

Managing an art exhibition: more than just hanging art on walls

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Abstract

Funding for arts festivals is decreasing as governments cut funding to provide for the less fortunate. However, the number of arts festivals is still growing, especially in developing countries such as South Africa. They are also becoming more competitive while providing a platform to promote the arts – in this case, art exhibitions. Managers need to consider various matters that influence the visitor's experience at an art exhibition. Previous studies have focused on factors either prior to the visit or after the visit that influence the visitor's experience.

This article provides important insights so that the managers of these art exhibitions can effectively manage any changes required. The research underlying the article was aimed at determining the significant differences in visitors' expectations before and after visiting an art exhibition.

Two questionnaires were distributed by trained fieldworkers at the three venues that served as visual art exhibition galleries at the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival. A paired-sample t-test based on management questions (CFS) and cross-tabulation was used to determine whether there were differences in visitors' expectations before and after visiting an exhibition. The results revealed that there was indeed a change in expectations if one compares the first survey to the second.

Key phrases

art management; critical success factors; exhibition; significant differences

1. INTRODUCTION

Festivals are one of the most popular types of events worldwide (Iso-Aho 2011:103) and the number of people visiting arts festivals specifically is on the increase (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick 2005:49; Slater 2007:149).

This phenomenon creates a competitive space for festival organisers with respect to viability and sustainability, as they are all competing for the same market (Bernardi 2005:3; Van Niekerk & Coetzee 2011:348). The same applies to art exhibitions, which have become highly competitive due to the growth in the number of arts festivals and an increase in the disposable income of visitors.

In addition, in the case of developing countries such as South Africa, governments are reducing funding for the arts to provide housing, education and health for the less fortunate (Belfiore & Bennet 2007:135; Faria & Machado 2015:196, Saayman & Saayman 2006:574). This implies that art and cultural activities have shifted to a user-pay system. In other words, it has become paramount for art managers to adopt a service-delivery approach that includes education, accessibility and communication, with an emphasis on effective management (Higgs *et al.* 2005:49) and a more customer-focused approach (McLean 1994:227).

Such an approach requires a service orientation and knowledge of the varying degrees of customers' needs, perceptions and experiences in comprehending instructions and directions (Gilmore & Rentschler 2002:758). Another implication of the above is that art exhibitions have moved more into the public domain (Axelsen 2006:21) and away from the shadows of only the privileged (O'Hagan 1996:280). Gallery managers therefore have become more customer focused, which has led to this research being conducted.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the critical success factors (CSFs) involving visitors' experiences in an art gallery before and after their visit differed. This study is unique in the sense that the literature review confirmed that previous studies determined CSFs pertaining to visitors' expectations before, during or after their visit; however, not before and after the same event.

Art events such as exhibitions are classified according to certain categories, such as participatory events and performing events, consisting of visual events, painting and

sculptures, to name but a few (Tassiopoulos 2010:15). There is a clear distinction between performing and visual arts (Esaak 2014). This research was conducted at the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival, celebrating its 18th anniversary in 2015 (Botha, Viviers & Slabbert 2012:22), and focused on visual arts at the Festival.

According to Manners (2011:22), there are two persons, namely the artist and the exhibition manager, who can influence the visitor's experience at an art exhibition. Harrison (1996:24) noted that little is known about visitors to art exhibitions; especially about what influences their experience, the attraction and what the visitor looks for when visiting an art exhibition. Visitors' expectations regarding how the exhibition is managed remain unknown.

Art exhibitions can often fail to satisfy the visitors adequately if managers do not apply innovation and new strategies to guide and intrigue the visitor (Dragicevic & Letunic 2014:1198; Faria & Machado 2015:205). Falk and Dierking (2013:254) add that the experience process for the visitor at the exhibition starts before, and continues during and after the visit, with the emphasis on *during*.

As they act as a mediator between individuals and the experiencing of art, gallery employees require skills, knowledge and sensitivity (Van Dyke 2011:125). This experience can have an implication for the visitor if it is not properly managed. Visitors' experiences of the staff can either lead to sales, or to a disappointed visitor. Keeping up with trends is important to continue the success of the gallery.

Managing an art gallery is therefore more than just hanging art on the walls (Van Dyke 2011:124). There are several key management aspects that the art manager needs to consider, which are also known as CSFs. These are aspects that make an exhibition a success if they are implemented effectively (Manners 2011:6). Van der Wager and Carlos (2005:76) add that to meet the needs of the visitor, it is important to understand what the art visitor wants to achieve through the experience. Exhibitions should therefore be evaluated on a regular basis to determine these factors (Singh 2009:243).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Getz (1997:404) states that the enjoyment and satisfaction of visitors at an event such as a festival are shaped by interaction, the programme, setting, management systems, staff and other visitors at the event. These aspects are fundamental to the visitors' experience in

terms of their expectations and influence of the general success – in this case, of the art exhibition. If one measures the event in the same way as any other business, the success will lie in the ability of the organisation and its management to continually satisfy the expectations of visitors (Getz, O’Neil & Carlsen 2001:380).

2.1 Critical success factors

Critical success factors, or CSFs, are also known as key success factors, strategic factors or strategic variable (Engelbrecht, Kruger, Saayman 2014:239; Nieh & Pong 2012:424). The internal and external factors that determine the success of the business also include factors that are beyond the control of the manager (Rogoff, Lee & Suh 2004:374). Wang and Hung (2015:93) add that CSFs can be related to tangible physical elements or intangible service elements. Expectations and the aspects that affect them should be managed (Manners 2011:22; Müller & Jugdev 2012:759). These key management aspects or CSFs include matters such as entertainment, technical aspects, food and beverages, marketing, entrance, transport, information, layout, accommodation, parking, community involvement, emergency, infrastructure and venues (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2006:252; Shank & Lyberger 2015: 257; Silvers 2004:41), and usually range between five and eight factors.

As management cannot control the quality of the artist’s work, the outcome of the artist’s work is somewhat uncertain (Manners 2011:13). Boorsma (2006:74) adds that the artist and arts organisations need an audience, and one of the main tasks of an arts manager is to build this audience – the audience is the customer (Hill, O’Sullivan & O’Sullivan 2012:37). According to Dictionary.Com (2016:Internet), the main function of exhibitions is showing, presenting or publicly displaying the works of artists or artisans or objects of general interest at a large fair of extended duration, such as a world fair. In other words, it is to educate, inspire, portray stories, stimulate and generate knowledge – a service-centred paradigm for management and analysis (Dragicevic & Letunic 2014:1198).

2.2 The art visitor and their expectation

The literature review revealed that museums (including art museums) have been gathering information about visitors since the late 1920s (Harrison 1996:24). Most investigations have focused on quantitative information; however, since the 1990s, the focus has been more on qualitative information (Bourdieu 1990:81); Hooper-Greenhill 1994). Kirchberg and Trondle

(2012:434) mention numerous studies dealing with visitors and their experiences within a museum; however, no mention of art exhibitions in particular is made. Other articles focus more on social responsibility and the future of museums, but do not mention art exhibitions. Ferguson (2005) addressed the issue of the effect of exhibitions upon visitors, and did not make any attempt to empirically test his proposal. Kirchberg and Trondle (2012:435) argued that if the visit is seen as the purpose of art, would there not be more empirically-oriented studies on the visitor's experience at art exhibitions?

What do visitors regard as important at art exhibitions? Some aspects include, architecture, exhibition content, design, atmosphere, programme, feeling of belonging (home-like feeling) and advertising, to name but a few. Managers need to be aware of gaps between the expectation of the visitor and the manager's perception of what is important. They have to continuously monitor and manage these needs in order to ensure repeat visitation (Giraldi 2016:43). Higgs *et al.* (2005:49) defined expectations as pre-tailored beliefs about a product or service. The literature is unclear on how expectations are shaped by experience. Kine, Bulla, Rubright, Green and Harris (2016:30) add that it is important to research customers' expectations.

2.3 The visitor vs the art manager

The manager's ability to ensure the success of the event is important, yet is often ignored (Saayman 2009:214). By implementing good evaluation and control measures, event managers not only determine the success, but also the failures and shortcomings that may occur (Saayman, Marais & Krugell 2010:97). To offer visitors adequate experiences at the art gallery/exhibition, it is necessary to identify aspects that make a contribution. Management must identify the areas they consider as important in order to achieve their goals (Ageron, Gunasekaran & Spalanzani 2012:171; Caralli, Stevens, Willke & Wilson 2004:2). Expectations can influence the way service is perceived and can also influence the level of satisfaction and experience the visitor derives from an art exhibition (Oriade 2010:166; Dabholkar 2014:483).

Van Dyke (2011:123) states that it is no longer enough to know about the artistic theories and the history of art, it is now about the management practices and marketing. Both skills and knowledge are required to successfully manage an art gallery.

To establish the requirements of visitors to an art exhibition, it is important to determine what the visitor to these art galleries and exhibitions regards as CSFs. This will provide insight into their perceptions on what is currently being offered to them (Turn, Norton & Wright 2006:66). According to Slabbert and Saayman (2003:8), CSFs affect the ability of the organisation to differentiate between profit and loss in the market place (Williams & Saayman 2013:186). Literature on expectation was available, yet nothing linked visitor expectations and CSFs to one another.

According to Van Dyke (2011:123), art exhibitions can take many forms and differ widely in purpose, audience and other factors (Scuetz 2013:12). Van Dyke (2011:124) further explains that the designation of an art gallery has an array of possibilities, such as just four walls of hanging art; a room full of art forms; local community in a park; as well as artworks of people in a refurbished warehouse, coffee shop, or a combination of several things. It is a place that consists of more than just walls. To successfully manage an art gallery, the manager needs to familiarise him-herself with the clientele (Van Dyke 2011:124). Gallery management has its day-to-day challenges, such as attracting people who are passionate about visual arts to visit the art gallery on a regular basis.

Page and Connell (2009:647) describe management as involving practical aspects of preparing and staging, and therefore gallery managers must develop leadership skills in themselves and in those they manage (Silvers 2010:63). Brotherton and Shaw (1996:114) state that any factor that is critical is of the greatest importance, and management involves a combination of activities and processes to support a desired outcome. Cardozo (1965:244) states that managers can, within limits, influence the effort and the expectation of visitors by knowing their effort and expectations, and understanding visitor behaviour (Smallman & Moore 2010:417).

Singh (2009:234) confirms that any event such as an exhibition should be evaluated on the basis of CSFs, which will assist the manager in either developing or improving the experience of the visitor (Bond, Packer & Ballantyne 2015:472). Despite the importance of CSFs in managing an art gallery, previous literature research concerning CSFs before and after a visit to an art gallery has not been conducted within the context of an art exhibition at a festival.

2.4 Overview of CSFs

Literature on CSFs focuses on different tourism operations and sectors such as the:

- *decision-making process* (Alhroot & Alak 2010; Oppermann & Chon 1997);
- *accommodation sectors* (Avicikurt *et al.* 2011; Brotherton 2004; Brotherton *et al.* 2002; Mardinai *et al.* 2015; Padilla-Melendez & Garrido-Moreno 2013; Van der Westhuizen 2003; Wang *et al.* 2011);
- *wine tourism* (Getz & Brown 2004);
- *conference tourism* (Kruger 2006);
- *event tourism* (music, wedding tourism, exhibition) (De Witt 2006; Getz 2003; Jones *et al.* 2015; Jung 2005; Manners 2011; Wang *et al.* 2014);
- *sustainability of events* (Casalo *et al.* 2013; Haven-Tang & Jones 2009);
- *festivals* (Erasmus 2011; Marais 2009; Williams 2011);
- *cultural tourism/community* (Freeman & Thomlinson 2014; Hughes & Carlsen 2010; Lucchetti & Font 2013),
- *coastal* (Jaafar 2011);
- *ecotourism such as national parks* (Engelbrecht 2011; Hamzah & Mohamad 2012);
- *virtual tourism* (Maymand *et al.* 2012);
- *medical tourism* (Yang 2013); and
- *others, such as travel agencies* (Lin & Fu 2012).

The results from these studies identify CSFs as unique to each segment and different overall.

The literature yielded results, but there was still no link between the CSFs of visual art managers and art exhibitions, or how they influence the visitors' expectations, neither how experiences are altered by this process, and how managers can manage these alterations to ensure sustainability.

Even fewer attempts have been made to research visitors to art exhibitions and management with respect to visual art management aspects (CSFs) at art festivals. This is important, since visitors to art exhibitions differ in profile (as visual arts have different categories) with respect to their expectations of what they view as being important in order to enhance their experience.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Experimental design

The research design is an experimental study to identify the CSFs of visitors to an art exhibition. To the authors' best knowledge, two questionnaires have not yet been used at an art exhibition to determine the pre-visit as well as the post-visit CSFs at an art exhibition.

The first phase of the survey involved the distribution of Questionnaire A, a structured questionnaire investigating socio-demographic details and managerial aspects, by trained fieldworkers. Every second visitor (or one in a group) was approached before they entered the exhibition/art gallery and briefed about the purpose of the research. They were given time to complete the questionnaire prior to entering the gallery. Each respondent was given a number, starting from 1 and the same number was allocated to Questionnaire A, which they completed.

The second phase of the survey involved asking the same respondents who had completed Questionnaire A to complete Questionnaire B when they exited the exhibition. Questionnaire B contained the same questions as those in Section B in Questionnaire A. If the same respondents were willing to complete the second questionnaire, they were asked their number. The same number was allocated to Questionnaire B; in other words, matching the numbers of Questionnaires A and B.

3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaire A had two sections, namely Section A, which captured the socio-demographic details (gender, language, age, occupation, home province and marital status, to name but a few), and Section B, which measured the managerial aspects (also known as CSFs).

In Section B, the items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not at all important, 2 = less important, 3 = neither important nor unimportant, 4 = very important, and 5 = extremely important). The questions relating to management were based on the work of Erasmus (2011), Kirchberg and Trondle (2012), Manners (2011), Marais (2009), and Sheng and Chen (2012), and modified in order to relate more specifically to an art exhibition.

3.3 Sampling

A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed and 237 completed questionnaires were received back. At the festival, 88 copies of Questionnaires A and B were distributed and 88 copies of Questionnaires A and B respectively were returned. At the Snowflake exhibitions, 71 copies of Questionnaires A and B were distributed, and 71 copies of Questionnaires A were returned and 69 copies of Questionnaire B were returned. At the gallery, 77 copies of Questionnaire A and 69 copies of Questionnaire B were distributed and 75 copies of Questionnaire A and 67 copies of Questionnaire B were returned.

After capturing the data, only 220 questionnaires were usable. Israel (2009:6) explains that in a population of 50 000 (N)* (although the art exhibition is part of the Clover Aardklop National Arts festival, it is not on the festival grounds, and therefore not people do not pay for entrance. This makes it difficult to determine how many people visit the exhibition. This is an acquired taste and only a small percentage of the visitors to the Clover Aardklop Arts Festival will visit the art exhibition. This is an estimation of how many people visited only the exhibition and not the Festival itself, which justifies the sample) 220 respondents (n) are seen as representative and result in a 95% level of confidence, with a 7% sampling error. Festival attendees do not pay entrance fees and the organisers are not sure how many people attend. Hence this formula was used.

According to Yeh and Lawrence (1996:38), a sample size of above 200 respondents enhances reliability significance (Pallant, 2013:215). The 220 questionnaires received back were therefore more than adequate and were included in further analysis.

3.4 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis was done in two stages; firstly, by using Microsoft Excel to capture the data and then with SPSS (SPSS Inc. 2012). A general profile of the respondents was compiled by using two-way frequency tables. A paired-sample t-test was then carried out to measure whether the expectations of the visitors with respect to management aspects were met. A paired-sample t-test indicated whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for expectations prior to and after the exhibition visit. The results of the statistical analyses are discussed in the next section. Descriptive statistics and a reliability test were also used to examine the data. The above-mentioned results were used to

determine by means of cross-tabulation to determine whether there was a significant difference in the gender, language, province and frequency of buying art.

3.5 Results

This section determined the profile of the visitors to the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival and the results of the paired-sample t-test on the basis of the management questions (CSFs), and cross-tabulation was used to determine whether there was any difference between the significant variables identified.

3.6 Profile of the respondents

The majority of the respondents who visited the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival art exhibition in 2013 were female (67%), between the ages of 20 and 29 (28%), spoke Afrikaans (93%), and were either married (46%) or single (33%). These visitors were mainly from the North West (57%) and Gauteng (23%) and spent an average of two nights in Potchefstroom. The visitors indicated that they attended art exhibitions an average of three times a year and preferred to buy art spontaneously (36%), or in some cases rarely or never (23%). Fifty-five percent (55%) of the visitors had initiated the visit to the exhibition themselves.

3.7 Results of the paired-sample t-test on management aspects

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to measure the expectations of visitors prior to and after visiting a gallery or exhibition. The guidelines according to Pallant (2013:251) to interpret the values are 0.10, indicating a small effect, 0.06 a moderate effect and 0.14 and higher indicating a large effect. These values indicate that there is a significant difference between the lowest and highest scores.

Referring to Table 1, questions 2 to 9, 18, 22, 23, 26 and 28, when comparing the two questionnaires, revealed no significant differences, while the rest of the questions were significant (Table 1). The mean scores indicated that there was a decrease across the two values. Using the guidelines according to Cohen, it can be concluded from the above results that there was a large effect with a substantial difference between the expectations prior to and after a visit to the exhibition/gallery.

These results suggest that adequate security at the parking area, information about parking, the exhibition and venue information about the event were effective, as were the punctuality of the exhibition, adequate ATM facilities, the variety of good-quality accessible merchandise, the layout of the venue and affordable food and beverages.

TABLE 1: Differences in expectations prior to and after a visit to an art exhibition

Question	Mean	Std. dev.	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Effect sizes
			Lower	Upper				
1. Adequate, clean and hygienic ablution facilities inside/outside the venue	0.2188	0,9848	0.0891	0.3484	3.324	223	0.001	0.1747
2. Effective traffic control to and from the venue	0.1067	0,9577	-0.0191	0.2325	1.671	224	0.096	0.0963
3. Friendly and professional trained staff who are easily noticeable in and around the venue	-0.0179	0.9032	-0.1368	0.1011	-0.296	223	0.768	0.0173
4. Appropriate gate opening time prior to event	0.0269	0.8900	-0.0905	0.1444	0.451	222	0.652	0.0294
5. Visibility of emergency and security staff in and around the venue	0.1448	1.1024	-0.0014	0.2909	1.953	220	0.052	0.1221

Question	Mean	Std. dev.	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Effect sizes
6. Communication of the adequate safety measures/precautions in place during the exhibitions in case of an emergency (e.g. evacuation plan/emergency exits)	0.1205	1.0017	-0.0114	0.2524	1.801	223	0.073	0.0977
7. Adequate pre-concert performances or pre-show entertainment	0.0318	1.1078	-0.1154	0.1790	0.426	219	0.671	0.0243
8. adequate/effective marketing prior to the event	0.1211	1.0348	-0.0155	0.2576	1.747	222	0.082	0.1064
9. Variety of marketing media used, e.g. magazines, radio and posters	-0.0092	0.9574	-0.1373	0.1189	-0.142	216	0.887	0.0078
10. Communication about parking and transport options prior to the event	0.1475	1.0914	0.0014	0.2935	1.990	216	0.048	0.1327
11. User-friendly and accessible information regarding the exhibitions, for example websites, radio advertisements and posters	0.1847	1.0409	0.0470	0.3224	2.644	221	0.009	0.1794

Question	Mean	Std. dev.	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Effect sizes
12. Correct information given through marketing (e.g. date, time, venue, transport options)	0.3273	0.9567	0.2002	0.4544	5.074	219	0.000	0.3154
13. Expecting quality sound and lighting	0.1963	0.9101	0.0751	0.3176	3.193	218	0.002	0.2021
14. Expecting all-round visibility and layout	0.1991	0.8719	0.0835	0.3147	3.395	220	0.001	0.2372
15. Good layout of venue and comfortable seating	0.2534	0.9950	0.1215	0.3853	3.786	220	0.000	0.2741
16. Punctuality of exhibition starting time	0.2055	1.0176	0.0700	0.3410	2.988	218	0.003	0.1941
17. Expecting affordable, varied, good-quality and easily accessible merchandise	0.2773	1.0856	0.1330	0.4215	3.788	219	0.000	0.2654
18. Expecting freebies from sponsors	0.0955	1.3898	-0.0892	0.2801	1.019	219	0.309	0.0633
19. Effective signage and directions to the venue	0.2387	1.1619	0.0851	0.3924	3.062	221	0.002	0.2220
20. Adequate parking at the venue	0.3378	1.1087	0.1912	0.4845	4.540	221	0.000	0.3133
21. Adequate security at parking areas	0.3394	1.0478	0.705	0.4783	4.815	220	0.000	0.3227

Question	Mean	Std. dev.	95% confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Effect sizes
22. Adequate information at the venue	0.0864	1.0278	-0.0502	0.2229	1.246	219	0.214	0.0843
23. Variety of food and beverages (e.g. Halaal, vegetarian, wines, soft drinks)	0.1076	1.2070	-0.0517	0.2669	1.332	222	0.184	0.0796
24. Effective ticket sales prior to Aardklop, for example online bookings	0.1518	1.0435	0.0144	0.2892	2.177	223	0.031	0.1279
25. Affordable food and beverages at venue	0.4083	1.1413	0.2559	0.5606	5.281	217	0.000	0.3159
26. Accessibility for the disabled	0.0946	1.0572	-0.0452	0.2344	1.333	221	0.184	0.0856
27. Effectively regulated traffic flow after the exhibition	0.1712	1.0540	0.0318	0.3106	2.420	221	0.016	0.1574
28. Expecting the opportunity to meet the artist at the exhibitions (e.g. photos, autograph)	0.1847	1.4229	-0.0035	0.3729	1.934	221	0.054	0.1348
29. Adequate ATM facilities/ card machines	0.2691	1.1544	0.1167	0.4214	3.480	222	0.001	0.220
30. All information given about the exhibition was correct	0.2825	1.0764	0.1405	0.4246	3.919	222	0.000	0.2782

Source: Calculated from survey results

3.8 Differences in expectations prior to and after the visit to the art exhibition

The second step was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the above results. This was done through a paired-sample t-test comparing the mean scores of factors prior to their visit and matched to the mean scores of factors after their visit with respect to the CSFs (Pallant 2001:247). There was a statistical significance in Questions 1, 10 to 17, 19 to 21, 23, 24, 27, 29 and 30 indicating the effect size of less than 0.05 (refer to Table 1 Colom sig. 2 tailed).

The next step was to compare the questions prior to and after the visit with respect to gender, language, province and frequency of buying art. The results were divided into two groups, namely socio-demographic (gender, language and province) and behavioural aspects (frequency of buying art).

3.8.1 Socio-demographic aspects

The socio-demographic aspects pertaining to *gender* revealed the following differences: there was a significant difference in Question 12: Correct information was given through marketing (e.g. date, time, venue, and transport options) prior to the visit. More females completed the questionnaire than males did, and the females felt that the information given prior to the visit was very/extremely important. In contrast, the males felt that the information given was not at all important.

Question 21 regarding adequate security at parking areas revealed that, after their visit to the exhibition, the males (13.9%) felt it was less important than the females did (3.4%). This was interesting, as the majority of visitors to the exhibition were females (67%). The majority of the female visitors (38.6%) felt that it was very important to have adequate security, while only 27.8% of the male respondents indicated this to be very important.

Question 30 asked whether all the information provided about the exhibition was correct after their visit. Among the female respondents, 35% felt that it was extremely important, compared to 18.9% of the males.

Results pertaining to *language* revealed the following differences. Prior to their visit, Question 17 asked whether the visitor expected affordable, varied, good-quality and easily accessible merchandise. The majority of the Afrikaans-speaking respondents felt that was

extremely important, and only 17.6% of the English-speaking respondents felt it was extremely important. Only 0.4% of all the Afrikaans-speaking respondents felt that this statement was not at all important, while none of the English-speaking respondents chose this option.

There were more Afrikaans-speaking respondents visiting the art gallery/exhibition than English-speaking respondents (92.5% and 7.5%, respectively). This was because the Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival is more an Afrikaans arts festival. Question 10 revealed that more English-speaking respondents (58.8%) than Afrikaans-speaking respondents (24.5%) felt after their visit to the exhibition that communication about parking areas and transport was very important. After they had visited the exhibition, 16% of the Afrikaans-speaking respondents felt that it was slightly important to know this.

Results pertaining to *province* and region of origin revealed no significant differences either prior to or after the visit.

3.8.2 Behavioural aspects

The results pertaining to behavioural aspects revealed with respect to the *frequency of buying*, or art-buying behaviour, prior to the visit that the majority (52.9%) of the visitors bought art spontaneously and felt it was extremely important to expect affordable, varied and good-quality art.

Question 29 regarding adequate ATM facilities or card machines revealed that, prior to their visit, respondents who bought art spontaneously felt it was extremely important (47.6%) to have adequate ATM or card facilities at the exhibition, while 15.1% of the respondents who rarely bought art felt it was not at all important. This can be due to the prices of art pieces, as well as the excitement of buying art at the exhibition. Not having these facilities may well lead to fewer art sales and unhappy visitors. Credit card facilities are not always reliable and some people do not want to use their credit cards, as they fear theft.

Question 19 revealed that after they had visited the art exhibition, signage and directions to the venue were important to the majority of the respondents who rarely bought art (46.9%), while 13.6% of the spontaneous art buyers regarded this as important. This could have been because they were not familiar with the festival layout and did not know where they were.

The results also revealed that, after their visit to the exhibition, the majority (45.8%) of respondents who bought art rarely felt it was important to have adequate parking at the venue, while 42.7% of the spontaneous art-buying respondents felt it was very important. This may have been because the respondents had walked quite a distance to the exhibition.

4. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Findings

Three key findings were identified by this research. *Firstly*, from the methodological point of view, there is a significant difference in CSFs prior to and after the respondents' visit to the exhibition. This implies that the exhibition in some way influenced their view of what was important. This idea is confirmed by Kirchberg and Trondle (2015:174), who also state that while visiting the exhibition there are factors that can change the visitors' experiences, such as what they looked at, assessment of the art, engagement, learning experience as well as emotional and cognitive responses and other visitors or staff members, to name but a few. This research identified these change factors.

The timing of a survey, e.g. before, during or at the end of an event could have serious consequences for decision-making, and can have an effect on repeat visits or can have none at all. It could also provide a false impression of aspects that require change. This implies that academics and managers need to take cognisance of the issue of timing with respect to a survey and they should be cautious when deciding when research is conducted, e.g. prior to, during or after an event. What we have learned is that surveys should be done in a combination of pre-, during- and post-event, or regular surveys to achieve the best results. Managers therefore need to improve their skills and focus on these factors that are of the greatest importance, and employ a combination of activities and processes to achieve a desired outcome.

Secondly, with respect to the difference in CSFs before and after visiting the exhibition, research confirmed that from a visitor's perspective, venue and accessibility as well as exhibitions and displays contribute to a memorable experience at an art exhibition. These factors therefore contribute to the visitor's level of satisfaction. Factors that were important to visitors before the visit included security and accessibility (in and around the exhibition, parking, effective traffic flow) and communication (start time, marketing of event). Important

factors during the visit were the exhibition layout (lighting, layout of art, quality of sound, signage, good and affordable art). If a manager wants to ensure repeat visits, it is therefore especially important to ascertain the visitors' expectations and meet them, because these visitors will use the expectations in their next experience. Cardozo (1965:244) confirms this statement.

Thirdly, there were more significant differences in *socio-demographic* than in *behavioural variables*. This contradicts the general research in tourism where behavioural variables are more significant than socio-demographic variables are. *Gender* revealed that prior to visiting the exhibition the female respondents found information more important than the male respondents did. One can deduce from this that females perceive and require information differently from males.

4.2 Implications

As was mentioned in the literature, events such as an arts festival attract different people, young and old. An arts festival caters for the masses and attracts all kinds of persons, and art managers need to use the marketing strategies of the festival organisers to create curiosity among these visitors and expose them to different aspects of what art has to offer.

Language also has implications. The Clover Aardklop National Arts Festival is more of an Afrikaans festival, yet it is open to all. Although art is not language bound, the overall marketing strategy of the Clover Aardklop National Art Festival is in Afrikaans and appeals to Afrikaans-speaking people. This may have implications, as visitors from other language groups may not understand the adverts or may feel left out.

Afrikaans- and English-speaking respondents as well as respondents buying art frequently expected affordable and a good variety of art and felt very strongly about this aspect. If the main goal of the exhibition is to portray and sell works of art, it should be applicable to all types of art lovers and income groups. The manager should provide for all income groups when deciding on artists, so that no one will feel out of place when visiting and keep the love of art strong. Staff should be able to assist visitors in their language or the manager should assist them, or perhaps information should be available in both Afrikaans and English.

Respondents who tended to *buy art spontaneously* felt that it was important to have adequate ATM and card facilities. Art is a differentiated product, making each piece highly

unique. Artists do not tend to make replicas, which gives the art piece a unique authorship, explaining why art visitors tend to buy art spontaneously to obtain ownership of the piece.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this exploratory and experimental research was to determine whether there were significant differences with respect to CSFs before and after visitors visited an art exhibition. CSFs that were identified were venue and accessibility, catering, marketing and safety. The results (Table 1) revealed significant differences. Literature confirmed that, in order to probe the visitor experience, it is necessary to probe the expectations before the visit, as well as during and after the visit. This experimental design did just that and is highly recommended for exhibitions and art galleries. In order to manage the expectations of the visitor, one has to determine what the visitor regards as important.

This research therefore makes a contribution to the literature and festival managers by showing that visitors' CSFs do in fact change after they have experienced the exhibition. The *second* important contribution was the identification of the CSFs and showing which socio-demographic and behavioural variables were significant. *Lastly*, this research can help art managers and academics by providing greater insight into how important it is to evaluate visitors' experiences, since better experiences can lead to more art sales, and this has a direct impact on the sustainability of art exhibitions.

What this research has also done is to show that very limited research has been conducted in the field of art exhibitions and therefore more work on this topic and in this field is required.

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