Tourism Events: Bringing Innovation to the North of Portugal

Susana Silva, Cândida Silva, and João Alves

Abstract Tourist destinations are places or regions that offer a set of tourism products, which provide experiences to the consumer according to their itinerary, culture, travel motivation, education, or life experience. Events usually provide the consumer with an opportunity for leisure and social interaction that goes beyond the experience of everyday life and by the desire of people to live an original and exclusive experience. Therefore, an event can be used to promote a destination and to make known the traditions, cultures, and experiences of local communities. In this way, it was carried out a study to understand the importance of events for the promotion of a tourist destination, identifying the themes of the events used to that promotion, and the role of events in the promotion of a touristic destination. This study was conducted in the Municipalities of the North of Portugal, following a qualitative methodology to collect and analyze data. The municipalities participating in this study hold entertainment, cultural, sports, and educational events, and the results showed that those events are a great attraction for visitors creating a good economic impact in the region, contributing to the increase of consumption and bigger dissemination of their products facilitating potential new contacts for business and partnerships.

S. Silva (✉)
Institute Polytechnic of Porto, School of Hospitality and Tourism, CEOS.PP and CITUR, Vila do Conde, Portugal
e-mail: susanasilva@esht.ipp.pt

C. Silva
Institute Polytechnic of Porto, School of Hospitality and Tourism, CITUR, Vila do Conde, Portugal

Algoritmi Research Center, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal
e-mail: candidasilva@esht.ipp.pt

J. Alves
Institute Polytechnic of Porto, School of Hospitality and Tourism, Vila do Conde, Portugal

1   Introduction

Tourist destinations are a set of tourism products that offer experiences to the consumer. However, it is increasingly that destinations can have a more subjective concept, which can be interpreted by consumers taking into account their itinerary, culture, travel motivation, education, or life experience (Buhalis, 2000). In turn, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourist destinations as a physical space in which a visitor stays at least one night. This space has to include several products, such as ancillary services and tourist attractions, and resources that can be visited in less than a day's travel. The organization of a specific event is, many times, also developed to be a tourist attraction.

Over the years, numerous events have been held with the most diverse themes, from fairs, festivals, exhibitions, sports, culture, business, among others (Mair & Whitford, 2013). Although they have existed for a long time, events are phenomena that have been growing worldwide both in quantity and popularity (Gursoy et al., 2004), as they provide a way to mark important personal or public occasions and personal or public occasions and celebrations of important milestones throughout life (Mair & Whitford, 2013).

Given that the essence of tourism is linked to human activity and the will of each person to achieve certain goals or satisfy their needs related to the act of traveling (Ratkowski & Ratkowska, 2018), these will give rise to a desire in people to participate in events in other parts of the world, such as events. These can be used as attractions to enhance the tourism growth of a region (Saayman & Rossouw, 2010).

Therefore, it can be noticed that the degree of the importance of events in the quality of the tourism offer has been increasing. This is because tourists' interest in travel has increased to attend a specific event, which makes attending an event one of the most important motivations for a tourist to travel (Panfiluk, 2015).

Thus, considering this possible effect of events on the increase of tourism, this study aimed to understand the importance of events in the promotion of a tourist destination in a smaller region, in this case, in the North of Portugal. Thus, the main goals were to characterize the importance of events for the promotion of a tourist destination, identify the theme of events in the promotion of a tourist destination, and identify the role of events in the promotion of a touristic destination.

This paper is structured as follows: the next section makes a literature review on the main concepts related to the study, namely, events, and their types, events in tourism, and the impacts of events. Section 3 will describe all the methodology used to carry out the study; Sect. 4 presents and discuss the main results of the study, and the last section is dedicated to conclusions and final considerations.

2   Literature Review

Events are commonly characterized by a one-time or infrequent occurrence, by a limited time that provides the consumer with an opportunity for leisure and social interaction that goes beyond the experience of everyday life, and by the desire of people to live an original and exclusive experience (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2014) that only events can offer, and thus differentiate them from other permanent attractions.

Events are considered important activities and even a factor that socioculturally unites communities or even nations. In this sense, more and more governments are investing invest in this area due to the growing impact they can have on society (Jamieson, 2014).

Events make it possible to create different kinds of experiences with a very wide diversity, from fun and entertainment to carnival and festivals, to the spirituality of religious pilgrimages and rituals of celebration. However, the purposes associated with the event can be in the promotion of commerce or learning, that is, using the event to enhance a transformation of behaviors, beliefs, values, and attitudes (Getz, 2008).

Events were, in the beginning, mostly an area of individual and community initiative. Nowadays, with the growth of the interest in events, it has become a professional and entrepreneurial activity and typified in four main categories according to its nature (Getz & Page, 2016).

2.1   *Types of Events*

Getz and Page (2016) classify events into four categories, namely business events, sporting events, festivals, and other cultural celebrations, and entertainment events. The categories are summarized in Fig. 1 as follows.

Business events are of great importance, as they can bring together professionals from one or more industries in one place, providing great opportunities for business, learning communication, and market research (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008).

Trade fairs are a type of business event that have been growing in importance increasing in importance because of the experiences that visitors can get visitors can get from their participation in these events. This type of event was firstly more used for marketing and sales purposes. More recently, a greater impact has been felt in the use of these fairs with innovative spaces that allow and facilitate the sharing of knowledge from different companies or market sectors (Zhong & Luo, 2018).

Sporting events have been growing in the tourism industry and are considered to have an economic, socio-cultural, and political impact on the places where they are organized (Maussier, 2017). Nowadays, people have different motivations for participating in these events, whether for health reasons, pleasure, or passion for the sport itself, for the contact with the local community, or the authenticity of the event.
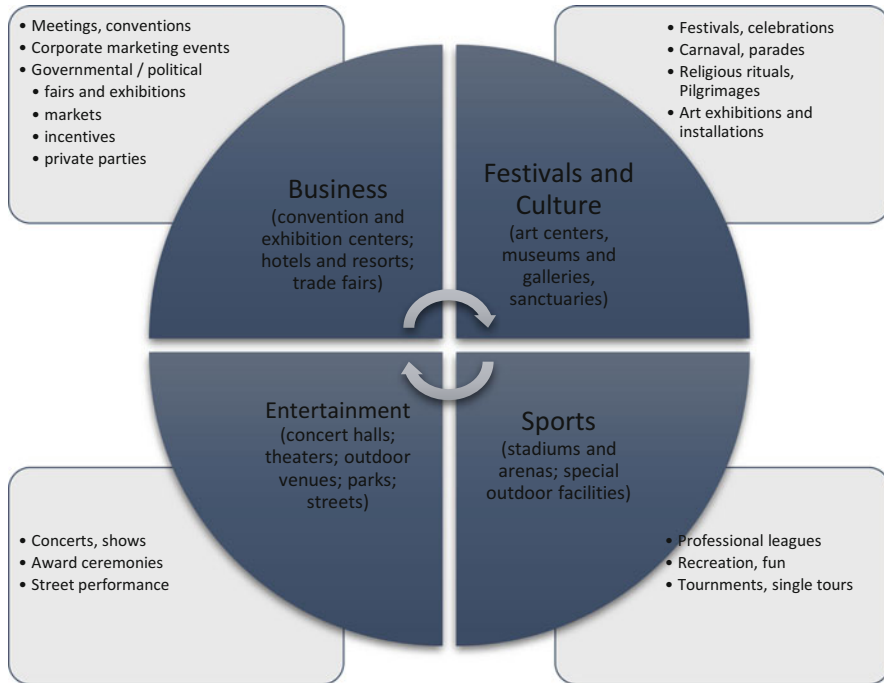
- Meetings, conventions
- Corporate marketing events
- Governmental / political
  - fairs and exhibitions
  - markets
  - incentives
  - private parties

- Festivals, celebrations
- Carnaval, parades
- Religious rituals, Pilgrimages
- Art exhibitions and installations

Business
(convention and exhibition centers; hotels and resorts; trade fairs)

Festivals and Culture
(art centers, museums and galleries, sanctuaries)

Entertainment
(concert halls; theaters; outdoor venues; parks; streets)

Sports
(stadiums and arenas; special outdoor facilities)

- Concerts, shows
- Award ceremonies
- Street performance

- Professional leagues
- Recreation, fun
- Tournments, single tours

Fig. 1 Event types (adapted from Getz & Page, 2016)

These events are usually able to generate benefits for the city, region, and the host country. For example, sometimes these events are used as a means of promotion of the host city in the national or international market, and thus they can differentiate themselves from the competition (Hemmonsbey et al., 2018).

The link between sports and tourism is recognized in different areas. In the area of health, leisure, leisure time management, cognitive values, and their economic effect, and this same connection leads to the organization of sporting events with tourism aspects (Ratkowski & Ratkowska, 2018). For this reason, tourism is one of the industries that greatly benefit from sporting events.

Festivals and other cultural celebrations events encompass several types of events, from cultural events, historical commemorations to festivals.

Cultural events are a source of creative experiences and have a strong economic component for regions because they enhancement the existing infrastructures, or the creation of new ones, and drivers of creative expression and local animation (Liu, 2014).

As for historical commemoration events, these can be incorporated into event development strategies for tourism, i.e., they should be considered as tools that are valuable and with great potential to be exploited at the level of the organizing destination's tourism development. Nevertheless, to be used as tourism events, it will be necessary to overcome the domestic orientation of the celebration, converting

them to an international level so that tourists do not feel like intruders (Viol et al., 2018). This way of utilizing the culture and traditions specific to each region increases the ability of destinations to attract visitors and increase the competitiveness of the different regions (Liu, 2014).

Entertainment events are difficult to define, as they can encompass a large number of events and diverse activities, such as sports, celebrations, or firework displays. These activities have entertainment value, meaning that anything that creates fun or joy can be considered entertainment (Getz & Page, 2016).

These types of events coupled with tourism activity can be used to revitalize cities. This revitalization includes the construction of various infrastructures appropriate for different types of entertainment, from atriums, convention centers, rehabilitation of historic centers, among others. This change ends up diversifying the existing offer and attracting tourists and professionals appropriate to the different types of attractions (Che, 2008). The theatre, concerts, shows, and spectacles are a good sample of these types of events, and their realization is normally provided by the private sector (Getz & Page, 2016).

2.2   Events in Tourism

The degree of importance of events in the quality of the tourism offer has been increasing. This is due to the fact that tourists' interest in travel has increased for the purpose of attending a specific event, which makes attending an event one of the most important motivations for a tourist to travel (Panfiluk, 2015).

Liu (2014) mentions that for tourism development, events are seen as a solution to the problem of seasonality and the issue of differentiation of the offer that each region can offer and consequently increase the competitiveness of the tourism market. Additionally, Getz and Page (2016) refer that their great boost in tourism is due to the strong economic impact that events have on the regions where they are organized.

However, although there is a great demand in the tourism sector, combating seasonality remains one of the biggest challenges for the supply of tourist destinations (Connell et al., 2015).

Another important factor for the development of tourism is the fact that events can promote the image of a destination both nationally and internationally. As a less positive point, we can say that events are very associated with the image of the destination. If the event does not go as planned or serious problems occur, it will end up being very negative for the destination, due to the great exposure it will have in the media (Liu, 2014). Given the association between events and destination image, care must be taken to choose the events that are best suited to project a genuine image of destinations (Hemmonsbey et al., 2018).

To take advantage of the fact that events promote a destination's image, many countries use mega-events to gain prestige by attracting attention to their

achievements, for trade promotion, tourism, or to help promote their countries' image in the world (Getz, 2008).

As a general rule, smaller-scale events, i.e., more local and regional events, are created by people who have an interest in a particular activity and who use events as a means of celebrating that activity and emphasizing their identity. These events do not have tourism as an objective, but when they end up having a more touristic aspect, they can lose their value and authenticity (Kelly & Fairley, 2018).

From a tourism industry perspective, through the vision of Destination Management Organization and event organizing agencies, events are very valuable as attractions, as promoting agents, animators, and creators of a positive image of the destination (Getz, 2008).

Getz and Page (2016) refer that events are animators of a tourist destination, making it more attractive. Thus, they are the key to marketing in the promotion of a destination. Given the great increase in global competitiveness, they also serve to attract and encourage tourists to spend more money during their stays. The authors also mention that events are used to develop unique selling propositions that differentiate the destination from other competing markets.

In this sense, several effects caused by events in tourist destinations are identified (Getz & Page, 2016):

– Great attraction of tourists, sponsors, and media, among others, that without the events might not get to visit a particular region.
– Leverage to maximize the value of destinations and a key factor in combating seasonal demand, extending tourism geographically, and contributing to urban and economic development.
– Their value can be used to strongly influence the market, especially if several market segments are involved in the process.
– They can create a very positive destination image, help in the promotion of region-specific brands, reposition the different destinations in the market, be part of marketing strategies.
– They make cities more dynamic, being able to animate cities, resorts, parks, urban spaces, among others.
– They make destinations more attractive to visit and offer more reasons for tourists to return to the already visited places, increasing the efficiency of the places.

2.3 Impacts of Events

The events produce positive and negative impacts on the regions and communities where they are held. These impacts can be divided into three types: economic, environmental, and personal, social, cultural, and political (Getz & Page, 2016).

2.3.1 Economic Impact

The events organisation in tourism change the consumption and income patterns of local inhabitants. The taxes that arise due to the increase of tourism activity during events ultimately benefit government organizations (Getz & Page, 2016). Saayman and Rossouw (2010) reinforce this idea with the results obtained in their study of music events that reinforce the idea that not only government organizations benefit economically but also the private sector, local businesses, and the tourism industry in general. It is noteworthy that not only do these events help in creating more jobs and attracting more investors, more investors, but they also help in the economic growth of the region. Since this financial return exists, along with your entity's exposure during the event, public and private entities will continue to financially support the events, even though the economic crises in the world have been decreasing the amount of funding these organizations invest. This funding is essential for the economic sustainability of the event (van Wyk et al., 2015). Financial support is not only important for organizing events but also to support the high costs of the revitalization of some cities that are beginning to focus on tourism (Che, 2008).

If the events take place during peak demand season, there may be an opportunity for hotels to raise their prices even higher, since they would already be in high demand because it is high season. Then they can further inflate their prices due to the extra tourists that want to attend the event. Likewise, this can be seen as a negative point (Andersson & Lundberg, 2013).

2.3.2 Environmental Impact

Events, by their nature, have an impact on the environment where they are organized, since they are large consumers of energy and other resources, i.e., they generate a high ecological bill to be paid. However, sustainable venues are beginning to be created to reduce the pollution caused by events and restore the balance of the environment (Getz & Page, 2016) in addition, and there are beginning to be changed in the management and disposal of waste that arises from the events and thus minimize the negative impacts on the environment (Dickson & Arcodia, 2010).

The construction of permanent infrastructure needed to good accessibility to the events and to the actual the event itself end up modifying the landscapes of the regions where they are organized, also causing an increase in costs and costs and demand for resources for their construction. However, there are already practices and rules that try to educate and encourage the protection and conservation of nature (Getz & Page, 2016).

Dickson and Arcodia (2010) note that there is great complexity in creating the most environmentally friendly industry. Nevertheless, the events industry is developing research into the relationship between events and the environment and acting on the results. The authors also emphasize that researchers, professionals, and governments need to work together to help predict, plan for and if possible overcome

challenges as a matter of urgency. Some of these challenges they mention are the fact that events depend on consistent and stable weather patterns or depend on environmental conditions for the event to take place, such as ice fishing competitions. They also highlight how the impact of climate change continues to be felt; events have to adapt to changes in the environment to maintain their continuity.

2.3.3 Personal, Social, Cultural, and Political Impact

Getz and Page (2016) state that there is difficulty in distinguishing impacts on a personal social, and cultural level, and can have political effects on destinations. Some of the social and cultural impacts are due to the fact that the change of traditional culture events begins to have a more touristic aspect and consequently lose authenticity. Gursoy et al. (2004) state that the growth of events can cause problems of overpopulation and inflations in local commerce, especially if they are organized only for the purpose of generating income. Overpopulation can also generate problems of insecurity, new conflicts, excess traffic, and pollution.

From another point of view, events can help preserve traditions, promote civism, national pride, and support culture and the arts (Getz & Page, 2016).

The social aspect that is disseminated by the media eventually affects the perceptions and attitudes of those who attend through demonstrations of disgust, protests, or antisocial behavior (Getz & Page, 2016).

The organization of events can create social and cultural capital by increasing cooperation networks between employees and the companies involved, such as volunteering, to promote personal development (Getz & Page, 2016). As mentioned earlier, events increase cooperation, unity, and social cohesion.

Gursoy et al. (2004) state that understanding the perceptions of event organizers about the impacts of festivals and special events on the local community is vital to the success of events.

The fact that events have both positive and negative impacts leads many people to be either for or against, depending on the benefits each person derives from the events (Getz & Page, 2016).

3 Methodology

3.1 Study Design

A qualitative methodology was used to answer the research question "How tourism events promote a tourist destination?" The main aims were to characterize the importance of events for the promotion of a tourist destination, identify the theme of events in the promotion of a tourist destination, and identify the role of events in the promotion of a touristic destination.

3.2   Instrument

It was used a semi-structured interview to reach the study objectives. This interview had two sections: the first section had seven sociodemographic questions such as gender, age, marital status, graduation, and professional experience; the second section had 16 questions about events. The section about events had questions about the infrastructure used, the objectives of the events, how the events are publicized, what results are obtained with the events, what is the link between events and tourism to questions related to the possible future development of the region. The questions were constructed more openly to give some freedom of response and to give some freedom of response and thus possibly obtain more information.

3.3   Participants

The participants in this study were responsible for the organization of events in several departments in the Municipalities of North of Portugal. The choice of these participants was made taking into account that they were the informants who best know the reality under study; therefore a theoretical sample was used.

Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, 11 were female, and 4 were male, with a mean age of 45 years (SD = 7.51), 10 participants were married. Most of the participants were from the cultural department (n = 8) from several hierarchical levels and had a high education level. The participants were in the current function, on average, for 15.03 years (SD = 4.5).

3.4   Procedure and Data Analysis

The study dissemination started with an inviting e-mail to several municipalities in the North of Portugal. To the municipalities that answered the e-mail, a second e-mail was sent scheduling the interview. The interviews occurred during September and November 2019. All the interviews were record and verbatim transcribed. All ethical procedures were taken.

Data were analyzed according to grounded theory procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Each interview was analyzed line by line to extract its meaning, coding it initially in open codes and later organizing it in central themes, from where rise the axial and selective codes. This phase ends with the formalization of the concepts that emerged from the information collected.

At the end of this process, it was obtained a set of concepts and relationships between them, based on the information analyzed and confirmed by the literature.

To ensure the validity of the analysis and the coding process, two researchers were consulted as auditors (independent researchers that discuss and validate the

categories) throughout the entire data analysis process to assist the primary author by challenging ideas and assisting in the construction of the categories. The main results are presented in the next section.

4 Results

This section presents the main results of the grounded theory analysis performed. Table 1 presents the structure of the codes created.

This analysis has one central theme, Events, emerging from Type of Events, Purposes, Planning, Infrastructure, Local Community, Dissemination, Disadvantages, Evaluation Methods, Results, Organization, Projects, and Future.

Regarding the main category, Events, the interviewees state that events are increasingly important for the Municipalities; all of them assume this importance and are often associated with the region logos. These logos are used to transmit the image of the Municipalities, its traditions, culture, and gastronomy to the world, as can be verified in the following quote "I think that this executive had the great vision to promote what is genuine. And this is what we are moving forward and this is what is that is managing to put the Municipality on the map." (Interview 2).

The category Type of Events is related to the several kinds of events, themes that are organized by the Municipalities, namely cultural events, entertainment events, sports events, and educational events. Illustrating this category in interview 9, it is mentioned, "There are different types of events, in the environmental area, in the cultural area, in the sports area, in the education area, and the social action area."

As for the category Purpose, given the different types of events, there are several purposes. The purposes may range from promoting the identity of the region to the practice of sports, to the creation of personal and professional skills in young people, or to combat school failure. It should be noted that the infrastructures that Municipalities have for the practice of outdoors are a strong point in this field for the growth of sporting events, as can be seen in the following quote "We can train young people competently to prepare them for the job market, but we also want schools to prepare people for life, to live in society, with values, with a taste for what are the roots of their land, to realize their potential, and somehow this also contribute to their personal development, we want educational success to also allow us to have habits of

Table 1 Codes structure

Events											
Type of Events	Purpose	Planning	Infrastructures	Local Community	Disclosure	Disadvantage	Evaluation methods	Results	Organisation	Projects	Future

healthy living, healthy eating healthy life habits, a healthy diet, sports, in the end, the goal is all of this goal is all this, educational success in all dimensions" (Interview 6).

The category Planning encompasses the factors most mentioned by respondents in the planning stage, assuming extreme importance in the organization of events, not losing sight of the purposes of the events and the culture, heritage of the region, and its recognition as a territory, as mentioned in interview 10, "So the most important events are those that in some way exalt our cultural, historical, and natural roots, are the brands, the sierras, the bread, the cookie, the toys, our religious heritage, the slate. And I think that somehow a series of events have been held and developed that have these same identity marks have been praised."

In the category Infrastructures, there are no infrastructures built from scratch for events, for this reason, several existing infrastructures are used that have other purposes such as Museums, auditorium, Forum, or other infrastructures, or outdoor spaces, such as streets and squares of the cities in the Municipalities, as shown in interview 2: "The infrastructures can be varied according to the nature of each event."

The category Local Community is a factor to be taken into account when organizing events where it is held. More and more the involvement and willingness to participate of the local population in the events. An important factor is a fact that the population can revive the old traditions of the region, which helps in the approval of the region to the events held, as shown in interview 3, "We notice that we are getting more adhesion from the public, people are recognizing these events that are being held periodically, so they are looking for participation in the events."

The category Disclosure refers to the way how dissemination is done to reach a greater number of people, as mentioned in the quote: "We have various outreach mediums including the posters, billboards, we have the digital channels, the municipality's website, Facebook" (Interview 11). This disclosure is performed through Digital media, such as social media, website, or television, and Non-Digital Media, such as posters, flyers, and billboards.

In the category Disadvantages, these refer to the events and are because roads have to be cut for the events to take place, which makes it difficult to access certain places. The noise that is originated by the events ends up bothering some of the local population revealing itself as another disadvantage. As mentioned in interview 2: "But there is always a person who complains because they cut a street or they don't have access to a restaurant, the access to the gas stations is or because a lot of noise was made in the street and the baby wanted to sleep, and could not sleep at 10 pm, he only got to sleep at midnight."

The category Evaluation Methods represents the mentioned ways of how the entities, evaluate the performance and the results of the events. It is a sector of the events that the interviewees state that there is a need for improvement. Sometimes they state that they only perceive the results by some kind of feedback from the public and not something structured such as surveys, as presented in interview 3: "We end up understanding how the events are going through the feedback from the public and the participants of the activities themselves."

The Results category reveals that the results obtained from events are diverse. You can get different results depending on the type of event you are organizing. But most of the events end up being a strategy for the Municipalities to show themselves to the world and present all their cultural heritage and all their added value, as the quote reveals: "By attending events, they get to know the region and realize that there are more activities they can do throughout the year, not only cultural ones but also others" (Interview 1). These results are related to the number of visitors, the amount of consumption, the economic impact, and the exposure of the Municipality.

In the subcategory Organization, some aspects that influence the organization of events are identified. In this case, there are some limitations for those who are organizing the events and some aspects that should be improved in the organization, cited in interview 10: "For now we are still planning with the outside in mind, but we are still planning a lot inward, we have a minimally defined strategy, but we are still planning a lot to educate internally and with the perspective of attracting externally, but for now we are responding to the influence of tourism is null" (Interview 10). Limitations are related to some aspects that end up limiting the organization of events were identified, namely the reduced number of workers and the event's costs, which ends up hindering the growth of the events or hindering the work of those who organize them, as can be seen in the quote: "Of the closed spaces that we needed, for example, a large multipurpose pavilion for certain activities which we also don't have so this is a disadvantage for us when we are preparing an event" (Interview 3).

The category Projects has new infrastructure under development in the Municipalities. These projects aim at the growth of the Municipalities, in having more attractions and creating new reasons to visit, as exemplified in interview 4, "we have some projects in agenda that will help to develop the Municipality, to do more events, and to attract more visitor..."

In the category Future, the same is expected to be promising. The Municipalities have been developing strategies for the region with the creation of logos that represent the region's greatest assets, with all the events organized, with the various infrastructures that have stood out in the outdoor sports level of outdoor sports and the new strategies that are being developed, as previously mentioned, to grow the region and the growth of the region and thus improve prospects, as mentioned in interview 2: "We are a municipality rich in history, rich in tradition, and a very good path is beginning to be taken towards that promotion. I hope that the future will enlighten even more those who are in this area and that in the future they will be able to help transform the Municipality into a special land."

5   Final Considerations

The organization of events is an important strategy for the promotion of a tourist destination, and it is advisable to focus on different themes (Getz & Page, 2016). In our results, this strategy is reinforced to the extent that municipalities hold entertainment, cultural, sports, and educational events. The first three types of events

mentioned belong to three of the four main event typologies elaborated by Getz and Page (2016).

One of the purposes of events is to promote the recognition of the region at regional and national levels. In this regard, Hemmonsbey et al. (2018) note that it is necessary to carefully select events that are best suited to project a genuine image of destinations. The choice of events that give greater visibility to the Municipalities seems to be related to the region's logos that aim to preserve the culture, traditions, and recognition of the region's image. In this way, the events become an important reason to visit the region, as Getz (2008) states that events with their increasing growth allied to tourism are included in the development and marketing strategies of a tourist destination.

In this case, and in line with the literature (Getz & Page, 2016), events are a great attraction for visitors creating a great economic impact in the region, contributing to the increase of consumption on the days of the events and greater dissemination of their products facilitating potential new contacts for business and partnerships.

The existence of events throughout the year seems to have a great financial impact on the economy of a region due to a greater consumption caused by an increase in the number of visitors. Thus, events are a strategy to combat seasonality, making cities more dynamic and lively, and making the region a more attractive place to visit, as stated by Getz and Page (2016).

Events are a reason for tourists to travel and contribute to the increase in the number of visits to a region (Panfiluk, 2015). Additionally, events promote the dissemination of the characteristic products of the region, thus being a differentiating reason to attract visitors to the region. This is why they are increasingly used in the development and marketing strategies of a region (Getz, 2008).

On the other hand, events contribute to the valorization of existing infrastructures in the region. By taking place in the infrastructures themselves or their immediate surroundings, events attract people to visit spaces that they would hardly get to know otherwise.

Although there is a growth in the number of events, some aspects need to be improved for the growth to be even greater and the quality of the events to be improved. The lack of evaluation of the events' results is one of the aspects to be improved. For that to happen, it is imperative to know the opinion of visitors and partners about the opportunities for improvement as well as to improve the way events are promoted.

One of the limitations of this study, it is important to mention that we only have the perspective of one actor in the organization of events—the Municipalities. In future studies, it is suggested to replicate this study with visitors, but also with event partners as well as with local communities and companies to get a more global view about the impact of events in the promotion of a tourist destination.

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