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HOSTING A MEMORABLE EVENT

Case: Food Festival in Ostrobothnia

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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<p>Event tourism is a fast growing sector in the tourism industry, over the last decade this sector has experienced tremendous growth and exposure and has attracted new investors and stakeholders. The aim of this thesis was to ascertain how the event food festival in Ostrobothnia (Jakobstad) was organized and managed. Also the aim was to find out what the tourism experts, participants and visiting tourists think about the achievements and shortfalls of this event – food festival in Ostrobothnia which was the first of its kind to be hosted in the city of Jakobstad in the Ostrobothnia region of western Finland.</p> <p>This thesis consists of three parts: the introduction, the theoretical framework, and the empirical study, The introduction describes the aim of the study, purpose and objectives, research problem and limitations. The theoretical framework dwells on event tourism, event management, food tourism and the Ostrobothnia food festival, and the empirical part talks about the research method that was applied on this study was qualitative research method which includes interview and observation, the nature of the research topic gave rise to the type of interview to be used which was the semi-structured interview. This type of interview is regularly used in qualitative research and; since the tourism industry is more descriptive in nature, the qualitative research method was chosen for this work.</p> <p>The findings of this study revealed that the food festival was a success, even though it was the first time it was organized its success cuts across all sections of the festival which is a sign that the concept behind the festival has worked perfectly well. The conclusion drawn from the research findings was that the organizers should improve in the areas of organization, planning and efficient management in the future. These recommendations are important for developing the event and giving it the needed exposure.</p>		
Key words Event tourism, event management, tourism, food tourism, food festival, qualitative research		

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1 INTRODUCTION

Event tourism as a tourism sector has gained a lot of recognition all over the world as this growth is a relatively recent development. More cities, towns and regions can boast with being a destination region today, because of the unique nature and advancement of event tourism in their domain. All these denote the importance of this particular industry. Events are being organized by villages, towns and cities as a way of creating awareness about what they have to offer to the outside world. They also use these events to market their tourism potentials to prospective tourists and investors as a means of attracting them. It is also a fact that these villages, towns and cities now profile themselves as destination regions by organizing and hosting events of various types and magnitudes.

The fact that the case under review in this study is a food festival (Swe. Matfesten, Fin. Ruokafestivaali) that was hosted for the first time, the study will be highlighting some detailed review of event tourism, event management, food tourism and the actual event. During the food festival in Ostrobothnia, a detailed research was conducted and the results were analyzed, and based on this conclusions could be drawn and recommendations made.

When defining event tourism Getz (1997, 16) notes that it implies the systematic planning, development, marketing of events as tourist attractions, as catalysts for other developments, image builders, and animators of attractions and destination area and that event tourism strategies should also cover the management of news and negative events. He also defined it as a market segment consisting of those people who travel to attend events, or who can be motivated to attend events while away from home

1.1 Aim of the thesis

The main aim of this thesis is to look at the process associated with organizing and hosting an event. The aim is also to ascertain what the tourism experts, participants and visiting tourists think about the achievements and shortfalls of this event - Jakobstad food festival (Matfesten)

which was the first of its kind to be hosted in the city of Jakobstad in the Ostrobothnia region of western Finland.

The main purpose is to carry out an in-depth study of how events are being managed and the scope of the research is restricted to the study of a small event. The reason for this is that the study will be of a qualitative nature. Therefore a smaller event is preferable in order to facilitate finding out how events are managed on a practical level. The results of this research are thus expected to be reliable as this case is small-scale and provide useful and reliable recommendations for the future.

Some objectives of the study are to see event tourism as a medium of branding a city or town as a destination region. Also, to see event hosting as a means of economic gains for the organizers, the host community and the participants. Furthermore, to recommend possible ways of hosting better events that will meet the expectations of all stakeholders in the future.

The study area in this thesis is the city of Jakobstad (Fin. Pietarsaari) which is a town of about 20,000 inhabitants, located in the Ostrobothnia region in the western part of Finland. It is a city known for its rich cultural heritage and for organizing and hosting various types of events and festivals ranging from cultural, historical, musical, sports, food to religious events and festivals. The food festival is one such event and it will be under focus in this thesis, which is expected to expose the strengths and weaknesses on the part of the organizers, provide constructive criticism and positive feedbacks and comments on the part of the participants, comprising the sellers and buyers as well as leisure tourists and tourism experts. (Jakobstad municipality 2011)

Jakobstad is located on the Gulf of Bothnia, and is an important port and industrial center, where more than half of the inhabitants speak Swedish. The town was founded in 1652 by Ebba Brahe, a widow of the Swedish general Count Jacob de la Gard. In the 17th century the area around the commune of Pedersöre on which the town now stands, was a fief of the de la Gardie family. Queen Christina of Sweden revoked the fief, but granted Count Jacob the right to found a town. (Jakobstad municipality 2011)

Jakobstad is noted for the botanical garden that features classical park architecture and is one of the most northernly gardens in the world. The park was completed in 1932 and features over 1,000 plant species. It is also known for its rich cultural heritage, wonderful attractions and a host of various kinds of events. The city of Jakobstad has grown over the years to become a city that has been positioned in great developmental strides. The city has become a destination region and is characterized as having a lot of attractions that range from historical, cultural and manmade attractions. It is of interest to know that the city enjoys relative peace and the local resident are very hospitable to tourists both from within and outside of Finland. (Jakobstad municipality 2011)

In respect of the fact that event tourism is fast becoming an important sector of the tourism industry, the problems associated with event hosting cannot be overemphasized. Such problems when properly identified and addressed, will pave the way for better event management.

Since this will be the first edition of this food festival, the research problem is to ascertain the effectiveness of the medium the organizers have used to create the awareness of this event to the participants, the residents of Jakobstad and its surrounding towns and villages. The researcher will collect contributions from participants and stakeholders about their opinion concerning this event. The researcher intends to carry out a survey during the event by interviewing selected participants and tourists on what their assessment is regarding the event, and to take suggestions from them on ways to improve subsequent editions of the event.

1.2 Limitations of the study

It is a known fact that every research work faces one kind of limitation or the other, and these limitations can hinder the desired result and affect the main aim of the study. Some of the expected limitations to this study can be, for example, that the interviewees are not giving their full cooperation to the researcher. The respondent may decide to withhold relevant

information crucial to the research work and thereby create problems for the researcher. Respondents may be afraid to disclose such information out of fear that it will be used against them. Another limitation the researcher can envisage during the research process is the lack of sufficient data and information at disposal. Since it was the first time that such a food festival was hosted in the city of Jakobstad, it is possible that relevant information that can aid the researcher may not have been readily available.

This thesis consists of three parts: the introduction, the theoretical framework, and the empirical study. The introduction, describes the aim of the study, purpose and objectives, the Jakobstad food festival, research problems and limitations. The theoretical framework dwells on event tourism, event management and food festival, and the empirical part discusses about the research method to be applied on this study, the interview type and presentation of the interview questions to be administered to the participants, the execution of the process, followed by presentation and analysis of the outcome of the interview, resulting in findings and reaching a conclusion and recommendation for future use.

2 EVENT TOURISM

In this chapter the world of event tourism will be introduced, followed by the trends and factors affecting an event, motivations behind hosting an event, attendee`s motivations to attend events and various stakeholders in the event sector. This will be followed by highlighting the different types of events, classifications of events and the economic importance of event hosting for both to the organizers and the host community. The chapter will be concluded by highlighting food tourism, its history, importance and growth.

2.1 Definition of event tourism

Historical evidence of human beings' existence has shown that events have always been a part of human activities, as people have always found ways of marking important events in their lives. People are getting more interested in events of different types, and can travel very long distances to participate in events that catch their interest. An event can therefore be referred to as an organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, and special event which comprises of several different, yet related, functions.

When defining event tourism Getz (1997,16) says that it implies the systematic planning, development, marketing of events as tourist attractions, as catalysts for other developments, image builders, and animators of attractions and destination areas and that event tourism strategies should also cover the management of news and negative events. He also defined it as a market segment consisting of those people who travel to attend events, or who can be motivated to attend events while away from home. Another definition of event tourism by Getz (2005) is that it is a destination and marketing strategy to realize all the potential economic benefits of events.

In his introduction Getz (1997) highlighted some objectives of event tourism and they are: To develop a systematic approach to the planning, development, and marketing of events as tourist attractions, catalysts, and image builders, and attractions, communities and destination areas. Examine event tourists, their motivations, benefits sought and consumer behavior, for the purpose of improved marketing. Provide practical planning and marketing methods and techniques for use by tourist organizations and event managers/organizers. Also to illustrate key concepts and methods through presentation of examples and case studies from many settings. Illustrating the potential benefits and cost of event tourism and ways to maximize benefits and prevent or ameliorate cost or problems. To draw conclusions as to the research, planning, and evaluation necessary to advance the field of event tourism.

2.2 Trends and factors affecting events

The ability for any person or organization to be current and up to date about the latest happenings around them is very important. Staying current with trends and forces facilitates strategic event planning, but the challenge is to identify which trends and forces apply to a certain event (Getz 1997, 22). This section will discuss some of the trends affecting events in areas of facilities, sponsors, competitiveness and professionalism. It will also discuss in detail the forces affecting events in the areas of economic forces, population and technological forces.

All available data strongly suggest that over the last few decades the quantity, variety and attractiveness of events have grown and the marketplace has become more competitive. New events will need to be very innovative and original in order to be competitive in terms of attracting artists, attendees, and financial support. (Getz 1997, 22). The sponsoring of events has increased as a result of more professionalized marketing of events, sports events have typically gained most sponsorship, but art events and community festivals are increasingly attracting support as well (Getz 1997, 24).

Facilities most communities and destinations require facilities to competitively bid on events, and events can also fast track the construction of new events venues and facilities. There is a noticeable trend towards mega-venues for events, especially conventions and trade show facilities, art complexes, festival markets, and gigantic sports stadia. Events organizers tend to make use of places like civic squares and plazas as events venues, but recent trends have forced newer ones with large assemblies to be designed. (Getz 1997, 23-24).

Sponsorship, the professionalization of event marketing has helped to increase the sponsorship for events. Recent trends where corporate bodies now market their products and promote their image through events sponsorship cannot be overlooked. Sporting events can be said to have benefited more from such sponsorship, but arts and community festivals are also attracting corporate support. Another trend is the sponsorship of events in which consumers become participants rather than just spectators. A related trend for sponsors is relationship marketing, where smaller segments are sponsored. (Getz 1997, 24.)

Competitiveness, the private sector has always held sway in the sponsorship of events as they have always involved themselves in staging concerts, consumer shows, and the like, but the scope for private entrepreneurial involvement is rapidly expanding. This trend has witnessed private companies entering the production field, consultants are also expanding their frontiers in trying to develop sponsorship by targeting corporations. (Getz 1997, 25 – 26.)

Professionalism, the recent trend in event management is that events are now planned, executed and managed by professionals to achieve desired results. In other words, it has created the realization that events must be managed like businesses. This has given room for organizations and positions for professional personnel to develop, bid on, promote and manage events. Volunteers still play a major role in the implementation of events, but a part of them will increasingly be required to do training and widen their skills in management. (Getz 1997, 25.)

2.3 Economic forces

Economic forces especially stem from the industrialized world where large numbers of people have a disposable income at their disposal to support a wide range of leisure interests, but also from the fast-growing Asian economies which has put a great demand on travel and leisure, and thus event tourism as well. People have more leisure time at their disposal than ever before and it is highly valued, and much is expected from discretionary time. Events are a very stimulating way of spending free time and can be occasions for both educational and leisure experiences. (Getz 1997, 26 – 27.)

2.3.1 Population forces

The global population is continually growing both in the developing and the developed nations. Social instability is also on the increase as a result of the continuous movement within and between countries today. Some socio-demographic forces influence the preferences and demand on event tourism, as well as tourism and leisure in general, and some factors, such as tastes, wealth, physical ability and responsibilities linked to life-stage, vary between generations. (Getz 1997, 28.)

2.3.2 Technological forces

Technology has largely influenced the world of event planning and programming of special events. Everything from planning to programming to a large extent relies on technological solutions, as event managers now use computer power for increased efficiency and effectiveness in all functional areas. It has also made it possible to ensure high level of safety and health standards. The Internet has also opened the door for new possibilities for communication and information, and functions as an efficient tool for marketing. The importance of stakeholders staying current with technology cannot be overemphasized, as consumers expect quick adaptation to new technological advances in the industry. (Getz 1997, 35.)

From the above theories presented by Donald Getz, it can be seen that trends and forces affecting events is something that stakeholders and key players in the industry have to always contend with. This, in turn, is a result of the constant changes taking place in the industry around the globe.

Reasons for Hosting Events, the reasons and motivations why stakeholders organize and host events of various types cannot be farfetched, as the reasons for hosting events usually vary based on the organizers' purpose. Such reasons can be economic gains, cultural awareness, environmental, social, or political reasons. Specific reasons for staging an event may be, for example, branding a destination or country, fun, promoting a message, revenue generation, recreation, socialization, education or tourism. For instance, communities may be more likely to put on events that promote a particular festival to the entire world as an attraction. But the tourist is seen as an honored guest of the event and the host community and must be made to feel as such. (Getz 1997, 324 & Douglas, Douglas & Derrett 2001, 358-359).

Motivations for attending events Different experiences are derived from attending events, which most times appeal to visitors and attendees at such events. Most common motivations for attending events are: entertainment, relaxation, leisure opportunities, escape from routines, socializing, learning, observation, participation and meeting new people. Any or all of these reasons may make people decide to partake in an event, and different people will be attracted to different events to satisfy their personal needs. (Douglas et al 2001, 360-363.)

2.4 Different types of events

Events are often characterized according to their size and scale. Common categories are mega-events, hallmark events and major events. Events can also be classified according to their purpose or the particular sector to which they belong. (McDonnell et al. 2011, 12)

The term mega event is used to describe events such as the Olympic Games, world fairs and the world cup in football. The term could also be defined in relation to the cost, size and image

or even in terms of economic impact, or in terms of worldwide publicity it may receive. Mega events are those that are so large that they affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media. These include the Olympic Games and world fairs; however, it is difficult for many other events to fit into this category. (Getz 1997, 6.) Another writer sees mega-events, by way of their size or significance, as those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige, or economic impacts for host community or destinations. (McDonnell et al. 2011, 12 & 13) It is what is happening at the time that is usually more important for events than their location so some mega events may move around the globe. (Cooper, C. Fletcher, J, Fyall, A. Gilbert, D. & Wanhill, S, 2008, 313)

Hallmark events looking in the dictionary (Macmillan 2007, 679) the term “hallmark” refers to a symbol of quality or authenticity that distinguishes some goods from others or refers to a distinctive feature of events. Events can be referred to as hallmark events when they possess such significance in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality, or publicity that the events provide the host venue, community or destinations with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination can become inextricably linked, such as Mardi Gras and New Orleans in the United States (Getz 2005, 16-17). Also (McDonnell et al. 2011, 13&14) refers to hallmark events as those events that become so identified with the spirit or ethos of a town, city or region that they become synonymous with the name of the place, and gains wide spread recognition and awareness. Another writer defined such events as major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term. McDonnell et al 2011, 13) International events that are regarded as world class normally stand alone as hallmark activities, others may be used to compliment the site-specification attractions. (Cooper et al, 2008, 313.)

Historical/community based event is smaller in scale than the mega or hallmark event, and also appeals to a smaller market segment. Historical/community-based events are usually held more frequently than the larger types of event. The celebration of this type of event is typically the way of life within a community or the community’s history. Though they are of limited duration but are generally held more frequently than other events. Community based events

may be as themed public occasions designed to occur for a limited duration that celebrate valued aspects of a community's way of life. (Douglas, Douglas & Derrett 2001, 357 & 358.)

3 EVENT MANAGEMENT

This section will highlight how events are being managed in practice and the word “special event” is used as an umbrella term that encompasses all functions that bring people together for a unique purpose. Most events require some sort of planning on the part of the organizer. (Fenich 2007, 230-231).

Event management involves studying the intricacies of the brand, identifying the target audience, devising the event concept, planning the logistics and coordinating the technical aspects before actually executing the modalities of the proposed event. Post-event analysis and ensuring a return on investment have become significant drivers for the event industry. Satisfaction of certain needs can be the main aim of organizing an event. The head of the organizing team for every event is saddled with the responsibility of creating a vision for the event and to motivate the team members to work collectively in achieving the goals and objectives set for them in actualizing the vision. (Douglas et al. 2001, 372.)

Getting an event started depends on the type of activity that is taking place and the set objectives. The organizers can be volunteers or professionals as the event can be of a personal, leisure, cultural or organizational nature. (Shone & Parry 2004, 65.) In his preface Getz highlighted some objectives of event management, which are to provide a comprehensive, systematic study of event programming, management, and marketing, encompassing theory, methods and practical application. To interpret and apply the principle of both business and not-for-profit management to the special needs of event organization. Also to use case studies of successful events in demonstrating how managers can improve their effectiveness and efficiency in producing successful events and meeting their organization's wider goals. To demonstrate how different perspective on event (i.e., economic, community, visitors, organizations, sponsors, the environment) require different management approaches, and how recognition of the interrelatedness of all these perspective can enhance event production, marketing, and impacts. To foster professionalism in event management, covering and

knowledge base, theory, methodologies, and ethics. To demonstrate the advantages and methods of integrating event management with event tourism.

The following sub chapter will present how an event is managed, step-by-step, and highlight some points that should be taken into consideration when organizing an event, as these might be quite essential when dealing with a smaller local event, such as a food festival. They might not be entirely applicable in larger event since they are more complex in management and operation.

3.1 The initial phase/stage

The first aspect to be taken into consideration when starting off an event, is the actual design and production of the event: how the site will look and its functions (i.e. site planning), how people and materials and everything needed for the event production will be delivered on time and at the right place. (Getz 2005, 103). Another point of view to consider at this stage is securing the venue for the event. After this follows obtaining every necessary permit from the local authorities, involving all necessary government agencies and departments, meeting with relevant parties to clear any misconceptions, recognizing all logistics involved and laying out security plans. (Fenich 2007, 249.)

The initial stage also involves deciding who will do the job, what are the ideas, if they are feasible or not, and this might be followed by the brainstorming phase when various ideas are thrown in and tossed around to get the best, which are then adopted for the event planning stage. (Shone & Parry 2004, 68-69.)

3.2 Planning

Planning is always future oriented, focusing on the formulation of goals and the means to achieve them. Goals can be things that are desired, events organizations plan and work towards a specific target completion. (Getz 2005, 61). Planning is the process which identifies aims and objectives, and establishes the method of achieving them. Planning is also

determining what has to be done and how, as every event must be planned, and carefully planned action can lead to the success of an event. According to Watt, planning is the main factor in achieving success, as a good event can be said to be carefully planned. Planning is the process of setting goals and deciding on the best approach to achieve them. (Watt 1998, 8, 25)

3.3 Finance and budget

Arriving at what has to be spent financially is important for any event, and time and effort will be required for planning and control. Financial resources include the means to plan, bid on, and produce events, including the development of events venue. Much of the capital for events comes from the private sector, especially sponsors, and nonprofit organizations. (Getz 2005, 150.) Managers use the budget to forecast their financial future, to help set priorities and plan the event, and to keep spending within limits. “Operating budgets” plan for the financial year of operations, as many events managers prepare only operating budgets. (Getz 2005, 272.)

3.4 Venue and logistics

The choice of a venue is an important decision that will ultimately determine many of the elements of the event as major factors need to be taken into consideration when choosing a venue, as the venue may be an obvious part of the theme of the event (Allen et al 2011, 424). Allen et al 2011 highlighted some of the factors to consider in venue selection, and they are: “matching the venue with the theme of the event, matching the size of the venue to the size of the event, the history of events at the venue, including venue reputation, availability, what the venue can provide, transport to, from and around the venue, parking, toilets and other amenities” “power (amount available and outlets) and lights, communication, climate, emergency plans and exits. As the uniqueness of the venue adds to the specialness of the event” (Allen et al 2011, 425.)

Different kinds of support functions will depend on what the event requires, and they can be organized by the team or be contracted out. The logistics become an important phase since such preparations are crucial for the success of the event, as logistics helps in the movement of people, equipment and materials to the right place at the right time. (Getz 2005, 112.)

3.5 Close-down, assessment and achievement

A close-down of an event has both physical and administrative aspects. The physical close-down will involve the taking apart and removing of the equipment, whereas the administrative side of the close-down will involve filing, completion of accounts and paying bills, and collecting feedback. Events may leave legacies behind, either planned and intended, or unintended. (Shone & Parry 2004, 214.)

The physical side of the close-down is the most noticeable one. Cleaning and clearing up will take place, and the removing of the event should practically be the same as the activities of the setup, only reversed. The administrative side of the close-down will involve picking up comments and noting down verbal feedback, but also the settling of accounts and bills, acquittal of contracts, along with an evaluation of how contractors and suppliers have done their job. (Allen 2011, 159.)

4 FOOD TOURISM

Local and regional food holds great potential to contribute to sustainable competitiveness in a destination. Food has always been considered as a reflection of the culture of a country and its people. It is therefore the ideal product to offer as an attraction in a destination and has many opportunities to be used as a marketing tool of such a destination. Food is a significant aspect of the tourist experience of a destination, driven by the growing trends of authenticity and the need to have a high-quality experience. (Yeoman 2008, 195.)

Hall and Mitchell (2005) defined food tourism as visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivation factor for travel (Yeoman 2008, 201).

Food and tourism have long been closely related, as eating out has always been a major tourism activity. It was only recently that the roles that food play in attracting tourist to a destination has come to be recognized by governments, researchers and by wine, food and tourism industries. Food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel. (Douglas 2001, 308.)

4.1 Major trends shaping our interest in food tourism

According to the trend analyst, Ian Yeoman, food is a significant aspect of the tourist's experience of a destination, driven by the growing trends of authenticity and the need to have a high-quality experience. The concept of food tourism is now becoming the focal point of travel decision making and the hallmark attraction of destinations around the world. (Yeoman 2008, 196). Next follows some trends shaping the interest in food tourism.

Trend 1 Disposable income and spending pattern: the growing affluence of the populations has a profound impact on consumer spending. Consumers spend a higher proportion of their income on prepared food, gourmet products, eating out and food items with some form of health or ethical benefits. (Yeoman 2008, 196.)

Trend 2 Demographic and household changes Research has shown that families are also becoming increasingly democratic in food choice, as children get older they have more influence on what they eat and where the family eats. Children are also spending increasing amounts of time with their grandparents. This increase indicates a demand for venues offering facilities that appeal to various age groups and generations. As the characteristics of different age groups become blurred and diverse, more people will expect the places they visit to be adaptable to different aspects of their daily lives. In other words, eating out opportunities suitable for whatever the situation requires is needed. (Yeoman 2008, 196.)

Trend 3 Individualism In this trend individualism means uniqueness as tourists search out local, fresh and good quality cuisine that reflects the authenticity of the destination. Though fast food outlets and big brands is threatened by growing individuality within culture across the world. This trend allows global brands to tailor their products for local societies. (Yeoman 2008, 197.)

Trend 4 & 5 - The role of celebrity chef and media made the emergence of the niche food programmes, TV channels and magazines implies a creation of the food celebrity and expert. Today, celebrity chefs shape tourism products, and this drives the interest in good quality real food. Trend 5 Well-being and food, we are experiencing an increase in awareness of health issues and food purchase decisions, consumers now visit a food nutritionist or advisor to seek opinion about 'food balance' or 'sensitivity towards certain foods and specialist diets are becoming more mainstream with individuals avoiding certain food. Consumers are therefore

becoming ever more demanding and cautious regarding the food they eat. (Yeoman 2008, 198.)

Trend 6 Foods as an oasis as the consumer desire for new experiences increases, the ‘authentic’ restaurant experience becomes more important. Authenticity is about food that is simple, rooted in the region, natural, ethical, beautiful and human — all these making for a food tourism destination. When on holiday, food becomes the social occasion when busy people create a ‘time oasis. (Yeoman 2008,199.)

4.2 Food tourism destinations

Some destinations have begun to realize that there is great potential for food tourism to offer a sustainable tourism product, notably Victoria (Australia) and Niagara (Canada), Ludlow (Britain) recognized that food and drink had been neglected in terms of consistent and coordinated promotions and are working to address this. (Yeoman 2008, 203). Today tourists are motivated when choosing a destination because of the food activities they would find there, and some destinations are beginning to realize that there is great potential for food tourism to offer a sustainable tourism product.

A good example of food tourism has been the rise in prominence of Ludlow in the United Kingdom as a food tourism destination. Ludlow from the early beginning of a farmers market has prospered into a major food tourism destination with a density of high quality restaurants, an abundance of local food suppliers in the high street and food festivals and events to attract tourists. Ludlow as a food destination illustrates its success through combining food and culture to promote the destination. Other destinations of food tourism are USA, Canada New Zealand, etc. (Yeoman 2008, 203).

5 THE OSTROBOTHNIAN FOOD FESTIVAL

Since this was the first time the food festival was arranged, it was difficult to get materials and information about the event since there were no past editions. The organizers, however, were able to provide a comprehensive project plan about the Ostrobothnian Food Festival. Jakobstad was thus one of the three venues that were slated to host the festival simultaneously with the other venues that were Vaasa and Närpes. This is the first edition of the event and the wish is that it will be an annually recurring event.

Since people gather around food for vacation, party and everyday life, food is a bearer of cultural meaning and an important part of our sense of local heritage and national heritage. At the same time it is a self-evident part of business life and an increasingly more important means of competition for conference services and visitation branches. Local food and food experience is a strong trend nowadays. A growing group of consumers are stating that they want to have locally produced food, the origin of which is known, and in many parts of Europe new business solutions are created for local food items. The same trends can also be seen in Finland, and it is predicted that the market for local food is going to grow in the next few years. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

Ostrobothnia has all the preconditions for offering various types of food items and food experiences. There is a large production of raw materials from agriculture, greenhouse farming and livestock, as well as refined foodstuffs from these. There is also a fishing branch with long traditions. However, food produced in Ostrobothnia is rarely marketed as Ostrobothnian. There is a clear difference in comparison to other regions in Europe and even to Sweden, where the region is often emphasized in brands or in the marketing of different food items. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

Ostrobothnia is seen as having a strong sense for the region and its local heritage. There are a few smaller and local markets around Ostrobothnia with food as their theme, but bigger events where people gather with food as the main theme are lacking. To strengthen the Ostrobothnia

peoples' awareness about and relation to the food that is produced within the region, the idea about an Ostrobothnia food festival was developed. The food festival was to be constructed with the help of the experiences from the culture and event management branch, with a focus on the wholeness experience for the visitors. A concept where the marketing message and outlining, how places are constructed as well as how audio, vision, and taste senses that are forwarded create a whole picture. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.1 Project idea

The organizers have participated in and familiarized themselves with different concepts for food items chants, food festivals and crop markets in Finland and in Sweden. Among these can be named the food festival in Skellefteå (Sweden), as well as the Middle Ages Market in Åbo (Finland), that have functioned as sources of inspiration for the planning of an Ostrobothnian food festival concept. In order to get Ostrobothnians to gather around food at a common autumn party, activities are needed in different parts of the landscape. Wide arrays of activities are needed, without losing the focus on the food. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

The basic idea of the project was to create an Ostrobothnian autumn party with visibility, activity and events in different parts of the landscape. The main theme of the party was local food, both in the form of crop products; refined food stuffs products as well as food experiences produced by Ostrobothnian restaurant- and service companies. A culinary and social folk party to promote the local food culture and regional food production. The activities and events in connection with the food festival were based on the local culture supply, by making room for organizations, clubs and individual creators within for example art, music, theatre, handicraft, literature and design. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

The Ostrobothnian food festival is constructed on the borderline between food experiences, culture and tourism. Local food, culture and visitation branches are closely related parts of the experience industry and create an exciting basis for a whole experience where the local food is presented around a completely new context and is constructed around an exciting storyline and

experience design. The creativity and ability to develop new concepts that exists within the culture branch could be utilized better by the rest of the industry and society. In the planning of the Ostrobothnian food festival, the creators were involved already in the planning stage in order to lift the event planning to a new level. The Ostrobothnian food festival is simultaneously an exciting new stage that creates visibility for creators and the culture branch. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

The focus of the food festival lay on the crops, food, meals, culture, experience and quality in a local/regional perspective aimed at the local population. In order to provide a genuine and quality experience, no public fundraisings, second hand markets or established marketing commercialization were allowed in connection with the food festival. Only the sale of local food and handicraft and meal and culture experiences were allowed. The Ostrobothnian food festival is mainly concentrated to three venues: Närpes, Vaasa and Jakobstad. The timing of the food festival was set to 17th-18th September 2011. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.2 Goals of the festival

The main goal of the project was to create a basis as well as perform as a regional food festival for the Ostrobothnian region. The food festival was aimed at creating relations between consumers and companies as well as attracting to exciting meetings between creators and economic life, producers and consumers, town and countryside, and the young and the old, with local food and culture production at the center of it all.

The Ostrobothnian food festival was to function as a platform for concrete sector-overcrossing co-operation between the primary branches, food industry, the culture branch and the tourism branch where the knowledge transferring and exchange of experiences is born in a natural way.

The objectives of the Ostrobothnian food festival were to: increase the consumers' awareness about and confidence for the Ostrobothnian products as well as increase the sale of these. Widen the interest for and knowledge about the local culture supply and services within the creative branches. Increase the creators and entrepreneurs competence in meeting the customer. Strengthen the consumers possibility to be able to choose a local product or service. Strengthen the brand for Ostrobothnian food stuffs and Ostrobothnian as a food stuffs region. Strengthen the preconditions for a long lasting development of local food experiences and experience services. Create an exciting cooperation between food, culture, and visitation branches.

A qualitative goal was that the project would create an interest and a basis for subsequent food festivals in cooperation with different actors within the region. Another goal was that the food festival's venues in 2011 would be visited by at least 15 000 persons. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.3 Target groups

The target groups that were associated with the food festival were: Ostrobothnian companies and producers within the food stuffs production- and refining in a broad perspective. Restaurants, cafes as well as other companies dealing with the production and sale of meals. Organizations, clubs, and individual creators within for example art, photo, music, theatre, handicraft, literature and design

Target groups of the food festival were: Ostrobothnians tourists within and outside of Finland, the general public. Visitors from other regions with an interest in food and culture. Regional and national media. (Food festival in ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.4 The concept behind the Ostrobothnian food festival

The three arenas for the food festival were planned to be Närpes, Vasa and Jakobstad. The basic concept for the party venues was a central event space or tent, with a scene and seating places and tables. Around the event tent there was sales of food and meals that are eaten on place. The meal sellers were local restaurants, catering companies; food stuffs companies, countryside companies with visiting- and experience activities and others.

Inside the main event tent, programs put in place would consist of lectures, interviews, performances and music. The program was planned according to a time schedule and an expected public, presenting a mixture of culture performances, performances with a food theme, and music and entertainment. In connection to the event venue there was a handicraft- and crop market, and sales of locally produced products.

The outlining of the event venues and activities were to be applied to the conditions and specialties of the three towns and countryside regions. The event venues were planned and constructed as individual experience points around selected themes. Prior to the date of the food festival the organizers would arrange seminars or training occasions where the participating target groups would get information and goals for the arrangement, as well as preparations for interactions with visitors and collaboration partners. Before the food festival the organizers also planned a competition with a food theme. The competition would be used to spread the information about the coming food festival and result in ideas for the program.

In connection with the food festival the purpose was also that separate seminars, performances, exhibitions and vernissage could take place in other venues than the food festival, but that would be marketed as a part of the Ostrobothnian food festival. For these events, collaboration was sought for with other actors in the region. The direct selling of food and drink did not entail any costs and incomes within the project. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011).

5.5 Information and marketing

The marketing of the project was resource demanding since it was aimed at different target groups and in different times intervals. Step 1 was to produce and spread information to the participating target groups, and step 2 was to market the event to branches and the region.

Needed for the marketing was:

Direct marketing to the participating target groups through the network of the project owners and collaboration partners. Searching activity and information occasions to the associated target groups. Press releases during the year about upcoming events. Information on the Internet sites, food festival blog and Facebook group. Marketing to the public through adverts or supplement in the local newspapers before the food festival. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.6 Implementing the event

The organizer was responsible for carrying out the event. The coordination, organizing and information about the project demanded a work effort of 160% of fulltime, divided on 3 persons. The personnel resources were employed on the basis of the project owner or managed in collaboration with other projects/organizations.

There was a reference group functioning as a support for the coordination and carrying through of the project, which consisted of persons that were active within projects and organizations with connection to the primary production, foodstuffs and culture sector. The project aimed at a broad collaboration with other regional actors and projects, and was connected to the regional Foodstuffs cluster financed

The planning spread of information and implementation, close collaboration was established with Juthbacka Culture Centre, and Ostrobothnia's Swedish Producing organization. In addition to these, collaboration was established with the local actors within economic life, culture, education, administration and interest organizations with the aim of engaging these in participating in the

implementation of the event within their respective activity areas. (Food festival in ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

5.7 Timetable of the event

The project time was 1.1.2011 – 31.12.2011

TABLE 1. Timetable of the event (Food festival in ostrobothnia, project plan 2011)

January – March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept development Planning of the characteristic graphical profile Investigating possible venues for the three venues of the food festival Creating contacts with collaboration partners for the event Planning of information spreading and marketing Marketing to the associated target groups
April – June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of information material Marketing to the associated target groups Detail planning Offers, contracts, bookings Information spreading
July – September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts, bookings Production of information material Information/training to the associated target groups Marketing Detail planning Implementation of the food festival Documentation
October - November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation Follow-up Assessment Concept development and planning
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting Reporting

5.8 Reporting

The reporting took place in accordance with the directions from the financiers. For the accounting of the implementation of the project, an independent and outside party was engaged. The documentation of the project, reporting and accounting were to be available and lay as basis for the planning and carrying through of follow up food festival initiatives in Ostrobothnia. (Food festival in Ostrobothnia, project plan 2011.)

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The data for this research work was collected via several methods of research, these included qualitative research method, individual research, direct conversation and others that were specified later. The type of qualitative research method that was applied in this study included interviews, observations; information received from local and international tourists, tourism experts both from the practical and academic field as well as people living in the host community and benefactors of the food festival. Therefore, the research method included data collection and analysis of quality information from the real source rather than numerical data (Veal 2006, 193).

The fact that this was the first time the food event was hosted; the importance of opinions from the locals and stakeholders from the host communities could not be over emphasized. The opinions and information received from these people when combined with the views of the experts and other information and observations formed the basis for the final conclusion. The nature of the research topic gave rise to the type of interview to be used which was the semi-structured interview. This type of interview is regularly used in qualitative research and; since the tourism industry is more descriptive in nature, the qualitative research method was chosen for this work.

The difference between qualitative and quantitative method is that while the former is normally used for analysis of qualitative information through interviews and observation, the latter is used as a basis for numerical data collection and analysis. The fact that this research work was to ascertain how events are being organized in practice and offer possible solutions to areas that need such, proved that a quantitative method of research could not be applied. But the flexible nature of qualitative research methods made it suitable for interview within the tourism field.

6.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research method, when applied, gives rise to qualitative rather than quantitative information. This qualitative approach tends to collect sufficient amount of important information concerning few cases. However, it can also deal with large number of cases. This research method can be used for pragmatic reasons in cases where formal, quantified research is not necessary or not possible. The research method is based on the belief that the people personally involved in a particular leisure or tourism situation are in the best position to describe and explain their experience or feelings in their own words, by allowing them to speak without an intermediary or any form of constraints. (Veal 2006, 193)

The fact that this form of research method allows the researcher to get to the very base of the study, makes it the best option for this research. Not only will it enable the researcher to come up with a comprehensive report about the intention of the study it will also make it easily understandable to any reader.

6.2 Presenting the results of the research

This research interview was conducted with three participants, three local tourists from the host community, the leader from the organizing team, and two tourism experts. The estimated average age of the interviewees is between the ages of 23 – 60 years. Some declined in revealing their age for some personal reasons. Even though nine interviews may not be enough to make a general conclusion, the individual observation will be relied upon in making the best of this study as the researcher also participated in the festival. The conclusions will be drawn based on the qualitative research method that was applied. The information received from the participants/sellers and local tourists would be relied upon based on their positive and negative remarks of the food festival. While information derived from the organizers would highlight the challenges and achievements they faced in planning and hosting the food festival, the information from the tourism experts would provide a general overview of events tourism sector in particular and the tourism industry in general.

6.2.1 Presenting the participant/seller interview

Theme 1 expresses the opinions of the organizers of the food festival. The purpose was to assess how the event was executed by the organizers. The interviewees gave their opinion based on their anticipation, while some gave their view based on the happenings and development at the events. Interviewee A stated that: “the event was well organized, considering it is organized for the first time, without any previous experience about how people move, which people would come, what their thought would be. I think it has worked unbelievably well”. Interview B believes that “everything is good in her opinion, as her my only problem was that she had no time to go for her lunch. But that is her problem. And that people are on a good mood and her sales has been successful. The People there have been very positive, completely different compared to other markets arranged in Pietarsaari.” Interview C stated that “the organization has been okay, as it seems they have a very nice team work and team spirit.”

Theme 2 gives their general opinion of the food festival and how it has impacted their businesses. This question was meant to ascertain their individual opinion and to analyze positive gains of participating in the event. The participants/sellers view was important as they revealed that their expectation before coming to the event was not very good, but they have been proved wrong as the event has gone very well and business has been very good, considering it was the first time it was taking place and they hope it continues in the future. Interviewee A stated that: “she was there to meet food-interested people. People who are interested specifically of locally produced food and food from nearby, to make sales and record good profit, and she was not disappointed as all have gone well.” Interviewee B believes that: “the festival has been very successful, which completely surpassed their expectations. Because actually I did not expect anything, so very good and was happy how it has been so good.” Interviewee C stated that: “it was a very good idea and wish it can continue any other time of the year also, though yesterday had not much people but today has been great with lots of people attending, as it is a success for this to be the first time, it is a success.”

Theme 3 is about their opinion on what could be done differently if the festival would be organized in future. The participants were asked this question because it will be of great assistance to the organizers and also help them make more profit in the future. The participant/sellers all gave their opinion about this subject. Interviewee A believes that:

It should be approximately similar to how it is now. Those of us who have vegetables on display like this; we should have had vegetables for sale also. People would have come here because they want to buy vegetables when they have seen them, but we do not have any on sale. We have on display only the products by the members of the Garden Association, so we do not have possibility to sell them. I have been here the whole day, so I have not had chance to go and see what they are selling on that handicraft market. But it seems like there would have been more need for the sale of fresh vegetables. So this can be something for the future. Interviewee B did not really know, and said that: There has been so much people here, that I have not had chance to go see the rest of the market. There is nothing to complain about. There is enough space here. So this has been unusually successful for a first time event. So I have been wondering how this could have been so successful. The weather was also perfect, although we had our doubts about it at first.

Interviewee C believes that: “there should be more music next year, it was too slow in the day time, and there would have been more music so people would stay a little bit longer and enjoy to just being together and they in turn will record more sales.”

6.2.2 Presenting the tourist interview

Theme 1 is about their general opinion of the event. This question was asked in order to know their general opinion and to ascertain the level of satisfaction they derived from attending the event. Interviewee D said this is really great fun.

A very nice event, there should be more of this kind. I have not yet experienced everything here, since I have only been on the wine tasting. But this has been something that one has looked forward to, based on all the previous info on the net and the newspaper. I will probably know more tomorrow but generally it has been good and successful.

Interviewee E believed “it is a good thing for the people of Jakobstad and it is a welcome development and hope it goes higher in years to come, as it was a success being the first time.” Interviewee F thinks there should have been more international foods. “I mean we have so much culture from different countries here in Jakobstad. I mean normal food we see here today can be found wherever you want. So I was expecting to be able to taste food from other cultures, and couldn’t find any.”

Theme 2 is about what they were expecting to see at the event. This question was to ascertain what the attending tourist had in mind before coming and to know if they got what they wanted.

Interviewee D was expecting to see the locally produced food, the local companies and food samples from different sellers who were participating in the event and to have a general feel of what the food festival was all about. Interviewee E was not really expecting anything in particular before come, though came to look around as it is an entirely new concept to the people of Jakobstad. Interviewee F had actually nothing to look forward to. They just came here to see what the event concept is about; since this was the first time they are arranging it.

Theme 3 was about if this event would be organized again in the future, and then what could be done differently. This question aimed at finding out what the tourists’ expectations are at subsequent events, as the researcher believes they are one of the factors that will determine the success of any event, because events where there are no tourists attending, would be a waste of time and resources.

Interviewee D thinks that since this event was organized for the first time, they do not really know what to say yet, but might think of it afterwards. But the locally produced food, and the event area is very good. Interviewee E hopes the event goes bigger and bigger in the years to come, as it was a great thing for the host and neighboring communities and the people of Jakobstad. Interviewee F thinks effort should be made in future to accommodate food from

other cultures and background, as they believe this can make the food festival go international and attract international tourist as well.

6.2.3 Presenting the organizer interview

Theme 1 “what do you think are your achievements so far concerning this event?” This question was asked to ascertain the level of achievement the organizers believed they have accomplished in organizing and hosting the event. The organizer considers the different areas he/she believes they have done well in. Interviewee G thinks that:

Which has gone well is that we see that there is a demand for this kind of event. Food is very popular, as well as that which is locally produced. People who have come here have done a lot of shopping. Everyone that I have spoken to, both visitors and salespeople, await also that this will come again next year. So this was a good start, next year it will be even better. So there is expectation for this to become a yearly event. That was also the point of this thing, that this would be a start, a seed that can become yearly happening, as a food festival.

Theme 2 “what are the problems that you faced during the process of putting this event together?” The organizer was asked this question in order to identify the difficulties faced by the organizing team, as there are always different challenges when organizing an event. Interviewee G thinks that:

During the planning and arranging beforehand, that which has been a problem is that we have been too few people who have worked with this. We have had problems with capacity. We should have marketed it better for the salespeople and the visitors, talk with different organizations, schools, companies and the media – in order to explain what Food Festival is, what we want to achieve and how it works. So it is communication and information that we should have had more capacity for. Then here on the venue, this is the first time and we have not had this kind of food festival before in Ostrobothnia, so people who come here do not understand the system, how they are supposed to do. They do not understand that we have a big party tent where one is supposed to eat; you buy your food on the outside and then go inside to eat. But people buy their food somewhere, and then are shy to go in to the big tent, because they don’t know if that is allowed. Better signs and better information is needed on the area. Better communication and information before the event.

Theme 3 “what is the economic impact of this festival on Jakobstad as the host community?”

This question was put forward to get the organizers, point of view on how this festival would benefit the host community, as it is expected that host community should benefit from hosting an event in different ways. Interviewee G says that:

It is a good event for the community and for the region because local food is very popular today because the farmers and the consumers have been brought together face to face as a result of this food festival, as I think the consumption of locally produced food will grow as a result of this event. The sellers have also benefited as I am aware they have been selling lots of product and making new contacts, as this events is now serving as a platform for the seller and buyer to meet and know one another.

Theme 4 “what are your future expectations for this food festival?” The organizer was asked this question in order to receive his future expectations for the food festival. Since this food festival was hosted for the first time. The organizer and interviewee G expects that:

more association and organizations will see the positive part of this festival by seizing this opportunity and become active and participate in future events to make it bigger, as i have also learnt a lot of how people think and how things work in practical so I know we will make a few changes by doing things in another way, but the event concept is working, which is a good sign.

Theme 5 “if there would have been more people than was recorded attending, do you think the participants/sellers can cater for all their needs?” This question was asked in order to ascertain the level of preparedness of the participants as the belief was that they did not envisage the high turnout of tourists at the event. Interviewee G said:

No, it’s already sellers that have run out of product, as the capacity of sellers present equals that of buyers, if more buyers should come, then there would have been problem, as they wouldn’t be able to manage the situation, giving an instance of a seller running out of product in less than three hours of commencement of sales on the last day of the event, as there have been close to four thousand people attending.

Theme 6 “what do you think about the venue is it okay, or would you have preferred a different venue like the city centre.” The organizer considers if the venue was good – the fact

that the venues of events are significant to their success made this question necessary. Interviewee G believes it is a good venue and good location, and its environment stands for what the concept of the event is all about, as an event about harvest season could not been held in a better venue as it is better to have it where they did than at the city centre, but for the evening music concerts there might have been more people attending if it was held at the city centre, but not for the market and food seller.

6.2.4 Presenting the expert interview

Theme 1 “what is your opinion of the present state of tourism development in Jakobstad?” This question directly involves analyzing tourism development in the city of Jakobstad, the experts’ view was important, as they both dwell on the issue of tourism development.

Interviewee A:

I cannot say it is growing as this sector lacks investment in tourism in the past, there are mostly some entrepreneurs who are running different businesses and they cannot execute huge investment as I think the city should participate more and try to find something really special for this area around some specialty which they have, for example the boat industry and other things which are more in this area. In a nutshell, there should be more investment in the industry.

Interviewee J thinks that:

its heading towards a more positive direction, as I believe it’s getting better, as the musical and cultural events are improving and are occurring more as a result of the musical institution and café After Eight, as these two are always organizing great events festival every month and year, but I believe we really need something more bigger, like the Jacob’s Days, which are good and nice, though last for one week, but attracts lots of tourist from within and outside Finland, but need to arrange some big event during the winter time, so we could get more event tourism flow.

Theme 2 “what is the possible economic impact of this food festival to Jakobstad as the host community?” This question intended to know from the expert point of view how the host community benefited economically from the food festival. Interviewee H believes that:

It was a positive impact as I heard that they had about four thousand people attending on Saturday, which is a very good sign; as those that were selling went home with good profit and this impact the host community positively, as the food festival has helped in bringing money as profits to the sellers.

Interviewee J says that:

thinking about the participant at the festival, I believed they have benefited economically in a positive way as they can market their product and be more visible in the market here in Ostrobothnia and Jakobstad region, I don't think this food festival made such a big impact because I think they should have marketed the festival more and also put it like in other ways, as I believe it was a small disappointment, as I think it might be better next year and they will properly arrange it, and then the economic impact might even be bigger for the participant and for Jakobstad. In general it was not such a big impact either as it was mostly local people who came as they didn't stay in hotels or go to restaurants, as they only went to the food market from home and stay for some hours. But if the event can be marketed in some towns in Sweden like Umeå, Skellefteå and some towns close to Finland, it could be a huge success for the economical part, so this event need to be marketed internationally around Finland.

Theme 3 “what is your opinion about how the event was organized and executed?” This was a question that was asked to get an expert assessment of what they feel about the way the organizers planned and executed the event. The expert interviewee H saw it as:

very positive and it was a nice initiative as food festival brings to you good feelings, it was rainy, a bit cold but it was good because I had some expectation before coming, though a bit disappointed because when I was there I try to order for some drinks and was told I had to wait two hours for them to get cold. This means that the participants were not prepared for the customers coming at 4pm, as it seems they were just building up their tent instead of being ready to serve tourist and customers alike upon arrival.

Interviewee J thinks that:

it was well organized starting with the venue, which was perfect for such event, it was the best time of the year to host such event, as this is the harvest season, and I also think the theme for the event is very current, as the culinary sector of the tourism industry is growing as people are getting more aware of the good things food can give, wine and so on, The arrangement of the tent was ok, as there was music playing at evenings, but I think there should have been more free food, as this would have served like small sample of every food, which will encourage the visitors to buy some product after having some taste of such food. Since there was more product on sale it would be difficult for the attendees to buy all product, so tasting would have been good. So there should be more free things in next event, I am proud that this kind of event is hosted here in Jakobstad.

Themes 4 “what area would you want them to improve upon by next year’s food festival event?” This question was put forward to get the experts views on the aspect of the festival the organizers needed to improve for the next event. Interviewee H thinks that:

It will be good and I hope they would have it in future with wider variation of the product and it should hold in early September, and they should also consider another venue, like the city centre, unlike the venue when it was wet grass. Also hopes there would be more participant/sellers who will be there to sell things, and also hopes the whole variety of local product would be represented at next year event.

Interviewee J is of the opinion that

there should be more free stuff for tasting for the visitors, they should also have the programs in English, as their program was only in Swedish and Finnish, and we have more foreign people in Jakobstad who were attending, and they couldn’t understand the program, and since they intend to attract more tourist, then they should have the programs in English. They should encourage participant to organize competition to where tourist can win a prize like a gift card to a restaurant, the venue should be well organized like installing good lighting system and putting up attracting signs. I think the days for the event should be increased from two days to four days and the venue should be modified as I see the future getting better but there should be more and effective marketing for the subsequent editions of the event, the venue should always be made ready before the time of commencement.

Theme 5 “do you think it should just be Finnish food and products at the event or should they open the opportunity for other cultures to participate?” Interviewee H was asked this question and her opinion was as follows:

They should give opportunity for other culture to participate with their traditional local food, as this will give the event a different boost. The price for the meals should be cheaper as it was just like the same price you can get for a meal at a restaurant in town. As I would like to buy smaller meals at reduced price instead of one large meal

6.3 Analysis of the research interview

The research interview conducted will be analyzed theme by theme and will be following the same pattern of themes the interviews presented above.

6.3.1 Analysis of the participants/sellers interview

Theme 1 was about their opinion concerning the organization of the food festival. This question was meant to assess how the organizers executed the various aspects that made up the event. It is a fact that there are challenges when organizing any event and the ability of organizers of events to overcome such challenges therefore means that the event stands a better chance of being successful. Therefore once a decision is made to conduct an event, an organizational structure will need to be established through which the event can be delivered. (Allen 2011, 95.) The Interviewees gave their opinion based on different factors.

Interviewee A gave the event a passing mark considering the fact that it was the first edition of the food festival to be hosted, without any previous experience in anticipating people's response to happenings, and believed it worked unbelievably well. Interviewee B believed that everything was good, as people that came there were in a very positive mood as her sales was successful, and that the food festival was completely different when compared to other markets arranged in Jakobstad. Interviewee C was of the opinion that the organization had been okay, as it appeared that the organizing team had done a very good team work and had a good team spirit

Theme 2 was about the participants/sellers general opinion of the food festival and its impact on their businesses. People participate in events as sellers in order to make some profit, so asking them this question was also a way of measuring the success of the event. Even though their expectation was low when coming to participate/sell their products at the festival, they have indeed been proven wrong as they all ended up making good profit.

Interviewee A gave a positive opinion of the festival considering the fact that it impacted her business positively as they recorded good profit. Interviewee B stated that the festival has been very successful and completely surpassed their expectations and was very happy for how it has turned out so good for their business. Interviewee C believed that the festival was a very good idea and wished it could continue any other time of the year, as it was a success being the first time it was taking place as business has been good.

Theme 3 was seeking their opinion on what could be done differently in the next edition of the festival. The response to this question is expected to be of great value to the organizers because it will help them to make necessary amendments when and where it is necessary.

Interview A believed that there might not be big changes but wants a situation where the garden association representatives would be allowed to sell vegetables instead of just bringing small quantity for display, as they observed that many people were looking for fresh vegetables to buy at the festival. Interviewee B was of the opinion that all was fine and went well, and had nothing really to complain about as everything had been successful for a first time event. Interviewee C was of the opinion that there should be more music at next year's edition, as it was too slow during the day, so applying more music would encourage people to stay and spend more time at the venue and enjoy more of being together and this would boost sales.

6.3.2 Analysis of the tourist interview

Theme 1 was about their general opinion of the food festival. The fact that the question was put forward to them would give the organizers the opportunity to ascertain the level of satisfaction they derived from attending the event.

Interviewee D believed that the festival has been good and successful and attending the event was fun, a very nice event, which he had been looking forward to and he hopes for more of its kind in the city of Jakobstad. Interviewee E thought it was a good thing and a welcomed development for the people of Jakobstad, and he hoped it would go higher and higher in years to come as it was a success being the first time it was hosted. Interviewee F believed that there should be more international food, as he knew there were people from different cultures living in Jakobstad. He was expecting to have a taste of food from other cultures but there was none.

Theme 2 was about knowing what the tourist was expecting to see at the event and to know if it was achieved. The response to this question would help the organizers to know if the attending tourists achieved the purpose of coming to the festival.

Interviewee D was expecting to have a general feel of the festival and to experience locally produced food, meet local farmers and food samples, so by attending the festival he was able to meet and satisfy his expectation. Interviewee E had no expectation in mind but was there to look around because the food festival was an entirely new concept to the people of the host community. And of the same opinion was interviewee F, as he had nothing in mind and just came to look around and have some fun, but was entirely satisfied with what he got.

Theme 3 was about knowing what could be done differently from the attending tourist's point of view at subsequent editions of the event. The fact that attending tourists are considered important in determining the success of any event made the response to this question of value to the organizers, as events without no tourist attending, would be a waste of time and resources.

Interviewee D was of the opinion that the locally produced food was very good and also that the event venue was well selected, but can be improved in order to achieve maximum results in the future. Interviewee E hoped that food festival would go bigger and bigger in the years to come, as they could improve on what was achieved this time, as they saw the food festival being of great significance to the people of the host and neighboring community. Interviewee F was of the opinion that avenues should be created to accommodate food from other cultures and background, as this would give the festival an international touch and attract international tourists as well.

6.3.3 Analysis of the organizers interview

In theme 1 the organizer was asked about his achievement concerning the food festival. In analyzing his response the organizer points out different areas where he has done well. Interviewee G sees this as a good start and believes the next edition will be even better. He says that:

The demand for this type of event made it a success, because the popularity of food and that which is locally produced have attracted people to come attend the festival, and it appears they have done lots of shopping and majority of the people are already talking and waiting for the next year edition of the festival which is part of the concept of the food festival.

Theme 2 asked the organizer to highlight some of the problems that he and his team faced from the beginning to the final staging of the festival. Interviewee G highlighted some difficulties and challenges that faced the organizing team, one of them being the problem of not having sufficient manpower in the organizing team as their capacity was low. This affected so many things at the long run, as the marketing aspect was poorly executed as he believed they could have marketed it better to the participants/sellers, prospective tourist and other stakeholders, which would have given them the opportunity to really explain what the food festival is all about, the concept and how it works. He believed information and communication should have had more capacity as it was at the event venue that people were now getting to know what the concept was all about

In theme 3 the organizer was asked to highlight the economic benefits of the food festival to Jakobstad as the host community, since whenever an event takes place, the host community benefits in different ways. Interview G believed it was a good event for the host community and for the region because local food has become very popular where consumers and farmers have been brought together as a result of the food festival. This he believed would increase the consumption of locally produced food. He went further to state that the sellers have also benefited because they have been selling lots of product, making profits and also making new contacts. Another benefit he mentioned was that the event has served as a platform for the seller and buyer to meet and get to know each other.

In theme 4 the organizer was asked to envision the future for the food festival. He was asked this question in order to reveal what future plans they might have in place for the food festival. Interviewee G thought that the concept of the event was working, which is a good sign as he saw the future to be promising by seeing more associations and organizations becoming very active in participating in subsequent editions of the food festival, and this he thought would make the festival bigger. He also thought that things would be done differently as few changes would be made in areas needed.

In theme 5 he was expected to explain how prepared the sellers were in meeting the demand of attending tourists/buyers. He answered this question based on facts at his disposal at that moment. Interviewee G thought they would not have been able to meet the demand if there would have been more people than it was that day, because a few hours into the start of the activities on day 2 of the festival, most of the sellers had run out of products and had to shut down for some time to enable a re-stock, and those that did not have any products left to re-stock, started packing their stand to leave for home. This meant that the sellers' expectations were surpassed which was a plus and success for the festival.

In theme 6 the organizer was asked to express his opinion what he thought about the venue. He went further to state that the selected venue could not have been better. Interviewee G thought that the venue location was best for the food festival as the environment stood for

what the concept of the food festival was all about, because an event about the harvest season could not be better staged than in a garden such a venue.

6.3.4 Analysis of the tourism expert interview

In theme 1 the experts were asked to consider the present state of the tourism development in Jakobstad. According to interviewee H, there is little or no development in this sector and this can be attributed to the lack of investment in the past in this sector. Moreover she thought that the small tourism entrepreneurs operating in the city lack the financial capability to execute huge investment, but she hoped that the city would be able to participate more in this regard by initiating some good investment in this sector with regards to something the city is known for.

Interviewee J in her turn, thought that it was moving towards a more positive direction, as the musical and cultural events are now taking place more frequently which she believed was as a result of the musical institution and a private organization who are always putting great events and festivals together all year round. She was also of the opinion that bigger events which could attract visitors from both international and within Finland need to be staged to increase the tourism flow.

In theme 2 they were both asked to consider the possible economic impacts of the food festival on the host community. This question was asked to get the experts' view on how the host community benefited economically from the food festival. Interviewee H believed that it had a positive impact knowing the fact that there was large turnout of visitors at the event, as the organizers and sellers ended up with more profit at the end of the event, they would also channel this profit into other economic activities in the city of Jakobstad.

Interviewee J thought that it was not that big of an impact, as it would have been greater if the festival would have been well marketed and attracted visitors from outside Jakobstad, as they would have lodged in hotels, visited restaurants and engaged in other activities. However, in this case it was just local visitors/tourists that attended the event from their homes and

returned back home afterwards. Interview J thought that the participants/sellers did benefit economically as they marketed and sold their products.

In theme 3 they were asked to assess the organizers regarding how well they organized and staged the festival. It was a question to see from the expert point of view about the way the festival was organized. Interviewee H thought that it was positive and a nice initiative, but observed some small lapses, as the venue was still under construction after the official commencement of the activities at the festival, and when she ordered for some drinks she was told she had to wait for two hours for them to get cold. These were indications that the organizers and sellers alike were ill prepared for the festival. Interviewee J gave positive remarks about the organization, venue selection and chosen time of the year to stage the event, which was the harvest season. She also commended the arrangement of the tent and other side attractions put in place to add colors to the festival, but thought that there should be an opportunity for people to taste all food on display.

In theme 4 the experts were asked to state the area the organizers needed to improve by next edition of the food festival. Their response will be of importance to the organizers. Interviewee H thought that they should have had wider variations of products; the festival should have been held in early September, considered another venue like the market place at the city Centre. They should also improve on their marketing plan and ensure effective communication to attract more sellers to come and sell wider variety of products. Interviewee J believed there should be more free stuff for tasting by visitors. Other suggestions were that they should also have the program in English, they should encourage participants to organize competitions where visitors could win prizes like gift cards to a restaurant, good and bright lighting system should be installed, and the days of the festival should be increased from two to four days, and the organizers should improve their marketing skills and always make sure that the venue is always ready before the commencement of activities.

Theme 5 asked the questions “is having only Finnish food and product at the festival good, or should they give opportunity to food and products from other culture?” One of the experts responded to this as follows. Interviewee H was of the opinion that opportunities should be

given to participants from other cultures to come and sell their traditional and local food, as she believed this would give the festival the needed boost. She also thought that the price for meals should be cheaper to encourage more patronage.

6.4 Findings

The study examined the hosting of a new event, the food festival in Ostrobothnia, and how it affected the host community, whose opinion about the festival, challenges and accomplishment of the organizers, and what went wrong during the festival and what could be improved in subsequent editions of the festival. The following paragraphs reveal the various findings based on the analysis of the interviews.

The research carried out showed that from the response of the sellers at the food festival, the organization was a success and it worked unbelievably well when compared to other markets arranged in Jakobstad, and also considering the fact that it was the first time such a festival was being hosted. It was also an indication that there is a good team spirit among the organizers. The research also showed that the festival had a positive impact on the participant businesses as they recorded good sales and made profit. The success of the festival surpassed their expectations. The study also showed that the concept behind the festival has worked perfectly well and was successful.

The study also revealed that the sellers had nothing to complain about as they believed all went well, as little or no changes were needed in the next edition of the festival, but more music could be provided to make the venue more lively during the day. The study revealed that the attending tourists at the festival saw it as a dream come true for them, as such a food festival was long overdue for the region. They had so much fun and hoped its popularity would increase. It also revealed that there should be different international foods, as food and products from different cultures ought to be represented at the festival to give the festival international recognition.

The research also revealed that the expectations of the attending tourists was actualized, as they were able to experience locally produced food, meet local farmers and get a general feel of the festival. This means that the concept of the festival, even though new to the local residents, has actually worked well. The research showed that the festival venue was well selected as the festival brought fresh locally produced food closer to the people, as they saw it of great significance to the host community and its neighboring towns and villages. The research also revealed that the demand for this type of event has made it a success as people are already talking and waiting for the next edition of the festival, and it also showed that it was a good start for the organizers.

There is no event that is planned and hosted that does not face challenges, this food festival was not an exception, as the study has revealed that the organizing team had their own challenges. These were: shortage of enough manpower which affected some activities during the event, inadequate marketing was another problem they faced and a break in communication and information dissemination was their greatest challenge as revealed by this study. The research also highlighted some of the benefits of the food festival on the host community, as it showed that farmers and consumers have been brought together by the festival which will increase the consumption of locally produced food and established new contacts, the festival has also brought earnings in form of profits to sellers and wages to workers.

The study also revealed that the future is good for the food festival, as it showed that the concept was working and the festival will just continue to grow with every edition. The research also revealed how ill prepared the participants/sellers were to cater for the big turnout on day two, as most of them ran out of products just a few hours into the day's activities This means that their target was surpassed by how things turned out. However, from the point of view of the organizers, the bigger than expected turnout was positive.

The research has also revealed that the tourism sector may be moving towards a more positive direction as a result of musical and cultural events being initiated and hosted in Jakobstad, but lack of needed investment in the tourism sector has made the city witness little or no development. Good investment plans should be initiated to save the situation.

The research also revealed that the impact of the food festival may not be that big, as it would have been better if tourists from outside Jakobstad would have been attending, as they would have booked hotels and engaged in activities that would boost the economic gains of the host community. Local tourists attended in their own numbers and they all returned to their various homes at the close of activities. The research has also showed that the venue for the festival was good and the date for the festival was also good as it was during the harvest season, but that there were lapses in some areas like late preparation in getting the venue and other facilities ready.

Finally the research also highlighted areas that could be improved by the next edition of the food festival, as this would make the festival's popularity grow in the future, like having a wider variety of products, free food and drinks for tasting, programs in English, organizing competitions where tourists could win prizes and finally by increasing the festival days from two to four days.

The findings highlighted above are the comprehensive summary derived from the interviews conducted during the food festival. It shows that the food festival had a positive impact on the host community and the public at large. However, much is still needed to be done in the area of marketing, communication, information dissemination and effective planning. This will help the festival to gain the needed reputation that will give it both national and international recognition. The next chapter will reveal some recommendations that were arrived at by the researcher.

6.5 Reliability and validity

It is important to check the reliability and validity of any research work carried out, irrespective of the method that was applied. Knowing if the research is reliable and valid is of great significance, not only to the researcher but to all other stakeholders.

Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be similar if the research was to be carried out at a later date with a different sample of subjects, and it will lead to the same results as the first research. If the research conditions are well controlled, repeating such research should produce similar results when and wherever it is carried out. Reliability of research in the social sciences is not as efficient as that of the natural science, as it deals with human beings from different environment as its subjects. (Veal 2006, 41.)

This research is a qualitative study of the challenges of hosting a new festival, the food festival in Ostrobothnia. The subjects that were interviewed had some degree of knowledge of the interview themes and motives. The reliability was further boosted with candid information and the responses received from the interviewees. Two tourism experts who visited the food festival in person were among the interviewees, one of whom is a lecturer who is well grounded in the area of festival and event management in the tourism department of a university in Finland. The other is a tourism graduate who is fully employed in the field of tourism, which is an indication that their responses to the interview can be said to be highly reliable, valid, credible and can be depended upon. The tourists and sellers interviewed were residents from the host community and the organizer response can be relied upon as he has been working in similar projects in the past.

Validity is to ascertain the extent to which the information gathered by the researcher truly reflects the subject being studied. Researching some tourism sectors might be difficult in this area, because they may be concerned with people's behavior and attitudes, they may never be sure as that of researches in natural sciences. (Veal 2006, 41) The validity of this research can be relied upon as the conducted interviews have made the entire study valid. The interviews conducted were well presented, fully analyzed, from which findings were arrived at, recommendations were made and conclusions drawn. Even though few persons were interviewed, their responses to the themes are important to the outcome of this research

7 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

After carrying out a detailed interview, presenting the interview, analyzing the interview and presenting the findings on the basis of the analysis, it is important to suggest and recommend possible ways in which the festival organizers can improve the success already recorded at the first edition of the food festival.

7.1 Recommendations

The organizers of the food festival should see to it that competent, sufficient and reliable persons are engaged to handle different tasks from the planning stage of the event to the conclusion of all activities, as this will bring about efficiency and help to check the problem they encountered at the last edition. They should also see to it that the marketing plans put in place for the festival are not only taken seriously but that they are effectively and professionally executed.

The organizers should fully annex all channels of communication and information dissemination, so that every bit of information sent out actually ends up at the step of those that truly need and stand to benefit from it. This can have a big and positive impact on the final outcome. The event venue should be improved upon by the organizers and see that all needed facilities and amenities are put in place. They should also make sure the venues are lighted with bright lights and informative signs with relevant instructions should be put up at strategic locations enabling easy direction.

The organizers should create an enabling environment where all participants at the food festival would have the opportunity to sell their products, because attending visitors/tourists came with the intention and expectation of seeing different varieties of products they wanted to buy. Sellers should be encouraged to bring a wider variety of products that would be on display at the festival so that tourists could have different varieties of products to buy. The

food festival organizers should see to it that the supply of music at the event venue is not restricted to any particular section and to any particular time of the day as tourists tend to leave if there is prolonged silence at event venues. Music should be available at various locations in the venue because this could add more colors to the festival and encourage people to spend longer time at the festival, and they would continue to buy food and drinks thereby boosting the sales.

The organizers should encourage the participation of foreigners at the food festival, as they could bring their own traditional food and products, as visiting tourist to any food festival often want to try food from different cultures that they are not used to. This would in many ways give the food festival the needed recognition. They should also see to it that the programs for the festival are also available in the English language in order to encourage foreigners to be a part of the festival. The organizers should see to it that associations and organizations are encouraged to participate in future festivals. Participants/sellers should also be encouraged to come and participate in large numbers as this is the only way demand and supply can be equal, and avoid a situation where sellers run out of products and cannot meet the tourists' demand.

Finally, the private investors and the city council should be encouraged to initiate and invest in the tourism sector of the host community, as this is one of the quickest ways to witness rapid development. More festivals and bigger events should be arranged to always attract both international and local tourist to the city as this would increase the tourism flow.

7.2 Conclusion

This research has shown that many villages, towns and cities now profile themselves as destination regions because of benefits derived from hosting events, as events have put the names of such places on the world map. Therefore, based on the research analysis, findings and recommendations earlier reached conclusion could be drawn.

The concept behind the food festival was a success; the fact that it was the first time the food festival would be hosted proved that organizers did a good job in successfully hosting the food festival. They might have faced some challenges along the way but the organizing team refused to be deterred by that, and maintained the good team spirit that existed among them to come out victoriously. The host communities also benefited in many ways, not only have they benefited economically, the food festival has marketed the host community as a destination region. Finally the venue was perfect for the event theme and what the concept represented, as the overall success of the event management team transcended all phases, from the initiation phase to the planning, implementation, the festival event and the close-down.

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Interview themes for participants/sellers

Research: Hosting a memorable event. Case: Food festival in Ostrobothnia.

Interview type: Semi-structured Interview

- **Theme 1:** What was their opinion concerning the organization of the food festival.
- **Theme 2:** is about their general opinion of the food festival and how it has impacted their businesses.
- **Theme 3:** is about their opinion on what could be done differently if the festival would be organized in future.

Interview themes for attending tourist.

Research: Hosting a memorable event. Case: Food festival in Ostrobothnia.

Interview type: Semi-structured Interview

- **Theme 1:** is about their general opinion of the event.
- **Theme 2:** was all about what they were expecting to see at the event.
- **Theme 3:** if this event would be organized again in the future, what could be done differently.

Interview themes for organizers

Research: Hosting a memorable event. Case: Food festival in Ostrobothnia.

Interview type: Semi-structured Interview

- **Theme 1:** what do you think are your achievements so far concerning this event.
- **Theme 2:** what are the problems that you faced during the process of putting this event together.
- **Theme 3:** what is the economic impact of this festival on Jakobstad as the host community.
- **Theme 4:** what are your future expectations for this food festival.
- **Theme 5:** if there would have been more people than was recorded attending, do you think the participants/seller can cater for all their needs.
- **Theme 6:** what do you think about the venue is it okay, or would you have prefer a different venue like the city Centre.

Interview themes for tourism experts

Research: Hosting a memorable event. Case: Food festival in Ostrobothnia.

Interview type: Semi-structured Interview

- **Theme 1:** what is your opinion of the present state of tourism development in Jakobstad.

- **Theme 2:** what is the possible economic impact of this food festival to Jakobstad as the host community.

- **Theme 3:** what is your opinion about how the event was organized and executed.

- **Theme 4:** what area would you want them to improve upon by next year food festival event.

- **Theme 5:** Do you think it should just be Finnish food and product at the event or they should open the opportunity for other culture to participate.