and other cues by the respondent that could not be obtained via telephone or mail" (Hunt et al, 1982, p. 270). These plus other benefits can be gained where interviews are conducted with groups of people. Focus groups are a flexible tool that can be used in a variety of contexts and within a range of research paradigms. Focus groups are regarded as being particularly effective in capturing complexities within a given context and to explore how participants value and define key concepts, in their own words (Thomas 2004). According to Gomm (2004) "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (p. 172). Thus, group discussion was identified as being the most efficient way to test an important aspect of the questionnaire; the relevance of impact items for each community.

According to Aaker et al (2004) when using focus groups as a pretest tool "three to four group sessions are usually sufficient" (p. 198). They argue that this is because a great deal is gained from the first session, while subsequent sessions may produce more information, but with less that is new, rather, "much of what is said has been heard before, and there is little to be gained from additional focus groups" (p. 199). One afternoon and one evening focus group were held in each community. A neutral location was used to hold the focus groups. In one community they were held in the conference room of the local tourism bureau, and in the other, they were held in the meeting room of a local hotel. Who participated, how many participated, and how participants were chosen are addressed in the following sections on 'who should participate in the pretest' and 'sample size of the pretest'.

A requirement for conducting successful focus groups is to have a skilled moderator. This is because the moderator has to deal with the issue of group dynamics. Along with knowledge of the topic, the moderator needs to be able to control the interview process so that all participants can express themselves in order that one or a few people do not dominate the discussion, more introverted people are encouraged to speak, and all important topics are covered (Mertens, 1998). Ensuring that all participants are equally involved in the discussion process, allows differing values, points of view and ideas to emerge, as opposed to the views of dominant individuals which may not be representative of other community groups.

The focus groups were conducted using a round table layout, and light refreshments were provided. Each focus group session ran for between one and a half to two hours. The moderator began by welcoming all participants and overseeing introductions. The participants were provided with an overview of the research project. The moderator explained the need for pretesting, why participants were invited, and the format in which the focus group would run. Following this, information sheets and consent forms were distributed, signed and collected before the focus groups were officially underway.

According to Aaker et al, (2004) when conducting an interview pretest, the researcher can choose one of two approaches; a debriefing or protocol approach. In the protocol method, "the subject is asked to 'think aloud' as he or she is filling out the questionnaire" (Aaker et al, 2004, p. 329). In the debriefing approach, the questionnaire is administered to respondents in the same way as is intended for the full-scale study (Aaker et al, 2004). It was decided to use the debriefing approach in the focus groups for two reasons. First, because there would be a number of participants in each focus group, asking them to think out loud could result in a confusing and distracting atmosphere. Second, the final instrument would be a self-complete questionnaire mailed to respondents for completion on their own. Therefore, it was determined that it would be more beneficial to ask participants to complete the questionnaire similar to the way in which it was intended for the full-scale study. Conducting the debriefing approach, within the focus groups, involved a number of stages.

First, participants were provided with a copy of the social impact questionnaire, clearly labelled as a "draft only". Second, they were specifically instructed not to ask the moderator for help, but instead to make note where they felt confusion or difficulty with a question. Third, the moderator observed the participants as they completed the questionnaire and made note of behaviour that indicated confusion, difficulty, or uneasiness with the questionnaire. The moderator looked for facial expressions that might represent confusion, and also body language including people leaning back into their chairs, 'stopping to think', scratching their heads etc which may indicate that participants had an issue with some aspect of the questionnaire. Fourth, participants were timed in order to make note of the maximum and minimum amount of time it took to complete the questionnaire.

Following completion of the questionnaires, the moderator 'debriefed' respondents. The debrief was based around the items that had been identified for pretesting, and included questions regarding the length and format of the questionnaire, difficulties understanding question wording or how to respond, and clarity of instructions. Each focus group was tape recorded.

The flexibility of focus groups implies that "the set of topics covered may change after each focus group experience" (Aaker et al, 2004, p. 200). If a question is failing to generate useful information, it may be dropped from subsequent focus groups. Additionally, should a new idea emerge from early focus groups, it may be added as an item for discussion in the focus groups that follow. This allows for the development of ideas, concepts, and impacts that are specific to respondents, rather than predefined variables. As the focus groups progressed it was decided to tag questions and impact items that did not hold meaning for participants. These would be removed from the questionnaire but discussed separately later in the focus group to ensure that there was consensus in them being modified or deleted. This was necessary, as focus groups were being held in different communities and it was decided not to make assumptions about potential responses in subsequent focus groups in a different community.

Who should participate in the pretest?

According to Aaker et al (2004) pretest participants should be representative of the target population to whom the final questionnaire will be distributed. As local residents within each of the festival communities for this research are the target population, it was necessary for pretest participants to come from these local communities. Whilst it is important that pretest participants are representative of the wider community that will eventually receive the questionnaire, it was also critical to this study, that pretest participants were able to comment on whether the items outlined in the questionnaire were relevant to their festival and community. Therefore it was necessary for pretest participants to have knowledge of the festival in order to allow them to do this. Since local residents and stakeholders from the community also participate in the festival as volunteers, these community volunteers represented an ideal source of focus group participants. In this way, it would ensure that the content of the questionnaire was relevant to the festival and community being studied.

Although focus group participants were selected from a limited source, in this case the volunteer database, any resultant bias is only a problem if the researcher is unaware of it. That is, it is only a problem if "you interpret what you hear in the focus groups as representing a full spectrum of experiences and opinions" (Morgan, 1988, p. 45). This however did not pose any problem since the researcher was fully aware of the source of her participants and any biases that the position of the festival volunteer might create.

The organising committees of each festival were responsible for the recruitment of participants for the focus groups. The organising committees were asked to randomly select from their volunteer database between ten and twelve participants for each of the two focus groups, to be conducted in each community. It was hoped that this would ensure enough participants showed up on the day. Additionally, having the organisers responsible for recruitment allowed the researcher to avoid any breach of privacy laws that would result from personal details of volunteers being provided to a third party.

Sample size for the pretest

Typically only small samples are needed when conducting a pretest, although this will vary depending on the instrument to be tested (Aaker et al, 2004). The size of a focus group "should not be so large as to be unwieldy or to preclude adequate participation by most members nor should it be so small that it fails to provide substantially greater coverage than that of an interview with one individual" (Merton et al, 1990, p. 137).

Typically, focus groups will have between six and twelve participants (Goodrick & Emmerson, 2004). Researchers will often over-recruit participants for a focus group due to the difficulties of ensuring that all participants will turn up on the day (Morgan, 1988). Therefore, it was decided to aim for a group size of up to twelve participants. In community A, there were ten confirmed participants for each of the two focus groups. On the day, eight and nine participants turned up to the afternoon and evening sessions respectively. In community B, there were eight and nine confirmed participants for the two focus groups. Both the afternoon and evening sessions ran with six participants each. A total of fours sessions were held; two in each community.

Outcomes of the Focus Group Pretest

The comments from participants in the focus groups were used to refine the SIP questionnaire. The focus groups revealed a number of issues that required changes to four out of five sections of the questionnaire. Section A consisted of open-ended questions, and they remained the same following the pretest. The only change in this section was that a definition of social impacts was added to one of the questions. Section B contained 35 social impact statements, and it was this section that underwent the most changes. Of the 35 impact statements, six were significantly reworded, eight were deleted and fifteen new impact statements were added to the questionnaire. These changes are illustrated in tables 1, 2 and 3, which show the items that were reworded, items that were deleted, and new items added into the final questionnaire respectively.

Table 1: Items reworded for inclusion in the final questionnaire

WORDING IN THE PRETEST	WORDING IN THE FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
• The festival encourages too many visitors to my community	• During the festival there were more visitors to the community
• There is a greater police presence during the festival	• The presence of police during the festival was adequate
• Traffic was congested during the festival	• During the festival there was increased traffic in the community
• The festival brings the community together	• The festival contributed to a sense of togetherness within the community
• During the festival there will be increased opportunities for crimes in the community	• Crime in the community increased during the festival
• During the festival there will be increased drinking and/or rowdy behaviour	• There is increased rowdy and delinquent behaviour during the festival

Table 2: Items deleted following the focus groups

ITEMS DELETED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE
▪ Public transport services will be congested during the festival
▪ The festival will contribute to increased business opportunities for locals following the festival
▪ The festival will encourage an increase in the future use of existing recreational and leisure facilities by locals
▪ The staging of this festival will encourage the restoration of existing public buildings
▪ During the festival, public facilities (such as toilets, parks etc.) will be maintained at a high standard
▪ The festival will encourage the local community to take an interest in the region's culture and history
▪ Locals will be more aware of the cultural activities available in their community following the festival
▪ Locals will be more likely to take part in future cultural activities of their community as a result of the festival

Table 3: New items added into the final questionnaire

NEW ITEMS ADDED TO THE FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
▪ The festival provided local residents with increased opportunities for cultural experiences
▪ The festival provided local residents with opportunities to host family and friends from out of town
▪ A diverse range of people from the local community attended the festival
▪ The festival provided opportunities for local residents to display their musical talents
▪ The festival provided fundraising opportunities for local community groups
▪ During the festival, noise levels in the area surrounding the festival venues were increased
▪ Road closures and redirections during the festival inconvenienced locals
▪ There is a sense of community ownership of the festival
▪ The festival helps to show others why the community is unique and special
▪ The festival gives the community an image which encourages tourism to the region
▪ Underage drinking occurred during the festival
▪ The use of prohibited substances increased during the festival
▪ Community groups worked together to achieve the goals of the festival
▪ The festival provided opportunities for members of the community to develop new skills
▪ Community identity is enhanced through the festival

Section C included cluster variables and section D was made up of variables relating to demographic information. Both these sections underwent similar changes. The wording of several questions was modified in order to avoid ambiguity, and at the request of focus group participants, extra response options were added. The order of these two sections was also rearranged to improve the flow of questions. Section E, contained space in which respondents could make any final comments. On request, the number of lines left for comments was increased from nine to eighteen.

Changes to wording were made after the first group so that the moderator could test for clarity in future focus groups. Because it was important for each group to be tested on the original impact items, changes to impact items were not made until the completion of all focus groups in both communities. However, following the first focus group in community A, the moderator kept a list of the impact items that participants wanted deleted or added and raised them for discussion, if they had not already been identified by the subsequent focus groups. Consistent with Aaker et al (2004) following the first two focus groups much of what was said, in later focus groups, had been heard before.

Benefits

The focus group approach, adopted in this study for pretesting the SIP questionnaire, had several benefits. By employing the debriefing approach, it allowed for respondents to complete the questionnaire, as they might in the final study. The pretest served as a practice run for the social impact questionnaire. The researcher was able to watch each person complete the questionnaire on their own, and gauge how residents might react if they were to do the same questionnaire at home. In this way, the focus groups allowed for an evaluation of the questionnaire design. The debriefing that followed, enabled the moderator to bring together each respondent's individual experience with the questionnaire to be examined within a wider group discussion. Each participant was able to explain any problems they had and could build upon the responses of other group members. Sharing responses and issues in this way, resulted in new ideas and connections being made between participants, enabling a greater emphasis being given to participants' viewpoints.

This discussion resulted in valuable suggestions for improvement to the questionnaire. It was important having community members who were involved with the festival to provide comment on the relevance of social impact items to their community. This allowed for the tailoring of a questionnaire, to one that is relevant to each community being studied. The process was also time efficient, as to hold 29 individual interviews would have taken a minimum of 29 hours, whereas the four focus groups entailed a maximum of eight hours.

Additionally, a sound rapport was established between the moderator and the participants, which had a positive flow on effect as participants had a sense of collaboration and went on to discuss their experiences with others in the community. As a result, the researcher was invited to comment on the study, in the local radio and newspapers, facilitating greater awareness of the research within these communities. Later, when the researcher returned to the field to observe the festivals, a sense of welcome, involvement, and belonging ensued.

Limitations

Focus groups as a pretest tool hold some limitations. The setting can be a somewhat artificial one. However, in this study it was found to provide an atmosphere of importance, that participants were involved in something meaningful which worked in the moderator's favour. In two different focus groups, there was a dominant individual, which at times tested the moderator's group management skills, in order to not allow responses to be socially biased. There was also the potential for the researcher as moderator to influence participants (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). The moderator was aware of this limitation and took every precaution to allow participants to rationalise their views, and to probe participants, on areas that were unclear to them..

Conclusion

This paper, through a review of methodological reports on event impact scale development, has demonstrated that whilst there have been a number of social impact scales developed, and reported within the literature, the methods employed to pretest these instruments are not being reported. Given the importance of pretesting, not only to validate these instruments, but to allow for easy replication of these studies, it is necessary for greater discussion of pretesting methodologies to be included in the reporting of this research.

To address this gap, this paper outlined the use of focus groups to pretest an event social impact perception (SIP) questionnaire. The focus group technique for pretesting this questionnaire was beneficial in identifying inadequacies relating to questionnaire design, content, administration and applicability. As a result the design and layout of the questionnaire was altered significantly in response to focus group feedback.

A number of important benefits were gained from using the focus group technique. Focus groups facilitated an environment in which respondents were able to fully understand the options available to them and provide a depth of response that assisted the researcher to realise the aims and objectives of the study. Focus group participants were able to discuss the meanings that they attributed to items within the questionnaire, which enabled the researcher to eliminate, clarify, or modify ambiguities and wording issues for the final questionnaire. Participants were able to identify those items that they perceived were not relevant to their community to be deleted from the scale, or alternately identify items that were relevant, and which should be included in the scale. Consequently the pretest methodology assisted the researcher in developing a scale, which reflected the perceptions and experiences of the community in which it was to be applied, rather than being driven by pre-existing items.

The methodological soundness of research methods is a key factor in all studies. Detailing the methodology used to pretest questionnaires ensures that methodology is transparent to the academic community and researchers can be assured of rigour in the methodology. If greater reporting of pretesting methods is conducted, it will enable replication and theoretical advancement by assisting future researchers to further develop these scales, either through refinement or addition. Although focus groups are only one method that can be utilised in pretesting social impact scales, this paper has identified there are a number of benefits to its application which can assist in developing a methodologically sound and content valid research tool.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

*** Denotes Working Paper only**

CONCURRENT SESSION 2

2A Event Evaluation Studies and Techniques

Methodological Considerations in Pretesting Social Impact Questionnaires: Reporting on the use of focus groups
Deborah Edwards, Sacha Reid, Katie Small

Testing of a Compressed Generic Instrument to Assess Host Community Perceptions of Events: A case study of the Australian Open Tennis Tournament
Liz Fredline, Marg Deery, Leo K Jago

A Comparative Approach to the Analysis of Event Audiences
Karen Smith

2B Sporting Event Issues and Evaluation

Evaluation of NSW Maritime Major Aquatic Events: 2003 Boat Owner/Skipper Survey
*Simon Darcy, Christopher Bolton, Tony Veal**

Ironman's Dominance of the Australian and New Zealand Long Course Triathlon Market
*Geoff Dickson, Harvey Griggs, Grant Schofield**

Peace Making Through Events: The impact of international sports events in multicultural Sri Lanka
*Nico Schulenkorf**

2C Host Community Perceptions and Engagement

Host Community Perceptions of the Impacts of Events: A comparison of different event themes in urban and regional communities
Liz Fredline, Leo K Jago and Marg Deery

Event Denizens and the Sports Tourist: Pre-event perceptions of the social impacts of a major event
Wiley J Sims, Luvlin D'Mello

Approaches to Community Engagement by Public Events
Rob Harris

*** Denotes Working Paper only**

CONCURRENT SESSION 3

3A Major Sports Events

3B Event Design and Impacts

3C Event Industry Issues 1

*** Denotes Working Paper only**

CONCURRENT SESSION 4

4A Regional Events

Event Public Policy and Regional Development in South East Queensland
Michelle Whitford

Micro Sporting Event Impacts in Regional New Zealand: The TRACE Sports Project
Geoff Dickson, Simon Milne. Anna McElrea and Vanessa Clark

Why do Regional Community Cultural Festivals Survive?
Ros Derrett

4B Arts Events and Their Impacts

An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Arts Festival Evaluation
Michael Williams, Glenn A J Bowdin

Special Art Exhibitions and Local Impact: A comparative case study
Monica Masucci, Elena Raviola

Festivals. Art and Mentoring: Disseminating knowledge. enhancing skills and developing networks in regional Victoria
Anne-Marie Hede, Ruth Rentschler

4C Event Industry Issues 2

The Impact of Transnational Events on the Host Country: The case of South Africa
*Malefane Monyane**

Event Management: An emerging field of business opportunity in India
Sudesh Chhikara. Vivek Shukla

Managing Reputation in Event Planning Companies
Kom Campiranon

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Event Education and Research Network Australia Symposium

CONCURRENT SESSION

1A Event Management Courses and Careers

Challenges in the Development of an Undergraduate Special Event Management Specialization
Wiley J Sims

A Critical Analysis of the Design and Implementation of an Event and Venue Management Program: A case study of the University of Wolverhampton
Ahmed Hassanien, Peter Dewhurst

A Review of Event Management Job Advertisements in Australian Newspapers
Charles Arcodia, Megan Axelsen

Experiential Learning in Events Management Education: Developing reflective practitioners
Phenoza Daruwalla, Wayne Fallon

1B Event Education Issues

Event Management Students' Reflections on their Placement Year: An examination of their "critical experiences"
Philip Williamson

Student Internship Learning Experiences in Event Management Training
Peter Burley

Training Event Leaders to Work in an Environment of Hot Action: The course development processes for mega events
Lynn Van Der Wagen *

Large Scale Sporting Events and Education for Sustainable Development
Rob Harris *

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THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR EVENT MANAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

THE IMPACTS OF EVENTS

EVENT MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH CONFERENCE

UTS: AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR EVENT MANAGEMENT

Associated events
EVENT EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
NETWORK AUSTRALIA SYMPOSIUM
15 JULY 2005

SETTING AN AGENDA FOR DISABILITY AND
TOURISM RESEARCH WORKSHOP
12 JULY 2005

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

Tourism Australia

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CRC

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

2005 EVENT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE THEME

THE 2005 EVENT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE WILL ADOPT THE THEME "THE IMPACTS OF EVENTS: TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE EVALUATION AND EVENT LEGACIES."

VENUE
Graduate School of Business, UTS Haymarket Campus, Quay Street, Haymarket, Sydney.

DATE
Wednesday 13 – Thursday 14 July 2005, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Events have a range of impacts on their host communities and stakeholders, both positive and negative. In evaluating these impacts, vent organisers, governments and funding bodies are increasingly applying a triple bottom line approach, embracing social, environmental and economic outcomes. Additionally, the time horizon used for evaluation is shifting from the short to longer term, particularly in the context of large scale events, as those organisations involved in their creation and delivery seek to leverage them in ways that maximise their associated legacies.

CONFERENCE FORMAT
The conference program will include a series of plenary sessions, forums and panel discussions designed to explore the many aspects of the conference theme, and to include lively discussion and debate.

KEYNOTE SESSIONS

Holistic Event Evaluation; An essential ingredient for a sustainable event industry
Leo K Jago, Deputy CEO and Director of esearch, CRC for Sustainable Tourism

Business Outcomes of Events
- Jon Hutchison, Managing Director, Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau

Tourism Events Australia: Government Event Strategies
- Ian Macfarlane, Director Marketing Services, Tourism Australia

Panel Discussion: Government Event Strategies
- Ian Macfarlane and Directors of State Event Corporations, chaired by Leo K Jago

The Central Sydney Operations Group – A best practice case study of city/state wide event coordination
- Jan Willett, Senior Manager Policy and Planning, Office of Protocol and Special Events, NSW Premiers Department

Crowd Safety and Security for Events: The UK Perspective
- Chris Kemp, Dean of Faculty, Leisure and Tourism, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College

The Sporting Impacts of the Sydney Olympic Games
- Tony Veal, Director Australian Centre for Olympic Studies, and Kristine Toohey, Professor in Sport Management, Griffith University

CRC Tourism Olympic Impacts Study
- Laurence Chalip, Professor of Sport Management, University of Texas

The Role of Governments in Leveraging the Economic Benefits of Events
- Michael O'Sullivan, Executive Director Industry Division, NSW Department of State and Regional Development

Creating Ceremonies for Major Events
- Andrew Walsh, Executive Producer, Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Athens Olympic Games 2004, and Director of the Opening Ceremony, Commonwealth Games Melbourne 2006

Celebrate Australia Day – Key planning issues in managing a major national day event
- Annabelle Pegrum, Chief Executive, National Capital Authority, Canberra

Regional Events and their Contribution to Communities
- Maggie Maguire, Senior Program Manager, Arts Victoria

WORKSHOPS

A series of practical workshops will be conducted on event management topics.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM DETAILS

Details of the Conference Program will be placed on the ACEM website (www.acem.uts.edu.au) as they come to hand. For all inquiries regarding the program, please email Conference Convenor Johnny Allen at John.Allen@uts.edu.au

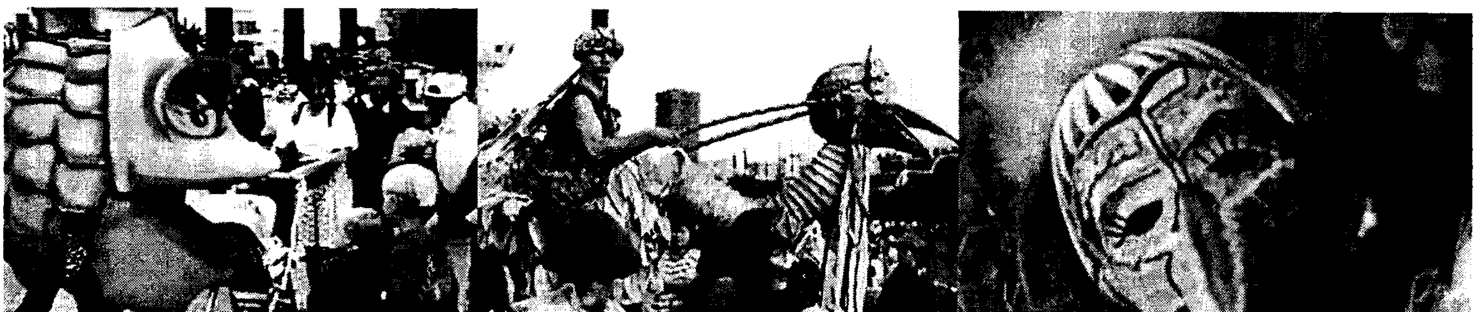
WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Individuals and organisations with an interest in event impacts, legacies and evaluation, including:

> Academics teaching or researching in the areas of event, tourism and sport management
> Government departments involved in event strategies and programs
> State Tourist Commissions/regional tourist associations involved in the creation of event tourism strategies
> Local Council event managers and community development workers
> Venue and public area managers
> State based event agencies
> Event industry associations
> Event organisers
> Consultants

CONFERENCE TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION
Conference delegates should make their own travel arrangements.

Availability of interstate and international flights into Sydney at this time of year is generally good, but delegates are advised to make travel and accommodation arrangements early.

A range of discount accommodation is available by booking directly through the UTS website www.housing.uts.edu.au/hotels/index.html - temporary accomodation for students and visitors.



THE IMPACTS OF EVENTS

PROCEEDINGS OF INTERNATIONAL EVENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE HELD IN SYDNEY JULY 2005

EDITED BY JOHNNY ALLEN

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PREFACE

Johnny Allen
Conference Convenor
Australian Centre for Event Management

At the First International Event Management Research Conference *Events Beyond 2000*, held in Sydney in July 2000, the economic impact of events and related methods for their measurement dominated the agenda of the Conference. However, the need for a wider and more holistic evaluation process was noted by the Conference, and reinforced by the Second Conference in 2002.

Since then, a triple bottom line approach to evaluation encompassing economic, social/cultural and environmental impacts has continued to emerge, notably in areas of academic research, the event industry and local government involvement in events. The response to the theme of this Conference would seem to indicate that this approach is now well established, with a wide variety of research projects exploring the full spectrum of event impacts and outcomes. In the Call for Papers, the theme of the Conference was broadened to include related areas such as event tourism, regional, community and event industry issues, and there has been a satisfying response in these areas also.

The area of event education and research has also continued to grow in tandem with the growth of the event industry, as demonstrated by the wide geographical spread of the Conference, encompassing delegates from most states of Australia and New Zealand, as well as from North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. As discussed at the last Conference, a special one-day Symposium has been added to the program to explore event education and research issues, and to establish an on-going association of event educators.

Papers from both the Conference and the Symposium have been published in the Conference Proceedings. All papers were submitted to a double blind peer review process, with papers grouped into thematic areas and each author invited to review the papers of two other colleagues. Authors were then invited to respond to the reviewers comments in compiling the final drafts of their papers. The review process was overseen by the Conference Academic Committee consisting of Leo Jago, Rob Harris and Johnny Allen. The papers are presented in the same thematic areas in the Conference Proceedings, with working papers denoted by an asterisk and in some cases represented by an abstract only, at the discretion of the Committee. The papers have been edited to conform as far as possible to a uniform style, whilst respecting the differing styles and cultural backgrounds of the authors.

In order to promote a dialogue at the Conference among academic researchers, industry practitioners and government representatives, several industry guest presentations and workshops were incorporated in the Conference Program. These were not subject to the review process, and are not included in the Conference Proceedings, but where possible have been placed on the Australian Centre for Event Management website at www.acem.uts.edu.au.

On behalf of the Conference Committee, I would like to thank warmly the guest presenters, academic authors, conference volunteers, and the many individuals and organizations that have contributed to the success of the Conference. Last, but not least, on behalf of the Conference Committee I would like to thank all our sponsors, without whose generous assistance we would not have been able to stage the Conference - Tourism Australia, the NSW Department of State and Regional Development, CRC for Sustainable Tourism, Victoria University, Southern Cross University, and the University of Queensland.

Johnny Allen, Sydney 2005

CONCURRENT SESSION 2

2A Event Evaluation Studies and Techniques

2B Sporting Event Issues and Evaluation

2C Host Community Perceptions and Engagement

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