

Festival tourism and socioeconomic development: case of Kwahu traditional areas of Ghana

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Abstract

Purpose – The place of festivals in national economic development has received increased attention from researchers globally. However, there appears to be a relatively small and disparate literature on the subject especially within the Ghanaian context. The study seeks to contribute to the global recognition of festivals as developmental tools and thus presents the effects of festival tourism on socio-economic capital of the people of Kwahu traditional area (Ghana) and how festival tourism in the region engenders economic benefits to businesses and the community.

Design/methodology/approach – This study is guided by the social development theory. A quantitative cross-sectional survey utilizing convenience technique was used to gather data from a sample of 398 residents of the selected towns and the regression model was used to analyse the data.

Findings – The findings revealed festival tourism to have a positive effect on community cohesiveness but not statistically significant. Further, the festival brought economic gains but had negative social effects on development of the selected towns.

Research limitations/implications – This research is destination-specific. The application of the findings to other festivals would demand a bigger sample size for generalisation to be made.

Practical implications – The findings suggest that for growth of festival tourism in Ghana to be actualised, the Ghana Tourism Authority needs to ensure festivals do not erode entrenched traditional values and negate efforts at developing social structures and systems by putting measures to reduce the negative effect of commoditisation of festivals on the communities' cultural authenticity. Law enforcement agents should also be massively beefed up to curtail crime and social vices.

Originality/value – The study's findings extend earlier studies to extend the scope in festival tourism literature. This study found that festival tourism has effect on both community cohesion and economic development of the people of Kwahu traditional area.

Keywords Festival tourism, Community cohesiveness, Economic gains, Social gain, Ghana

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Festival tourism was termed “an emerging giant” over 10 years ago, and [Mair and Whitford \(2013\)](#) highlighted the global attention being paid to the place of festivals in national economic



development. In spite of this increased attention, there appears to be a relatively small and disparate literature on the subject especially within the Ghanaian context. From the national context, research has been conducted into the role of tourism and more specifically festival tourism in enhancing national development by [Imbeah *et al.* \(2016\)](#); [Adu-Ampong \(2019\)](#) and [Akyeampong \(2019\)](#). However, though there are research outputs from the Ghana context that highlight the attributes and outcomes of festivals, there is the need to deepen understanding of the national context of tourism just as can be seen from research done in the European and American context. There is therefore a strong argument for research related to Ghanaian cultural festivals, to be carried out from a tourism and event organisation viewpoint, not just to reinforce and extend the theoretical scope of event and tourism literature but also to better advise and aid in developing an ecological method for the improvement and organisation of traditional festivals in Ghana within the context of tourism.

In recent times, the boundaries of tourism have grown to include cultural/festival and ecological attractions. Although tourism itself has long been regarded as a way of enhancing regional and national development, the inclusion of festival and cultural tourism has been a recent research interest ([Moscardo, 2007](#)). The resort to cultural and festival tourism is based on the belief that it has potential to re-position the city as a tourism destination ([Felsenstein and Fleischer, 2003](#)). These festivals stimulate the diffusion and commemoration of local culture as well as custom and ceremonies. Again, local festivals and events are used to attract tourists who in turn make contribution to the development of the community ([Whitford and Dunn, 2014](#)). In addition to the promotion of tourism, the successful holding of festivals has implications for the socio-economic development of a city. According to [McIntosh *et al.* \(2002\)](#), members of a community have three basic expectations of tourism including re-enforcement of values and an avenue to reap some monetary benefits.

Some of the envisaged benefits of festivals include the increase in aggregate income and job creation. Other benefits accruable include infrastructural enhancement and development, increased demand for real estate, enhancing communal cohesion and extending local heritage externally ([Felsenstein and Fleischer, 2003](#)). On the other hand, festivals also have the potential to attract miscreants, criminal elements and compromise cultural heritage through cultural adulteration, worsen the city's sanitation through pollution, vehicular and human congestion and influence an increase in the cost of living through lavish spending of visitors and festival attendants.

However, extant research from the Ghana context ([Adu-Ampong, 2019](#); [Akyeampong, 2019](#); [Imbeah *et al.*, 2016](#)) is not steep in terms of highlighting the impact of festival tourism on the socio-economic development of cities. Given the paucity of the research on the relationship between festival tourism and socio-economic development, the researchers undertake to investigate this relationship using the Kwahu Traditional Area as a case study. Consequently, the objectives of this research include: examining the effects of festival tourism on the economic and socio-cultural well-being of the Kwahu people and identifying the ill-effects of festival tourism (if any) on the social and infrastructural landscape of the Kwahu region. The Kwahu Easter Festival in particular is instrumental in shaping festival tourism in Ghana because of its undoubtedly successful performance over the years. Hence, it is significant to be able to mark out its gains and shortfalls so it can serve as benchmark for other festivals across the country. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide the necessary impetus for the shaping of policy and strategy for the celebration of festivals in particular and tourism in general in Ghana. In the ensuing paragraphs, this paper takes the following form: First it will present a background to the study location specifically the geographical, sociological and anthropological context of the study population, an exposition on the role of tourism in Ghana's development, the contribution of festival tourism to the espoused gains and negative effects of tourism. These

are followed by a review of the literature and the theory underpinning the study. The scale developed by [Gursoy and Rutherford \(2004\)](#) is used to measure the variables, and the results of the study are presented and discussed followed by the implications section and conclusion.

Literature review

Festival tourism and contextual background

Festival tourism is a rapidly growing model of tourism on which many nations are capitalising to shore up the benefits of tourism. Festival tourism is however usually distinguished from other occasions because of their tendency to take their significance and validity from people's ethnic uniqueness and help to delineate its meaning ([Getz et al., 2004](#); [Schollman et al., 2001](#)). Moreover, the festival displays bring about a strong appreciation of the historic design and landscape of a place ([Picard and Robinson, 2006](#)).

According to [O'Sullivan and Jackson \(2002\)](#), festival tourism is a key player in ensuring sustainability of local economic growth and has been recognised as "an emerging giant" (p. 326). Among other things, festival tourism helps to build communities and cities through the opportunities it provides. These include the impact they make on a community's local economy, socio-cultural image as well as infrastructural landscape. However, most of these festivals are celebrated by the local citizenry and are not linked to tourism possibly because of inability of the organisers to structure the tour package into the festival or a poor understanding of the linkage between the two as well as the potential benefits accruable to the local community and the nation.

The Kwahu region learnt itself to tourism from as early as towards the end of the slave trade in 1828 in the 19th century ([Aboagye, 2013](#)) when the European Missionaries from Switzerland namely the Basel Missionaries identified the mountainous region as ideal for habitation and for missionary work. The region fast became the resort of many Europeans who came into the Gold Coast to ply their trade and has since been preferred by most Europeans because the region is serene. In 1975, McWilliam and Kwamena Poh described the landscape of one of their towns- Abetifi as "the Switzerland of West Africa, with nights as cool as May nights in Europe". It is easy to see why the Kwahu region became a growing attraction to most foreigners and nationals as well.

The Kwahu region is home to several clusters of mountains which have earned it the local accolade "Beposo" meaning the hill. In addition to this, the Kwahu festival is celebrated in the Aburi, Kwahu, Pepease areas and their environs, which have close proximity to Accra the national capital. Thus, while the festival may be localised in the Kwahu area, it nevertheless has economic and social ramifications on hotels and other related businesses in Accra as most tourists light off first in Accra before proceeding to the festival. Some of the tourists also take up residence in the Accra hotels and shuttle to the festivals. Hence it is crucial for businesses in Accra that the Kwahu festival is successful.

In addition to the above, other tour attractions that can be exploited and marketed as cross-products during festivals in Ghana include: The Lake Volta Estuary, Traditional Cloth Making at Boama, Lake Volta, Aburi Botanical Gardens, Tetteh Quarshie's Cocoa Farm, Slave Market of Abonse, Boti Falls etc. There are also a large number of heritage sites such as the Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle, Fort St. Jago, Fort William, Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Centre for National Culture, Kakum National Park, among others. In order for stakeholders to appreciate and capitalise on the economic benefits such festivals and attractions can bring to the nation there is need to critically evaluate the costs and benefits of these festivals and attractions as postulated in the literature and research outputs. Ghana can boast of many festivals that yearly attract tourists and provide income-earning opportunities. Some of these are listed below (See [Table 1](#)):

Festival	Region/Tribe
Aboakyer	Central Region
Adae Kese	Ashanti Region
Bakatue	Central Region
Beng	Savannah Region
Bugum(Fire Festival)	Savannah Region
Katie	Bono East Region
Kwahu Easter/Paragliding Festival	Eastern Region
Fetu Afahye	Central Region
Foo (Fao)	Upper East Region
Hogbetsotso	Volta /Oti Region
Homowo	Greater Accra
Kundum	Western Region
Kakube	Upper West Region
Ngmayem	Greater Accra
Ohum	Eastern Region
Volo (Me/Lomo)	Greater Accra Region
Yam	Volta Region

Source(s): /www.easytrackghana.com/cultural-overview-ghana_festivals.php

Table 1.
Festivals celebrated
in Ghana

This study is relevant to Ghana in the following ways: first, tourism plays an important role as a development tool and to that regard, researchers like [Imbeah et al. \(2016\)](#); [Adu-Ampong \(2019\)](#) and [Akyeampong \(2019\)](#) have brought out several significant pointers to stakeholder attention. Second, among other things, [Imbeah et al. \(2016\)](#) iterated that Ghana's economy has benefited immensely from tourism and tourism-related activities, thus prompting [Acheampong \(2019\)](#) to highlight the growing recognition of tourism and festivals in enhancing economic purse of the nation reflected in the inclusion of event management courses in universities and higher education institutions. Third, it is said to be the fourth highest foreign exchange earner for Ghana raking in some US 3.0bn in GDP contributions ([Adu-Ampong, 2019](#)). Fourth, the Kwahu festival has a lot of side attractions. Thus, it is usual to occasionally find drops of water oozing out of the rocks and also to see the mist hovering above the mountains. Other prominent highlights are the tall trees in the valleys. Because of their experience with the early European missionaries, the people of the Kwahu region are accustomed to seeing foreigners Americans and others from temperate climates easily attracted to those parts of Ghana. Famous personalities like the wife of the late Bob Marley and other people of African descent have taken habitation there as well.

Theoretical foundation

A number of pertinent theories are available to choose from when discussing the socio-economic impact of festival tourism on a community ([Mair and Whitford, 2013](#)). Theories which researchers have used over time include Social Identity Theory ([Maruyama and Woosnam, 2015](#); [Stets and Burke, 2010](#); [Treppe, 2006](#)), identity theory ([Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012](#); [Stets and Burke, 2010](#)), the social representations theory ([Látková and Vogt, 2012](#)); social development theory etc. However, this paper adopts the social exchange theory (SET) as the pivotal theory to ground the study. This is principally because in assessing the engagement and endorsement of people in socio-economic activities the SET comes in handy to help unravel the rationale driving peoples' engagement, endorsement and commitment to an activity. SET has moreover been used in similar studies ([Boley et al., 2014](#); [Haley et al, 2005](#)). A second reason for the adoption of the SET is that it is critical for examining the incongruent views of a given population collocated in a given community. The frequent use of

this theory by researchers in tourism is based on the fact that people always consider the cost-benefit outcomes of engaging in an event such as tourism. So, after its introduction into tourism literature by Ap (1992), it has become the dominant grounded theory for tourism research (Almeida-García *et al.*, 2016). Stakeholders in tourism evaluate the physical and incorporeal benefits accruable from an investment of their resources before committing to it in order to ensure that costs do not outweigh the benefits. Gursoy *et al.* (2002) however have criticised the use of the theory to conglomerate the effect of tourism to include social, environment and economic without isolating the effects of tourism into larger bases. In response to Gursoy *et al.*'s (2002) critique, Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) widened Gursoy *et al.*'s (2002) model by adding economic benefits, social benefits, social costs, cultural benefits and cultural costs which they consider as five key areas which communities have expressed concerns about. They also cited that attachment to the community as well as cultural benefits are some of the areas people evaluate in determining the impact of tourism on their communities. A scale developed by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) was tested in a study by Dyer *et al.* (2007) in an analogous study in Australia and postulated that there is a need to balance the scale by adding positive and negative effects to the variables in the scale. In spite of the varying application of the model to different studies, there is no consensus on their findings. Another study carried out by Miyakuni (2012) found that there is a negative economic outcome of tourism and the environment. Miyakuni's (2012) study equally adopted the SET, thus accentuating the usefulness of the theory.

Developing hypotheses

The social-cultural benefits of festival tourism. The social benefits of festival tourism range from social cohesion to the development of social infrastructure and physical development of the community. Festival tourism has been touted to aid in and invigorate inter-personal and inter-family cohesion and trust. Festivals are used as an occasion to bring families and communities together to harmonise personal, family and community aspirations and shore up confidence in the security of the community (Gursoya *et al.*, 2004; Henderson, 2015; O'Sullivan and Jackson, 2002). Festival tourism is said to also have the power to bring families and communities together in harmony and also enhance pride (Imbeah *et al.*, 2016). However, Imbeah *et al.* (2016) also found that residents' sense of decency was offended as they were confronted with clothing coupled with licentious behaviour alien to the community. According to Rao (2001), festival tourism helps families to forge a common bond and unify their goals. In Ghana, particularly in the Kwahu area, Easter, a Christian festival, has been adopted as a community festival and celebrated in a grand style annually. The occasion has become the focal and rallying point for relatives living in other parts of Ghana and the world to re-unite with their 'roots' and undertake family developmental projects or focus on important family goals and achievements. For the liberal arts, festival tourism is said to provide the avenue for expansion and exhibition of craftsmanship. Local artefacts are produced in larger quantities to meet anticipated tourist demand, while local artistes use the occasion as a platform for thrilling their fans with sterling performance.

The socio-cultural benefits of festival tourism have however also been discounted because of the adverse effects festival tourism has a community's social fabric. One of such drawbacks is the potential threat of foreign cultures imported to the festival by tourists on the quality of the festival. According to Quinn (2006), festivals can lose their fascination especially because of the need to position the festival externally, thus lending the festivals to more "professionalism" and poor accessibility by indigenes. In other words, "authenticity diminishes" and problems of overcrowding and commercialisation take over in favour of revenue generation" (Gursoya *et al.*, 2004, p. 172). Again, it has been argued that with an increasing focus on satisfying foreign audiences, local artistes lose their power to scrutinise artistic output, and this can result in the festivals becoming less celebratory and involving (Quinn, 2006).

A second contradictory contribution of festival tourism is what [Gursoya et al. \(2004\)](#) describe as social cost. These include increments in miscreants, pressure on local services and facilities and abuse of local hospitality by perverts and fraudsters. Excessive generation and poor management of waste have been widely cited as one of the social fallouts of festivals. A study by [Kugbonu et al. \(2018\)](#) found that food and plastic waste tended to increase during events such as festivals and religious convocations. Failure and/or inability of event planners and managers to pre-empt its occurrence thus resulted in large sanitation deficits after festivals. Some factors identified in their study as causes of the poor pre-emptive measures include inadequate supply of toilet and waste bins. On the religious and moral front, researchers ([Okyere-Manu and Antwi, 2016](#); [Sirakaya et al., 2002](#)) have decried the reckless abandon of festival attendees to alcohol and drugs leading to increased immoral acts such as drunkenness and wanton sex. The outcome is an increase in HIV/AIDS and impoverishment of the local culture and value system. Researchers have further argued that while practical legitimacy of festivals is acquired and maintained through observance of rituals, norms and accepted behaviours, modern ways of celebrating festivals tend to become secular or profane events because the festivals offer a pretext for reversal of roles, carousing and licentious behaviour ([Humphrey, 2001](#)). Again, it has been argued that the commercialisation of festivals results in an affinity to bringing in foods that are not native and connected with the festival. Again, objects may be presented at the event that change their history ([Humphrey, 2001](#)). Based on the above literature, the researchers hypothesise that:

H1. Festival tourism significantly enhances community cohesion.

The economic benefits of festival tourism

One of the primary realisations of festival tourism has been seen in the area of enhancing capacity of the inhabitants of the community. With festival tourism comes the pre-festival training and capacity development, creation and improvement of indigenous products and services which translate into financial gains for existing and start-up businesses (increasing the flow and circulation of funds through visitor as well as indigene spending ([Gursoya et al., 2004](#); [Rao, 2001](#)); local business development ([Derret, 2005](#)) as well as revenue generation for both the local authority and the state especially through the extension of the tourism period ([O'Sullivan and Jackson, 2002](#)). Similar research in African countries show that festival tourism plays significant economic roles. For instance, research conducted in South Africa found that festivals contribute immensely towards the economic development of the festival participants especially the artists who perform during the festival by providing the opportunity to increase the sale of their products and putting extra income into their pockets through gate fees ([Pretorius et al., 2016](#)). [Chebotibin et al. \(2018\)](#) also found from their research conducted in Kenya that there is a symbiotic relationship between culture and tourism and hence between culture and economic development. Nigerians and indigenes in localities have also benefited from tourism by way of tax revenues for the local government and business opportunities for the indigenes according to [Agbabiaka et al. \(2017\)](#). However, its impact on culture and arts and crafts have also been identified ([Agbabiaka et al., 2017](#)).

Other economic gains include generation of employment and improved standards of living. However, the economic gains of festival tourism have been criticised by some researchers who contest that the financial returns from festival tourism are not commensurate with the input that local businesses and indigenes make into the festival ([Christie, n.d.](#)). Consequently, [Prentice and Andersen \(2003\)](#) caution against hyping the acclaimed ability of festival tourism to rake in financial gains for the individuals, the community and the nation. Secondly, according to [Henry \(2008\)](#), the commoditisation of culture and history usually presented in concerts to entice a visitor's dollar often pose a momentous menace to traditional native festivals. This deleterious effect of the

commoditisation of festival coupled with the obvious effects of forest degradation have been shown to dampen the patronage and value of some local festivals. For instance, [Akyeampong \(2019\)](#) decries the decline in both the historical and cultural value of the Aboakyir festival of the Efutus of Winneba. The commoditisation of festivals also has other unintended consequences on the community such as hindering community cohesion. A key factor envisaged in the Ghanaian festivals is their ability to cement community relations and create stronger bonds in and among families. Whiles both arguments may hold merit, these have not been tested in a Ghanaian setting. Hence, the research hypothesises that:

H2. Economic gain or benefit significantly enhances festival tourism support.

Social gain of festival tourism

Infrastructure-wise, festival seasons are automatic timelines for repair of damaged or dilapidated infrastructure as well as the construction of new ones. Social amenities are enhanced or developed to satisfy both local needs and tourist satisfaction ([Henderson, 2015](#)). A critical area of development is infrastructure, particularly event centres, accommodation and restaurants. Refurbishment of existing hospitality facilities as well as new developments often herald the organising of festivals. [Scholtz et al. \(2019\)](#) found that infrastructural outcomes of festivals not only provide solution to the community's infrastructural needs but it also re-enforces the indigenes' opinion of the usefulness and impact of festivals. This was also corroborated by findings from [Agbabiaka et al. \(2017\)](#) who found that development of buildings and other infrastructure accounted for the fourth reason why people patronised festivals. The development of public amenities is therefore highlighting the significance of festival tourism. However, the acclaimed benefits of festival tourism in enhancing the development of social infrastructure need to be tested within context. This paper therefore also hypothesises:

H3. Festival tourism significantly enhances social gains or benefits.

Methodology

Sampling and data collection

The sampling frame for this study was all residents who lived and participated in the festival, aged 18 years and above and who self-completed questionnaires made available in hard copy form at the catchment communities of the Kwahu festival (Mpraeso, Abetifi, Nkawkaw, Obo, Obomeny and Atibie). These communities were purposively selected due to their contributions towards the festival. For example, the Odweanoma Arc mountain (ARC) hosts receptacles for the television, radio and civil aviation antennae ([Kwahu South District Assembly, 2012](#)). Atibie is also considered as a perfect take-off place for paragliding activities, and the Nkofieho Cave of life at Twenedurase near Obo, which served as a hideout for indigenes of the area during the war times was a significant tourist attraction. Abetifi is the seat of the district capital of the Kwahu traditional area; Nkawkaw is where the paragliders make their landing at the sport stadium, and it is also the starting point of the climbing of the Nkawkaw mountain, and finally the big stadium known as "Bryton's park" in Mpraeso is where the football matches take place to climax the festival. Within context, the study provides the rationale for the choice of 18 years and above. One, at age 18, it is assumed that even if a person is under a parental control, the person could still form some impression about the expected benefits of tourism to their communities. Two, the national median age of 18 years for universal adult suffrage, persons of 18 years and above was considered for this study.

Data were collected between May to June 2019. This was after the festival (the festival took place during the Easter periods in the month of April, 2019). These months were chosen

because it is expected that the euphoria of the festival will have waned enough for participants to be able to give a candid evaluation of the socio-economic effects of the festival. Secondly, residents who owned business will have also had enough time to do a cost and benefit analysis of participating in the festival. The local authorities of the selected Kwahu communities were contacted to assist in employing data collectors to assist the researchers to gather data, where the researchers have little awareness about selected communities for the study. The assistant data collectors were made up of six groups comprising two enumerators for each of the six selected communities, who were fluent in English language and Twi dialect, had knowledge in research procedures and had similar research experience. The Twi dialect is the main local language of the residents so it was important to get research team members to speak the dialect. First, the field assistants attended to each participant selected separately in order to prevent them from discussing their responses. Second, the team was also there to assist the participants to clarify some questions when necessary. Utilizing the convenience sampling approach, the enumerators simultaneously gathered data at their various communities. This research used two scanning questions to sample the targeted participants and also to avoid double sampling: Did you take part in the just ended festival?, and Have you earlier completed this questionnaire?

A total of 650 questionnaires were distributed conveniently to the participants who were willing and ready to complete questionnaires at their various homes during their free time, after they had been explained the purpose of the study. The convenience sampling method was used due to easy accessibility of participants, their willingness and readiness to complete the questionnaire (Creswell, 2014; Etika *et al.*, 2016). One hundred and fifty questionnaires in Abetifi due to its comparatively high population and 100 each questionnaire in the remaining communities. In all, 398 (398) useable questionnaires were completed from Mpraeso = 52 (13%); Abetifi = 103 (26%); Nkawkaw = 78 (20%); Obo = 48 (12%); Obomeny = 56 (14%) and Atibie = 61 (15%). This represented an overall response rate of 61.23%. Earlier, the survey instrument was developed in the official language (English language), pre-tested to determine the flow of language and logical presentation of the questions and to determine if it aided the understanding of the survey instrument by the participants. Thirty (30) festival attendees were conveniently selected in Abetifi, the district capital of the Kwahu traditional area for the pre-testing. The results of the pilot test showed that the respondents did not have any challenge in understanding the questions as the questions were written in simple English. Again, this exercise was useful because all the 22 items presented were retained. It was also observed that the pretested instrument was completed within 36 min average as the questions were simple and understood by the participants. Preneger *et al.* (2014) suggested that 30 participants for a pre-test is likely to provide a high power of 80% and the ability to detect any problem within the population.

Instrumentation and analytical procedure

The level of participants' opinion of socio-economic development was measured by 18 items presented in Table 2. To collect data for this study, the researchers adopted and modified a scale developed by Gursoya *et al.* (2004). Community cohesiveness was operationalised as help to build a sense of pride and unity and it included five (5) items (enhance community image, build community pride, help preserve the local culture and help to create cohesion in the community). Within context, economic benefits were considered as factors that aided in improving the livelihoods of the indigenes. These were (4) items: "increase employment opportunities", "increase standard of living", "encourage locals to develop new facilities" and "increases sales and hence revenue". Social incentives were defined as the benefits such as "providing more recreational opportunities", "promoting organisations and businesses", "offering family-based recreation activities", "enhancing community image to outsiders",

Table 2.
Descriptive statistics of
socio-economic
development of festival
tourism

Statements	Mean	SD	Loadings	Reliability
<i>Community Cohesiveness (CC)</i>	3.05	0.99		
Help create cohesion in the community	3.03	0.97	0.79	0.74
Enhance community image	3.29	0.89	0.71	0.71
Build community	3.21	0.90	0.75	0.76
Help preserve the local culture	2.67	1.18	0.69	0.73
<i>Economic Benefits (EB)</i>	3.55	1.10		
Increase employment opportunities	3.69	1.42	0.81	0.78
Increase standard of living	3.23	1.38	0.80	0.77
Encourage locals to develop new facilities	3.18	1.38	0.77	0.78
Increase sales and hence revenue	4.11	1.27	0.73	0.69
<i>Social Benefits (SB)</i>	3.58	0.96		
Provide more recreational opportunities	3.54	1.25	0.87	0.81
Promote organization and businesses	3.71	1.32	0.87	0.80
Offer family-based recreation activities	3.60	1.36	0.86	0.80
Enhance community image to outsiders	3.72	1.35	0.79	0.85
Help foster relationship between residents and visitors	3.96	1.30	0.76	0.80
Educational make people aware of culture	2.95	1.49	0.63	0.80
<i>Social Cost (SC)</i>	3.75	1.37		
Increase traffic congestion	4.47	1.17	0.81	0.92
Put pressure on local services (police, utilities, etc.)	3.74	1.31	0.78	0.93
Increase crime rate	3.58	1.39	0.77	0.93
Overcrowding	3.13	1.49	0.76	0.92
Sexual abuse or Prostitution	4.09	1.40	0.74	0.9
Noise pollution	3.48	1.47	0.68	0.89
<i>Festival tourism support (FTS)</i>	3.84	1.12		
I believe that further festival tourism activities would positively affect my quality of life in this community	3.12	1.02	0.87	0.80
I think this festival would attract more tourists	3.26	1.22	0.78	0.85
I support the celebration of this festival in my community	4.03	1.11	0.86	0.81
I think this festival is the best strategy for economic diversification for the people of Kwahu	4.56	1.24	0.65	0.80
Overall, I believe the impact of the festival is positive in the Kwahu traditional areas	4.22	1.00	0.78	0.82

“fostering relationship between residents and visitors’ and ‘providing education to make people aware of the culture of the people”. In addition to this, social cost adapted from [Gursory et al. \(2004\)](#) examined items like increase in traffic congestion, pressure on local services and increase in crime. Finally, residents’ support for festival tourism (5 items) was borrowed from [Hammad et al. \(2018\)](#) and operationalized within context as the overall supports for further festival tourism that would positively affect quality of life. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not favourable) to 5 (very favourable) was used to measure residents’ perception of socio-economic benefits of the festival. This type of scale is also suggested by earlier researchers ([Grassi et al., 2007](#)).

In all, the reliability (Cronbach alpha and composite reliability) and validity (convergent and discriminant) of the borrowed instruments provided evidence that the questions were reliable and valid. The final descriptive results of personal information of the participants revealed that majority were male (50.9%) and aged between 20–30 years (50.9%). However, in terms of education, majority had first degree (43.6%). Majority of the respondents were civil and public servants, which accounted for (37.5%). Majority of the respondents indicated that they participate in the festival and paragliding yearly, which accounted for (58.9%). Further, this study descriptively analysed social cost of the festival tourism ([Table 3](#)). Averagely three (3) items of social costs recorded the highest mean value among the six (6) items presented:

Variables	Mpraeso (N = 52)		Abetifi (N = 103)		Nkaw'kaw (N = 78)		Obo (N = 48)		Obomeny (N = 56)		Atibie (N = 61)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Community cohesion	4.79	1.04	3.71	0.90	3.87	0.89	4.67	1.18	4.11	1.27	4.60	1.36
Economic benefits	3.49	1.47	3.70	1.39	4.33	1.27	3.07	1.49	3.86	1.48	3.67	1.53
Social benefits	4.52	1.19	3.91	1.35	3.74	1.52	3.69	1.53	3.18	1.66	4.16	1.51
Social cost	4.34	1.02	4.53	0.98	4.23	1.42	4.45	1.23	4.56	1.02	4.35	1.09
Festival tourism support	3.54	1.63	3.33	1.55	4.36	1.41	3.75	1.64	3.89	1.61	3.87	1.68

Table 3.
Descriptive results of
the constructs in the
selected communities

increase traffic congestion (4.47), sexual abuse (4.09) and put pressure on local services (3.74). This implies that majority of the residents agreed that the festival resulted in negative social activities.

Reliability and validity

The Cronbach alpha and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used to test the reliability and validity of the borrowed items, respectively. The reliability and the composite reliability scores in (Tables 2 and 3) were above the threshold 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010) indicating the items are reliable and there is internal consistency of items used in this study. Next, the factor loadings (Table 2) of the CFA analysis were above the threshold 0.5 (Hair et al., 2014) revealing that the borrowed items were valid for this study. Convergent and discriminant validity were established. The loadings of average variance extracted (AVE) were above the cut-off point of 0.5 (Table 4) that provided evidence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). Again, the correlation coefficient showed in (Table 3) was not above 0.8 revealing that multicollinearity is not an issue (Hair et al., 2010). To fulfil the requirement of the discriminant validity, the square root of the constructs' AVEs were greater than their inter-factor correlation (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating that the constructs are distinct from one another (Table 4). Thus, there is evidence of discriminant validity. The research also explored normal distribution of the data and found that all measurement items were within skewness and kurtosis thresholds between -1.5 and + 1.5 indicating no deviation from normality (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012).

Factor analysis

Earlier, the study applied exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.722, above the commonly recommended value (0.6) (Hair et al., 1998). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 12,287, df = 285, \rho < 0.01$). The direct Oblimin Method was utilised since it was speculated that the factors may be correlated among themselves. Overall, the factor analysis found four factors that explained 63.04% of the total variance proving that the distribution of values in the initial measure of community cohesion, economic benefits, social benefits and social costs were adequate for conducting factor analysis. The factor scores were computed for each of the constructs utilising the regression factor score method due to its maximization of validity of the items used (DiStefano et al., 2009). The factor scores were used in the subsequent regression analysis.

Data analysis and results

SPSS 25 was used to analyse three separate linear regression analyses due to the nature of the research hypotheses, where festival tourism support was considered as the independent

Constructs	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4
CC	0.55	0.91	<i>0.74</i>			
EB	0.61	0.92	0.57**	<i>0.79</i>		
SB	0.63	0.95	0.45**	0.52**	<i>0.80</i>	
FTS	0.62	0.90	0.24	0.55*	0.36	<i>0.75</i>
Mean	–	–	3.00	3.55	3.58	3.84
SD	–	–	0.70	1.10	0.96	1.12

Table 4. Mean, SD, reliability measures and inter-correlation for all variables

Note(s): SD = standard deviation, AVE = average variance explained and CR=composite reliability. All inter-correlation coefficients are significant at * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$. Italics diagonal figures represent the square root of the AVE; sub-diagonal figures are the latent construct for inter-correlations

variable that significantly impacted on three dependent variables (community cohesion, economic benefits, social benefits and social costs). Allen (2017) indicates that one of the advantages of applying regression is its strength in analysing the relative influences or effects of the predictor on the predicted variable. In addition, the averages of the dependent and independent variables were calculated per community and presented in Table 3. In Table 3, it revealed that all the communities obtained a mean above 3.5 indicating that the festival provides the residents with economic benefits except Obo community that had an average below 3.5 meaning the residents were undecided. Again, all the communities acknowledged that the festival comes with some social benefits only. Obomeny community rejected this assertion based on a mean of 3.18. Residents of Abetifi recorded a mean of 3.30 which indicated they were undecided in the support of the festival. Overall, all the communities selected obtained means above 3.5 for social cost revealing that the festival provides social cost to the residents.

Tables 5–7 respectively display the model, Anova and coefficients. The first results showed that festival tourism ($F(1, 396) = 54.773$, $\beta = 0.324$, $p > 0.05$, $t(1.027)$, $R^2 = 0.569$) has an insignificant and positive effect on community cohesiveness not supporting H1.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R square	Standard error of the estimate
1	0.569 ^a	0.569	0.522	0.254
2	0.731 ^b	0.531	0.501	0.296
3	0.724 ^c	0.624	0.613	0.345

Note(s): Dependents: community cohesion, economic benefits, social benefits
Independent: Festival tourism support

Table 5.
Model summary

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	106.357 ^a	1	106.357	54.773	0.001
	Residual	768.942	396	1.942		
	Total	875.299	397			
2	Regression	120.870 ^b	1	120.87	65.601	0.000
	Residual	726.309	396	1.834		
	Total	847.179	397			
3	Regression	144.569 ^c	1	144.569	81.481	0.001
	Residual	702.609	396	1.774		
	Total	847.178	397			

Table 6.
Anova

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig
		B	Standard Error	Beta			
CC	(Constant ^a)	1.564	0.183			8.562	0.000
	Festival tourism	0.324	0.047	0.413		1.027	0.023
EB	(Constant ^b)	1.751	0.179			9.765	0.000
	Festival tourism	0.463	0.050	0.378		8.118	0.000
SB	(Constant ^c)	1.340	0.178			7.543	0.001
	Festival tourism	-0.091	0.042	-0.595		-14.735	0.000

Note(s): Independent: Festival tourism
Dependent variables: Community Cohesion (CC), Economic Benefits (EC), Social Benefits (SB)

Table 7.
Regression coefficients

The second result showed that festival tourism ($F(1, 395) = 65.601$, $\beta = 0.463$, $p < 0.05$, $t(8.118)$, $R^2 = 0.531$) has a significant and positive effect on local economic benefits supporting H2. The third finding revealed festival tourism ($F(1, 396) = 81.481$, $\beta = -0.091$, $p < 0.05$, $t(14.735)$, $R^2 = 0.624$) has a significant and negative effect on social benefits supporting H3. The coefficient of determinations showed that festival tourism account for 56.9% variations in community cohesiveness, economic benefits (53.1%) and social benefits (62.4%).

Discussion and conclusion

This study sets out with the aim of examining the effects of festival tourism on the economic and socio-cultural well-being of the residents of Kwahu underpinned by the social development theory.

This study found that festival tourism has both community cohesion and economic benefits to the people of Kwahu traditional area. Several research outputs have indicated that tourism engenders economic growth by generating business for local enterprises (McGehee and Andereck, 2004); providing opportunity for employment (Diedrich and Garcia-Buades, 2008); raising additional revenue for the government (Tovar and Lockwood, 2008) among others. In this study, the study results confirm that there are economic benefits accruable from the KEPF. This effect was not lost on our respondents who indicated that while the economic benefits are not the principal reasons for the holding of the festival, indigenes as well as enterprising firms take advantage of the festival to increase their earnings, indicating significant economic gains (Weber and Ali-Knight, 2012). This finding is therefore a confirmation of prior research. The findings therefore validate the call-in literature for governments and local authorities to seriously consider the significant differences that festival tourism can make in a community's economy. This is because whereas in the past, festivals were simply social gatherings, they have in recent times assumed economic importance as seen from the results of the study.

Other effects seen from analysis of the effects of the KEPF include the social and developmental gains made by the community and the nation as a whole. One of the contributions and values of this study is that festival tourism is perceived by residents as a way of developing community cohesion and development of social amenities within context. The study found that festivals promote community cohesiveness, thus confirming H1. This result is similar to those of Fredline *et al.* (2006a, b) who studied the impact of tourism on Ghanaian communities. Similar findings were reported in Gursory *et al.*'s (2004) study. Community cohesiveness is a significant social attribute for every community desiring to see development. Peace, stability and the upholding of social conscience are all contingent on the presence or otherwise of community cohesiveness. One of the factors that promote cohesiveness is the pride a people have in themselves and one another. As a people, the yearly Kwahu Easter and Paragliding Festival foster unity and pride among the people. Earlier study by Andereck *et al.* (2005) showed that pride was one of the immediate sensations that indigenes experienced as a result of people choosing their destination not only to spend their money but also to interact and discover the culture. This earlier finding was corroborated in this study. The feeling of pride among the Kwahu people is not only essential for social purposes but also developmental outcomes.

However, the study found that there was no significant relationship between participation in the festival and social incentives, thus not confirming the previous findings of Haley *et al.* (2005) and Woosnam *et al.* (2009) which postulated that tourism enhances the social lives of both the tourists and the residents of the destination. Earlier studies such as Haley *et al.* (2005) and Woosnam *et al.* (2009) etc. advanced that beyond the delectable effects of the festival, tourists often seek extra entertainment especially for night life and thus provoke the creation of or re-invigoration of entertainment venues and activities. These turn to serve not only the interest of the tourists but also serves as a rallying point for local participants in the festival,

thus enhancing their social lives. This evidence was however not corroborated in this study, thus negating the arguments of prior researchers.

Within the context of Ghanaian festival tourism, the development benefits of festival tourism have not been well pronounced; hence many local festivals are still celebrated in the conservative fashion, thus depriving the local community and the nation of possible socioeconomic benefits. This study found that the annual KEPF resulted in negative outcomes such as overuse of public infrastructure, lowering quality of life for local residents due to increase in cost of goods and services, over-crowding, improper tourist behaviour. The overuse of public infrastructure and overcrowding in particular indicate a discrepancy between the provision of social amenities and tourism development.

Whiles the study showed good outcomes, it also depicted the KEPF as being socially non-beneficial and costly to the residents. The literature is replete with findings that indicate negative outcomes of festival and public events. Within context for instance, the work of [Kugbonu et al. \(2018\)](#) lamented the degradation and pollution of the environment. Similar results were obtained in other contexts. [Andereck et al. \(2005\)](#), as well as [Woosnam et al. \(2009\)](#) for instance report overcapacity while [Deery et al. \(2005\)](#); [Yen and Kerstetter \(2009\)](#) also found increase in noise levels brought on by festivals. Other problems reported in the literature include traffic congestion ([Fredline et al., 2006a, b](#)) and antisocial acts ([Diedrich and Garcia-Buades, 2008](#)). From the policy perspective, the local government needs to increase their efforts towards supporting tourism growth by providing more social amenities. However, on the flipside, this discrepancy provides an opportunity for business in the area of amenity services. Crime and anti-social behaviour found in this study confirms [Okyere-Manu and Antwi \(2016\)](#) findings. This is problematic as it may discourage other tribes and ethnic groups from investing in and developing their own festivals. Two, it clearly indicated that residents perceived festival tourism as more associated with social costs such as prostitution, crime, violence among others. Three, the current study's findings go beyond earlier studies ([Okyere-Manu and Antwi, 2016](#); [Pielichaty, 2015](#)) to extend the scope in festival tourism literature. While the findings of [Okyere-Manu and Antwi \(2016\)](#) on cultural, social and moral challenges revealed that festival tourism in Kwahu has the potential to become a silent contributor of HIV infection in Ghana. Finally, the study's findings proved that the residents did not perceive the festival to have any social benefits but rather it contributes more to social costs, which extends the findings of [Gursory et al. \(2004\)](#) in a different country setting.

Conclusion

From the findings above, it is concluded that festival tourism is a significant catalyst in the tourism industry and must be given a more focused attention. Specifically, attention should be paid to the factors that can adequately facilitate the contribution of key stakeholders to the development of the industry. More importantly, some key findings of the study especially the negative derivatives of festival tourism such as overuse of public infrastructure, lowered quality of life for local residents resulting from increased cost of goods and services, over-crowding, improper tourist behaviour, crime and anti-social behaviour and their potential to discourage initiatives among other tribes and ethnic groups should be at the forefront of government and stakeholder focus. Moreover, players in the industry should engage themselves to better understand the push and pull factors of festival tourism. As gateway to Africa, Ghana stands to enjoy enormous benefits if its cultural heritage can be marketed effectively through tourism.

Implications and limitations

From the above identified benefits of festival tourism, it is clear that festival tourism holds promise for Ghana's tourism development. Consequently, key factors that are sine-qua-non

for sustainability of tourism, and its gains need to be clearly marked and positioned to ensure Ghana grows into a viable global player in the tourism industry. This study is thus a significant eyebrow raiser to Ghana's tourism sector stakeholders as well as the custodians of culture in the various ethnic groupings in Ghana. For the larger global community, the effect of festival tourism in Ghana will increase understanding of the sector and provide a basis for cross-cultural comparison.

Managerial implications

The positive prospects identified in the study have several implications for managers of the industry. First, the Ghana Tourism Authority needs to ensure festivals do not erode entrenched traditional values and negate efforts at developing social structures and systems by putting measures to reduce the negative effect of commoditisation of festivals on the communities' cultural authenticity. This will help ensure that the growth of festival tourism in Ghana is sustained. Admittedly, while this may be a difficult task, giving strong responsiveness to the social and ethical values in Ghanaian festivals and for that matter in the Kwahu festival is exigent. It is therefore imperative that government agencies such as the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture as well as traditional rulers and festival organisers factor the positive gains as well as the negative ramifications of festivals into the planning and organising of the events.

Theoretical contributions

This work makes significant contribution to event management theory and improvement of festival viability. Theoretically, the work grounds and extends the social exchange theory because it demonstrates strongly that success and sustenance of festival tourism in Ghana largely depends on organisers' ability to provide wealth, value or satisfaction for all its stakeholders. One of the key stakeholders within context is the government of Ghana which stands to benefit from taxes and foreign exchange revenue. From the social exchange perspective, since tourism is the fourth highest foreign exchange earner for Ghana (Adu-Ampong, 2019), the government should focus more on enhancing the earnings obtained from tourism by giving priority attention to festival tourism which has a huge multiplier effect because of the vast number of festivals across the country. The sustenance and effectiveness of festival tourism within context therefore resonates the sine-qua-none of providing value for all its stakeholders in terms of economic wealth, upholding social and cultural values and maintaining or improving infrastructure and social amenities. Indigenous communities and tour organisations also need to work together to provide beneficial outcomes to festival tourists in exchange for increased patronage of festivals especially by non-Ghanaians. In addition to the revenue that accrues from the sales of festival tickets, patronage of hotels, restaurants, etc. festival tourism provides a big window of opportunity to market Ghanaian culture especially to the African-American communities in Europe and America seeking to make a connection with their African roots. On the flipside, tourism information needs to be steeped and purposely disseminated to provide more education to tourists, while a policy framework should be put in place to minimise opportunities for tourists to abuse hospitality and denigrate the cultural values of indigenous communities where festival tourism takes place.

Again, the research has confirmed prior research (Wang, 2009) that festivals provide the tonic that sustain community cohesion because of their power to foster family and social ties and provide refreshment to the community as well as a sense of pride. Hence, organisers of festivals such as the Kwahu paragliding festival should endeavour a fit between the goals of the festival and the environment. McIntosh *et al.* (2002) highlighted the importance of having

a fit between tourism ethnic values. That is one sure way of ensuring sustainability in tourism. For this, Reid and Arcodia (2002) propose integrating stakeholders in the planning and execution of festival tourism. It is hoped that such an approach will generate enhanced community approval, thus reducing the potency of a mismatch of organisers' intents and community desires and thus prevent failure.

In spite of the theoretical contributions this study has made, it is limited by the fact that although that there are many other facets of the community and the local economy that can be positively or negatively affected by festival tourism, the study was no able to capture and report on the impact of festival tourism on the culture and environment. This serves as an opening for further research within context considering that there are many geographical areas and festivals which have not yet been explored. Again, the research sampling was limited to indigenes only. Business entities and the traditional rulers were not captured, thus providing opportunity for further studies in this uncaptured population.

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