

## PROFILING MASQUERADE FESTIVAL ATTENDEES IN GHANA

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This article describes a study profiling 241 attendees to the 2014 masquerade festival in Winneba in Southern Ghana according to their support for and past membership of the competing masquerade groups. Three cohorts of attendees were used to highlight the differences that exist in terms of their demographics and trip/event profile, information sources, and how satisfied they were with various facilities and services provided by the event organizers. The study found that two cohorts belonged to or supported a masquerade group while the majority neither belonged to nor supported a masquerade group nor ever been masqueraders. The demographic profile of the majority subsample showed they were likely to be female, young, employed with above-average incomes and educational attainment. Their main source of information on the festival was friends, and they also tended to be intolerable of the long ticket queues and other appalling conditions of the event venue more than the other subgroups and this had implications for marketing and product development.

**Key words: Masquerade festival; Winneba; Ghana; Satisfaction; Information source**

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### Introduction

In the past couple of decades, festival and event tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing segments of the world leisure industry (Getz, 1991, 2005; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Salamone, 2000). A concomitant interest among academia is reflected in the large number of studies into various aspects of the industry: attendees' motivations (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Dewar, Meyer, & Li, 2001; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Li & Petrick, 2006); consequences for host communities (Burgan

& Mules, 2000; Rees, 2000); festival attendance as social capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2008); festival management (Getz, 1999; Gnoth & Anwar, 2000; Ralston & Hamilton, 1992; Ritchie, 1984; Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond, & McMahon-Beattie, 2004); etc. Invariably, however, such studies have tended to be Eurocentric in content and implications. Not unexpectedly, studies from Africa and other less developed economies dwell on traditional festivals (Rea, 2007). That is the point of departure for the current study, which presents the background to and results from a study undertaken

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in Winneba, Ghana. The focus of this article is profiling attendees to the 2014 masquerade festival on the basis of their support for and past membership of the competing masquerade groups. Specifically, attendees' demographics characteristics, information sources used, and levels of satisfaction with the services and facilities provided by the event organizers were investigated.

Festivals in Ghana can be subdivided into two genres: traditional and contemporary. The former, which tends to be the most widespread and leading crowd puller for indigenes, is celebrated often in commemoration of some historical events or as propitiation to the gods and ancestors for a good harvest (Odotei, 2002). Irrespective of their origins, it is the active participation and leadership provided by the traditional authorities (e.g., rulers, elders, native priests, etc.) that define traditional festivals. Traditional authorities are not just the principal celebrants; such events are actually held at their behest. Above all, every traditional area boasts of at least one traditional festival, which makes them the most equitably distributed tourism resource in Ghana. These have been relatively well researched (Bame, 1991; Clarke-Ekong, 1995; Cole, 1975; Opoku, 1970).

Contemporary events, on the other hand, are not identified with any traditional area, ethnic group, community, or city, a major criterion for assuming "festival" status (Getz, 1991, 1999). They are put together by budding event organizers and have *footloose* location, though they are invariably held in the large urban centers where they enjoy patronage by the middle class and other urban dwellers. Examples of such events in Ghana held annually include beauty pageants (e.g., Miss Ghana, Ms. Malaika), musical awards (e.g., Musicians Union of Ghana Awards), Farmers' Day, and sporting events (e.g., Milo Marathon). However, there are two exceptions: the Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) and Emancipation Day (Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008). Started by the state in 1992 to commemorate the abhorrent Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the biennial events, especially the former, used to be a huge Pan-African event that attracted large numbers of individuals and participating groups from both the continent and the Diaspora; attendance has, however, declined in recent times (Amenumey, 2003; Georgia State

University/Ghana Tourism Capacity Development Initiative [GSU/GTCDI], 2003).

From planning, product development, and marketing perspectives, the distinction between traditional and contemporary festivals in Ghana, and indeed Sub-Saharan Africa, needs to be underlined because of their distinctive markets. Traditional festivals are assured of patronage, at least by indigenes of that traditional area (every settlement in Ghana belongs to a traditional area, besides the formal administrative district); attendance is almost mandatory for citizens (in some rural communities, citizens who fail to show up face sanctions from the traditional authorities). As a result, traditional festivals have lately become veritable fora for the discussion of developmental issues—with or without political figures in attendance (Clarke-Ekong, 1997). Contemporary festivals, on the other hand, do not enjoy such guaranteed patronage and must rely on sustained advertising and promotional activities to attract large audiences.

Thus, profiling masquerade festival attendees' is justified on several grounds. First, it is a key to designing product offerings for them. The corollary holds that people do not just buy products or services; they buy the expectation of benefits, which satisfy a need. Because festival program elements may be designed to meet different needs, it is important to identify visitors' needs so a festival's design can be tailored to meet those needs. Identification of their needs is a prerequisite for effectively developing elements of a festival and marketing them. If those needs are not understood, then the festival elements are likely to be presented in a suboptimal way. A second reason for profiling masquerade attendees is that it allows for a better understanding of their behavior. It is vital to recognize that most festivals draw from a relatively local area, so their continued viability is dependent on a high level of repeat visitation. As a postpurchase comparison of perceived performance of a product (in this case, an event) with expectations, satisfaction is critical in this respect (Herrmann, Huber, & Braunstein, 2000; Lovelock, Patterson, & Walker, 2001; Musa, Pallister, & Robson, 2004). The findings of the current study should go a long way in enhancing product delivery and developing marketing strategies for an event with great potential as a tourist attraction.

### *Winneba and the Masquerading Festival*

Winneba is a coastal town located some 66 km west of Accra, the national capital. Traditionally, the local inhabitants call it *Simpa*, but Europeans called it Winneba, a corruption of “windy bay” because they found the sea breeze there rather windy (it is believed that the French Huguenot Jean Barbot sailed around the “windy bay” in 1679). Thus, the town became a bustling fishing port and later a major stop on the southern Slave Routes where the British built a fort in 1727 (Lawrence, 1963). The fort was destroyed in 1812 after its commandant, James Meredith, was murdered by the local people allegedly for failing to return gold given him for safe keeping during war time. Currently, it is the capital of the Effutu Municipality and economic life revolves around fishing and farming, though there has been a drastic decline in fish landing in recent times.

However, on the tourist circuit, the town is mostly known for *Aboakyer*, a traditional festival that involves hunting for a live deer without any weapons. *Aboakyer*, one of Ghana’s most popular traditional festivals, used to draw hundreds of visitors (Wyllie, 1994). In recent years, however, attendance is dwindling in the face of perennial chieftaincy feuds and years of no catch. The masquerade festival (or *fancy dress* in the local parlance) has thus become popular, and a major crowd puller. Unlike *Aboakyer*, whose main actors are the traditional authorities and the *Asafo* (traditional militia), masquerading is for the working class and has no challenges with patronage (see Ewusi, 2005, for further details on the two festivals in Winneba).

In some parts of West Africa, especially Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, masquerading has religious undertones and are celebrated during ceremonial rituals, ancestral worship sessions, and funerals (e.g., Doris, 2005; Esu & Arrey, 2009; Picton, 1990; Rea 1998, 2007). In Ghana, this is not the case; masquerading in Winneba and, indeed, the country as a whole, has no religious, metaphysical, or mythical connotations; it is celebrated solely for its entertainment value though unlike the rest of the country the merry making in Winneba is underpinned and sustained by the intense rivalry among the competing groups.

Masquerading was introduced into Winneba in the 1920s by artisans returning from Saltpond,

another coastal community located some 40 kms west of Winneba (it is said that a section of expatriates, particularly Dutch traders in Saltpond, practiced the art of wearing masks in the evenings during festive occasions). By 1923, the first masquerade group was formed in Winneba. Discontented members somehow found reason to break away from an existing group such that by 1933 there were four groups (*Nobles*, *Egyaa*, *Tumus*, and *Red Cross*) firmly established in town, each with its own following (Akyeampong, 2011). Membership of a group is open to the public though membership is thicker in the suburb where a group has its base.

Planning and executing the annual masquerade festival entails huge financial outlay with little or no financial returns on investment; individuals hardly earn enough to cover their expenses. Yet, just for the fun—and perhaps the prestige associated with membership of a group—scores of youth toil to raise funds to enable them to perform year after year. Unlike masquerade groups elsewhere in the country who are content with using the same dress, made often from cheap fabric for years on end, the Winneba groups go for flashy costumes made from silk, velvet, and lace; hence, the local name *fancy dress*.

The indulgence in such ostentation is driven by rivalry, the sheer desire to outdo the other groups. Indeed, one can surmise that it is the rivalry among the groups that has nurtured masquerading into an institution in Winneba. The intense rivalry among masquerading groups in Winneba is not manifested only in their costume. Dancing (which attracts a huge mark during competitions) is another fiercely contested element. In fact, the dancing and choreography practice sessions towards the New Year’s Day competition are shrouded in utmost secrecy; the venue is kept secret and only bona fide members are allowed entry (Ewusi, 2005). Membership of a group does not guarantee automatic selection for the annual competition; selection is purely by merit, based on one’s dexterity during rehearsals.

Until about a decade ago, masquerading in Winneba was an all-male affair. Female involvement in the masquerade art was peripheral, mostly limited to varying degrees of support and spectatorship. The main dancing troupe was made of young men; three or four of them as stilt walkers while adult males constituted the group elders. The bandmen

were all males. In recent times, however, a few young ladies have enrolled into the main dance groups but they constitute no more than 1% of the total membership. Thus, since the mid-1900s, masquerading has become part of the popular culture of Winneba.

Masquerade festival has been held in Winneba since 1958, a year after the participation of the masquerade groups in Ghana's independence celebrations. The display by the four groups won them so much acclaim that the expatriate community of the time (mostly colonial administrators and merchants) offered to sponsor an annual competition, a proposal which was accepted by the then Winneba Town Council. Since then the competition has been kept alive by a federation made up of representatives of the groups, the Municipal Assembly, and the municipal office of Ghana's Commission on Culture. Sponsorship, in the form of financial assistance to the groups and donation of trophies and other prizes to winners, is often sought from corporate organizations.

The masquerade season begins around Christmas Eve and ends on the second or third day of January, depending on when the first working week of the year begins. Accompanied by brass band music, masquerades entertain the public during the Christmas–New Year festivities; as each group moves around town, they also visit the homes of notable residents soliciting for financial assistance to support their activities. The season reaches its climax on New Year's Day, when a competition is organized to select the best group for the year. Dignitaries from the local and national level come to grace the occasion with judges provided by the National Commission on Culture.

Each group, represented by a contingent of between 50 and 70, goes through a march past, and choreography/dancing skills. Other elements for scoring include costume and overall composure. Until another yuletide, the groups remain dormant but may perform during the funeral of a member or a local dignitary. On a couple of occasions, they have represented the Central Region (one of the country's 10 administrative regions) at the biennial National Festival of Arts and Culture. In 2005, at a national competition of masquerade groups, the Winneba chaps took the first four positions amid protest by the others that their performances made

the four Winneba groups more of Brazilian-style carnival groups than masquerades—and therefore should not be part of the national competition. Masquerading in Winneba is, indeed, in a class of its own, hence its ability to draw hundreds of residents and visitors from far and near every New Year's Day.

Funding is the main challenge to masquerading in Winneba at the individual, group, and federation levels. The Federation needs funds to organize and promote the annual competition while groups need funds for the brass band that is hired for performances and for the meals served to group members just before an outing. Over the years, sources of funding have dwindled and, currently for the groups, only two are viable—going round town with bag in hand and looking forward to sponsorship packages from corporate bodies. Drag net fishing, which used to be a reliable source of funds, has since the mid-1990s been abandoned as low fish landings made the venture unattractive.

With very little or no possibility of securing sponsorship from corporate bodies, individual masquerades are the hardest hit. As stated above, masquerading involves very huge expenses to individuals who toil to raise funds on their own—with very little chance of recouping their investment. In recent times, masquerades from other towns come to Winneba to purchase old costumes, providing much needed funds for individual masquerades. Others—from across the various groups—organize themselves into small gangs soon after the New Year holidays and tour the major urban centers, particularly those with large concentrations of migrants from Winneba, where they perform in exchange for funds from the public.

## Method

The data in the current study were collected from a convenience sample of attendees to the 2014 edition of the masquerade festival in Winneba and so consist of local residents and nonresidents. After initial questions to ascertain whether respondents belonged/supported one of the four competing masquerading groups or held past membership of the masquerading groups, the trained field assistants introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the study, answered participants' questions, and

confirmed their willingness to participate. The field assistants orally administered the questionnaires at the event venue (a football field) during the competition and along the streets afterwards.

The instrument was prepared in English and then translated into local dialects (*Twi, Fante, and Effutu*). It was checked for accuracy through the back-translation process (Geisinger, 1994). The instrument was pretested during a football league match between Mysterious Dwarfs and Asante Kotoko, two of Ghana's premier clubs played in November 2013 at the Robert Mensah Sports Stadium at Cape Coast, the administrative capital of the Central Region, about 90 km west of Winneba. The former was the home side, which at the time was struggling in the league, whereas the latter was the defending champion and league leaders, a scenario which generated the same level of tension among fans as witnessed at the masquerade festival. A total of 30 football fans were purposively selected to complete the questionnaire. This enabled the researchers to sharpen the instrument before the actual survey. The actual data collection was conducted on January 1, 2014.

Essentially, the questionnaire comprised three sections. The first section sought standard demographic information about age, sex, marital status, religion, employment status, and education level. In order to differentiate local residents from visitors, respondents were asked "where is your normal place of residence?" Questions relating to event/trip characteristics such as attendance history (first timers vs. repeaters), travel companion, party size, accommodation facilities patronized, and means of transport were also asked. The second section asked respondents which information sources they used on the 2014 masquerade festival. The third section measured respondents' level of satisfaction and overall quality of the festival. Satisfaction with the services, facilities, and activities related to the festival were measured using a 5-point scale (ranging from *extremely satisfied* = 5 to *not at all satisfied* = 1). Similarly, overall quality was measured with a single item, placed on a 5-point scale (ranging from *excellent* = 5 to *poor* = 1) asking respondents to rate their overall experience.

The questionnaires were distributed to 400 attendees. Of these, 241 questionnaires were completed and returned, for a response rate of 60.3%. Of the

241 respondents, 22.4% reported that they belonged/supported a masquerade group and had ever been masqueraders, while 32.8% reported they identified with or supported a masquerade group but had never been a masquerader. A further 44.8% of the respondents indicated they neither belonged/supported a masquerade group nor ever been a masquerader. For ease of presentation, these cohorts are identified in the margins of the tables as "ardent patrons," "masquerade supporters," and "masquerade enthusiasts."

The data were analyzed using chi-square and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Chi-square analysis was used to test whether statistically significant relationships existed between the cohort of attendees and their demographics, event/trip characteristics, and information sources. ANOVA with Games-Howell post hoc tests were used to determine if differences existed (and if so where the differences lie) between the attendees in terms of their level of satisfaction with services, facilities, and activities provided by the festival organizers and their rating of the overall quality of the festival.

A major drawback with the questionnaire survey was the reluctance of most attendees to participate in the survey. The organizational challenges with the festival made this inevitable; attendees had to contend with long ticket queues, standing for hours in the scorching sun before entering a venue with no seats. Those inclement conditions and the researchers' presence contributed to the not so impressive response rate.

## Results and Discussion

As shown in Table 1, "ardent patrons" were more likely to be male, between 21 and 30 years of age, single, high school educated, and unemployed. Respondents of this subgroup likely were to be community members who, given their support and/or past membership of masquerade groups, regularly attend the festival and do so with public transport.

The "masquerade enthusiasts" were, in most instances, similar to the "ardent patrons." However, members of this subgroup were relatively better educated, employed, and were mostly from Accra (the national capital) and other surrounding urban centers in Ghana. It is thus their better financial status (better educated and employed) that facilitates their attendance at the festival as they travel from

Table 1  
Demographic Profile and Event/Trip Characteristics of Respondents

	Ardent Patrons ( <i>n</i> = 54)	Masquerade Supporters ( <i>n</i> = 79)	Masquerade Enthusiasts ( <i>n</i> = 108)	Chi-Square Statistic ( <i>p</i> -value)
Sociodemographic characteristics				
Place of residence				35.069 (0.001*)
Winneba	61.1%	53.2%	23.1%	
District adjoining Winneba	18.5%	15.2%	14.8%	
Accra	9.3%	13.9%	31.5%	
Others	11.1%	17.7%	30.6%	
Gender				27.950 (0.001*)
Male	68.5%	27.8%	61.1%	
Female	31.5%	72.2%	38.9%	
Age				8.130 (0.087)
18–20	29.6%	20.3%	23.1%	
21–30	50.0%	35.4%	41.7%	
31–40	20.0%	44.3%	35.2%	
Marital status				9.933 (0.007*)
Single	72.2%	45.6%	61.1%	
Married	27.8%	54.4%	38.9%	
Education				50.364 (0.001*)
Primary/JSS	29.6%	13.9%	5.6%	
High school/technical/vocational	44.4%	38.0%	23.1%	
Postsecondary (nontertiary)	9.3%	29.1%	17.6%	
University/tertiary	16.7%	19.0%	53.7%	
Religion				2.056 (0.358)
Christian	81.5%	81.0%	88.0%	
Moslem	18.5%	19.0%	12.0%	
Employment status				23.770 (0.001*)
Employed	42.6%	54.4%	62.0%	
Unemployed	38.9%	20.3%	7.4%	
Student	18.5%	25.3%	30.6%	
Event/trip characteristic				
Participation history				23.207(0.001*)
First timers	22.2%	11.4%	42.6%	
Repeat attendant	77.8%	88.6%	57.4%	
Repeat participation history				19.967 (0.001*)
2–4 times	33.3%	41.4%	71.0%	
5–7 times	14.3%	17.1%	12.9%	
>7	52.4%	41.4%	16.1%	
Travel companion <sup>a</sup>				3.274 (0.195)
Alone	33.3%	51.7%	55.4%	
In a group	66.7%	48.6%	44.6%	
Party size ( 18 years) <sup>a</sup>				2.255 (0.324)
<5	42.9%	61.1%	65.8%	
5–9	57.1%	38.9%	34.2%	
Length of stay in Winneba <sup>a</sup>				23.187 (0.001*)
<24 hours	33.3%	27.0%	22.9%	
1–3 days	9.5%	45.9%	62.7%	
4+	57.1%	27.0%	14.5%	
Accommodation <sup>a</sup>				7.655 (0.105)
Friend's house	14.3%	29.6	45.3	
Family house	50.0%	25.9%	21.9%	
Hotel	35.7%	44.4%	32.8%	
Means of transport <sup>a</sup>				42.084 (0.001*)
Private car	23.5%	26.1%	33.3%	
Taxi	70.6%	60.9%	19.0%	
Public bus	5.9%	13.0%	58.7%	

<sup>a</sup>Questions not asked of residents of Winneba.

\*Statistically significant at 0.05 level.

far and near and can afford the entrance fee. In contrast to these two subgroups, the “masquerade supporters” were likely to be female, between the ages of 31 and 40 years, married, had postsecondary education, and were employed. More than half the members of this group were locals, who boarded taxis to the festival grounds.

As shown in Table 1, a statistically significant relationship existed between the three subgroups and place of residence [ $\chi^2(6) = 35.069, p < 0.05$ ]. The data showed that “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” were likely to be local residents compared to enthusiasts who were more likely to be visitors. The analysis suggests that although “masquerade enthusiasts” came from a wide range of places, they mostly hailed from Winneba. The masquerade festival is therefore an occasion to enhance kinship relationships (Crompton, 1979) and communal ties. O’Sullivan and Jackson’s (2002) conception of “home-grown” festival emerges to explain the nature of patrons of the masquerade festival.

Gender was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with the three subgroups [ $\chi^2(2) = 35.690, p < 0.05$ ]. As a form of leisure pursuit, masquerading is largely male dominated, especially for “ardent patrons” and enthusiasts. This perhaps draws from the historical antecedents in which the pioneer masqueraders were adult males; males continue to dominate the masquerade tradition as group elders, bandsmen, stilt walkers, and the main gang. Over the last decade, however, females have enrolled as masqueraders but constitute a very insignificant proportion of the various groups. Otherwise, as the study showed, female involvement in the masquerade tradition was peripheral, mostly as spectators and supporters of the various groups.

Unmarried respondents were noted to be “ardent patrons” and enthusiasts while their married counterparts were mostly supporters [ $\chi^2(2) = 9.933, p < 0.05$ ]. In most of Ghanaian society, masquerading is socially unacceptable for married individuals because it portrays values linked to single men: strength, virility, and powerfulness. Regarding education, participants who support or had past membership of a masquerade group were fairly high [ $\chi^2(6) = 50.364, p < 0.05$ ]. This goes to buttress the origins of the masquerade tradition in Winneba

(introduced by emigrant artisans) and the perception held by most residents that, unlike *Aboakyer* festival in which unlettered fisher folks held sway, “fancy dress” (masquerading) was the domain of the working or educated class (Ewusi, 2005). Table 1 also shows that masquerade enthusiasts were more educated than the other two subgroups [ $\chi^2(4) = 23.770, p < 0.05$ ]. This may reflect the elitism historically associated with the festival. More importantly, it is this subgroup that financially supports the staging of the festival by donating to individual masqueraders (for their costume) and groups for their performance.

Statistically significant relationships were also noted between the subgroups and participation history [ $\chi^2(6) = 23.207, p < 0.05$ ], repeat visitation [ $\chi^2(4) = 19.957, p < 0.05$ ], length of stay [ $\chi^2(4) = 23.187, p < 0.05$ ], and means of transport [ $\chi^2(4) = 42.084, p < 0.05$ ]. On the other hand, no statistically significant relationship was found between the subgroups and age, religion, travel companion, party size, and accommodation. Thus, these variables do not influence attendance to the masquerade festival.

#### *Sources of Information*

The information sources used by the respondents were analyzed (Table 2). Typically, “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” relied on indigenous knowledge as their principal source of information. As previously mentioned, knowledge of the masquerade festival is based on continuous observation and close attachment to the various competing groups. Until recently when the festival was fraught with challenges because of lack of sponsorship, local residents and international tourists alike knew the masquerade festival as being an annual event. By contrast, “masquerade enthusiasts” used a wide range of information sources with word-of-mouth recommendations, possibly from friends who were sons and daughters of Winneba pursuing economic, educational, or other activities in other places as the most important source. This is confirmed by the chi-square value [ $\chi^2(6) = 31.919, p < 0.05$ ], which indicated statistically significant relationship between the three subgroups and information source. This suggests that marketers need to adopt different promotional tools to inform and persuade

Table 2  
Information Source on Masquerade Festival (% of Respondents)

Information Source	Ardent Patrons	Masquerade Supporters	Masquerade Enthusiasts
Indigenous knowledge	59.3	51.9	20.4
Friends	22.2	25.3	43.5
Print media	11.1	10.1	22.2
Radio/television	7.4	12.7	13.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

$\chi^2(6) = 31.919, p = 0.001.$

the three cohorts of festival attendees. For example, “masquerade enthusiasts” would be attracted to the festival through word-of-mouth communication while advertising on the radio/television would get the attention of “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters.”

#### *Satisfaction With Services, Facilities, and Activities*

Thirteen items on the services, facilities, and activities provided by festival organizers were presented in the survey (Table 3). Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on the items using a 5-point Likert scale of *extremely satisfied* (5) and *not at all satisfied* (1). ANOVA showed

that the three cohorts of attendees differed from each other on nine of the items of the satisfaction scale. Table 3 shows some items were particularly good discriminators between the segments; these included food and beverage, venue facilities, sanitation, and ticket supply. The results show that “masquerade enthusiasts” were less satisfied than “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” about accommodation facilities. Even though there has been a boom in the town’s commercial accommodation market as a direct result of the presence of the University of Education, anecdotal evidence suggests many of the operators provide shoddy facilities and services. It was also observed that the satisfaction rating by “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” were significantly different

Table 3  
Satisfaction of Selected Elements of the Masquerade Festival

Item	Ardent Patrons		Masquerade Supporters		Masquerade Enthusiasts		Welch's <i>F</i> Test ( <i>p</i> Values)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Hospitality of the people	<u>4.68</u>	0.50	<u>4.12</u>	1.10	<u>4.70</u>	0.51	9.556 (0.001*)
Accommodation	<u>4.40</u>	1.26	4.07	1.48	<u>3.59</u>	1.49	6.816 (0.001*)
Internal transportation	4.51	0.50	<u>4.34</u>	0.47	<u>4.69</u>	0.58	10.189 (0.118)
Masquerade competition on the field	4.38	0.91	<u>4.35</u>	0.94	4.31	0.88	0.126 (0.940)
Masquerade display on the streets	<u>4.31</u>	0.77	<u>4.98</u>	0.11	<u>4.78</u>	0.43	29.547 (0.001*)
Food and beverage	<u>4.16</u>	1.02	<u>4.58</u>	0.63	<u>3.60</u>	0.87	31.627 (0.001*)
Entertainment	<u>4.62</u>	0.78	<u>4.98</u>	0.11	<u>4.47</u>	0.55	57.476 (0.001*)
Prices/cost of living	3.46	0.78	3.69	0.68	3.55	0.58	2.166 (0.117)
Venue facilities	<u>3.61</u>	0.71	3.77	0.59	1.98	0.68	202.597 (0.001*)
Ticket supply	3.55	0.66	3.67	0.63	<u>1.83</u>	0.79	187.184 (0.001)
Information/signage	4.12	0.95	3.64	0.69	<u>3.66</u>	0.58	5.843 (0.004*)
Sanitation	3.03	0.75	3.07	0.50	<u>1.73</u>	0.82	101.220 (0.001*)
Souvenir	3.88	0.31	3.93	0.37	<u>3.82</u>	0.40	1.963 (0.144)

Mean values based on a 5-point Likert scale. Underlined means show differences are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ , according to Games-Howell post hoc test.

\* $p < 0.05$ .



from that of the “masquerade enthusiasts” because the latter who/which tended to be nonresidents were unsure with the state of accommodation facilities. This perhaps explains why many lodged with friends and family rather than commercial accommodation (please refer to Table 1).

It was also found that “masquerade enthusiasts,” compared to the other subgroups, had low levels of satisfaction with venue facilities and ticket supply. This was not surprising. The substandard conditions at the gates and venue proper have been alluded to above; the overcrowding was worsened by teenagers who wanted to enter without paying the gate fee. More complaints were also voiced about the insanitary conditions at the venue. Although this reflects the general sanitary conditions in the town, it was not discernible why the “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” remained indifferent when asked in the survey. Perhaps they had become used to the unsightly situation.

Furthermore, Games-Howell post hoc analysis revealed “ardent patrons” ratings to be significantly higher than “masquerade supporters” on hospitality of the people. On other hand, “masquerade enthusiasts” rated hospitality of the people higher than “masquerade supporters.” “Ardent patrons” were likely to be more satisfied with accommodation facilities than “masquerade enthusiasts.” Additionally, “masquerade supporters” held significantly lower satisfaction rating for internal transport than “masquerade enthusiasts.” Masquerade procession on the streets distinguished the cohorts, and only “masquerade supporters” held a relatively high satisfaction score for this item. “Masquerade enthusiasts” were unique in indicating lower means for ticket supply, venue facilities, sanitation, and food and beverage while “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters” held higher satisfaction scores. “Masquerade supporters” showed high scores for entertainment while “ardent patrons” held relatively high satisfactions score on information/signage.

Finally, the respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of the 2014 masquerade festival on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being *excellent* and 5 being *poor*. It was found that “masquerade enthusiasts” were significantly more likely to rate the event as “poor.” This was confirmed by the ANOVA test that showed statistically significant differences between the three subgroups and their overall quality

ratings of the 2014 masquerade festival [Welch’s  $F(2, 129.121) = 54.903, p > 0.05$ ]. Likewise, the Games-Howell post hoc test indicated that the “masquerade enthusiasts” held significantly lower overall quality ratings for the festival than “ardent patrons” and “masquerade supporters.” The satisfaction ratings of this cohort mirrored their overall rating of the festival, though they are slightly over-represented relative to the other subsamples.

### Conclusions

The annual Winneba Masquerade Festival has emerged as one of Ghana’s foremost contemporary event attractions; the 2014 edition was no exception. Unlike the practice in the rest of Ghana, masquerading in Winneba revolves around four competing groups and it is the rivalry among them that has ensured its survival and made it an institution and integral part of Christmas–New Year festivities in Winneba since 1958. Thus, the segmentation analysis of the market based on attendees’ support for and membership of the competing masquerade groups allowed comparison of their demographics, information source, and how satisfied they were with facilities and services provided at the festival. Though attendees came from around the country and beyond, the bulk of 2014 audience came from the southern part of Ghana. That the audience was dominated by the youth suggests that after witnessing it for decades, adult members of the community were not as excited with the festival as the youth. Among the three cohorts of attendees, “ardent patrons” tended to be residents whereas the bulk of “enthusiasts” were visitors who were indigenes of Winneba domiciled elsewhere.

The characteristics of the three cohorts of attendees, their sources of information, level of satisfaction, and overall impressions have some important implications for operational planning, product development, and marketing. If masquerade festival organizers have a clear understanding of diversity of the attendees, they will not only be able to develop effective product and marketing strategies that reflect their unique demographic characteristics but also be able to select advertising and marketing messages that can inform and persuade them to attend. The educational and employment status of attendees suggest that attendance could be

increased if more resources were devoted to advertisement and promotion. After over half a century, organizers of the annual competition should be able to raise enough funds internally to finance the organization of the annual competition. The present practice of going round to ask for alms for what is essentially an income-generating venture is not business like. Any financial element contained in a sponsorship package from corporate bodies should be supplementary, not the principal source of finance for organizing the festival.

From a sustainability perspective, two questions arise from the current study. The first is whether the masquerade festival can be sustained for, and enjoyed by, future generations. Anecdotal evidence indicates that for the event organizers, the masquerade festival needs to be profitable while offering opportunities for social and artistic expressions. However, as indicated above, this is impractical given the lack of sponsorship for the event. Thus, improving the venue facilities each year to cater for increasing patrons and achieving high levels of satisfaction in a financially sustainable way requires shifting the attitude of key stakeholders and the community at large. The second question relates to how the event increases benefits to the local residents in the long run. It is not surprising that while the masquerade festival has helped to showcase the town, it has not been able to bring about socioeconomic transformation of the local community. Apart from local eateries and bars that pay merchant fees to set up within the venue, the potential to spread economic benefits of the masquerade festival has not been realized so far. It is essential that the local community benefit from hosting the annual event within the context of development goals of providing sustainable income-generating activities while ensuring that environmental guidelines are central to the festival's sustainability. In this direction, it would be most useful to assess and monitor the masquerade festival's contribution and impact on the local economy, as it is necessary to sustain the event in the long run.

From the operational and strategic planning perspective, the result of the study provides valuable information for festival organizers regarding the attendees' information search behavior. The use of this information can be useful in deciding which information source would be effective in reaching

the targeted festival market audience and maximize/maximizing attendance. This article has shown that differences exist in the sources of information utilized by residents and nonresidents. Although the former would likely rely on their shared belief that the festival is an annual event, the latter would more likely rely on word of mouth. Thus, it does seem appropriate that television/radio would provide cost-effective dissemination of indigenous knowledge about the masquerade festival while social marketing campaigns may be an appropriate strategy for visitors, especially when the majority are indigenes of Winneba domiciled elsewhere.

A further practical implication is the need to better understand and meet attendees' expectations. Notwithstanding attendees' support for or past membership of the competing masquerade groups, they expect certain services and experiences. If the right market segment is targeted but their expectations are not met, dissatisfaction will occur and quality of experience will suffer. As indicated, there is high repeat attendance among the cohorts of visitors (see Table 1). Over 98% were repeat visitors and nearly 71% were making at least their fourth attendance. Thus, attention needs to be focused on reducing the likelihood of dissatisfaction among the target market segments. The venue, which received criticism from respondents, should not be conceived as being secondary to the annual festival; like any event, venue is an essential component of the product especially for cultural events (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011; Hassanien & Dale, 2011; Walker & Sherwood, 2003). A professional event manager should be in a better position to appreciate this point—and the earlier they were brought in the better for both attendees and organizers! Given that the market corresponds to the majority who neither belong/support a masquerade group nor ever been a masquerader, improving conditions at the venue, putting in place effective ticketing systems, and providing ancillary service areas for catering should enhance visitor satisfaction and translate into a marketing tool as well.

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