

Economic and socio-cultural impacts of two leading cultural festivals of Savonlinna

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Abstract

This paper presents the economic and socio-cultural impacts that Savonlinna Opera Festival and Savonlinna Ballet festival have on the town hosting them, and on the lives of local people. The studies were conducted by using the Finnish Event Evaluation Tool which is used to investigate the views of several stakeholder groups. The studies revealed the economic impacts, differences in the attitudes of locals towards the festivals, as well as challenges the new festival may have at the locality in order to ensure its continuity and success.

Keywords: cultural festivals; impacts; Finnish Event Evaluation Tool (FEET); eastern Finland; event tourism.

Introduction

In recent years festivals and events have become increasingly important to localities and the tourism industry also in eastern Finland. Especially important they are in regional areas where the available sources of income are more limited than in metropolitan areas (e.g. Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003; Jackson, Houghton, Russel, & Triandos, 2005). Often events and festivals are important tourist attractions, but on the other hand they can be primarily targeted at local people. Lately the interest to research the impacts of events and festivals has grown. In event evaluation research the main focus has long been on measuring the economic impacts of events, but lately the importance to assess the social and cultural meanings that festivals and events have on the lives of local people and on the regions hosting them has also been noticed (e.g. Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell, & Harris, 2002; Delamere, 2001; Delamere, Wankel, & Hinch, 2001; Jago & Dwyer, 2006; Mossberg, 2000; Small, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2005; Wood, 2005).

This paper presents the economic as well as the socio-cultural impacts that two summer festivals, Savonlinna Opera Festival and Savonlinna Ballet Festival, have separately and in total on their town, on the lives of local people and on the tourism of the town of Savonlinna. The studies were conducted in summer 2008 and 2009 by using the Finnish Event Evaluation Tool (FEET) which was developed in order to produce comparable information on the events in Finland and to gain some continuity to event research (Pasanen, Taskinen, & Mikkonen, 2009). The impacts were

researched from the point of view of five stakeholder groups: festival organizers, festival visitors, local entrepreneurs, local residents and policymakers. This paper focuses on the economic impacts (e.g. tourism income, employment), and the attitudes of locals towards the festivals. The study also reveals the challenges the festivals have to overcome in order to ensure their continuity and success at the locality.

Impacts of events

Festivals and events have a range of impacts on their host destinations, and they are usually divided into economic, socio-cultural, environmental and political impacts (e.g. Allen et al., 2002; Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001; Jackson et al., 2005). In event evaluation research, the main focus has long been on assessing the economic impacts of events (e.g. Chhabra, Sills, & Cabbage, 2003; Daniels, 2004; Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2005; Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2006; Jago & Dwyer, 2006; Kim, Scott, Thigpen, & Kim, 1998; Tohmo, 2005) with less empirical research on the difficult to measure, yet very important, socio-cultural impacts. Even less attention has been paid to environmental impacts of events. Great emphasis is often placed on the economic impacts partly because of the need of event organizers and governments to meet budget goals and justify expenditure, and partly because such impacts are most easily assessed. (Allen et al., 2002; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000a; Jago & Dwyer, 2006)

However it has been recognized that the economic aspect alone is insufficient, and awareness of the need to measure also the intangible socio-cultural impacts has been increasing in recent years (e.g. Small et al., 2005). The locals have most often been the interest group that is taken into account. Despite the difficulty of measuring socio-cultural impacts, some frameworks and scales have been developed in order to evaluate them (Delamere, 2001; Delamere et al., 2001; Fredline, Jago, & Deery, 2002; Small, 2007; Small et al., 2005).

Much work has been done in an attempt to develop standardized measures for economic and non-economic impacts of events. The lack of a standardized approach has limited the comparability between event evaluations. In recent years it has been acknowledged that it is essential to adopt a holistic approach to impact evaluation across a range of economic, environmental and social criteria. Equal emphasis must also be placed on evaluating both the positive and negative impacts of an event. (Jago & Dwyer, 2006; Small et al., 2005.) Recently an attempt towards a holistic approach in impact evaluation has emerged, and comprehensive work has been done to weave together all the different components of event evaluation into a single framework so that overall assessment can be made (e.g. Carlsen, Ali-Knight, & Robertson, 2007; Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis, & Mules, 2000b; Fredline, Raybould, Jago, & Deery, 2005; Hede, 2007; Wood, 2009). An example of this kind of holistic approach is Triple Bottom Line which is borrowed from accounting and finance, and it amalgamates the social, economic and environmental aspects of events into one framework (Hede, 2007; Fredline et al., 2005).

Finnish Event Evaluation tool is also a one example of an attempt for holistic approach. In Finland event evaluation research is quite a new field of research. The few researches conducted concentrate mainly on economic impacts of events, and they all are conducted using a bit different methods (e.g. Cantell, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2003; Tohmo, 2005; Tyni, & Aho, 1999). Hence there was a need for extensive research and creation of a research tool that could be used for assessing various impacts of events in a comparable manner. From this need the Finnish Event Evaluation Tool (FEET) was created (Pasanen et al., 2009). The FEET method is used to investigate both economic and socio-cultural impacts of events from the point of view of several stakeholders: event organizers, event visitors, local entrepreneurs, local residents, and policymakers (figure 1).

Environmental impacts have only a minor role in FEET method at the moment, although the importance of environmental impacts was recognized (Pasanen et al 2009).

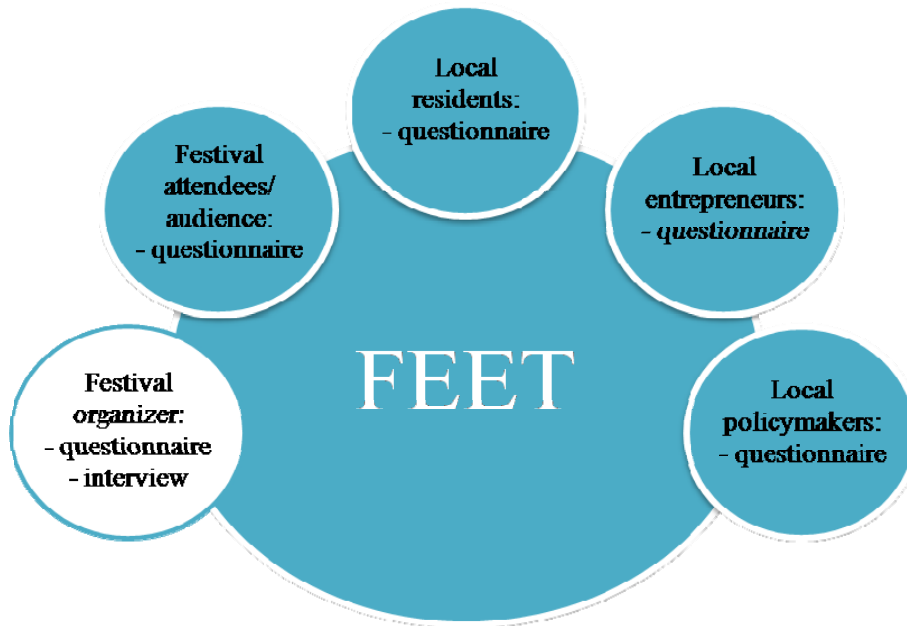


Figure 1. Components of Finnish Event Evaluation Tool.

Case studies: Savonlinna Opera Festival and Savonlinna Ballet Festival

About the festivals

Savonlinna is a small town of 30 000 inhabitants in eastern Finland, and famous for its opera festival that takes place at the medieval Olavinlinna castle. The festival has a long tradition at the locality. It was held for the first time already in 1912, but after five times it ran into difficulties and was dormant for fifty years. Since 1967 it has been held every July, and grown from one-week event into an internationally recognized festival lasting a whole month. Today it attracts from 50 000 to 70 000 friends of opera every summer, which is twice as much as there are inhabitants in town hosting the festival. Around 10 percent of the attendees come from abroad. For the first three weeks the program of opera festival consists of its own opera productions, and on the fourth week the festival acts as a host to foreign opera companies. In Savonlinna city centre every festival morning begins with particular “morning opening” in which opera singers, players or festival staff visits and performs. The affair is free for everyone and very popular among local people.

Savonlinna Ballet Festival instead is a lot younger and smaller event. For the first time it was arranged in June 2002, at the same venue as the opera festival. After three years festival faced serious difficulties in financing, and festival had to be cancelled for three more years. In 2008 after some changes in organization and performers festival was revived and it took place in August right after the opera festival. One of the reasons for organizing the festival in August was that it would continue tourism season in Savonlinna after the opera festival, and offer program for tourists and locals. It has been typical for Savonlinna that the town is full of people and program in July, and immediately after the opera festival the town quiets down right when the holiday season in Europe begins. Ballet Festival lasts from three to four days (four days in 2008) and the attendance has varied between 3000 - 6000 attendees (in 2008 it was about 6000). The performers of the festival come from Russia, and the festival consists from one to three different productions. In 2008 the performers came from Petrozavodsk Music Theatre and acted two different ballet productions.

Methodology and analysis

The Finnish Event Evaluation Tool was used in order to find out the economic and socio-cultural impacts of both festivals. The study was conducted at the Ballet Festival in summer 2008 and at the Opera Festival in summer 2009. The same method was used in the case of both festivals.

In FEET the research of economic impacts emphasizes direct economic impacts of festivals, and no multipliers are used to uncover the indirect economic impacts. FEET examines primarily tourism expenditure of a festival by investigating the spending of the event attendees. The key is to identify how much economic activity has been generated through visitors from outside the region being attracted into the region by the festival. Besides the tourism expenditure, also the views of local entrepreneurs on how the event affects (positively or negatively) the operations and economics of a company (e.g. revenue), and how they perceive the impacts caused by the event are researched. In addition, the expenditure caused by organizing the event (e.g. advertising, payments to employees) is studied to arrive at the total economic impacts of an event at the locality.

The positive and negative socio-cultural impacts that occur as a result of staging the festival are identified through the opinions of local residents, local entrepreneurs, policymakers and event organizers by using Likert-scale statements (agree-disagree). The statements relate, for example, to the impacts of an event on local infrastructure and services, on the environment, on the image and attraction of the locality, on the community involvement, and on the meaning of the event for the quality of life and activity opportunities of locals. After each impact topic respondents are asked to give an overall assessment of the effect of the topic on their own life and on the locality at scale from minus three (very negative effect) to plus three (very positive effect), and to explain their choice in their own words.

The main method for data collection is questionnaires. The study was conducted by online questionnaires directed to local residents, local entrepreneurs and policymakers after the festivals. Local residents were reached through websites that are commonly used by them, and by handing out flyers encouraging them to answer the questionnaire on the Internet. The questionnaires for policymakers and entrepreneurs were sent by e-mail. The lines of businesses included in the study were hospitality and tourism (e.g. accommodation, restaurants, and travel agencies), retail trade, groceries, transportation and garage services. Only festival visitors were researched by paper questionnaires because they were easier to use and fill at the event.

Even if the data collection was conducted in a same way in the case of both festivals, the number of respondents varied greatly between and even within different target groups (Table 1). The attendee study was conducted together with the opera festival, and the data was collected only at the chargeable opera performances and concerts. In the respondent rates of the local people the longer tradition and great importance of the opera festival can be seen. Ballet festival is less known, and has also caused some disliking because of the financial issues. This may be one reason for such a low respondent rates.

Table 1. Number of respondents and respondent rates in the case of entrepreneurs and policy makers.

	Attendees	Local residents	Entrepreneurs (%)	Policy makers (%)
Opera Festival	1027	222	31 (26 %)	31 (63 %)
Ballet Festival	253	27	15 (10 %)	25 (57 %)

The data was analyzed mainly by descriptive statistics. These were used especially when analyzing the intangible socio-cultural impacts. The respondents could also explain their views in their own words, and these comments played important role in supplementing the vision of the impacts. In addition to descriptive statistics, calculations were made to find out the tourism expenditure of the festivals. The tourism expenditure was calculated only based on the average spending of non-local attendees to whom the festival was a primary or an important reason for coming to the locality. The calculation of tourism expenditure was based on total attendance numbers which were untangled by proportioning the attendance number given by the event organizer to the average number of performances attended. Only direct tourism expenditure was calculated.

Results

The study of two leading cultural festivals of Savonlinna revealed the different impacts that the festivals have on the town, and the differences in resident attitudes towards both festivals. With FEET the amount of data collected is very extensive. For that reason only some essential findings are presented in this paper about the economic impacts and socio-cultural impacts. The latter is presented only from the point of view of local residents.

Economic impacts

There is a big difference in the size of the two studied festivals, and naturally the economic impacts vary greatly. Therefore there is no point in comparing the economic impacts of these festivals. Instead some key figures are highlighted here.

Opera Festival has a huge economic impact on the whole Savonlinna region. According to the event organizers the total attendance of the opera festival in summer 2009 was 64 700 (free and chargeable performances). Since the attendee study was conducted only at chargeable opera performances the calculation of direct tourism expenditure is based on the attendance of those performances which was 53 700.

The tourism expenditure was calculated based on the spending of non-local attendees to whom the event was an important reason for coming to the locality. The actual attendance numbers were used in calculation. Those were untangled by proportioning the attendance number given by the event organizer to the average number of performances attended (see table 2). Most of the attendees (95 %) were travelers of which most (77 %) spend the night at the locality. Reasons for a small share of local festival visitors might be that locals may not have considered it important to take part in the survey, and many get free tickets to final rehearsals so they are absent from the actual opera performances where the study was conducted.

Table 2. Share and number of attendees of Savonlinna Opera Festival and attended performances of attendee groups.

	% of attendees	Attended performances (on average)	Actual number of attendees
Local attendees	4,6 %	2,4	1 567
Day visitors	20,6 %	1,3	7 016
Travelers who stayed in chargeable accommodation	53,6 %	1,6	18 256
Travelers who stayed in free accommodation	16,0 %	1,7	5 450
Travelers to whom the event was not an important reason for coming to the locality	5,3 %	1,3	1 805
Total	100 %		34 060

Those travelers who spend the night at chargeable accommodation spend on average 1.9 nights, and those who stayed in free accommodation spend on average 3.2 nights in Savonlinna. The average spending of traveler groups can be seen in table 3. Based on these variables the direct tourism income caused by the Savonlinna Opera Festival was 4.6 million euro. In addition to that the festival itself made purchases from local enterprises worth of 950 000 euro.

Table 3. The average spending of traveler groups (to whom the event was important reason for traveling) and tourism expenditure of the Savonlinna Opera Festival and Savonlinna Ballet Festival.

	Opera Festival 2009	Ballet Festival 2008
Average spending of day visitors	42,80 €	57 €
Average spending of travelers staying in chargeable accommodation	103,80 €/day	113,80 €/day
Average spending of travelers staying in free accommodation	43,80 €/day	43,30 €/day
Direct tourism income	4,6 M €	157 000 €

All the stakeholder groups agreed that Savonlinna Opera Festival has a very positive economic impact on the region (table 5). Nearly all (84 %) entrepreneurs said that the opera festival affected positively on their businesses. There are even a few who make the profit of the year during July, or operate at the locality only during July due to the opera festival. Especially enterprises in the field of tourism (hotels, restaurants etc.) benefits greatly from the festival, but there were no big differences between lines of businesses.

The impact of the opera festival on employment is also remarkable. The festival itself has 18 year-round employees, 63 temporary employees, 400 artists/performers and 300 as a technical staff. Many artists live in Savonlinna from one to two months, and also local people get income by renting apartments for them. Many local enterprises (68 % of respondents) need to hire staff for high-season, and therefore the festival creates new jobs at the locality. For many young people the opera festival is the first summer job, and every summer there is a big group of volunteers as well. There are also some enterprises that would not operate at the locality if there was not this festival.

Also local people benefit from the new facilities and infrastructure that are created from the need of festival visitors.

At the moment many entrepreneurs feel that the festival ceases too quickly, and the difference between the last week of opera festival and the week right after it is too big. The whole town calms down and tourists fade. Many feel that the festival has not yet been utilized year-round as well as it could. More cooperation is needed between the entrepreneurs, festival and whole Savonlinna region. The tourism season should be made longer in order to gain more positive economic impact.

The economic impact of Savonlinna Ballet Festival was naturally smaller than impacts of opera festival when measured based on tourism expenditure, since the festival lasts only couple of days and had attendance of 5082 (=sold tickets) in 2008. Ballet festival has more of a local status and appeal than opera festival: 42 percent of all festival attendees were locals and 58 percent travelers. Only small proportion of travelers stayed the night at the locality (see table 4), and those who stayed spend on average only one night which has a decreasing effect on tourism expenditure. The relatively large share of local attendees also affects the tourism income, because the locals do not bring tourism income to the locality. The direct tourism income of ballet festival was 157 000 euro. Purchases that the festival made from the local enterprises were worth of 70 000 euro.

Table 4. Share and number of attendees of Savonlinna Ballet Festival and attended performances of attendee groups.

	% of attendees	Attended performances (on average)	Actual number of attendees
Local attendees	41,9 %	1	2 129
Day visitors	31,1 %	1	1 580
Travelers who stayed in chargeable accommodation	8,7 %	1	442
Travelers who stayed in free accommodation	7,8 %	1	396
Travelers to whom the event was not an important reason for coming to the locality	10,5 %	1	535
Total	100 %		5 082

The impact on employment is also weak. The festival itself employs two year-round part-time employees and 25 temporary employees during the festival. In total the festival is constructed with the force of 200 persons, including for example the performers, technical staff and volunteers.

Despite the low tourism expenditure, according to the survey more than half (67 %) of the entrepreneurs felt that the ballet festival had a positive impact on their businesses. However since the number of responses was very low no generalizations can be made. According to some entrepreneurs even the low tourism income is better than nothing. Evidently the event attracts some tourists who otherwise would not come to Savonlinna. It also continues tourism season that would otherwise cease when opera festivals comes to an end, and keeps more tourism services available. The financial problems and uncertainty of organizing the festival in recent years is probably still reflecting the attitudes of locals. Even if the economic impact of ballet festival was low according to different stakeholders (table 5) there however was some belief towards bigger economic impacts in the future if the festival succeeds to firmly establish its position at the locality.

Table 5. Impacts of festivals on economic life according to stakeholders (mean value).

	Opera Festival 2009	Ballet Festival 2008
Local entrepreneurs	2,7	1,6
Local people	2,4	0,9
Policy-makers	2,6	1,5

3 = very positive impact, 0 = no impact, -3 = very negative impact.

Social and cultural impacts

Negative and positive socio-cultural impacts of both festivals are identified mainly through the opinions of local people in this paper, but also some notions of the opinions of decision makers are presented. The impacts are summarized in table 6.

Opera festival is generally approved among local people, and the community involvement is relatively high. The locals perceive the festival “as their own” even if, according to the survey, only five percent of festival visitors were locals. One reason for that may be that the festival includes more than just opera performances at the castle. The international festival atmosphere is present everywhere on the town: there are free opera morning openings at the park, rehearsals, shops are decorated in opera theme, and town is filled with tourists. Local people have also a possibility to accommodate artists in their homes and thus get a closer interaction with the opera. In some way everyone can feel and be part of creating the festival atmosphere. This helps to increase the community identity, togetherness and pride of the locals towards the festival and town hosting it. Of course there are some locals who see the whole festival disturbing, and therefore escape from town but they are minority. Most of the locals (70 %) feel that opera festival makes the town nicer and more interesting place to live and almost everyone (88 %) said that the festival has increased their pride towards their hometown (see table 6). During that one month of the year there is something happening in Savonlinna.

Locals are also delighted about the facilities, services and other activities that the festival contributes. Without opera festival there would not be so many restaurants, shops, transport and tourism services. Now also local people can benefit from them. Opera festival has also an educational impact. Most of the respondents (85 %) admitted that Savonlinna Opera Festival has increased their interest towards opera, and without this festival many would not have attended any opera performance anywhere. The festival also introduces young people and children into the world of opera in the form of singing courses, summer jobs and children operas. This year Savonlinna Opera Festival has launched a new project (“opera by you”) in which anyone as a part of Internet community can contribute to the creation of an opera. All the members can help to write the libretto, compose the music, and design the sets and costumes, and the opera is performed at the stage of Olavinlinna in the summer 2012.

All the stakeholder groups agreed that the festival enhances the image of Savonlinna. The image is so strong that outside the town, even internationally, the town is mostly known from its opera festival. The opera festival has a very important role in the identity of the town.

Of course the opera festival is not only celebration and glory, but it also has some negative side effects. About fifth of respondents experienced some disturbance. The disturbing factors mentioned were most often traffic jams and parking problems which are quite common in the case of festival this size. Also noise, littering, rise in prices and financial support from town were mentioned as disadvantages. Mainly the opera festival is regarded positively among local people.

Table 6. Socio-cultural impacts of the festivals according to local people (mean value).

	Opera Festival	Ballet Festival
Impact on commitment towards the locality	1,15	0,1
Impact on community involvement and togetherness	1,07	0
Meaning for quality of life and activity opportunities	1,55	0,5
Impact on the image and attraction of the locality	2,50	0,9
Impact on environment	0,88	0
Impact on the infrastructure and services	2,06	0,9

3 = very positive impact, 0 = no impact, -3 = very negative impact.

Ballet festival on the other hand has only little social and cultural impacts on the lives of local people (table 6). The low number of respondents tells something of this: locals did not have any interest to answer the questionnaire or they thought that they do not have anything to say. It seems that since the ballet festival has been organized only five times, it has not yet rooted at the locality. In addition the duration of festival is only couple of days, and it is not very visible in the town space. Local people have not yet formed a relationship with the festival, and the whole festival is felt distant. Even if the ballet festival especially wanted to take the locals into consideration, for example by making the festival more visible in town and more easily approachable, it has not yet succeeded to achieve the commitment and trust of locals. There is lack of community involvement and togetherness among local people.

In its early years Savonlinna Ballet Festival has faced some difficulties finding economic support and funding. For this reason even the ability for organizing an event has been uncertain for couple of years. These problems have caused negative associations among respondents, and are seen as a burden for rooting of the festival at the locality. This may be one reason for the lack of local commitment towards the festival. Uncertainty might promote negative associations for the whole region.

Despite the negative associations there were also positive aspects seen in ballet festival. Almost all respondents (75 %) agreed that the ballet festival has a positive effect on the image of Savonlinna as a culturally active region, and it attracts tourists to the town after opera festival in a season that would otherwise be quieter. The most important role the ballet festival has at the moment is to diversify the cultural offering of Savonlinna. The opera festival alone is not sufficient, and ballet festival has the ability to enhance the image of Savonlinna as a culturally active region.

Financial sustainability would create more confidence towards the festival, and this would enhance the attitudes of locals, the image of the festival as well as image of the town. At the moment many feel that the financial support from the town of Savonlinna could be used for something more important than to a festival that is unsure. Still many feel that it would be important to continue the festival, but more collaborative activity should be created among the festival, local people and entrepreneurs. By working together stakeholders could maximize the overall income and benefits of event tourism.

Conclusions

This study revealed the economic and socio-cultural impacts that Savonlinna Opera Festival and Savonlinna Ballet festival have on town hosting them, and on the lives of local people. Some points emerging from this study are worth highlighting. Firstly, it was interesting to notice that even if those two festivals are quite similar in nature (both classical music festival held at the same venue) there are a lot of differences for example in the attitudes of local residents. Even if the most of the attendees of opera festival comes from outside the locality there was higher community involvement among local people than in the case of ballet festival of which nearly half of the audience are locals. Maybe one reason for that is the history: opera festival has taken place already 40 years and is very important part of local identity, while ballet festival is still young and trying to find its place and role at the locality. Opera festival also offers lot to do and experience for locals, even if they would not participate in the performances. The ballet festival has not yet succeeded to do that, and get the locals to create a festival spirit at the locality. Certainly the great economic impact of the opera festival has an effect on the attitudes. However the attitude has not always been so positive. For the long time the festival was considered elitist, but in the course of time local residents have learned to enjoy the atmosphere, and to see the total benefits, economic and non-economic, that the festival has on the whole Savonlinna region.

The lack of commitment of the locals is a problem that can affect the sustainability or success of a festival. The festival organizers, especially in the case of ballet festival, should pay more attention to the issue. The importance of community involvement in festivals has been recognized as a factor contributing to the success of festivals, as well as potential for the events and festivals to contribute to the building of community cohesion and identity (e.g. Derrett, 2003; Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Molloy, 2002). It is important to find out why the inhabitants feel that the festival is not contributing much to community spirit. If the festival is not able to attract the interest and approval of the host community, it might fail in the long run (Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2007; Small et al. 2005).

In order to achieve the support of locals, and become more permanent and stable part of Savonlinna's cultural life the ballet festival should strengthen and balance its financial situation, and concentrate on increasing the involvement of the local residents, entrepreneurs and local officers in the process of festival and tourism planning and production. Listening to the concerns and hopes of the locals might elucidate and concretize the reasons for the low community participation. By strengthening the bond between the host community and the festival, the organizers could minimize the potential negative impacts of the event (Delamere, 2001). According to Getz et al. (2007) to find and sustain a permanent niche in the community, the festival organization must be expert in developing a supportive network and in managing its diverse stakeholder relationships.

Secondly, festivals are often used as an important tool for destination branding and enhancing the destination images (e.g. Getz, 2008; Hede & Jago, 2005; Jago et al., 2003). Together these festivals could have more effect than the opera festival alone. The tourism season of Savonlinna ceases simultaneously with the opera festival, and it would be important to make the high season longer and keep more services and program available for tourists, especially foreigners, who travel in August. Also the decision makers of town should see the potential of the impacts that these festivals could have together, and make consistent and long-term decisions.

Festivals can have different roles and meanings at the locality. Savonlinna Opera Festival has achieved its position as a "hallmark event" which is by definition attached to a single place, being effectively cobranded with the host city or destination. It possesses such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality, or publicity, that the event provides the host destination with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination can become inextricably linked. (Getz,

2005; Getz & Andersson, 2009.) As it became evident from the several responses, the town of Savonlinna is often associated very strongly with the opera festival. Ballet festival instead has a more regional status at the moment, and can be seen as a local or regional event where the tourism perspective is not that significant. The festival (together with local stakeholders) should decide whether it wants to be more tourism or locally oriented. In both cases the ballet festival has a potential alongside with opera festival to make the Savonlinna region more competitive and attractive travel destination.

Methodological implications

This study acted in a way as a pilot for FEET -method so some notions about the use of the method are appropriate to point out. A few challenges and difficulties of the use of FEET method were confronted. The data collection from different stakeholders proved to be one of the biggest challenges in FEET studies, especially in the case of local residents and entrepreneurs. When collecting data with online questionnaires the number of responses was not adequate, and the motivation of locals to respond was difficult. Perhaps the use of paper questionnaires would be more efficient, but at the same time the amount of field work and the time of analysis would multiply. Also the use of interviews could enhance the quality of the data, however leading to the same problem as paper questionnaires. The extension of the research tool and the diversity of data collected are wide, and the research process is laborious to carry out, but the possibility to investigate the views of several stakeholder groups at the same time was a basis for developing the tool (Pasanen et al., 2009). To carry out that purpose the use of electronic questionnaires might be inevitable, unless there is a large group of people available for data collection. The method in its full form offers a possibility for versatile data and viewpoints for impacts of events. However it would be more usable in the case where there would be a need to investigate only one stakeholder group or group of impacts.

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