

Collaborative innovation: Catalyst for a destination's event success

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Collaborative Innovation: Catalyst for a Destination's Event Success

Peter Schofield, Phil Crowther, Leo Jago, John Heeley, Scott Taylor

Abstract

Purpose – This article contributes to theory concerning collaborative innovation through stakeholder engagement with reference to Glasgow City Marketing Bureau's (GCMB) management strategies, which represent UK best practice in events procurement, leveraging and destination branding.

Design/methodology/approach – The research adopts a case study design to facilitate an in-depth evaluation of the DMO's critical success factors. Multiple perspectives on GCMB's collaborative innovation are achieved through semi-structured interviews with senior managers from the bureau, key stakeholders and other DMOs.

Findings – GCMB's success results from long term, extensive, collaborative engagement, a unique institutional structure and sustained political and financial support through to transformational leadership, strategic event selection and targeted marketing through 'earned' distribution channels.

Research limitations/implications – The study takes a single case study approach and focuses on GCMB's event-led branding strategy. Given the importance but relative neglect of long term inter-personal relationships in collaborative innovation, future research should focus on the development of social capital and adopt a longitudinal perspective.

Practical implications – The paper provides insights into the collaborative innovation process with a range of stakeholders, which underpins GCMB's events strategy and its leveraging of the city brand. In particular, the study highlights the need for entrepreneurial leadership and the development of long-term relationships for effective engagement with stakeholders.

Originality/value – Previous research has focussed on outcomes and neglected pre-requisites and the process of collaborative innovation between destination stakeholders. This study examines this issue from the perspective of a successful DMO and presents a conceptual framework and new engagement dimensions which address this gap in knowledge.

Acknowledgements

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This paper is dedicated to our co-author and esteemed colleague, John Heeley, who passed away in June 2017.

1. Introduction

Innovation is a key strategy for tourism organisations to survive and grow in an increasingly competitive and global market (Yang and Tan, 2017) and collaboration has been found to be an important driver of successful innovation (Alonso and Liu, 2012). Despite the importance of innovation, many tourism organisations have been slow to innovate because the pre-requisites for innovation are inadequate (Kessler et al., 2015). Organizational innovativeness precedes innovation, and business success follows innovation success (Grissemann et al., 2013). Given this scenario, Teare and Monk (2002) argue that an organisation is the 'best live action case' for business innovation learning. In response to this and to Getz's (2008) call for case studies on the planning and management of events to identify effective strategies and practices, this study's purpose is to examine Glasgow City Marketing Bureau's (GCMB) collaborative innovation, through engagement with stakeholders, in relation to their event procurement and leveraging to enhance the city's brand image. GCMB is one of the leading visitor and convention bureaus in Europe in securing conferences, conventions and event business, and promoting its destination brand. As such, a close examination of its collaborative innovation processes, which are critical for success in tourism (Tajeddini, 2011), will provide new insights to inform both innovation theory and managerial practice in event-led destination branding within this 'mediated intra-destination' context (Fyall et al, 2012: p. 11).

Events facilitate the development of a destination's tourism potential and brand image (Getz and Page, 2016), but the literature has hitherto focussed on the outcomes from event-led destination development while neglecting processes and mechanisms (Ziakas, 2014). Moreover, despite the critical importance of combining internal and external resources to achieve tourism excellence (Denicolai et al., 2010) there is a paucity of research on inter-organisational collaborative innovation in an event and destination branding context. Addressing this gap in knowledge is important because while events provide excellent leveraging opportunities, they are complex projects which do not always realize their potential due to strategic misalignment (Jago et al., 2003), unresolved differences between stakeholders (Singha and Hub, 2008) and ineffective media strategies (Li and Kaplanidou, 2013). Although collaboration is now widely recognised as being key to innovation, little research has been undertaken to explore multiple engagement patterns between partners in wider collaborative networks (Howells, 2010). Therefore, Carlborg et al. (2014) have called for future research to seek a better understanding of an organisation's interactions with its stakeholders.

Previous research has also tended to focus at either the individual level while ignoring the group context or at the group level while neglecting individual factors (Hon and Lui, 2016). Consequently, relatively little is known about the interrelationships between individuals, innovative mechanisms and the outcomes from group-level innovation. This study addresses these issues by adopting an integrative, multi-level approach, as recommended by Anderson et al. (2014). Within this context, it focusses on GCMB's innovative intra- and inter-group collaborative practices with multiple stakeholders relating to processes associated with securing, hosting, and leveraging events to raise the city's profile. In particular, the study adds to knowledge by examining individual, group and organisational engagement patterns to identify the key drivers of innovativeness and collaborative innovation, which underpin event-led destination branding success, but which have hitherto been neglected (Zach, 2012).

Building on the recommendation of Sorensen and Torfing (2011: 21) to undertake qualitative case studies to 'fully understand' the complex processes and contextual richness of collaborative innovation, this research adopts a single case study design. Conceptually, it

builds on existing research strands relating to management innovation, destination branding and events management, drawing on innovation, stakeholder and social exchange theories to develop a conceptual framework with which to examine the dynamics of GCMB's collaborative innovation. To address the extant gaps in the literature and contribute to theory development, it focusses on four research questions.

1. What are the pre-requisites for organisational innovativeness?
2. What elements of organizational innovativeness influence GCMB's collaborative innovation?
3. What are the innovative practices which create value, competitive advantage and differentiation?
4. How does GCMB effectively manage collaborative processes to secure event success, economic impact, brand leverage, stakeholder benefits and visitor satisfaction?

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, the extant literature on organisation innovativeness, collaborative innovation and destination branding, and the role of events in destination branding strategies is reviewed; we then present the initial conceptual framework based on this research. Second, we explain the research method, using interviews with senior managers from the DMO and its stakeholders. Third, we discuss the findings and a revised conceptual framework. Finally, we outline the contribution of this research and the managerial implications, address the study's limitations, and make recommendations for further research.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Organisational innovativeness, collaborative innovation and destination branding

The literature recognises product, market, process, behavioural and strategic types of organisational innovativeness (Wang and Ahmed, 2004) and five categories of innovation: product/service, process, managerial, management/ marketing, and institutional (Hjalager, 1997). However, the growing importance of the services sector has resulted in significant challenges in defining and measuring innovations, not least because of the shift toward open innovation based on increasingly networked environments (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015). Recent discussions on innovation have referred to it as: 'the application of new ideas with the aim of creating value' (Johannessen, 2013: 1195) and 'a knowledge intensive process of seeing and doing things differently' (Jalonen, 2015: 1). While innovation is critical to gaining competitive advantage in a dynamic environment (Omerzel, 2016), it is also linked with uncertainty, risk, cost and potential for failure, which may constrain creativity and innovation (Hon et al., 2014). Strategic contingency power theory suggests that organisations must identify and implement coping mechanisms to alleviate these negative effects of uncertainty; these should include group-level conditions such as supportive leadership, information and resource sharing through task interdependence, and participation in decision making and problem solving to improve group cohesion and creative efficacy (Hon and Lui, 2016). However, their effective implementation needs an understanding of the complex cross-level interaction effects and social dynamics between individuals, groups and organisational factors, critical for innovation; this requires a multi-level approach (Anderson et al., 2014; Wong, 2016), as adopted in this study.

Previous studies on innovation in tourism have identified three theoretical perspectives. First, a Schumpeterian approach, where innovation is driven by entrepreneurs (Hjalager, 2010), akin to the influence of transformational leadership; second, the technology-push/demand-pull approach, which acknowledges technology as a driving force (Coombs et al., 1987); third, a Marshallian innovation system (Pikkemaat and Weiermair, 2007), which considers a wide range of internal and external factors and relationships. It is increasingly accepted that the sharing of knowledge and resources can lead to competitive advantage, but many organisations lack the expertise to collaborate effectively (Pechlaner et al., 2005) and fail to establish the critical preconditions for successful innovation: organizational size (Denicolai et al., 2010), leadership (Beritelli, 2011), innovation formally integrated into daily activities (Tajeddini, 2011) and collaborative partnerships (Alonso and Liu, 2012).

Recent research in hospitality (Uen et al., 2012) and in tourism on micro DMOs (Zach, 2016) has highlighted the role of 'transformational leadership' in innovative behaviour. This induces employees' trust and commitment, and creates an organisational brand climate where members have shared perceptions (Liao and Chuang, 2007). Moreover, Hon (2012) found that a management style which developed a sense of autonomous employee motivation led to creativity and innovation. In a DMO context, effective leadership is critical for ensuring the brand climate extends externally through both strategic relationship building and consistent communication with stakeholders in a network, yet this is rarely achieved in practice (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009).

Through effectual cultivation of partnerships and development of integrated products and brand strategies, DMOs can potentially enhance the depth, quality or array of visitor experiences (Harrison-Hill and Chalip, 2005). Destination brand performance is therefore linked to, and impinges upon, stakeholder relations, which often comprise common and divergent views (Wang and Xiang, 2007), but skilful DMO coordination can foster the development of shared values and a unified mind set among tourism business partners (Wang, 2008). Perceptions of brand, and related constructs, rely on the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of not only stakeholder organisations' employees and management, but a diverse range of citizens. Hence cities require a distinct form of branding, underpinned by the pervasive importance of network collaboration (Keller and Richey, 2006), and impinging upon clear messages to build civic consciousness, self-confidence and a strong brand identity (Ashworth and Kavaratzis, 2009). However, despite the wide acknowledgement of these factors, their implementation is achieved by very few organisations.

2.2 Integrating destination branding and events strategies

From a destination branding perspective, major events are 'highly valued as attractions, catalysts, animators, place marketers and image makers' (Getz, 2008: 406) and are often used in city branding strategies because of their short term impacts on tourism and longer term legacy from media exposure (Hede, 2005). These promotional opportunities are particularly important given prevailing conditions of market saturation, product substitution and diminishing opportunities for differentiation (Vel and Sharma, 2010). However, it is rare for a host destination to be featured prominently in the media coverage of an event, for example a sports event, because the focus is on the sport (Chalip and Costa, 2005). Therefore, superficially pairing the event and destination is insufficient; destination marketers must adopt a more strategic approach, ensuring the desired associations are delivered through event communication to facilitate brand image transfer (Ritchie et al., 2007).

Strategically, the incorporation of events into a host destination's tourism offer is challenging (O'Brien, 2006); destinations often fail to effectively cross-leverage events because the events have not been selected nor purposefully designed and integrated to align with destination branding strategies (Li and Kaplanidou, 2013). Consequently, destinations fail to successfully communicate their brand identity because the primary, secondary and tertiary components of their communications strategy are incongruous (Kavaratzis, 2004). Ultimately, it is a highly strategic decision to identify which events can add value to the destination brand (Chalip, 2004). Therefore, although events are increasingly being used by destinations to add uniqueness and enhance the brand (Truong et al, 2017), their ability to effectively integrate events into destination branding strategies is limited (Van Nierkerk, 2017).

Organisational innovativeness underpins innovation (Grissemann et al., 2013) and, therefore, the creation of value (Johannessen, 2013). Such innovation enables destination managers to add high value experiences to their events which can translate into favourable destination images and loyalty (Van Niekerk, 2017). Therefore, since innovation can be strengthened via collaboration between key stakeholders (Sorensen and Torfing, 2011), collaborative innovation should be seen as the driver of co-creation of value in such relationships, evidenced by studies such as Wang and Ahmed (2004) and Beritelli (2011). Additionally, Hon and Lui (2016) have highlighted the criticality of addressing uncertainty in order to facilitate creativity, while Anderson et al. (2014) and Wong (2016) stress the importance of leveraging cross-level interaction effects and managing social dynamics. These findings from the extant literature underpinned the development of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

This framework was used to guide the operationalisation of our research in the context of event-led destination branding, with specific reference to GCMB. Significantly, much of the previous research on collaborative innovation has neglected the 'enabling' of collaboration in the service delivery process (Osborne and Strokosch, 2013). Moreover, while other recent work has highlighted the importance of engagement, it has insufficiently captured the importance of creativity (Hon et al., 2014), the strategic significance of collaborative innovation and the role of personal relationships in the process (Frow et al., 2015). This study addresses these gaps in the literature by focusing on collaborative innovation as a strategic approach to the creation of value and competitive advantage; we also examine the essential pre-requisites which underpin collaborative innovation, and the multi-level human interaction and DMO creativity in event-led destination branding.

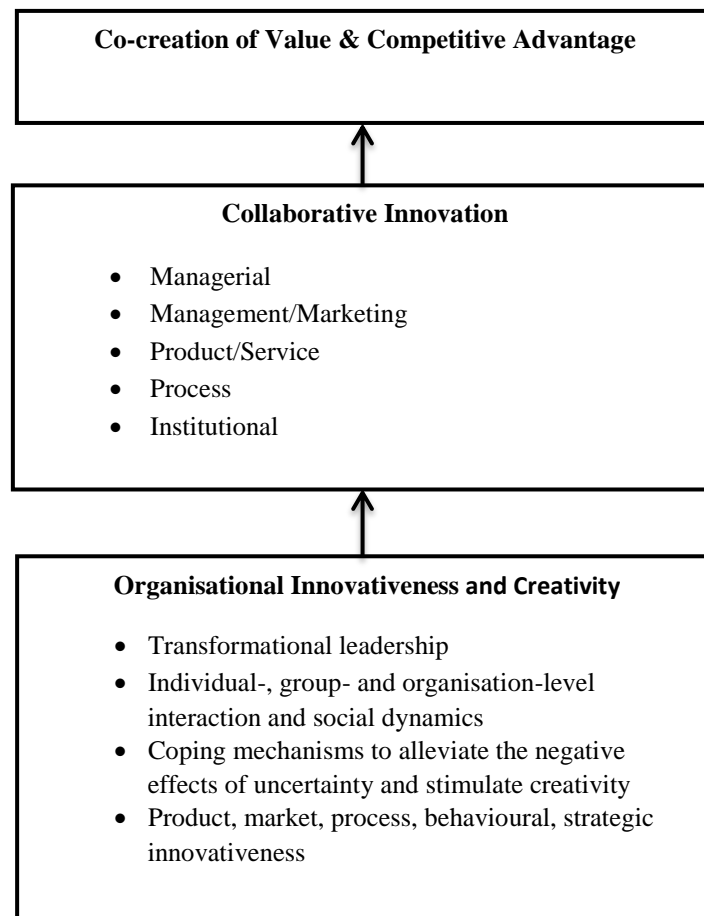
3. Research method

Given both the limited understanding of the process of collaborative innovation within a DMO context and the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2014) was considered the most appropriate method. In examining multiple stakeholder perspectives relating to collaborative innovation, the authors acknowledge the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of qualitative research; we obtained credible knowledge by gathering information directly from the interviewees, and reported accurately their constructed realities based on statements and views expressed during the interviews. We also acknowledge that the information and its interpretation are value-laden.

3.1 Study setting

Whilst a single-case design has limited powers of generalisability, it does permit a detailed

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Collaborative Innovation



examination and also responds to Hanna and Rowley's (2011) call for individual case studies to further our understanding of place brand management. GCMB was selected as the case study because it is the UK market leader and widely regarded as the most successful visitor and convention bureau in Europe in terms of procuring and leveraging events business. As such, it represents a viable 'live action case' (Teare and Monk, 2002) for examining industry best practice in collaborative innovation within an event-led city branding context.

3.2. Interview schedule and procedure

Interview questions, and question areas were guided by the emergent literature-based themes depicted in Figure 1. Importantly, questions were framed, and responses probed, in such a way as to enable, not constrain, the responses of interviewees. Pre-tests with a former CEO of a city-based DMO resulted in minor changes to the questions. Eleven interviews were conducted, by two of the authors, during May and June 2016 with four further interviews completed in early 2017. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, but skype or telephone was used where face-to-face interaction was not practicable. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes.

We adopted a data saturation strategy based on Francis et al.'s (2010) principles. First, we specified a priori an 'initial analysis sample' ($n = 10$). Data saturation was reached with 10 interviews or less in studies by Cabiddu et al. (2013) and Pocock & McIntosh (2013). Second, we specified the 'stopping criterion': how many more interviews would be conducted without new themes or ideas emerging (+3). Third, the interviewees represented the key

collaborative partners, and also included a former CEO of four English DMOs and a member of the South Africa National Convention Bureau, with detailed knowledge of GCMB, to provide an external frame of reference. Data saturation was achieved after eight interviews; nevertheless, seven further interviews ($n = 15$) were undertaken. This confirmed that saturation was reached at eight interviews.

3.3 Data analysis

A continuous process of data collection, analysis and evaluation was adopted in an attempt to identify consistencies in stakeholder transcripts. Each interview was recorded and immediately transcribed; the texts were then analysed using the following coding procedure (after Miles and Huberman, 1994). First, key issues relating to the research questions were identified. Second, appropriate units of information i.e. phrases, sentences or paragraphs which facilitated the researchers' understanding of a research question were identified. Third, the units were sorted into appropriate categories (themes) using relevant theory for interpretation. Fourth, the categorisation of units was then independently verified using an inter-sorter reliability test on five randomly selected interview transcripts using the same procedure; this achieved 92% agreement, exceeding the recommended acceptable level (Johnson and Heal, 1987). Final categorisations were reached after subsequent discussion.

4. Results and discussion

The findings are contextualised within the key components of the framework presented in Figure 1. In Glasgow, an increasingly dynamic and competitive market is the key instigator of collaboration, while a range of factors not least the strong and unfailing political and financial backing from Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government together with effective DMO leadership are key facilitators.

4.1 Innovative building blocks

DMOs are typically burdened by a recurring tension between the regulation and bureaucracy that characterises their environment and the uncompromisingly competitive market (D'Angella and Go, 2009). Six 'innovative building blocks', or foundations were identified, with one interviewee commenting that 'the building blocks are where the real innovation is'.

First, the bureau was set up as a limited company at a 'fingernail's distance' from Glasgow City Council, with the council leader as chair of its board and its directors comprising leaders of other influential stakeholder organisations. This distinctive organisational structure, market flexibility, board membership and level of political support are rare in practice and represent an 'institutional innovation' (Lynch and Morrison, 2007). GCMB's culture was cited as a 'critical success factor' by one interviewee who remarked, 'you can hire the right people, pay them the right money, fire them for underperforming and therefore create the right culture'. The bureau could therefore focus on the market and on economic impact, working commercially on achieving a return of 10:1 to present the case for events, although often achieving a return of between 18 and 20:1. The importance of its business culture is exemplified in the following quote from its former CEO:

'Cities need to operate in an independent marketplace without constraints... The DMO was set up on that premise so that Glasgow could compete... It was empowered to disrupt the marketplace.'

This stark degree of flexibility and high degree of responsiveness to change enabled GCMB to establish an 'unassailable competitive position', which engenders a high level of stakeholder confidence, respect and trust.

Many DMOs blame 'bureaucracy' or a 'lack of power' for their inefficiency and ineffectiveness, but the view of the former CEO is that DMO performance is typically constrained by a 'failure to understand the importance of the political process and the absolute necessity to engage at the highest political elite level'. One interviewee, reflecting on the distinctiveness of Glasgow's approach from an external perspective, identified 'the city's degree and depth of political commitment' as the second key building block, providing the requisite foundation for the DMO's innovative approach to destination branding and in particular, its use of events to leverage the brand. There was wide agreement among interviewees that key politicians' and business leaders' recognition of the importance of events, and the stability created through their sustained support for the DMO's event strategy was one of the most critical but rare factors in GCMB's success: 'it happens in Glasgow and Gothenburg and nowhere else'. The long-term commitment came from 'an understanding that it would take time...not wanting quick returns'; this underpinned a more strategic approach 'over 10 to 15 years rather than 1 to 2 years'.

Glasgow's political commitment is paralleled by the third building block - the consistently high level of funding compared with other DMOs. GCMB's revenue was £10.4 million in 2014-15, of which approximately two-thirds came from the City Council; one interviewee commented: 'this is high compared with elsewhere in the UK for example Edinburgh which received £980,000'. In an era of public deficits in Western economies, this level of commitment and financial backing supports GCMB's strategic approach to brokering the city's business and engaging in what another interviewee referred to as 'long term acquisition (with event owners), because lead times are often enormous'.

The fourth building block is the strong relationship between the DMO and universities; this supports Franchetti and Page's (2009) 'triple helix model' of collaboration. In this context, these linkages are forged through DMO board membership, 'daily' communication between GCMB's CEO and university vice-chancellors, and through the 'ambassador programme', the first of its kind in Europe. One interviewee stated 'the bureau has 1,650 ambassadors ...working in fields where they are most interested in winning conferences'. Another participant commented that 'often universities sit uncomfortably within city brands, but not in Glasgow'; they are fully engaged with the 'People Make Glasgow' brand, enabling the DMO to deliver a single, cohesive message. This highlights the importance of adopting a multi-level approach to examining innovation.

The fifth building block relates to the strength of the city's brand and the quality and extent of its venues and supporting facilities, while the sixth relates to accessibility through both transport links and communications networks. The combined effect of these resources provides a firm foundation for the DMO, but their value is further enhanced through the bureau's strategic approach to collaborative innovation and stakeholder engagement.

4.2 Organisational innovativeness influencing innovation in GCMB

The cumulative impact of these building blocks has significantly reduced bureaucracy, eased financial constraints, and facilitated market orientation, which has, in turn, driven GCMB's organisational innovativeness and its ability to see and do things differently (Jalonen, 2015). All of the interviewees independently highlighted many collaborative practices involving

GCMB and its stakeholders, which they considered to be innovatory. There was a clear message that the bureau's 'transformational leadership' or 'managerial innovation' (Hu et al, 2009), albeit in combination with a range of other key factors, was critical. The former CEO established the tone and direction of the company through the brand climate's shared values and practices:

'We set up new rules of engaging...we re-engineered so as not to compete with everyone doing the same thing; we assumed a new position and responsibility for driving that forward.'

He also emphasised 'the importance of creative people, a creative culture and a creative environment. So innovation is at the heart of our organisation for the purpose of creating customers'. He went on to describe the bureau in terms of its 'committed staff', 'open communication environment', 'inclusive approach', 'knowledge sharing culture' and 'encouragement of critical thinking' - key influences on innovation identified in the literature (Hon and Lui, 2016;). This is portrayed in the following:

'We were all on one floor so lots of talking. We mixed up specialisms and teams - no departments. Regular meetings, discussions and writing on walls. I had 65 people in my team but would speak to all in a week, so they felt the shared success.'

This demonstrates a high level of task interdependence, social interaction, co-operation and information exchange, facilitated by 'inclusive work processes', 'participative culture' and 'team spirit', which have also been highlighted in the literature as critical for creativity and collaboration (Omerzel, 2016).

Given the short lifecycles of products in this market, the bureau aims to produce a new product idea every day as part of a 'disruptive innovation strategy' (Cagnazzo et al. (2008). From the GCMB's perspective:

'you must be innovative or you get left behind at phenomenal speed...to innovate you have to get in a room often enough to find solutions; we are constantly thinking about what we can do differently to shake up the market'.'

This integration of innovative activity into daily activities (Tajeddini, 2011) to create value for customers through 'product innovation' or 'co-production' (Ranjan and Reed, 2016) is driven by the bureau's 'transformational leadership' (Zach, 2016) and a high level of sustained engagement with colleagues, partners and customers, resulting in superior organisational performance. The DMO's success is evidenced by the city's standing: Glasgow was ranked 5th in the SportBusiness Ultimate Sport City Awards (2016) despite being the same size as 3000 other global cities. From a Schumpeterian perspective, the bureau's mission to continually disrupt the market and fill gaps in the value chain suggests that its entrepreneurial leadership is driving innovation. However, the critical influence of other factors including the collaborative nature of much of the DMO's innovation, through its sustained engagement with stakeholders, partners and customers, indicates that theoretically GCMB's innovative practices can also be viewed as Marshallian.

4.3 Creating value and competitive advantage through collaborative innovation

4.3.1 Innovation through strategic networking

Previous research has shown that collaboration is a key aspect of innovation (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015) and interviewees agreed about the value stakeholders place on the bureau's network. There was strong emphasis on the CEO's frequent personal contacts with a wide range of people, and a consensus that these relationships, which were both formal and informal as well as wide and deep (Simard and West, 2006), were what made GCMB so effective, and that this was not happening elsewhere in the UK. This indicates that social capital is a key input for establishing and sustaining Glasgow's event success. The emphasis on social capital also confirms the key role of transformational leadership in developing and maintaining inter-personal relationships and the importance of frequent communication to nurture trust, and mutual understanding (Beritelli, 2011).

In relation to these strong connections, frequent comments were also made about the bureau's 'receptiveness' and 'quick decision making', which have also been identified as key issues for DMOs (Fyall et al., (2012). Many of the interviewees also emphasised the importance of the bureau's long term relationships with partners. For example, in 2007, GCMB were speaking to MTV about their 2014 awards:

'We played the long game with them...It took five and a half years to get a contract... it is all about a long term set of relationships with a client...Glasgow will cultivate for the long term and you will not find this in other DMOs.'

This also highlights the critical importance of the bureau's sustained level of engagement with stakeholders, which is not a widespread practice according to many of the interviewees.

Another distinguishing feature of GCMB's collaboration in comparison with other DMOs is its 'multiple' engagement patterns (Howells, 2010) i.e. the breadth of its engagement to produce a range of collaborative product, process and management innovations. The bureau is also actively involved in the city's bidding process for new airline routes; once secured, it then focuses on marketing the new routes to develop the passenger flows in both directions.

GCMB also acts as an effective catalyst for collaboration between its partners, such as the city's hotels, restaurants and taxi firms. While previous research has highlighted the orchestrating role of DMOs, interviewees stressed that nurturing these relationships goes far beyond the act of physically gathering parties together. The bureau's extensive engagement with actors in its network created opportunities beyond the traditional focus of co-creation to increase the range of value chain activities (Driessen and Hillebrand, 2013), including co-conception, co-design, co-production, co-promotion, co-pricing and co-distribution (Frow et al., 2015).

4.3.2 Innovation in events procurement, distribution and city brand leveraging

Success in the process of bidding for, hosting, and leveraging events is contingent upon a collaborative approach between a city and its stakeholders (Getz and Fairley, 2004) and a clear vision for the legacy of events (Jago et al., 2003). However, events are rarely employed as part of an integrated development strategy (Van Nierkerk, 2017). In Glasgow, by comparison, the City Council and Chamber of Commerce 'have always seen events in a positive light, always been supportive and always understood events.' Consequently, GCMB has been able to bridge the gap between the political backdrop, key agencies and wider stakeholders (Pike and Page, 2014), enabling them to innovatively navigate typical obstacles that thwart the realisation of event potential (Chalip, 2004). This is evidenced through the

establishment of the Strategic Major Events Forum (SMEF) and its Major Events Charter (MEC) in 2005, which have strengthened the city's image and enhanced its reputation as a model of best practice.

Glasgow is also innovative in relation to its major event selection strategy. A key criterion for bidding is the economic return, but according to one interviewee, events must also 'substantiate the city's brand positioning...events need to reflect the personality of the brand and what you want your city to be known for'. Another interviewee stated that while some other cities have selection criteria, unlike Glasgow they do not put them into practice. In regard to the preparation of event bids, reference was also made to Glasgow's 'client focussed' collaborative research involving key partners, with the Commonwealth Games in 2014 being a particular highlight. The success of the Commonwealth Games resulted from the long term vision and investment of the city leaders, and the sustained effort and development of stakeholder understanding about the synergetic effects of team work in delivering memorable experiences (Kim, 2014), ensuring quality in every aspect, to benefit the city overall (Hankinson, 2009). One interviewee commented: 'it's not enough to fulfil the bidding brief; you have to go some considerable distance to be preferred destination'. This included the provision of stakeholder training programmes, for example, customer care initiatives for taxi drivers.

Glasgow's long term commitment to, and strategic development of, its events portfolio has facilitated the promotion of the city's uniqueness to attract new visitors, but has also built long-lasting, positive impressions which have strengthened the brand identity to influence revisit intentions (Milicevic et al, 2017). The interviews also showed that GCMB's media strategy for events, including the Commonwealth Games, focused mainly on 'earned' channels of distribution - 'earning the right to be discussed by others...in other people's channels'. This management innovation was achieved by developing relationships over the long term with intermediaries that have large customer bases.

The findings therefore show that Glasgow is successful because it is strategically innovative in its stakeholder engagement, network development, selection of events to leverage the city brand, and in its use of earned distribution channels to target specific segments.

5. Revised framework for DMO Collaborative Innovation

Whilst the framework presented in Figure 1 was useful in guiding this study, the findings indicate that there are other dimensions and issues that need to be considered in understanding collaborative innovation and its outcomes in relation to event-leveraged destination marketing (Figure 2). This understanding is important given the criticality of events in enhancing a destination's competitive advantage and the growing interest in event tourism within the research community (Todd et al, 2017). There is evidence for six 'innovative building blocks' that underpin organisational innovativeness and subsequently influence creativity and collaborative innovation in this context. The clearly stated view of highly experienced interviewees in this study is that these building blocks are less evident for most DMOs compared to GCMB. This is particularly the case in relation to the level of political, financial and stakeholder support they receive, which corroborates Kessler et al.'s (2015) argument concerning the inadequacy of many tourism organisations' prerequisites for innovation.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for DMO Collaborative Innovation in Event-led Destination Branding

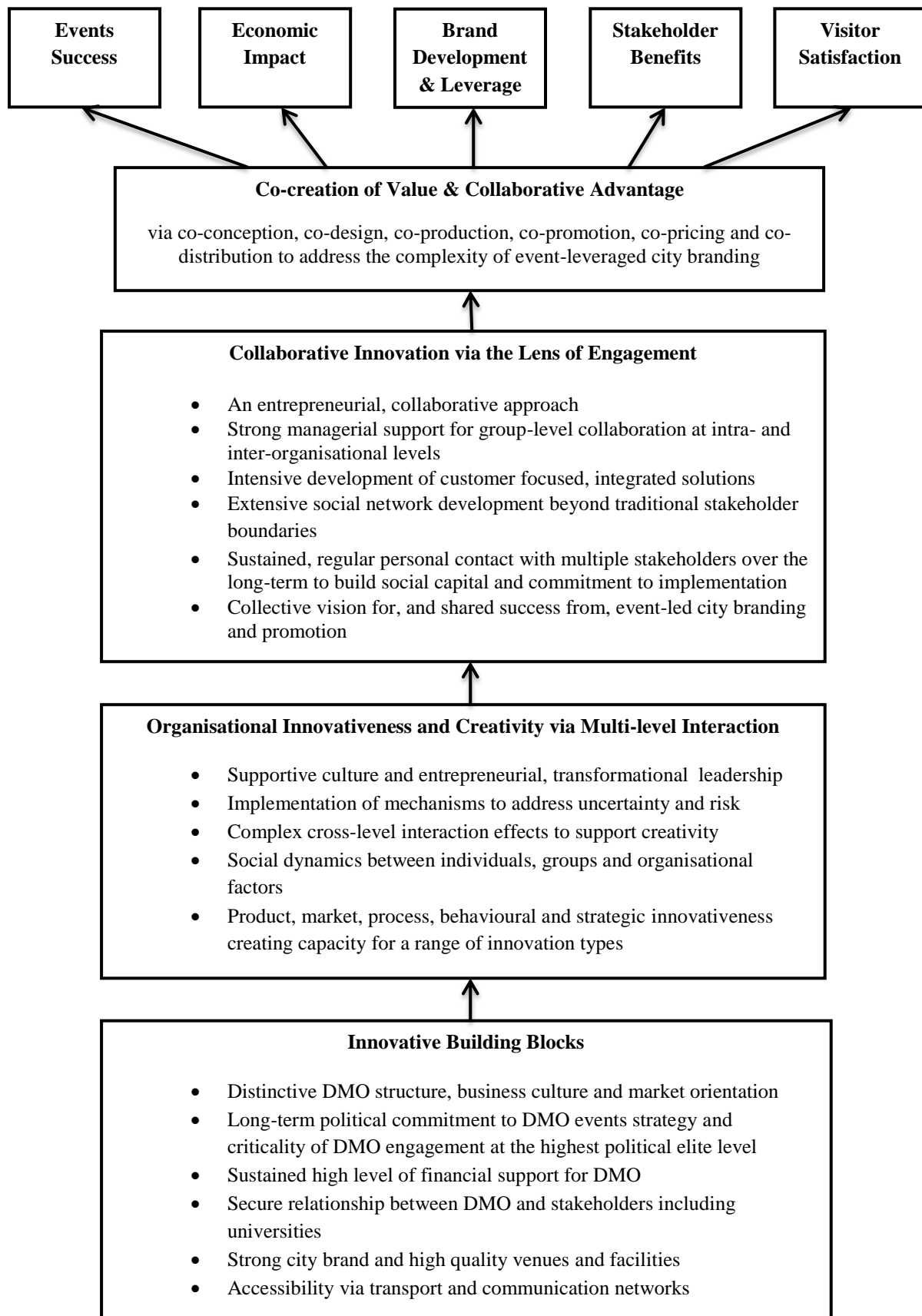


Figure 2 makes more explicit, the various dimensions of collaborative innovation from Figure 1. We found that GCMB operationalizes these dimensions in a certain fashion based on their particular way of seeing and doing things and creating value from new ideas. GCMB's distinct structure, funding, governance, and therefore culture, underlies their creation of value. Based on these foundations, the bureau's innovativeness derives from its entrepreneurial orientation and transformational leadership, reflected in its proactivity and support for creativity through risk reduction and cross-level interaction (Hon and Lui, 2016). All five types of organisational innovativeness identified by Wang and Ahmed (2004) are evidenced. However, GCMB's particular strengths in 'behavioural innovativeness', and social dynamics, are critical given the extent to which engagement underpins the whole process of collaborative innovation.

Within this context, the most distinguishing characteristic of GCMB's collaborative innovation is the extent of its engagement. Whilst engagement forms part of 'managerial innovation', the findings strongly indicate that engagement is seen as the lens through which creativity and collaborative innovation should be viewed both within the DMO and in relation to inter-organisation interactions. Moreover, it is not the extent of the bureau's social network per se that is important but rather the manner in which it is exploited by GCMB staff and by the CEO in particular. This supports Zach's (2016) finding that effectual DMO leadership is not only preoccupied with innovation, but the facilitator of collaborative innovation, indicative of GCMB's distinctive approach. The regular personal contact and relationship development with stakeholders was seen as instrumental to collaborative innovation and the co-creation of competitive advantage. Terms like building 'social capital' were used to describe the benefits derived from DMO engagement and the 'depth, breadth and duration of engagement' are important differentiating features of GCMB's approach.

A clear emphasis was placed on the diversity of GCMB's engagement patterns to fully leverage the benefits from a wide range of products co-created with many different stakeholders. The DMO acts as the catalyst for engagement, transferring the value creation outside the bureau to its partnerships within this service system. Interviewees were able to identify five key outcomes from GCMB's collaborative innovation and co-creation, essential for gaining a competitive advantage, namely, event success, economic impact, brand development and leverage, stakeholder benefits, and visitor satisfaction.

Figure 2, therefore, addresses some of the gaps in earlier studies and identifies the critical success factors in this specific context. It highlights the drivers of organisational innovativeness in a DMO context and contributes to an understanding of the extent of multiple engagement patterns required within a collaborative network. Central to the bureau's success, was its transformational leadership, effective implementation of coping mechanisms to reduce risk and facilitate individual- and group-level creativity, and its extensive cross-level and inter-organisational social interaction. GCMB's collaborative innovation strategy therefore supports an 'interactional model' of innovativeness and creativity (Woodman et al, 1993), but the DMO's extensive inter-organisational engagement extends this model beyond the individual organisation into its extensive network. 'GCMB understands the primacy of collective goals' and is able to develop and sustain 'an emotional connection' through its engagement with partners. This provides empirical support for Hon and Lui's (2016) notion that creativity is 'embedded in a complex social system'. Figure 2 extends the traditional multi-level model beyond the intra-organisational setting to include inter-organisational inputs in the form of innovative building blocks and outputs as inter-organisational collaborative processes and products. It also highlights what was described as 'GCMB's

culture of innovation across stakeholders', driven by long-term personal engagement with a wide range of partners who share its vision and belief in 'collaborative advantage'.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Theoretical implications

Events provide excellent opportunities for tourism development and city branding through event-destination image transfer (Yang and Tan, 2017), but their potential is rarely realized. Yet literature has hitherto neglected the processes and mechanisms, including collaborative innovation, by which the desired outcomes might be achieved, although such an understanding is critical (Tajeddini, 2011). This study has addressed this gap in the literature by focussing on the collaborative innovation practices of GCMB in relation to event procurement, leveraging and enhancement of the city's brand image. Moreover, its integrative, multi-level approach has facilitated the development of a conceptual framework which furthers understanding of collaborative innovation in this context. The four research questions presented at the outset have been addressed and the outcomes relating to each one have been presented in the preceding sections, and summarised in Figure 2.

One of the main lessons emerging from the study is the pivotal role of the public sector as co-driver in implementing an innovative strategy based on a particular organisational structure and culture, and the provision of a consistent and high level of funding and resolve. This finding provides a distinct theoretical contribution to the organisational preconditions for successful innovation in tourism organisations identified in previous research (Alonso and Liu, 2012).

A recurrent finding was the primacy of engagement as a lens through which the different forms of collaborative innovation take effect. The study builds on recent work in co-creation through engagement (Frow et al., 2015) by extending the existing range of engagement dimensions: 'engagement platform' (e.g. dedicated personnel); 'level of engagement' (e.g. cognitive, emotional, behavioural); 'duration of engagement' (e.g. one-off or continuous), through the addition of 'depth of engagement' and 'extent of engagement' to the literature. The 'depth of engagement' characterises the DMO's high involvement over and above competitor offers, reflecting its deep commitment to 'value creation' and 'acceptance of complete responsibility'. The 'extent of engagement' relates to the breadth of its network beyond traditional stakeholder contact because of its 'multiple patterns of engagement'. The identification of both engagement dimensions represents a noteworthy contribution of the study and provides a clear message to executives in DMOs as to the multifaceted character of collaborative engagement and the degree of commitment required.

Theoretically, our investigation strongly indicates the salience of both Schumpeterian and Marshallian methods. This shows that in order to address the complexity of event leveraging, given the network interconnectedness, a breadth of innovation is required and this must be underpinned by both individual- and group-level creativity and supportive leadership. The process of developing innovations from the idea stage through to their implementation requires substantial stakeholder commitment and trust. This can only be developed over the long-term through personal relationships and this temporal dimension of collaborative networks has hitherto been neglected in favour of spatial aspects in relationship-based collaboration theories. The study has therefore provided a better understanding of interactions

with stakeholders through social exchanges in an organisation's network, a gap in the literature identified by Carlborg et al. (2014).

6.2 Practical implications

From a managerial perspective, there are three prominent implications. First, DMOs must strive to understand the social dynamics of creativity at individual, group, organisation, and also inter-organisation levels because innovation transcends organisational boundaries. This management of cross-level interaction requires careful orchestration, including adequate resourcing, an appropriate culture, and effective leadership to reduce risk and stimulate innovation. This is critical for leveraging intra-destination collaborative partnerships in order to maximise the strategic use of events. Second, there is a clear imperative to recruit and retain 'creative', 'critical thinking', 'communicative' and 'committed' team members to develop and sustain the requisite levels of innovativeness, social capital and customer creation. Third, while each action independently may seem undemanding, their interconnectedness is deeply rooted to the psyche of the leader, organisational culture and political context. However, there is no reason to believe that the important role that engagement plays in underpinning collaborative innovation in this setting would not be relevant in other cities. Moreover, the key drivers of collaborative innovation found in this study appear sufficiently generic to have application beyond the DMO context in which they were identified, although this will need to be tested.

6.3 Limitations and future research

Whilst this study has answered the four research questions established at the outset, it should be considered in light of certain limitations. First, there is limited research on collaborative innovation in an event-led destination branding context with which to compare the findings. Second, the study used a single case study design to facilitate an in-depth evaluation, and although many of the interviewees had an external frame of reference, the absence of a direct empirical comparison is acknowledged. Future research should compare GCMB's approach directly with other leading DMOs. Moreover, given the importance but relative neglect of long-term inter-personal relationships in destination networks and collaborative innovation, it should focus on the development of social capital and adopt a longitudinal perspective.

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