

## **"Give and take": A social exchange perspective on festival stakeholder relations**

### **Abstract**

Based on social exchange theory, this research seeks to establish the differences between festival stakeholder relations in terms of trust, control, dependence, and altruism. A total of 1,105 participant surveys were collected at six festivals in Ghana across eight stakeholder groups including organizers, government authorities, visitors, volunteers, sponsors, and media. The results indicate that organizers have the highest level of trust for other stakeholders whereas media have the lowest. For other stakeholders trust levels are similar, suggesting that festival organizers capitalize on mutual stakeholder trust to broaden collaboration. Regarding dependence, volunteers showed the least level of dependence on other stakeholders, suggesting that organizers work to more deeply engage their volunteers to improve relationships. This multi-dimensional assessment of social exchange theory in the festival field contributes to our understanding of dynamics among festival stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Festival, stakeholders, social exchange, trust, control, dependence, altruism.

## **Introduction**

Among the theories pertaining to social interaction is social exchange theory (SET). SET posits that people weigh the costs and benefits when interacting with others and will enter into interactions that bring the most benefits and the least costs (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958, 1961, 1974; Ward & Berno, 2011). The key components of SET include trust, control, dependence and in later developments, altruism (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Emerson, 1975; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). The social interactions in a festival situation are expected to present dynamics that demonstrate how festival stakeholders differ on the propositions set forth in the theory.

Based on previous studies on festival stakeholders, there are research gaps. Even though diverse festival stakeholders collaborate together for organizing a successful festival, the SET has not been actively adopted in academic research to understand the power dynamics between stakeholders in sharing a variety of resources such as information, budget, influence, benefit, cost, and knowledge. Previous studies have often examined the responses of only one stakeholder, such as sponsors (Crompton, 1994; Dees, Bennett, & Tsuji, 2006), visitors (Moital, Whitefield, & Jackson, 2012; Özdemir & Çulha, 2009; Thrane, 2002), or volunteers (Barron & Rihova, 2011), most typically in developed destinations despite the global phenomenon of festivals. The dyadic stakeholder relationships that exist in festivals must be critically examined if collaboration is to be enhanced (Li, Wood, & Thomas, 2017; Robertson, Rogers, & Leask 2009).

In view of the above, the study goal is to advance our understanding of stakeholder relationships in order to improve festival success. Thus, the first objective of this research is to establish the differences between stakeholders in their responses to how they perceive themselves according to the tenets of social exchange—that is, regarding trust, control, dependence, and altruism, in their role as stakeholders in festivals. The second is to establish how stakeholders

evaluate other stakeholders regarding the four tenets. The third objective is to test the nature of social exchange concept in the African festival stakeholder discourse context. Propelled by global competitiveness, festivals are a growing component of the tourism system, as is the case in Africa (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008). Inter-organizational collaboration and stakeholder relations are recognized as key to festival success, yet their dynamics remain largely unknown.

## **Literature and hypotheses**

### *Social Exchange Theory*

Basically, SET is premised on the idea that human interaction and social behavior is an interchange of physical or intangible activity based on rewards or costs obtained from the interaction (Ap, 1992; Homans, 1961). This presupposes that rewards and costs obtained from any interaction guide how humans relate, that people will act in anticipation of some form of return, and that people will likely choose a course of action that promises the most rewards and the least costs (Molm, 1991; Molm, Takahashi, & Peterson, 2000). Hence, self-interest, individualism, and interdependence are key in the exchange process (Alonso & Bressan, 2013). Costs are what actors forego or “lose” as a result of the interaction (Ward & Berno, 2011). Costs can also be negative stimuli experienced in the exchange process, or simply what is deemed to have negative value to a person (Emerson, 1975).

One dimension of social exchange that merits consideration is the translation of individual dyadic relationships to explain inter-group interaction. This is because social exchanges also occur on a much larger scale between groups. Since SET points towards two-party individual relations, it is important to understand both the micro and macro levels of social interaction (Coulson, MacLaren, McKenzie, & O’Gorman, 2014; Emerson, 1975). Therefore, the theory does similar to

what economic exchange theory does for the competitive market because the concepts and principles show the exchange relations into larger social structures.

Tourism researchers have used SET to explain residents' perception and support for tourism (e.g., Ap, 1992; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkisoorn, 2012). For example, Nunkoo and Ramkisoorn (2012) discovered that residents' support for tourism in Mauritius was in line with what the theory proposes. Some studies examined residents' perception of and attitude towards events based on the theory with similar results (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Getz, 2012; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Kim & Morrison, 2005).

Alonso and Bressan (2013) justify the application of SET in the event context, stating that *"the adoption of SET may help gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and intricacies event stakeholders face, for instance in managing or participating at local events"* (p. 311). Some studies employed SET in the context of local community residents' perceptions to understand how they view the impacts of mega-events (Gursey & Kendell, 2006; Lim & Lee, 2006) and discovered that the extent to which residents benefit from an event largely determines their attitude towards the event and its sustenance (Getz, 2012).

Figure 1 illustrates the model of the social exchange relationship between any two stakeholders in a festival. Stakeholders differ in terms of their expectations of other stakeholders. Sponsors, for instance, *"enter partnerships with event organizations to secure benefits but there are risks associated with such investments"* (Crompton, 1994, p. 71). This implies that sponsors will sponsor a festival in exchange for benefits such as increasing or altering brand image, media exposure, and merchandising opportunities (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Moital et al., 2012). For visitors, reasons often include family togetherness, socializing and interacting, rest and relaxation,

exploring culture, enjoying the thrill of the festival, escape, family union, and novelty (Kim & Morrison, 2005).

Vendors tend to be profit-motivated (Reid, 2011), whereas local government authorities often expect the festival to promote the locality and bring wider socioeconomic and political benefits (Buch et al., 2011; Mossberg & Getz, 2006). Volunteers often seek excitement, the chance to meet people, the opportunity to do something useful for the community, team participation, and the chance to use their skills (Ralston, Lumsdon, & Downward, 2005; Wendell, Lishman, & Whalley, 2000). Local residents tend to be interested in improving the image of the community, enhancing community pride and relations, and appreciating community culture (1993; Jago & Shaw, 1998). Organizers are often interested in the survival and viability of festivals, and stakeholder satisfaction (Frisby & Getz, 1989).

The impetus for a relationship between any two stakeholders arises out of situations such as asymmetric information, limited resources, disharmony, conflict, common problems, legitimate interests, and dependency (Bourne & Walker, 2005; Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Getz, 2002; Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009; Li et al., 2017). The ability of stakeholders to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes from their interaction is dependent on the extent of trust, dependence, control, and altruism that they themselves have and that they perceive other stakeholders as having (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Larson, 2009a; Wicks, Berman, & Jones, 1999).

The beneficial outcomes of any exchange relationship between stakeholders include increased collaboration, information sharing, benefits sharing, resource exchange, building of trust, stakeholder satisfaction, enhanced autonomy of the festival organization, increasing participation in the festival, strengthening place attachment with the host community, and creating harmony between stakeholders (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Derrett, 2008; Getz, Andersson, &

Carlsen, 2010; Reid, 2011). The ultimate aim is to create a successful festival. The level of trust, dependence, control and altruism will, however, depend on the stakeholder in question.

## [FIGURE 1]

### *Trust*

One significant aspect of social exchange is trust (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). A universal definition of trust is however elusive. Trust is seen as the ability of parties over a period of time to consistently act in ways that enable them to cope with the uncertainties of each other's actions (So and Sculli, 2002). It is also seen as the acceptance of vulnerability based on the thinking that the other party will behave and do things in an expected way, or, as the confidence that the other party will do as expected (Rousseau et al. 1989; Nguyen & Rose, 2009). Trust could be between two familiar individuals (personal), individual strangers (generalized), between an individual and an organization or group (institutionalized), or political, where individuals trust a political or governmental system (Backmann & Innkpen, 2011; Kwon and Arenius, 2010; Nunkoo Ramkinssoon, & Gursey, 2012). Trust can also be competence-based, where one party believes that another party has the ability to carry out obligations effectively (Conelly, Miller, & Davis 2012).

Nunkoo (2017) identifies two schools of thought regarding trust in the social interaction context. The first is the micro to macro approach and the second is the macro to micro approach. The first approach sees trust as emanating from interpersonal relationships, shaped by culture and moving from the individual to influence societal organizations and institutions (Putnam, 1993). The macro to micro school of thought suggests that trust is shaped by institutions and elements such as law enforcement and rules, and that individuals follow these social institutions to develop

and maintain trust (Szsstompka, 2016). It is advocated that trust should form a central theme in social exchange as it minimizes conflict in social interactions (Stein & Harper, 2003). This holds because most social interactions are unlikely to occur out of compulsion, as the obligation one party owes the other is often not compulsory, implying that parties have to trust each other (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Zafirovski, 2005). Social interaction is, in many respects, based on trust, so it seems logical that it form the basis for analyzing any theory that has to do with social interaction (Cook et al., 2005). Yet “trust in social networks and collaborative arrangements seems to have been taken for granted by tourism researchers and practitioners compared to other fields such as sociology and political science” (Nunkoo, 2007, p. 282).

Trust is considered a resource that a stakeholder possesses; each stakeholder, it could be inferred, sees other stakeholders differently in relation to trust (Molm et al., 2000; Nunkoo et al., 2012). Trust is developed by frequent communication, reciprocal respect and listening to other parties, as well as fairness, ethical behavior, meeting obligations, and reciprocity (Leahy & Anderson, 2013; Fisher, 2013; Moscardo, 2014). With products and services, trust often results from previous positive experiences of using a particular product or service (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001) Trust has been considered important for community support for mega events (Gursey et al., 2017). It facilitates social interaction and reduces conflict between parties (Robins, 2016). Trust is vital in establishing and maintaining stakeholder collaboration, and indications of trustworthiness from a party enhances reciprocal relations (Nunkoo & Gursey 2015). Trust is necessary for resident support for tourism (Moscardo et al., 2017). When local residents trust the organizers of mega events, they tend to support the hosting of such events (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Building trust is essential if any festival is to succeed and grow (Larson, 2009b).

Festival stakeholder relations are based on mutual trust and personal relationships, rather than formalized group or organizational relationship guidelines (Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2006). For example, there can be strong trust between organizer and vendor because of sponsorship (Finkel, 2010), whereas organizers may need to more formally solicit trust from government (Li, Wood, & Thomas, 2017). Local residents may form trust with organizers if they believe that a festival generates benefits in the community (Jago & Shaw, 1998; Molloy, 2002), whereas organizers need trust from residents because they need their support (Hede, 2007; Reid, 2011). Visitors tend to show trust toward organizers if they experience a high quality festival (Tiew, Holmes, & De Bussy, 2015). Festival organizers need volunteers who assist the event without definite profit (Barron & Rihova, 2011; Ralston et al., 2005). Though past studies have attempted to understand mutual relationships or analyze the phenomenon through descriptive studies, empirical research to identify the level of festival stakeholder ties in terms of trust among pertinent actors is lacking. To test whether the population mean Likert scores for each festival stakeholder group differ in their responses regarding trust, the following null hypothesis is proposed:

*Null hypothesis 1: The population mean Likert scores for each festival stakeholder group are equal in their responses regarding trust.*

### *Control*

Additional aspects of SET that have widespread implications are the concepts of control and dependence (Thibault & Kelly, 1959). Underlying this aspect of the theory is the idea that people will avoid dependence which comes with control, should they be able to obtain what they want elsewhere. This is because dependence has a way of fostering control and most people want to avoid control if they can (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Three forms of control are identified by Thibault and Kelly (1959). The first is reflective control, which implies that a party has control



over themselves and their actions in a relationship regardless of what the other party does, and can reward themselves in the relationship. The second is fate control, where one party can control the outcomes of another party's future regardless of what that other party does. The third is behavior control, where a variation in one party's behavior can control what another party does or can do. At least one (or as many as all three) of these forms of control is present in any interdependent relationship.

Festival organizers show control over other stakeholders, specially, vendors who require booth rental contracts with the organizer (Tiew et al., 2015). Government authority and media hold festival organizers in check to examine whether the festival is well operated (Frawley, 2015), whereas volunteers are influenced by the guidance of organizers (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017; Ragsdell & Jepson, 2014; Ralston et al., 2005). Organizers can be influenced by sponsors because successful events' feasibility is often thanks to monetary or nonmonetary sponsors (Cummings, 2008; Dees et al., 2006). Additionally, there have been efforts to ascertain how the extent of control influences stakeholder relationships when a festival is held in multiple settings. As multilateral relations in the festival setting are complicated, it is tricky to set a hypothesis based on the level of agreement among stakeholders. Instead, it leads to the more general hypothesis 2.

*Null hypothesis 2: The population mean Likert scores for each festival stakeholder group are equal in their responses regarding control.*

### *Dependence*

Stakeholder dependence exists when a stakeholder has control over resources needed by another stakeholder (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Different stakeholders have different levels of dependence on others because stakeholders vary in the level of resources they possess or require (Frooman, 1999). These resources could be tangible or intangible. Dependency is created if the resources

being supplied are not so abundant as to be easily obtained elsewhere (Frooman, 1999). The magnitude of stakeholder dependency also depends on: how crucial the resource is to the operations of the stakeholder that requires it; the extent of control that the stakeholder supplying the resource has over it; and, the discretion that the stakeholder has over its distribution (Jawaher & McLaughlin, 2001). Dependency is also linked to power. Thus, the extent of power stakeholder A has over stakeholder B is directly linked to stakeholder B's dependency on stakeholder A (Emerson, 1962; Boutilier, 2017).

How each stakeholder shows dependency towards other stakeholders is critical to the success of any festival. When a stakeholder is heavily relied on by other stakeholders, this can lead to power imbalances and can result in a few stakeholders dominating the festival and influencing its content to suit their objectives (Frawley, 2015; Larson & Wikström, 2001; Presenza & Iocca, 2012). For example, organizers tend to show reliance upon sponsors because of financial or in-kind support (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998), to volunteers due to their volunteer work (Ralston et al., 2005), and to government due to financial subsidy and administrative support (Buch et al., 2011; Molloy, 2002). Vendors highly depend on support by organizers who offer opportunity to earn financially (Tiew et al., 2015). Residents and visitors have a favorable relationship with festival organizers and government when offered a good opportunity to enjoy local festivals (Cudney et al., 2012; Gursoy, Yolal, Ribeiro, & Netto, 2017; Kim, Choi, Agrusa, Wang, & Kim, 2010). To test the relations between diverse stakeholders who have different resources and resource needs the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Null hypothesis 3: The population mean Likert scores for each festival stakeholder group are equal in their responses regarding dependence.*

*Altruism*

There have been criticisms of SET as being rather reductionist by considering psychology as the sole basis of sociological phenomena, which has led to some adjustments (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005). Voluntary human interaction is not always motivated by some gain, as seen by Blau (1964). In effect, “*rationality in the sense of action based upon prior calculation of expected returns forms [just] one part of the subject matter of social exchange*” (Emerson, 1975, p. 341). This has led to the consideration of altruism in social exchange studies because, although SET is premised on the weighing of benefits and costs, social interactions can also be altruistic in which rewards are not necessarily anticipated (Emerson, 1975; Parakevaidis & Andriotis, 2017).

From a festival standpoint, it is essential to consider stakeholders who participate from an altruistic point of view and to establish the possible reasons for this. Some stakeholders, notably volunteers, are thought to be altruistic whereas sponsors and vendors are often thought to be less altruistic (Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017). Local residents also assist festival participants by being welcoming, keeping areas clean, sharing parking lots, etc. (Buch et al., 2011; Getz et al., 2006). Altruistic motivation can come from a relationship between sponsor and organizer in cases where sponsorship comes from generosity (Dees et al., 2010). Since government offices are most willing to support successful festivals, their relationship with organizers should generally be encouraging. However, media can promote or critic the event depending on the festival outcome. (Getz, 2002). Consequently, this study attempts to investigate the magnitude of agreement between multiple actors regarding exchange of altruism. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

*Null hypothesis 4: The population mean Likert scores for each festival stakeholder group are equal in their responses regarding altruism.*

## **Methodology**

### *Instrument Development*

Since the operationalization of items differs across past research, items were selected that best reflected the study definitions of trust, altruism, control, and dependence. Items to measure trust were elicited from a range of previous research (Austin, 2000; Blau, 1964; Cook et al., 2005; Homans, 1958; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Molm et al., 2000; Nunkoo, 2015; Nunkoo & Ramkisoorn, 2012; Nunkoo & Smith, 2013; Stein & Harper, 2003). Items to measure altruism reflect the notion that positive actions can and are taken for the interest of other stakeholders without the expectation of a positive reciprocal gesture (e.g., Blau, 1964; Coghlan & Fennell, 2009; Emerson, 1975; Nair, 2002; Sawyer, 1966).

Items to measure control were selected to reflect the ability of a stakeholder to determine the actions of another stakeholder (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013; Shapiro, 1987; Thibault & Kelly, 1959). Items to measure dependence reflect the extent to which a stakeholder's successful participation in the festival is reliant on another stakeholder (Andersson & Getz, 2008; Frooman, 1999; Frooman & Murrell, 2005; Molm, 1991; Thibault & Kelly, 1959).

Questionnaires were customized to measure the study variables across the eight identified stakeholder groups. Each questionnaire contained three sections: items for self-evaluation, for evaluation of other stakeholders, and for the socio-demographic profile of respondents. Except for socio-demographic variables, all variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree"; 3 = "neutral"; 5 = "strongly agree"). To further ensure that the instrument was valid and reliable, a pretest was conducted involving 15 faculty and doctoral students researching tourism and hospitality. Some items were removed or reworded after comments raised in the pretest. The next stage was a pilot test using 69 respondents of eight actual stakeholder groups, who participated in the Parigbelle Festival in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Based on their comments, minor modifications of some items were made.

### *Data Collection*

Data were collected in Ghana where festivals are not only important for tourism, but culturally and socially as well (for more about Ghanaian festivals, refer to the Ghana Tourism Authority, 2014). A selection process was established to identify tourism festivals, held to attract tourists, build destination image, or to support other tourism developments, as distinct from local festivals held to foster community or cultural development. Of the over 200 festivals on a list of the Ghana Tourism Authority, six were selected according to a set of criteria. First, the scale of the festival had to be such that all eight stakeholder groups were represented. Festivals that did not have all the stakeholder groups represented were not considered. Second, the festivals selected were held between the study timeframe of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2015 to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016 since this was the time period available for the researchers to be in Ghana and to travel around the country to collect the data. Third, the selected festivals were all characterized as traditional genre festivals. Traditional festivals are the most prominent, public and local of all festivals and also have the involvement of all stakeholders. Other festival genres in Ghana including private music and art festivals, limited in terms of number and composition of stakeholders, without representation of all eight stakeholder groups. Fourth, selected festivals had to be long-established and successful in Ghana. Since many festivals abound, even to the level of the local village, it was vital to ensure that the selected festivals were generally well known and established in Ghanaian society. Based on these criteria, the selected festivals were Danjua, Damba, Akwasidae, Edina Bronya, Fao, and Aboakyir, geographically dispersed throughout the country.

These festivals are organized by local communities in various geographical regions of Ghana. Common features include song, dance, food and cultural celebrations. The chiefs of these areas typically set up committees to oversee the festivals. The generally young nature of the

Ghanaian population, who desire socialization and to learn about the culture and tradition of the local community, also dictates that the participants are of a younger age and male, reflecting Ghana's patriarchal-leaning roots. Festivals usually last a week, with a grand durbar held on the penultimate day, when chiefs of the local areas address the inhabitants. The durbar is a time to give thanks to the gods for the previous year, to make merry, and to socialize.

In the main survey, contact with the various organizers of the festivals was aided by officials from the Centre for National Culture (CNC), the Regional House of Chiefs, and the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA). To select samples for stakeholder groups of organizers, government authorities, sponsors, and media, randomly selected groups from the lists we had obtained from the officials were used. For selection of samples from vendors, visitors, local residents, and volunteers, a random sampling approach was challenging because the festivals were hosted in open spaces.

Thus, to employ scientific sampling methods for selecting representative samples of these groups, each festival venue was divided into seven districts to avoid sampling bias and to ensure that only those who were in one location in the open space were selected. Then, samples for the cohorts were chosen according to the sample targets allocated in advance. Data collection was done during both weekdays and weekends between December 2015 and March 2016 and a gift (worth USD 0.50) was offered to those who completed the questionnaire. Among the 1,200 questionnaires distributed at the six festivals, a total of 1,105 were collected. After excluding 13 questionnaires with incomplete responses, a total of 1,092 questionnaires were used for data analysis. The response rates for the six festivals ranged from 87% to 99%. The sample size showed a variation from 6.6% to 21.2% of participants across the six festivals.

## Results

### *Profiles of Respondents*

As a percentage of respondents ( $N=1,092$ ), the stakeholder groups were as follows: organizer ( $n=85$ , 7.78%), government authorities ( $n=68$ , 6.23%), volunteers ( $n=128$ , 11.70%), local residents ( $n=255$ , 23.35%), visitors ( $n=330$ , 30.22%), sponsors ( $n=52$ , 4.76%), vendors ( $n=105$ , 9.62%), and media ( $n=69$ , 6.32%). In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male (71%). With respect to occupation, students constituted the majority (43%), followed by civil servants (10%) and company employees (8.1%). The least represented occupational group was the retired (0.6%).

In terms of education level, 40.2% of the respondents had at least a high school education, and 41.8% were either currently attending a polytechnic/university or had completed university. With regard to age distribution, most of the respondents were aged between 20 and 29 (41.8%), followed by those aged 18 to 20 (23.7%) and those aged 30 to 39 (18.8%). The age group that was least represented was the 60 years and over group (2.5%). This relatively young sample reflects Ghana's festival participation of volunteer students, and popularity with visitors and residents under 40 years of age (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2014). The generally young nature of the Ghanaian population, who desire socialization and to learn about the culture and tradition of the local community, also dictates that the participants are of a younger age.

### *Assumption check prior to one-way ANOVA and repeated measures ANOVA*

The analytical method of one-way ANOVA was used to identify differences in responses among the eight stakeholder groups regarding the items specifying trust, altruism, control and dependence. The repeated measures ANOVA were employed to compare responses to each of these conditions in cases where respondents were subjected to more than one condition/trial

(Davis, 2003). Prior to performing these tests, it is imperative to check assumptions that (i) each sample is drawn from a normally distributed population (normality), and (ii) the populations from which the samples have been taken exhibit equal variance (homogeneity) (McClave, Benson, & Sincich, 2008).

To check normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was adopted, and Mauchly's test for Sphericity (for repeated measures ANOVA) was used to assess equal variance of the different groups. Accordingly, results of the Shapiro-Wilk test (significant at the .01 level) and of Mauchly's test for Sphericity (significant at the .01 level) revealed that most of the ANOVA models violated normality. Thus, this study adopted two non-parametric methods: the Kruskal-Wallis test as an alternative for one-way ANOVA; and, the Friedman test as an alternative of repeated measures ANOVA (Zimmerman & Zumbo, 1993). If significant at the .001 level, there is a statistically significant difference in item perception between festival stakeholders.

#### *Stakeholders' Self-evaluation*

Table 1 reports outcomes of a series of Kruskal-Wallis tests. Significances were identified at least at the .01 level in all items except one. The results of computing mean rank scores on trust reveal that the organizer group has the highest level of trust for other stakeholders in the festivals, whereas media and sponsor groups display the lowest level of trust. With regard to the altruism item, "I think I participate in this festival without expecting any reward in return from other stakeholders" the organizer group has the highest perception of the altruistic nature of their actions, whereas sponsors scored the lowest mean rank on this item. In terms of control, the mean rank score of the organizer group is the highest, indicating that the perception of control over other stakeholders is highest among organizers. The mean rank scores of the local resident and visitor groups shows that they have the lowest perception of their control over other stakeholders. It also



matters most to organizers which stakeholder has the most control over the festival, whereas the other groups did not differ in their perception of control. Concerning dependence, organizers demonstrate the highest mean rank value, while government authorities and volunteers show the lowest mean ranks.

**[TABLE 1]**

*Each Stakeholder's Evaluation of Other Stakeholder Groups*

Tables 2 through 5 illustrate the results of employing the Friedman test to examine how stakeholders evaluated each other. Some stakeholders were not included for statistical procedures because a relationship between two stakeholders was not hypothesized. For example, a dyadic relationship between media and sponsor was not tested because it was hypothesized that in this case, a social exchange relationship would not be formulated. Table 2 displays the organizers' evaluation of other stakeholders. In terms of trust, organizers have the highest level of trust for local residents - its mean rank score was the highest- whereas organizers show the lowest trust for vendors. Concerning altruism, organizers most highly regard local residents as an altruistic group, and regard sponsors as least. Organizers also display the most control over volunteers and local residents, and the least over government authorities. In terms of dependence, results show that organizers depend most on volunteers and local residents to support their role, and depend least on vendors.

Table 2 also showcases how government authorities evaluated other stakeholders. The highest level of trust was found for the organizer, while the lowest was for local residents and visitors. Authorities consider volunteers and local residents to be the most altruistic groups, and vendors to be the least. Authorities give the most control over visitors and the least over organizers.

In order to play their festival role effectively, government authorities relied most on organizers, and least on sponsors and vendors.

**[TABLE 2]**

Table 3 depicts the evaluation of other stakeholders by vendors. Vendors most highly regarded organizer to be altruistic, whereas they did visitors or local residents to be least altruistic. Vendors indicate the lowest level of control over organizers, while their highest level of control is over visitors. Vendors also depend most on organizers to support their role in festivals, and least on government authorities. Turning to volunteers' evaluation of other stakeholders, beginning with altruism, volunteers acted most altruistically towards local residents, and least so towards sponsors. They also indicated the highest level of control over visitors and vendors, and the lowest level over organizers. Volunteers also depend most on organizers and least on visitors and vendors in order to effectively play their role in the festivals.

**[TABLE 3]**

Local residents' evaluation of other stakeholders is displayed in Table 4. Local residents act most altruistically towards volunteers, while least so towards sponsors. They also rely most on the organizers and least so on the local authorities and sponsors in order to play their role in the festivals. Table 4 also depicts how the visitors evaluated other stakeholders. Visitors dealt most altruistically with local residents, and least so with vendors. Visitors also show a generally low level of control over other stakeholders with the highest being over vendors and the lowest over organizers. On dependence, visitors depend most on organizers and volunteers but least on the vendors. Table 5 shows the responses of the media in evaluating other stakeholders, they have

little to no relationship with other stakeholders because all items did not show significance at the .05 level.

## [TABLES 4 AND 5]

### **Discussion and implications**

From the results of the stakeholder self-evaluations, organizers show the highest level of trust for other stakeholders, consistent with previous studies (Finkel, 2010; Li et al., 2017; Reid, 2011). The media on the other hand, show the lowest level of trust for other festival stakeholders. Even though the role of media is minimal during the organizing of a festival, its role is significant in terms of promotion and ultimately, event outcomes. Thus, there is a need to solicit media commitment with festivals in order for media to develop interest in and favorability of festivals. Apart from the organizers, vendors have a higher level of trust than all other stakeholders. However, when stakeholders evaluated each other, significant differences were inconsistent, indicating that no single stakeholder group is the most trusted by all stakeholders involved. This situation is a deviation from studies in other settings such as Larson and Gyimothy (2013) in Sweden and Denmark, Gursoy et al. (2017) in the United States, and Dickson et al. (2018) in New Zealand, where trust levels among event stakeholders were consistently low, and varied from stakeholder to stakeholder.

Building trust takes time, repeated interaction and familiarity (Dervitsiotis, 2003; Izzo, Bonetti, & Masiello, 2012; Larson, Getz, & Pastras, 2015; Ward & Berno, 2011). Frequency of interaction is a panacea for trust to develop, and stakeholders that dialogue frequently develop transparency. Trust between stakeholders is stimulated by frequent interactions (Larson & Gyimothy, 2013; Ziakas & Costa, 2010). When stakeholders interact frequently, personal ties often

develop, and this increases trust (Larson & Wikström 2001). Furthermore, to develop and maintain trust, there must be elements of sincerity, competence and care (Dervitsiotis, 2003). Organizers generally view their role as a commitment to make the festival a success and to uphold their integrity as organizers, rather than just as a job to do. For this reason, sincerity and genuine care for the success of the festival is often present. This increases the organizers' willingness to voluntarily work with and trust other stakeholders (Ragsdell & Jepson, 2014).

The low level of trust exhibited by the media is likely due to the limited interaction they have with other stakeholders, especially at the planning stage of the festival. The quest for objectivity in their reporting also makes them cautious in how they accept the views expressed by stakeholders. Furthermore, according to Ragsdell and Jepson (2014), paid workers or contracted staff do not often have high levels of trust for other stakeholders. The higher level of trust expressed by vendors above other stakeholders in the self-evaluation is attributed to the fact that the interaction between vendors and other stakeholders is often a quick financial transaction which may not offer sufficient time for mistrust to develop. The fact that no stakeholder stood out clearly as the most trusted is, however, an unusual deviation because as observed by some researchers (Coulson et al., 2014; Larson et al. 2015), organizers tend to have a higher level of trust from other stakeholders through consistently delivering festival success.

The results of the stakeholder self-evaluation of altruism show that the organizers view themselves as more altruistic than all other stakeholders. When volunteers evaluate other stakeholders, they give the lowest altruism scores to sponsors and vendors. The likely reason is that volunteers regard the two groups as profit-seeking compared to their volunteering motive. Therefore, conflicts can occur between their groups. In evaluating altruism in relation to other specific stakeholders, most stakeholder groups (four out of six) indicated that they acted most

altruistically towards local residents. The least altruistic behavior was observed towards sponsors. Since organizers in these festivals are not paid professionals and yet bear the responsibility of ensuring a festival's success, it is natural for them to have a high perception of selflessness.

Contrary to what SET stipulates, stakeholders in these festivals have a high sense of altruism. Altruism was considered because some people relate to others in an altruistic manner (Cropranzano & Mitchell, 2005; Emerson, 1975). Although the literature recognizes the altruistic nature of volunteers (Molloy, 2002), the volunteers in this study did not display a level of altruism significantly higher than other stakeholders. Often assumed to be altruistic, volunteers tend to seek benefits such as developing interpersonal contacts and prestige in the community. Thus, the findings of this study showed differences from those of previous studies (Bang & Ross, 2009; Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017).

Considering that sponsors seldom commit resources without expectation of some benefit (Cummings, 2008) the results not indicating sponsors as the least altruistic is quite interesting. In most festivals, the aim of festival sponsorship is to make profit from participants who come to the festival, those who watch the festival via some media (such as the Indie music festivals in Australia), increase brand awareness, and also to expand markets by using the festival as a marketing tool (Larson, 2009; Mossberg & Getz, 2006). This finding is evidence to suggest that sponsorship of festivals is sometimes seen as a way of giving back to the community (Finkel, 2010; Frisby & Getz, 1989).

From the results of the self-evaluation of control, organizers show the highest perception of control over other stakeholders, particularly over local residents, which suggests an interesting power dynamic. The result implies a connection between organizer and residents in the community in a process of converging local voices in support of a festival. Sponsors also display a higher

perception of control over other stakeholders than government authorities, vendors, volunteers, local residents, visitors and the media. The result is attributed to a sense of power derived from monetary or in-kind sponsorship (Crompton, 1994; Dees et al., 2006). In terms of control over particular stakeholders, most stakeholders thought they had the highest control over visitors and the least control over organizers. Control results from possession of critical resources needed by others (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The control exercised by organizers is logical because they have greater influence over how the festival proceeds, including resource allocation and giving directions to other stakeholders (Ralston et al., 2015; Tiew et al., 2015). The high perception of control by sponsors is attributed to the financial resources they provide especially at the planning stage of festivals (Crompton, 1994; Mossberg & Getz, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003; Reid, 2011). Contrary to what we anticipated, government authorities do not have significant control in these festivals; this is likely because the festivals in this study are largely community-driven and less reliant on government agencies for resources.

Results of stakeholder dependence show that organizers have the highest level of agreement on their level of reliance on other stakeholders. The results are similar to those of other studies where the organizer is central to relationships with stakeholders (Getz et al., 2006; Molloy, 2002). Government authorities and volunteers however show the lowest level of agreement on their dependence on other stakeholders. The reason is attributable to little need of their dependence upon other stakeholders as the role of government is often limited to festival audit or voluntary assistance (Ralston et al., 2005). The level of dependence on other stakeholders was higher for sponsors than government authorities and volunteers. Local residents showed the second highest level of dependence on other stakeholders. Most stakeholders' highest reliance was on organizers and local residents, and lowest on vendors. This suggests that festival organizers are most mutually

reliant, which explains their higher level of perception of dependence. This dependence is often tilted towards powerful stakeholders who contribute significant resources to the festival, as previous studies have indicated (Andersson & Getz, 2008; Frawley, 2015; Ward & Berno, 2011).

However, volunteers and government authorities revealed their low level of dependence on other stakeholders because government authorities, such as regional tourism offices and other agencies, tend not to be actively involved in festivals (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008). Volunteers are basically at the service of the organizers and in festivals where organizers dictate virtually everything volunteers tend to have a low perception of dependence on other stakeholders (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006).

From this study, we see that almost all stakeholders state that they rely most on the organizers in order to effectively participate in festivals, which is reasonable because the organizers are the central stakeholders around which most festivals revolve (Reid, 2011; Reid & Arcodia, 2002). At the opposite end of the spectrum, stakeholders depend least on vendors. Vendors are often the least powerful because they do businesses under set contracts and their voices can be easily quelled (Tiew et al., 2015). In summary, null hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 are rejected and alternative hypotheses supported, meaning that stakeholders perceived significant differences in terms of trust, altruism, control, and dependence in their relationships with other stakeholders. Further, the magnitude of the differences varies by stakeholder and by component of the social exchange theory.

#### *Conclusion and suggestions for future study*

This study contributes to a new application of SET in the festival field through multi-dimensional assessment, and identifies specific strengths and weaknesses in stakeholder relations. Interestingly, there is give and take for all stakeholders, and while some exchanges are expected,

others surprise. Firstly, trust implies a degree of willingness to cooperate. This study found not only high trust levels between stakeholders but additionally, no differences regarding which of the various stakeholders were less trustworthy. On a practical level, festivals could capitalize on this apparent trust to bring all stakeholders onboard festival planning committees to enhance collaboration among stakeholders. This would ultimately render the festivals more attractive and successful since more ideas for planning and marketing would be offered and all stakeholders would be more likely to support efforts since they would have been part of the festival's creation. Since the media have the lowest level of trust, it would be imperative to include them in the early stages of festival planning in order to build trust and allow them the opportunity to see the benefits of covering the event. It would be beneficial to get the media to go even further—to extend their support of festivals, especially in terms of publicity.

The examination of altruism was intended to see the extent to which altruism is exercised by stakeholders in the festival context. This research lends support to the notion of altruism in human interaction stemming from later developments in SET. Stakeholders in this festival study context display a high level of altruistic behavior. This finding is especially surprising in relation to sponsors because they are often considered to be purely profit-oriented stakeholders. Results lend support to the assertion that sponsorship of festivals can, to some extent, be a corporate social responsibility. In order to tap into this altruistic goodwill, festival organizers can appeal to the social responsibility of sponsors and other resource holders to enhance support for festivals.

The aspect of social exchange related to control and dependence is supported by this study because festival stakeholders, especially organizers and sponsors who have the most resources, exhibit more control. Since organizers are relied on most by other stakeholders, they will need to deliver on the expectations of all stakeholders in order to sustain participation. Given the



importance of control, it would serve a good purpose to bring in professionals to assist in the organization of these festivals as many suffer from organizational and resource mobilization constraints when run by nonprofessionals.

While a strength of this study is its unique cultural context, adding an African perspective to literature most weighted to other geographical settings, this too is a limitation. Surveys were conducted over four months at six representative cultural festivals in Ghana. We acknowledge that the dynamics of stakeholder interactions may be characteristically different from other types of festivals. For this reason, future research to compare the results of this study to those of other festival genres and geographies is recommended. Now, with this foundational understanding of SET in Ghanaian festivals, testing in other cultural contexts will help to advance more universal conclusions. Meanings of festivals can differ by cross-cultural context (Getz et al., 2010; Robertson, 2009). Thus, extending this study would enhance external validity by exploring the extent to which the outcomes can be applied or generalized to other festival situations, to other cultural samples (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010), and to other contexts where stakeholder relationships matter. Beyond the festival setting and geographic location, this research contributes a methodological approach to study the contemporary phenomenon of social exchange in a real and natural context, and provides a means to empirically measure the complexity of stakeholder relationships.

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Table 1. Festival Stakeholders' Self-evaluation

	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Kruskal- Wallis test	<i>p</i> - value
<i>Trust</i>										
I think I trust other stakeholders in this festival.	630.23	517.67	509.82	607.34	585.02	542.85	513.02	509.02	19.38**	.007
<i>Altruism</i>										
I think I participate in this festival without expecting any reward in return from other stakeholders.	722.69	569.22	412.13	494.28	519.68	543.05	547.03	547.73	43.83***	.000
I think I consider the interests of other festival stakeholders first before mine.	799.92	519.70	560.45	494.74	570.00	528.34	516.95	493.84	67.62***	.000
<i>Control</i>										
I think I have control over most stakeholders in the festival.	756.74	583.35	645.45	523.93	601.26	509.39	485.15	539.94	68.62***	.000

I think it matters to me which stakeholder has more control over this festival.	692.79	546.24	587.71	545.91	536.10	538.80	515.22	533.73	24.15**	.001
<i>Dependence</i>										
I think I rely on other stakeholders in order to play my role in this festival.	550.47	491.28	544.96	586.00	544.68	549.22	538.25	569.89	4.63	.705
I think my level of reliance on other stakeholders is appropriate.	647.49	492.94	535.42	549.76	500.84	577.49	521.59	567.59	19.80**	.006

Note: \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ , \*\*:  $p < .01$ , \*:  $p < .05$ .  
Numbers indicate mean rank scores.

Table 2. Organizers' and Government Authorities' Evaluation of Other Stakeholder Groups

Organizers' Evaluation	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	4.29	4.15	3.32	4.08	4.50	4.22	3.48	43.66***	.000
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	4.12	3.65	3.73	4.16	4.19	4.14	4.01	21.38**	.002
I have control over ___ in this festival.	2.93	3.43	3.49	4.83	4.82	4.35	4.15	103.79***	.000
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.90	3.78	3.65	4.39	4.40	3.87	4.00	29.85***	.000

  

Government Authorities' Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	4.53	3.94	3.84	4.06	3.79	3.76	4.08	18.81**	.004

I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	4.10	3.90	3.48	4.21	4.24	4.06	4.01	24.60***	.000
I have control over ___ in this festival.	3.65	3.74	4.07	3.92	3.90	4.54	4.17	29.13***	.000
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	5.05	3.57	3.57	3.90	4.40	3.72	3.79	61.09***	.000

Note: \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ , \*\*:  $p < .01$ , \*:  $p < .05$ .

Numbers indicate mean rank scores.

Table 3. Vendors' and Volunteers' Evaluation of Other Stakeholder Groups

Vendors' Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.11	2.97	N/A	3.02	3.03	2.86	N/A	4.00	.408
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.22	3.01	N/A	3.06	2.88	2.84	N/A	10.26	.036
I have control over ___ in this festival.	2.75	2.98	N/A	3.01	3.03	3.23	N/A	13.88*	.008
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.26	2.70	N/A	2.79	3.26	2.99	N/A	20.99***	.000

  

Volunteers' Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.73	3.55	3.34	3.38	3.62	3.38	N/A	9.91	.078

I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.55	3.41	3.14	3.23	3.92	3.75	N/A	31.63***	.000
I have control over ___ in this festival.	3.16	3.37	3.44	3.80	3.49	3.75	N/A	18.21**	.003
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	4.00	3.49	3.37	3.23	3.73	3.19	N/A	33.35***	.000

Note: \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ , \*\*:  $p < .01$ , \*:  $p < .05$ .

N/A indicates that a relationship between two stakeholders was not hypothesized.

Numbers indicate mean rank scores.

Table 4. Local Residents' and Visitors' Evaluation of Other Stakeholder Groups

Local Residents' Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Visitor (7)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.97	4.02	3.97	3.85	4.14	3.89	4.16	10.31	.112
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	4.08	4.02	3.72	3.95	4.18	4.04	4.00	15.92*	.014
I have control over ___ in this festival.	3.84	3.80	3.96	4.13	4.10	4.11	4.06	15.12*	.019
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	4.45	3.68	3.72	3.90	4.32	3.90	4.03	66.40***	.000

  

Visitors' Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Media (8)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	<i>p</i> -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	3.60	3.44	3.43	3.41	3.51	3.62	N/A	10.14	.071

I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	3.56	3.43	3.45	3.38	3.52	3.66	N/A	13.74	.017
I have control over ___ in this festival.	3.32	3.43	3.61	3.73	3.49	3.44	N/A	29.72***	.000
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	3.63	3.42	3.33	3.21	3.66	3.77	N/A	54.80***	.000

Note: \*\*\*:  $p < .001$ , \*\*:  $p < .01$ , \*:  $p < .05$ .

N/A indicates that a relationship between two stakeholders was not hypothesized.

Numbers indicate mean rank scores.

Table 5. Media's Evaluation of Other Stakeholder Groups

Media's Evaluation	Organizer (1)	Government Authority (2)	Sponsor (3)	Vendor (4)	Volunteer (5)	Local Resident (6)	Visitor (7)	Chi-square derived by Friedman's two-way ANOVA for ranks	$p$ -value
I trust the ___ in this festival.	2.06	2.02	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.92	N/A	1.98	.372
I deal with ___ without expecting any reward in return.	2.03	1.97	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.00	N/A	.400	.819
I have control over ___ in this festival.	1.89	2.06	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.06	N/A	5.73	.057
I rely on ___ in order to play my role in this festival.	2.07	1.94	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.99	N/A	1.24	.539

Note: N/A indicates that a relationship between two stakeholders was not hypothesized.

Numbers indicate mean rank scores.



Figure 1. The Social Exchange Relationship between Festival Stakeholders

