

Sustainable Management of Events in an Experiential Perspective



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Abstract Events are complex value propositions that are realized by specialists to meet different leisure and entertainment needs. They are highly intangible and experiential-type products (Pencarelli and Forlani 2016) to which the application of logical experience is particularly suitable (Bartolazzi et al. 2008; Pegg and Patterson 2010; Manthiou et al. 2014; Getz and Page 2016). This chapter aims to describe the role played by events in the experience economy for territories involved in sustainable tourism strategies. The authors also propose a model for event impact analysis and evaluation. Starting from the idea that tourist destinations represent a stage on which tourism products can be displayed, so as to satisfy the demands of travelers seeking engaging experiences (Pencarelli and Forlani 2016), the importance of the role played by destination management in managing the events is further underlined. Tourists searching such experiences want to be in the spotlight and co-participate with territorial players in the creation of value. As such, event management requires the use of tools such as planning, organization, and control in order to design, plan, and put on a balanced program of events while monitoring the impact on value creation for both tourists and regional stakeholders within the perspective of sustainability. This chapter proposes to redefine the experiential perspective of a set of indicators that are useful in holistically evaluating the

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performance of events in a traditional tri-faceted dimension, i.e., economic, social, and environmental.

1 Tourism Events as a Systemic Offer of Experiences

The connection between events and tourism reveals itself to be complex and difficult to define, leaving a number of open issues that are harbingers of overlapping and problematic definers, beginning with the very concept of a *tourism event*. Can an event be defined as touristic simply because it justifies tourist flows and represents a motivation for someone to take a trip? Or should we consider touristic those events that attract the predominating participation of tourists rather than residents? Moreover, event management is a field of study that intersects tourism and destination but which remains separate (Allen et al. 2000; Ferrari 2002; Yoeman et al. 2003; Getz 2008; Crowther 2010; Berridge 2010; Getz and Page 2016). According to the logic we have adopted, in order to consider events in a touristic context oriented toward sustainability, every event is the result of a systemic offer of goods, services, information, tourist attractions, environment, and culture. Such an offer is put out by local and nonlocal production systems, both of which supply the customer with economic offers that go beyond a simple mix of goods and services to aim more specifically and consciously for a product with high experiential content (Rispoli 2001).

In this sense, then, events constitute an archetypal experience, in keeping with Pine and Gilmore's progression of economic value (1999, 2016), which aims to intercept the use of the consumer's free time. Having free time, in fact, fosters consumer needs that have been considered unnecessary luxuries in the past but which are now seen as a community's social right; this creates needs that are connected to the consumption of tourist experiences of various kinds, both genuine and artificial. The consumer pays to spend time enjoying memorable events; companies and territories use a physical facility, as though it were a stage upon which to showcase experiences that intrigue or attract consumers at various levels, including sensorial, emotional, and cognitive, and that can have an impact on the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual values of the experiences they (the customers) perceive. The consumption of experiences makes it paramount for the production system to develop and make good on its experiential value promise (*Experiential Value Promise*, Schmitt 2003); in other words, it must act upon multiple areas of human perception and follow experiential policies able to increase the symbolic value of the offer. What is traditionally supplied (good and services) must therefore be enriched by experiential content that will satisfy the hedonistic needs of the post-modern consumer. To "experientialize" an offer is equivalent to significantly increasing the degree of involvement of the subjects in the act of consumption to the point of allowing individuals to intentionally take advantage of the event and, thus, to echo the words of Pine and Gilmore (1999, 2013, 2016), to pay for the

experience itself (paying events) instead of limiting themselves to appreciating the experientialization of good and services (free events).

Experience products must truly be unique, able to fully engage the consumer and the hosting communities emotionally, physically and cognitively; it is for this reason that these products must be innovative and capable of proposing new and original solutions thanks to their format, content, time period, location, and participants involved. No event should be (or can afford to be) a replica of another, even in subsequent editions of the same event. This requires the creative intelligence of all the subjects involved, including the viewers or participants, so as to avoid banal standardization of any kind. Each event has specific features that qualify it based on the venue where it is held and that highlight certain aspects of dialectic contamination and critical bonding between experience and territory.

The connection between event and experience is explored by Maggiore and Resciniti (2009), who proposes a model for managing events that is “experience oriented.” According to the author, in order to design an event in which the experiential dimension is enhanced, it becomes necessary to use the following three elements, which make up what is called the event mix, as levers:

- the program, i.e., the core of the offer (theme, guests, shows, etc.);
- the location, i.e., the venue where the event is being held;
- the services, i.e., all of the interactions between the organization and the participants that are aimed at producing value for the latter in terms of suitability of the event.

The events may stem from initiatives proposed by either permanent or temporary organizations and/or from the collaboration between them and/or a network of professionals (artists, experts, etc.) who are coordinated through hierarchical models, i.e., through network approaches that activate “cooperation chains” (Sedita 2009; Aiello et al. 2012). From this viewpoint, it is important to understand the connections that exist among the event organization methods, the governance model for tourist destinations, and the key actors’ approach to destination management. Events are the result of activities borne of the creative intelligences (shared, but also not shared and unknown) of various subjects who are either already present at the destination or who come from other territorial areas. Florida (2002) considers people, when seen as human and artistic capital, to be the very basis for creative capital. Creative capital is made up of talent (people’s creative capacity), technology (businesses’ innovative capacity), and tolerance (the capacity to accept and welcome diverse cultures and ethnicities). This, in turn, qualifies the locations’ capacity to attract visitors and is a determining factor in realizing the potential for development of those locations.

The task of synthesizing the system of players involved in the value creation process relative to an event is a difficult but necessary one. The central role is taken on by the organizer or the agent responsible (whether directly or indirectly) for all of the activities related to putting on the event. The organizer/agent may act in different ways based on:

- the number of subjects involved: as a single entity or as a team;
- the legal nature: public, private or mixed entity;
- the timeline: continuous or occasional;
- objective of the event versus the organizer's mission: the event being the organizer's mission (event as objective) or a collateral activity (event as a means to an end);
- geographical location versus the venue for the event: local or external.

Whatever form the organizer assumes, the event not only represents the output of a series of managerial activities, but it is also the result of the contribution made by an indefinite number of local-area subjects who, albeit not directly responsible for the event, sometimes become determining factors of its success. Therefore, there exists a network of subjects who are external to the organization, i.e., a network of relationships that represents a *constellation of value* associated with the event. In our opinion, this created value represents the object to be evaluated and taken into consideration in both the pre-event and post-event phases.

Moreover, events offer the opportunity to actively engage consumers/tourists guided by the emotional and dream-like aspects of the decision-making process and willing to be the co-producers of the experience product (van Limburg 2008; Pegg and Patterson 2010; Boo and Lu 2015). Thus, their presence allows for the success or failure of the event itself, just as the way in which they participate in the event determines the performance (Mason and Paggiaro 2012; Pegg and Patterson 2010).

Consumers can express new categories of needs and can provide information that is useful for programming or re-programming the event. Their participation can also determine the situational climate and can contribute to the experience itself and to the perception of authenticity by other participants (Gilmore and Pine 2007). Further, anyone who takes part in an event is likely to foster future communication about it through word-of-mouth and new technologies (social networks, chat rooms, virtual communities, etc.). Finally, the participants can contribute to the innovative aspect of the event by making available their own personal creativity or facilitating access to the creativity of the social networks to which they belong (Pencarelli and Splendiani 2010; Prentice and Andersen 2003; Richards and Wilson 2006).

On the basis of the above-mentioned aspects, we go beyond the “traditional” concept of event—analyzed as a synonym of ceremony or ritual—and re-qualify it as an occasion where time is spent in an entertaining way. In this sense, Shone and Parry (2004) maintain that an event can be understood and, indeed, defined as “that phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions, which have leisure, cultural, personal or organizational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of a people.”

Thus, events constitute important vehicles for increasing the touristic and cultural attractiveness of destinations and, hence, for creating economic and social value for the territory, although they must be managed and calibrated on the basis of the crowd capacity of the venues (Fuentes et al. 2015; Pencarelli et al. 2013). To maintain a long-lasting competitive edge, it is opportune that events follow the

principles of sustainability, just as any other activity should that takes place in areas that attract tourism (Pencarelli et al. 2013; Raj and Vignali 2010). Such principles are based on a core value that is expressed in the triple-sided (economic, social, and environmental) dimension. For this reason, it becomes desirable to develop event management models and tools that dovetail with a sustainable approach to destination management (Pencarelli and Splendiani 2010).

Eventually, events become tools that tourist destinations can use to develop their own competitive differentiation strategies (Crowther 2010). The differentiating effect is of particular importance, especially when events are able to provide experiential value that is specifically linked to that area (Bartolazzi et al. 2008). An event, for example, that is focused on a local food and wine typology qualifies itself as a proposal of unique experiences for customers (authentic experiences) that is simultaneously capable of enhancing the resources of stakeholders in the territory (e.g., by enhancing the experiential value of the typical local products).

From this perspective, events should be managed using experience logic in order to maximize the effectiveness of the proposal in experiential terms (Pencarelli and Forlani in this book). In particular, as observed above, it is important to:

1. create an identifiable theme for the experiences acting on different levels, taking inspiration from the physical world and from philosophical and psychological concepts, religious or political models, historical situations, art, popular culture and fashion so as to involve consumers according to their willingness to pay to live the experience or to enjoy the experientialization of goods and services;
2. harmonize the impressions related to the theme of the experience offered in the event;
3. eliminate negative or nonpertinent cues with respect to the theme chosen for the designed experience;
4. pay attention to the atmosphere connected to the event in order to create a pleasant experience;
5. offer meaningful local souvenirs that can enhance a participant's memory of the event;
6. involve all of the consumers' senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch);
7. ensure the authenticity of the proposed experiences;
8. stage the experiences according to a theatrical drama model and pay attention to the dramatic structure of the events;
9. train front-line employees as though each of them were the most important actors to ensure the best event experience;
10. closely couple backstage employees and front stage event experiences;
11. work to seek the welfare of individuals and of all stakeholder involved in the event.

Governance implies the necessary involvement of the territorial subjects in consideration of the nature of the "complex and systemic products" of the events and outputs of the territorial production system, which includes participation of players who are diverse by nature, objectives, or governance models. This implies

that the governing territorial agent carries out activities to coordinate and guide the players involved in building the event product and obliging them to follow the time constraints, guidelines, and protocols imposed in compliance with the principles of sustainability. Such principles must therefore represent the managerial framework of reference for both the organizers and the territorial policymakers.

2 The Need for Shared Event Management: Role of Planning

The use of strategic planning for tourism events has been the object of numerous professional publications, but it remains a relatively unexplored research topic (Getz 2008: 416–417). Among the various scientific papers that have contributed to the literature (Getz 1991, 1997; Gnoth and Anwar 2000; Stokes 2008), the work done by Stokes (2008) is worthy of note. This author examined different strategic planning models for both single events and tourist destinations. The author observed the growing importance of stakeholder theory in the analysis and interpretation of the development strategies for tourism events and has underlined the need to pay proper attention to the relationships between influential individuals and groups regarding initiatives to be undertaken. This attention includes particular consideration for the interactions and relationships with the local community, businesses in general, local agencies, culture, and nature interest groups (Getz 1997) as well as with visitors and tourists.

Indeed, subjects who are in any way interested in an event, whether actively or passively, can play a significant role by either orienting the strategy of the event or by having an impact on its outcome and success. By way of example, local businesses can take on a communication function that can strongly influence the whole tourist experience.

From this perspective, it becomes advantageous to conceive of event planning as a participatory and dynamic process aimed at catalyzing various forces within the destination system toward the achievement of a common sustainable objective. This requires adequate listening to and sharing with the stakeholders, taking into consideration both of the categories in which they may be classified (Grunig and Hunt 1984), i.e., those who bring productive factors or resources that make the events feasible (local agencies, organizers, businesses, sponsors, etc.) and/or those who acquire the services that make up the system of events offered (visitors, tourists, residents). In some cases, such as EXPO 2015 in Milan (Romanenko and Ferrazzo 2014), the local community's weak level of attention can generate opposition from citizens or other stakeholders, resulting in delays and difficulties in programming and implementing activities. In fact, in mega events, it must be kept in mind that managerial processes concern a variety of projects within one event, which in itself represents a complex project. Event managers still must continue to pay close attention to the gratification of the participants, making the experience of the event

unique and memorable for them. In this regard, it is important to involve the participants in a positive way and make them the active protagonists of the event, from the planning stage to the stages following the event. Subjects' involvement must be concretely achieved through tried and true methods successfully used in numerous territorial planning experiences, such as focus groups, public forums, public-private round tables, surveys to measure expectations or degree of satisfaction, and so on. Along these lines, it bears noting that if, on the one hand, it is worthwhile to include as many potentially interested subjects as possible—particularly for the diffusion of information—on the other hand, a selection process is essential in order to discern those strategic choices and lines of action that best keep with sustainable objectives. In pursuing the ultimate goal of shared strategic governance, it is plainly evident that the expectations, opinions, and suggestions of the different stakeholders should be gathered and the most relevant ones identified. As highlighted by Napolitano and Riviezzo (2008: 135) in their work on strategic marketing in reference to urban developments, it can prove useful to assign an order of priority to the stakeholders based on their vested interest and on their power to influence choices, decisions, and results.

The basic idea is to satisfy the expectations of those stakeholders who are considered to be the most important, while, at the same time, create sustainable value for the whole destination. Such an objective induces planners to emphasize, in the context of the strategic planning process, the phases related to measuring and analyzing the impact of a single event or of a system of events.

Evaluating the results can, in fact, make it possible to:

- foster improvement and innovation processes for the experience product event because they are indispensable for both its success and its survival;
- obtain suggestions for the better allocation of resources toward those events whose performance is better;
- define more rational objectives and actions (e.g., communication activities);
- improve the use of resources;
- create and maintain favorable event conditions within the territorial system;
- set up collaboration and cooperation projects with the stakeholders.

Therefore, in keeping with sustainability principles, pre-assessing the possible impact of an event is essential when developing systems of events to be offered that not only can more adequately respond to the stakeholders' needs and expectations but can also generate value for the hosting territory. A tourist destination should therefore schedule its portfolio of events (Getz and Page 2016) through a selection of the same (events to be organized, to be supported with contribution, to be sponsored, not sponsored, to be avoided), which should coordinate with the territorial stakeholders, evaluate the experiential qualities of the event (guaranteeing its competitiveness), and evaluate the sustainability characteristics (fundamental to qualifying its hold in the medium-to-long-term).

3 Assessing the Impact of Events in the Context of Sustainable Tourism Development: Prospect of Value Creation

The concept of sustainable tourism is commonly understood as an approach to tourism development that is capable of satisfying the current needs of tourists and of the hosting regions while at the same time safeguarding and improving future prospects. It therefore aims for the “management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential processes, biological diversity and life systems” (World Tourism Organization). Taking a closer look, sustainable tourism is a topic that appears to have significant management implications, in addition to ethical–cultural ones, because it determines the need for managing and enhancing the natural and environmental resources in a given destination. Such resources are the key factors in that destination’s competitiveness (Crouch and Ritchie 1999; Franch 2010; Pencarelli and Forlani 2016). Territorial policymakers who seek to implement governance approaches that aim to maintain or recover sustainability are thus called to orientate territorial strategies towards multidimensional objectives, i.e., ones capable of highlighting the connections and the cause–effect relationships between the tourism phenomenon and the economy and the environment and society (cf., Mihalic 2000). Events are, by all means, to be included among the elements that constitute territorial strategy (cf., Cercola and Bonetti 2009) and, as such, are objects to be considered in the sustainable tourism development programming for destinations.

Impact analysis for an event in the hosting territory is a topic of major relevance, particularly because of the critical issues related to subjectivity factors tied to the value created and perceived by the territorial subjects. Event assessment appears to be of particular interest to scholars who focus on event management. Getz (2008), in analyzing the subject of future prospects for tourist destinations, proposes the “event portfolio” approach, according to which the territory would think about and plan events using the same logic adopted by companies when developing new products. The author subdivides events into categories according to their attraction potential and tourist flows, ranging from mega-events to local events. (Williams and Bowdin 2007), instead, focus on the evaluation of single events and imagine a three-step process: *pre-event assessment* in a preliminary phase; *monitoring* during the event; and *post-event* analysis in the final phase. These authors also stress the fact that the economic–financial profitability of events is actually crucial to their survival, and so, for this reason, the area pertaining to the events must be closely governed by control mechanisms. Their research showed, however, that this does not always occur.

In fact, in the literature, the topic of event impact measurement in economic terms remains preeminent when compared with the social and environmental

arenas, where there are still very few consolidated evaluation models, although progress is being made in this sense (Quinn 2006; Franch 2010; Deery et al. 2012; Toraldo et al. 2012). The major focus remains centered on the economic effects of the event and is attributable to the fact that this is where the greater interest lies, i.e., considering how important events are in influencing the economy of the hosting territory and also considering the weight, in turn, that economic resources carry in affecting social and environmental conditions.

As Bracalente et al. (2011: 1252) and Della Lucia (2013: 92) have remarked, the overall impact of an event upon the economic system can be seen in the multiplying effect that is generated by the demand for goods and services coming from both organizers and visitors. Specifically, the impact can be said to be the estimated sum of the various effects connected to the production and sale of goods and services. This can be broken down into direct and indirect impacts.

- *Direct*: representing expenses borne by the organizers (e.g., rental fees for buildings, stages or equipment, setup, publicity costs) and by the visitors (e.g., cost of tickets, overnight accommodations, food, shopping);
- *Indirect*: tied to providing the necessary input to supply the goods and services requested (e.g., hospitality and welcoming, food catering, transportation, trade).

Another point of note is the induced multiplicative effect of increased consumption in the local community, which follows in the wake of the distribution of economic value and a rise in the standard of living. From a holistic perspective, the impact of an event on the hosting territory can be seen, first of all, in three contexts (Cherubini et al. 2009):

- *Economic*: the effects—direct, indirect, and induced—which are felt in the local economy, both in quantitative terms and in terms of wealth distribution;
- *Social*: the effects relating to the changes that are brought about in the residents' quality of life;
- *Environmental*: all of the effects that the event can produce vis-à-vis the natural balance in the surrounding environment.

The three dimensions represent the same ambits in which territorial sustainability is identified and, thus, assessed (Pencarelli and Splendiani 2010). At the same time, they also represent three perspectives concerning value creation for stakeholders.

The prospect of sustainable value creation for the territories and for tourist destinations implies the need to not only focus on the economic and social effects but also to develop analytical models based on a holistic view that encompasses all three dimensions. Such models must be applicable in the three assessment phases described above, i.e., before, during and after the event (Gregori et al. 2013).

The integration of experiential logic with that of sustainability highlights the capacity of events to create lasting territorial value, which depends on the capacity of the events themselves to grasp and respond to the experiential consumption needs of the target tourist segments and to satisfy demand by generating benefits

that can be seen as superior to those offered by the competition. For this reason, too, they should be considered elements that are not necessarily exclusive to what is being supplied in the system of territorial tourism, but which, based on market needs, can be integrated into other components and tourist products so as to make up experiential packages that are suitably competitive.

In addition, as pointed out in the experiential literature (Zarantonello and Schmitt 2013; Johansson and Kociatkiewicz 2011; Bartolazzi et al. 2008), events produce experiential communication that have a major impact on the visibility and image of the territory, thereby contributing to brand place market positioning (Hanna and Rowley 2013).

When using experiential managerial logic, it is appropriate to enrich the three classical domains of the sustainability paradigm with some indicators that take into account experiential performance to evaluate and monitor event performance. When analyzing event performance, it is important to consider how all the realms of experiences impact participants (Oh et al. 2007; Mason and Paggiaro 2012; Akyildiz et al. 2013; Boo and Lu 2015; Geus et al. 2015).

The underlying argument is that sustainable events in a given territory in the medium- to long-term must provide an experiential value aligned with the market trends (the experiences required) and the positioning of the destination (thus increasing the experiential value of the same).

In practical terms, while the assessment of the experiential competitiveness of the event is the responsibility of the organizing entity that takes on the entrepreneurial risk, the relevant aspect to be assessed for the destination management organization is the experiential coherence of the event itself with the territory's image. Event control metrics should therefore be able to assess the experiential dimension of the event and its impact on the strategic positioning of the territory and on the brand place. In fact, if there is coherence between the experience generated by the event and the territorial values, then the experiential value of the destination multiplies; but if there is not coherence, it causes an unwanted market repositioning or nonpositioning effect. As Pencarelli and Forlani (2016: 220) state, "According to the experience logic each touristic experience is unique and non-repeatable because it is generated by the interaction between a guest and the package of services, good, and commodities created by the system with the support of the contextual platform and the contribution of the guests themselves, the characterizing features of the experience production system are rooted in the territorial touristic system. The latter, as a mix of offerings and the object of acts of governance, must possess a series of requisites that make it attractive to target tourist groups. It must be attractive, accessible, hospitable, appropriate (as a setting), and lively."

In the Forlani and Pencarelli chapter of this volume, it was also shown that this model assumes that the governing body of a viable touristic system should

coordinate,¹ as a director, the staging of the show and its actions should be based on a management philosophy addressed to the market. When considering the event as a product experience, it can be emphasized that the task of territorial management is to verify the coherence between the experience event and the territorial context, both in terms of enhancing the elements of attraction and in terms of protection and enhancing the appropriate setting and social (lively) resources while also in coherence with accessibility and accommodation services.

The present paper underlines the need for an assessment that takes into account the experiential coherence between the event and the host territory, both in terms of impact on the elements of the operating structure and the place brand. This assessment should be carried out by analyzing the perception of the relevant stakeholders (i.e., tourists, tour operators, citizens, etc.).

4 Assessment Model to Measure an Event's Capacity to Create Value from the Perspective of Sustainability

One model for event impact assessment, formulated from the perspective of sustainable tourism development, is an integration of what has been recognized in the literature (Martini 2010) and adopted by the World Tourism Organization (Guidebook on Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations 2004). In particular, the model analyzes four dimensions:

1. *The economic and competitive dimension*: This is defined as the capacity of the event to generate market value in the host territory. This dimension, considered by some to be the most important because it is the only one able to determine the survival of the event itself over time, can be evaluated according to four sets of indicators that are complementary, albeit distinct: economic–financial indicators, strategic–competitive indicators, *experiential performance indicators*, and *experiential coherence indicators*. The first set of indicators includes parameters such as the number of participants, the volume of business generated, the number of nights booked for the event, etc. Because they present the advantage of accurate measurability, these indicators can be best used for post-event assessment, as they are indicative of what has emerged from the event (although they can also serve to forecast results and therefore can be used in both the pre-event and the during-event assessment phases). The strategic–competitive indicators, instead, can better represent the prospective capacity of the event to

¹Just like on a stage where the actors play and the quality of the show depends on their capacity to get the public emotionally involved, in the same way on the stage of the territory there are both tour operators and the local population, which are operative protagonists of the touristic offer and responsible for the final performance. The governing body, just like the theater director, is in charge of realizing the best performance. But once it has begun, he can only give directions from backstage.

generate economic value, as they are primarily tied to the competitive capacity of the event in relation to other competing events and, consequently, to its potential for increasing the attractiveness of the hosting territory. These indicators include participant satisfaction and loyalty, event-related brand recognition, etc. The experiential performance indicators allow for evaluation of the experiential nature of the event and its potential competitiveness as a product experience. The experiential coherence indicators allow for assessment of the coherence between the experiential dimension of the event, of the territory and its brands:

- a. *Economic–financial indicators*: number of tickets sold (experience products sold) and number of participants, revenues from ticket sales or from goods and services sold (directly or indirectly connected to the event), resources invested in putting on the event, ROI for the event, number of people employed, number of people arriving or present because of the event, increase in real estate value of the hosting areas and sites.
 - b. *Strategic–competitive indicators*: participant satisfaction/enjoyment, degree of accessibility (physical and economic), loyalty rate of participants, event-related brand recognition, uniqueness of the event on national/international level, innovative capacity of the event (compared with previous editions), how well it fits in with the host territory’s strategy, capacity to engage in synergetic and co-marketing activities with the host territory (consistency with the territory attractivities and the values that are communicated), capacity to create jobs and foster entrepreneurship (consistency with the accommodation facilities in the territory and their value proposition).
 - c. *Experiential performance indicators*: presence of a light theme, dramaturgy of the event (program of activities/shows) consistent with the theme, consistency of the setups and scenery with the theme, proposal of souvenirs (gadgets/merchandising/souvenirs) in line with the theme, ability to engage the visitor’s five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, feel), degree of originality of the proposed experience (original, format, imitation, etc.).
 - d. *Experiential coherence indicators*: consistency between place brand experience and event brand experience (Zarantonello and Schmitt 2013), how the event had an impact on the place brand image and the experiential positioning of the territory, capacity to engage in synergetic communication and co-marketing activities with the host territory (consistency with the values communicated by the territory).
2. *The social dimension*: This is defined as the capacity of the event to generate well-being in the host territory. This capacity can be measured by taking into consideration some tangible and intangible aspects related to the concept of quality of life, such as a strengthened spirit of cohesion and integration of the residents, the latter’s satisfaction level vis-à-vis the experience and the image of the territory that is projected through the event hosted, the opportunities for learning and innovation, the improvements brought to area infrastructure, job

opportunities, security and personal safety (which could be compromised or threatened because of the events held, especially those that attract big crowds). Another point worthy of consideration is the effect of “cultural contamination” between residents and tourists, elements that generate knowledge and innovation *spillover* within the territory (cf., Migliaccio and Rivetti 2012). One study on the social impact of events (Deery et al. 2012) highlights that some important variables can influence residents’ perceptions concerning the effects of an event. These variables include the economic interests tied to the event, the distance between a resident’s home and the place of intense tourist activity, the level of contact with the visitors or the tourists and the use of common services and spaces, the ratio of visitors/tourists to residents (an excessive number of people coming from outside the territory could lead to conditions of intolerance), the emotional attachment to the location (this can depend on the length of residency, if it is a resident’s birthplace) and the political, social, and environmental values held. Therefore, all of these values must be considered when assessing the social impact of an event. This also implies that there cannot be a generalized evaluation made without taking into account the possible differences of perception within the local resident population, which is not homogeneous. Within the social scope, those aspects tied to employment and the birth of new business activities also ought to be considered, along with economic–financial elements that should be seen in the context of social innovation and the creation of innovative and entrepreneurial networks (Holt and Lapenta 2013). The indicators related to the social dimension can be grouped together according to the following variables:

- a. *The hosting community’s acquisition of benefits deriving from the event*: level of involvement of local businesses and of local workers, amount of investments made in the territory (e.g., sports facilities), fiscal revenues generated, enhancement of territorial brand, event-territory-local business co-marketing initiatives undertaken, maintenance and growth of real estate values, new entrepreneurial activities generated locally, matching of event objectives and territorial policymakers’ objectives (e.g., de-seasonalization of tourist flows), innovation and know-how brought into the territory.
 - b. *Participation, enjoyment, and satisfaction of residents*: number of residents participating in the event and their degree of satisfaction, satisfaction of local business people, degree of integration between local culture and that of non-residents.
 - c. *Health, safety, modified habits of residents*: level of safety in organization process, number of work-related incidents/accidents recorded, number of crime incidents, number of emergency calls, costs to local public authorities to guarantee safety and traffic conditions.
3. *The environmental dimension*: This is defined as the capacity of the event to allow the ecological balance of the host territory to remain unaltered.

Monitoring the environmental effects is quite important for a destination, both from the standpoint of preservation of touristic resources and that of following consumer trends. In fact, “the concept of environmental sustainability will always represent a critical factor in the choice of a destination because the quality of the environment is part of the touristic experience” (Gregori and Bolzicco 2009; Laing and Frost 2010; Ruozi 2005). In addition to the effects on the natural environment, other factors must also be considered, such as those tied to the deterioration of artistic, historic and cultural heritage and, more generally, to the landscape, particularly in cases when the capacity of a location is not complied with and visitors/participants do not behave respectfully. The assessment of such an impact would seem especially useful, then, to strike the right balance between safeguarding the environment in a wide sense, as an ecosystem, and the enjoyment of the benefits of which it is composed. The indicators relative to the environmental dimension can be grouped together according to the following variables:

- a. *Pollution generated*: emissions levels harmful to the atmosphere (CO₂, fine particulate matter, etc.), levels of acoustic emissions (noise pollution).
- b. *Consumption of energy and of natural resources*: electrical energy consumption, per capita quantity of energy per participant, percent of energy from renewable sources, water consumption, percent of water savings, dimensions of area destined for the event and impact on flora and fauna.
- c. *Waste management*: total quantity of waste and refuse produced, per capita quantity of refuse per participant and percent of separated (recyclable) refuse in total.
- d. *Conservation and redevelopment of historic-artistic heritage*: in the selection of events to be supported, those who offer experiences that are consistent with culture (art, monuments, etc.) and local resources (typical products, crafts, etc.) should be preferred. This way, the event will not only promote itself but also the territorial context. The events that do not detract from the location should also be chosen, and it is even better if alternative venues are to be upgraded (maintenance, adaptation and improvement).
- e. *Active policies on sustainability and certifications*: communication policies connected to sustainability issues, possession of environmental certifications for the events.

A process of event management must, ultimately, have an overall guideline to which it refers (Table 1) that is a synthesis of the four perspectives outlined above and which is connected to a set of measurable and relevant indicators. Moreover, at the destination level, it would be useful in any case to adopt the event portfolio approach, according to which diverse events can coexist, displaying different types of performances and targeted to different objectives, but which all aim to achieve satisfactory results in every dimension and, hence, are sustainable in the long term.

Table 1 Synoptic table of the dimensions and variables of the model

Dimension	Variables/groups of indicators
Economic and competitive	a. Economic–financial b. Strategic–competitive c. <i>Experiential performance</i> d. <i>Experiential coherence</i>
Social	e. Hosting community’s acquisition of benefits deriving from the event f. Participation, enjoyment, and satisfaction of the residents g. Health, safety, and modified habits of the residents
Environmental	h. Pollution generated i. Consumption of energy and of natural resources j. Waste management k. Conservation and redevelopment of historic-artistic heritage l. Active policies on sustainability and certifications

5 Concluding Remarks and Managerial Implications for Policymakers

In the context of growing territorial competition and limited resources, we believe that adopting a managerial approach to the overall handling of tourism events, in line with principles of management and marketing, can offer a valid solution for destination managers who intend to develop tourism supply systems that are oriented toward value creation for the territory. In fact, because of the increasing importance of these events as sources of territorial attractiveness and competitiveness, event management represents an inescapable critical factor for the government agencies of territories that depend on tourism. An event’s capacity to generate tourist flows, and therefore to be the main reason for the trip, represents that factor that best helps us to conceptually distinguish generic events (regardless of theme) from tourism events.

Merely forecasting and even organizing a calendar of events remains nevertheless insufficient in touristic contexts that are governed strategically, i.e., in those where there is a strategic horizon and objectives that are recognized, shared, and followed. Fully included among territorial strategic activities undertaken, events must be the objects of a shared management approach and, as such, subject to processes of planning, assessment, and control that involve territorial stakeholders in decision-making and evaluation.

In those cases where governing authorities intend to imprint events with sustainability in the experiential perspective, their very assessment takes on holistic and multidimensional connotations because it is not only the economic–financial dimension but also the competitive and experiential (market dimension) and the environmental and social dimensions that will be taken into consideration. The value created for the territory, expressed through the three dimensions illustrated above, represents the object of measurement and the fundamental point of reference

in each phase of the management process, whether it be for a single event or for a portfolio of events.

However, a number of difficulties come to light in the attempt to realize such a theoretical forecast in real contexts. What are the determinants of perceived value vis-à-vis the single beneficiaries? What degree of intensity can be attributed to those values and how does one measure created value? How is it possible to measure the experiential performance of the events from the guests' point of view, as the value concept is value-in-use contextualized? The schema proposed here, while not presuming to be exhaustive, represents a holistic assessment model based on a set of indicators oriented toward sustainability and the experiential perspective conceived as the balance of the three perspectives. This is the only way to guarantee the continuity of an event and the growth of lasting value for the territory.

The assessment model can be adopted as a managerial yardstick for destination manager organizations to orient and guide the realization of sustainable and experiential events, which, besides fostering consensus and social cohesion, are also able to create territorial economic value in a way that does not upset the environmental balance of the area. Therefore, events must be capable of ensuring the satisfaction of both the tourists and the hosts who participate in the events, as well as the territorial stakeholders who are involved in supplying the experience product (the organizers, the agencies, and institutions that provide public areas and facilities, financiers, sponsors, etc.). The set of indicators proposed can be expanded, refined or more narrowly focused, according to the following:

- the specifics of the events as classified by nature and theme (sports, religion, culture, music, food and wine, etc.), size (small, large, etc.), frequency (one-time, annual, monthly, etc.) or target (local, national, international);
- the venues (mountain, rural, urban, coastal destinations, archaeological areas, etc.);
- the resources activated by direct beneficiaries of the events (free or paid events) or by indirect beneficiaries (totally or partially sponsored events or financed by private or public funds from outside the organization).

This model can also provide a basis for starting a quality certification process in compliance with the standards outlined in ISO 20121, specifically concerning event qualification for sustainability. Furthermore, in some cases, having information regarding event performance can be useful to either reposition or modify certain features of the event. This would allow, for example, an event to go from being free to paid, from a one-time event to periodically repeated during the year, from being a high-season event to a shoulder- or low-season one and so forth.

This paper aims to provide a conceptual contribution that serves to highlight the connections that exist between tourism events and the sustainable development of tourist destinations through the perspective of managerial analysis that uses the logic of experience. As such, there is clearly a significant limitation in the lack of empirical validation of the model proposed. A further limitation resides with the difficulties in measuring some of the indicators, for reasons tied to the need for

instruments and tools that are not easily mobilized (e.g., amount of refuse collection and recycling, measurement of CO₂ emissions, etc.) or because of the possible co-presence or overlapping of other events at the same destination, making it difficult to isolate the figures.

Nevertheless, as with any control system, what must be kept in mind is that what cannot be measured cannot be assessed. Therefore, the model aims to serve as a support tool and a catalyst for managerial innovation in the field of tourist destination management, within which events represent the emblem of highly experiential products capable of increasing the competitiveness of the destinations themselves. This study could be especially useful to territorial policymakers who are being called to give event management a high priority in the planning process for territorial tourism. This inevitably means weighing the impact of events, as seen in the three dimensions—social, environmental, economic—by adopting a holistic approach to assessment that can monitor value creation for territorial stakeholders alongside of sustainable development for destinations. These goals are anything but conflicting; on the contrary, they are closely connected and interdependent.

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