SURPRISE!

the influences of programmed surprises on audience behaviour at festivals and events

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Introduction

Events are experiences offering the audience the opportunity to experience something new, by providing an entertaining experience with the aim of enriching the audience’s lives (Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell (2011). Getz (1997) notes “emotional responses can be fostered at events” (p.163) where the event planner employs the elements of event design in order to elicit an emotional response from the audience.

Event design is the “creation, conceptual development and design of an event to maximise the positive and meaningful impact for the event’s audience and/or participants” (Brown, as cited in Getz, 2007, p.208). This incorporates five design principles, scale, shape, focus, timing and build (Brown and James as cited in Getz 2007).

An element of Event Design Theory that has not been thoroughly investigated is the element of surprise and the impact of surprise on audience behaviour at events. This report focuses on the emotion surprise and how it can be used to enhance audience satisfaction at an event.
Aim

The aim of the research project was to research and document literature relevant to the emotion surprise and how surprise can increase audience satisfaction at an event. The information was sourced through a literature review and the findings are presented in the format of an annotated bibliography.

The research focused on the primary research question:

How can audience satisfaction be increased at an event by the use of a staged or planned surprise?

Three sub research questions were also developed:

1. What current research exists on the use of a staged or planned surprise at an event?

2. What is the audience response /reaction to a surprise at an event?

3. What is required to successfully stage a surprise at an event?
Authorisation

This report was requested by Dr Steve Brown, Head of Tourism at Flinders University. The report was requested on the 8 August 2011 and is due on the 27 February 2012. This was authorised by Dr Steve Brown, Head of Tourism on 8 August 2011, due for submission on the 27 February 2012.

Declaration

This research project was undertaken as part of course requirements for topic TOUR 3104/5 Tourism Research Project and the research result provided should be read in that context. I certify that this research project does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief, incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed:

Date:
Methodology

The Interpretive Social Sciences Paradigm was used as the basis of the research project as it suited the research purpose of gaining information about the influences of surprises on audience satisfaction at festivals and events. The Interpretive Social Sciences paradigm assumes a relativist ontology where there are multiple realities to explain a phenomenon and subjectivist epistemology allowing the researcher and subject co-create understandings (Jennings, 2010). As this research project required the investigation of human emotions, it was vital the paradigm allowed for multiple explanations for human behaviour.

A qualitative methodology was used, as the methodology concentrates on the in-depth study of a phenomenon by using empirical material collection and interpretation which is focused on extracting key themes from the data collected.

Data was collected through a literature review. The majority of data sourced was collected from online journal articles, from various databases and libraries. The justification for the use of online databases for collecting resources is due to there currently being limited research in the field. Therefore, the most relevant data was sourced through journal articles.
Results and Findings

What is surprise?

Emotions are organised patterns producing cognitive, experiential, behavioural, expressive and psychological reactions and responses (Reisenzein, 2000). Surprise is one of the basic emotions (Reisenzein & Studmann, 2007), that is produced as a result of an unexpected event (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh, 1999) or something differing from our expectations (Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003).

Unlike most other emotions, surprise is experienced as a result of both positive and negative events. The key characteristic of surprise is the fact that it is unexpected (Keren & Teigen, 2003).

When surprised, various emotions we feel are typically wonder, amazement, awe, astonishment, shock and confusion (McDaniel, Jordan, & Fleeman, 2003). Surprise can be seen in a person through subjective, physiological and behavioural characteristics (Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003). These characteristics can include distinctive facial expressions such as eye brow raising, jaw dropping and it is believed facial expressions intensify the experience and the emotions felt. (Reisenzein & Studmann, 2007).

When a surprise is experienced, it interrupts our current activities and our focus is redirected to the surprising event (Maguire & Maguire, 2011). Surprises demonstrate our beliefs and expectations about the way things are. (Keren & Teigen, 2003) and as a result of a surprise we can expect our views to be challenged and changes in our beliefs and expectations (Maguire & Maguire, 2011).

The research was able to answer the main research question and all bar one of the sub research questions. The findings are as follows.

Main Research Question
How can audience satisfaction be increased at an event by the use of a staged or planned surprise?

When focussing on enhancing audience experience at an event through the use of surprise it is essential the event planner takes into consideration all the reactions and responses the surprise will elicit in its audience. It is also worth considering the psychological process an audience member will go through when confronted with a surprise. (Reisenzein, 2000).
Associative learning theory suggests unpredictability forms the basis of learning (Fletcher et al, 2001). Learning is considered as identifying an inconsistency in expectations and outcomes and then adjusting ones expectations based on the inconsistency. When staging an event the event manager has the ability to use the surprise as a learning experience for the audience. There is potential to increase the audience experience and satisfaction by providing a learning experience through a staged surprise (Fletcher, et al 2001)

**Sub Research Questions**

What current research exists on the use of a staged or planned surprise at an event?

There has been little research conducted on the emotion surprise particularity in relation to staging a surprise at an event. The literature sourced in this research project was specific to the emotion surprise, however this can be successfully transferred to the subject matter events.

What is the audience response /reaction to a surprise at an event?

Surprise occurs when our expectations are disturbed by an unexpected turn of events. The level of surprise is determined by how different the outcome is from what was expected and the contrast between the probabilities of the alternative outcomes. The highest level of surprise is felt when there is the largest difference between the expected and the outcome (Keren & Teigen, 2003) as a result of challenging our ingrained thoughts (McDaniel, Jordan, & Fleeman, 2003).

The feeling of surprise signals the need to process and remove the deviation from the expected. (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh, 1999). This is achieved by identifying the event as unexpected, then simultaneously engaging with the surprise while also processing and analysing the event (Reisenzein, 2000). The analysis includes evaluating the implications of the event, ascertaining the relevance of the event and identifying causes and predictors of the even (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh, 1999).

Surprise is displayed in various ways by an individual. This includes the subjective level, the feeling of surprise; the physiological level, the skin response; and the behavioural level, distinct facial expressions, interruption of attention to focus on the surprising event (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh, 1999).
The level of surprise felt is measured by the reaction and response to the unexpected event and is dependent on the experience and expectations of the observer. The rate of surprise is never identical as it is determined by our experiences, which in turn shape our expectations (Keren & Teigen, 2003).

A surprise provides the opportunity for education; lessons can be learnt about our thoughts and expectations. When confronted with something unexpected, we need to assess our views and beliefs and potentially re-evaluate the way we do things (McDaniel, Jordan, & Fleeman, 2003).

What is required to successfully stage a surprise at an event?

There are various factors to take into consideration when planning a staged surprise at an event. This study identified the following:

**Age of the audience:**
Children and seniors take longer to respond to a surprising event than adults. This delay is as a result of the different methods of processing surprises by each age category. (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh, 1999).

**Cultural background of the audience:**
As a result of cultural reasons, people can either be more or less surprised at an unexpected event, due to their cultural background and upbringing. The level of surprise and satisfaction felt as a result of a surprise is dependent on cultural backgrounds (Choi & Nisbett, 2000).

**Timing of the surprise:**
The best way ensure the greatest surprise is by exploiting resources to the maximum. Patience is required when considering the timing of the surprise, the best strategy is to wait for the optimum time to produce the surprise. It is vital to ensure the surprise is not produced when it is expected. By using the available resources the event planner can elicit the greatest positive response from the audience and in turn increase their satisfaction with the event (Axelrod, 1979).

**Cost of the surprise:**
Ensuring you are getting the greatest benefit from your surprise (Axelrod, 1979).
Additional benefits:
Surprise can contribute to WOM as surprise elicits emotions and is characterised by something that challenges our expectations. When we are challenged and dealing with unexpected emotions we are more likely to share this with someone else, than keep it to ourselves. Surprise is a means of enhancing or damaging word of mouth. Positive surprise can initiate positive WOM and negative surprise can cause negative WOM (Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003).

Audience participation:
Unexpected events can increase observer participation and involvement as the surprise is inconsistent with original expectations. The observer takes more time to explain the unexpected event, as it is not consistent with standard beliefs and attitudes (Clary & Tesser, 1983).

Reaction time:
Observers who have strong expectations of an event respond slowly when the event was not consistent with their expectations. However, when observers do not have set expectations, they are quicker to respond to the inconsistent event (Clary & Tesser, 1983).

Positive and negative reaction:
Unlike most other emotions, surprise is experienced as a result of both positive and negative events. The key characteristic of surprise is the fact that is it unexpected (Keren & Teigen, 2003). When confronted with a surprise event, a secondary emotion is felt, which is either positive, potentially felt through joy, or negative, potentially felt through anger (Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003).

Challenging audience expectations:
Surprises demonstrate our beliefs and expectations about the way things are. (Keren & Teigen, 2003) and as a result of a surprise we can expect our views to be challenged and changes in our beliefs and expectations.

Enhancing tourist experience:
The surprise needs to enhance and increase the tourist experience at an event, not decrease the audience satisfaction by staging and event that does not confirm with current codes and conventions (Edensor, 2001).
Experiencing new events:
Allowing the tourist to be themselves and step away from their normal behaviour, through exploring, letting go, and taking on new roles. A surprise at an event needs to allow the tourist to have these experiences, whilst also providing them with an enjoyable and meaningful experience (Edensor, 2001).

Staging of the surprise:
The surprise needs to occur on a relevant stage that symbolises the performance that will take place. The organisation and qualities of that stage determine the experience the tourist will have, if managed successfully the tourist will immerse themselves in the surprise and have a positive and meaningful experience. Failure to take into consideration the needs of the tourist may result in alienating the tourist causing them to feel uncomfortable and have a poor experience (Edensor, 2001).

Capturing the audience’s gaze:
The audience’s gaze is always changing and the challenge is attempting to continuously capture their gaze. The surprise needs to be staged in a manner that will attract the audience’s attention (Perkins & Thorn, 2001).

Authenticity of the surprise:
When staging a surprise at an event, it is vital the surprise is authentic and appropriate to the local culture and heritage (Chhabra, Healey & Sills, 2003) Audience satisfaction will be increased if the surprise staged creates an experience that is authentic, appropriate and relevant to the setting and a novel experience for the audience (Perkins & Thorn, 2001; Ross, 1993).

Destination image:
Prior to the event taking place, the event planner needs to ensure the audience has a positive image of the event as positive destination image encompasses the entire experience. If the audience has a positive image of the destination of the event prior to the surprise staged at the event, the surprise will have a positive impact and increase audience satisfaction (Ross, 1993).

For analysis of these factors please see Appendix 1.
Issues and Benefits

Issues

The main issues faced by the researcher were in relation to sourcing the material for the annotated bibliography. These issues included the lack of research in the field, leading to difficulty sourcing material and the lack of access to academic resources, with many of the relevant articles sourced being blocked due to restrictions and cost related issues.

The quantity of relevant journal articles sourced was minimal and disappointing. This is as a result of the field not being extensively researched. Although numerous journal articles were sourced on the emotion surprise, they lacked the focus on the event design aspect which was the basis of this research.

The main issue for the research project was the lack of research in the field. This has led to less information being provided in the annotated bibliography than was anticipated. As a result, the research project will have a limited contribution to the industry partner, the academic community and the event industry.

Benefits

The benefit of this study is the information sourced on surprise through the research project which will contribute to the further study in the field. The project was able to provide a solid theoretical background understanding on the emotion surprise. The project has also provided the industry partner, the academic community and the event industry with information on the factors to consider when planning a staged surprise at an event. This information will be able to be used for future events to ensure the greatest audience satisfaction when using a staged surprise.

The researcher has also benefited from this study by developing research skills, report writing skills and a theoretical understanding of what is required to successfully stage a surprise at an event with the aim of increasing audience satisfaction.
Conclusion

The aim of the research project was to research and document literature in an annotated bibliography relevant to the emotion surprise. The project also required an answer to the research question regarding how audience satisfaction can be increased at an event by the use of a staged or planned surprise.

The research project has produced a definition of surprise being one of the basic emotions (Reisenzein & Studmann, 2007) produced as a result of an unexpected event (Reisenzein & Schutzwoh 1999) or something differing from our expectations (Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2003).

The research project has provided the industry partner, academic community and event designers with a variety of factors required to successfully stage a surprise at an event, with the aim of increasing the audience’s satisfaction at the event. These factors include but are not limited to, the age of the audience, the audiences cultural background, the timing and cost of the surprise, the audiences reaction and reaction time, the staging of the surprise and capturing the audiences gaze.

These factors have been summarised in Appendix 1 as a tool for event designers to use when planning a staged surprise at an event. Successful use of these factors will result in event designers being able to increase audience satisfaction at an event through the use of a staged surprise.
**Recommendations**

Insufficient research currently exists on the use of a staged or planned surprise at an event. Further research needs to be conducted into the field of surprise, specific to events. The research needs to focus on the audience reactions to surprises events, rather than the theoretical background on the emotion surprise. This will provide the industry with both the theory and tools to apply to event design when attempting to enhance the audience satisfaction at an event through the use of a staged surprise.

The field would also greatly benefit from identifying case studies on successful staged surprises that have been conducted. Analysis on events that have already taken place would further the research by adding real life examples of successes in enhancing the audience satisfaction at events through the use of a staged surprise. The researcher was unable to source relevant case studies for this purpose of study.
Annotated Bibliography
A new experimental paradigm involving a computerised quiz was used to examine, on an intra-individual level, the strength of association between four components of the surprise syndrome: cognitive (degree of prospectively estimated unexpectedness), experiential (the feeling of surprise), behavioural (degree of response delay on a parallel task), and expressive (the facial expression of surprise). It is argued that this paradigm, together with associated methods of data analysis, effectively controls for the most method factors that could in previous studies have lowered the correlations among the components of emotion syndromes. It was found that (a) the components of the surprise syndrome were all positively correlated; (b) strong association existed only between the cognitive and the experiential component of surprise; (c) that the coherence between the syndrome components did not increase with increasing intensity of surprise; and (d) there was also only a moderate coherence between the components of the facial expression of surprise (eyebrow raising, eye widening, mouth opening), although in this case, coherence tended to increase with intensity. Taken together, the findings support only a weakly probabilistic version of behavioural syndrome view of surprise. However, the component correlations seem strong enough to support the existence of strong associations among a subset of the mental or central neuropsychological process engaged in surprise.

This journal article is a scientific study of the “degree of association among the components and subcomponents” (Reisenzein, 2000, p.2) of emotions, including surprise. Reisenzein identifies emotions as organised patterns producing cognitive, experiential, behavioural, expressive and psychological reactions and responses.

Whilst the article focuses mainly on the scientific study of surprise, Reisenzein discusses the mental process elicited, as a result of a surprise event, which is relevant to this study. When confronted with a surprising event, the audience member will go through the process of identifying the event as unexpected, then will simultaneously continue engaging with the surprise while also processing and analysing the event. This will result in the audience member analysing and evaluating the surprise.
When focussing on enhancing audience experience at an event through the use of surprise it is essential the event planner takes into consideration all the reactions and responses the surprise will elicit in its audience. It is also worth considering the psychological process an audience member will go through when confronted with a surprise.
Surprise


Three studies investigated age-related differences in the surprise reaction. Study 1 revealed that children and seniors showed a more pronounced action delay in response to a simple, hedonically neutral surprising event than young adults that could not be attributed to a general slowing of information processing. Studies 2 and 3 provided evidence that these age-related differences in action delay between children and young adults were due to children’s greater difficulties to find an explanation for the occurrence of the surprising event and to decide on its relevance for action. These results support the idea that the core mechanism of surprise is evolutionary-based and age-invariant, but its eliciting conditions and consequences depend on developmental changes of knowledge structures.

This journal article focuses on examining the age-related differences in the reactions to the emotions surprise. This is not directly relevant to the study; however the authors also discuss many aspects of surprise which can be used to further enhance the theoretical background knowledge of this report.

Surprise is defined as an emotion that is produced as a result of an unexpected event and an unexpected event is defined as one that deviates from what is expected. The feeling of surprise by an individual signals the requirement to process and remove the deviation from the expected. This is achieved by allocating resources and focussing attention on analysing the surprising event. The process that achieves this is the confirmation of the surprising event, evaluating the implications of the event, ascertaining the relevance of the event and identifying causes and predictors of the event.

Reisenzein and Schutzwoh discuss the emotion surprise and the characteristics surprise is displayed in. This includes the subjective level, the feeling of surprise; the physiological level, the skin response; and the behavioural level, distinct facial expressions, interruption of attention to focus on the surprising event.
The results of the study by Reisenzein and Schutzwoh show children and seniors take longer to respond to a surprising event than adults. This delay is as a result of the different methods of processing surprises by each age category. This information will be of use to an event planner when staging a surprise event targeted to a specific age group.
Surprise


Learning depends on surprise and is not engendered by predictable occurrences. In this functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study of causal associative learning, we show that dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) is associated specifically with the adjustment of inferential learning on the basis of unpredictability. At the outset, when all associations were unpredictable, DLPFC activation was maximal. This response attenuated with learning but, subsequently, activation here was evoked by surprise violations of the learned association. Furthermore, the magnitude of DLPFC response to surprise event was sensitive to the relationship that had been learned and was predictive of subsequent behavioural change. In short, the physiological response properties of right DLPFC satisfied specific predictions made by associative learning theory.

Fletcher et al focus on the human response to surprise through studying the neurophysiological level responses. This articles main focus is above the level of this research project. However, the authors raise relevant points about learning in their article.

Associative learning theory suggests unpredictability forms the basis of learning (Fletcher et al, 2001). Learning is considered as identifying an inconsistency in expectations and outcomes and then adjusting ones expectations based on the inconsistency. When staging an event the event manager has the ability to use the surprise as a learning experience for the audience. There is potential to increase the audience experience and satisfaction by providing a learning experience through a staged surprise.
Surprise


Outcome expectations can be expressed prospectively in terms of probability estimates, and retrospectively in terms of surprise. Surprise ratings and probability estimates differ, however, in some important ways. Surprises are generally created by low-probability outcomes, yet, as shown by several experiments, not all low-probability outcomes are equally surprising. To account for surprise, we propose a contrast hypothesis according to which the level of surprise associated with an outcome is mainly determined by the extent to which it contrasts with the default, expected alternative. Three ways by which contrast can be established are explored: contrasts due to relative probabilities, where the obtained outcome is less likely than a default alternative; contrasts formed by novelty and change, where a contrast exists between the obtained outcome and the individual’s previous experience; and contrasts due to the perceptual or conceptual distance between the expected and the obtained. In all these cases, greater contrast was accompanied by higher ratings of surprise.

This article provides extensive information on the emotion surprise. Surprise is one of the basic emotions but is unlike most other emotions as it is experienced as a result of both positive and negative events. The key characteristic of surprise is the fact that it is unexpected and it demonstrates our beliefs and expectations about the way things are.

The authors also discuss that a surprise is measured by the reaction and response to the unexpected event. It is worth noting that events can range in “surprisal” due to the experience and expectations of the observer. The rate of surprise is never identical. Judgement of a surprise is more likely to be impacted by the persons experiences, which in turn shape their expectations.

Surprise occurs when expectations are disturbed by an unexpected turn of events. The degree of surprise is determined by the improbability of the outcome and how different it is from what was expected and the contrast between the probability of the alternative outcomes. The highest level of surprise is achieved when there is the largest difference between the expected and the outcome.
Surprise


Surprise can emanate from two sources: lack of sufficient information or knowledge and the basic dynamics of complex adaptive systems. The authors expand the traditional view of surprise with a complexity perspective that makes it possible to ask new questions and to consider new ways of understanding the world around us. They discuss creativity and learning as two strategies for capitalizing on the surprises that confronts organizations.

The focus of this article is analysing surprise from an organisational perspective. Whilst organisations are different from events, the authors raise various relevant and related points to the study.

Surprises have a variety of definitions, including “an attack made without warning”, “taking unawares” (McDaniel et al, 2003, P.267). When surprised, various emotions we feel are typically wonder, amazement, awe, astonishment, shock and confusion as a result of unexpectedness or unusualness.

Sources of surprises can be from a lack of knowledge or ignorance. Surprises can be associated as being unfavourable, as they deviate from what is expected and our previous experiences. Surprises challenge our ingrained thoughts and as a result can be upsetting.

A reaction to surprise can be to normalise it and deny its existence. This can be used as a means to manage an unpleasant surprise. A reaction to a surprise can also be determined by how it is described and managed.

A surprise provides the opportunity for education; lessons can be learnt about our thoughts and expectations. When confronted with something unexpected, we need to assess our views and beliefs and potentially re-evaluate the way we do things.

Surprise is frequently possible only by risking the revelation of the means of surprise. Thus, anyone who has had the means to surprise his opponent faces the problem of when his resource for surprise should be exploited, and when it should be conserved for a time when the stakes are higher and the surprise would be more valuable. Using the resource for surprise at the first opportunity would mean getting less from it than would be possible if a more suitable event were to come along immediately after the resource for deception had been expended. On the other hand, it is frequently necessary to pay significant costs to maintain a resource for surprise. And, as in all calculations about getting things at one time or another, it is better to get a given payoff sooner rather than later.

The focus of this article is analysing the timing of surprise, with a focus on war. While the subject matter is not directly relevant to the study, Axelrod raises relevant transferable information for this study.

Axelrod discusses surprise in relation to war and the best way ensure the greatest surprise is by exploiting resources to the maximum, therefore incurring the greatest surprise. This principle can be applied to events by ensuring the surprise is timed correctly and by using the available resources the event planner can elicit the greatest positive response from the audience and in turn increase their satisfaction with the event.

Axelrod also reflects on the cost of surprise, in particular the cost of maintaining and exploiting a resource and ensuring you are getting the greatest benefit from your surprise.

The timing of the surprise is also imperative. The surprise must occur when the stakes are high enough to elicit the most favourable reaction, but not so high that it has incurred significant investment to elicit the surprise. Patience is also needed when considering the timing of the surprise, the best strategy can be to wait for the optimum time to produce the surprise. It is also vital to ensure the surprise is not produced when it is expected.
Surprise


This research – using the critical incident technique – brings to the fore the emotion of surprise and its influence on word-of-mouth (WOM). The results show – as expected – that the intensity of surprise is significantly correlated with the frequency of WOM and that this relationship is not completely mediated by subsequent positive or negative emotions. This relationship is explained in terms of social sharing of emotions.

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as a means of advising other consumers about characteristics of goods and services through the channel of informal communication. It has been described as the most important method of informal communication, mainly due to it being a method of advertising performed by people we trust, such as our friends and family.

Derbaix and Vanhamme highlight the importance and characteristics of WOM and also discuss surprise as a means of enhancing or damaging word of mouth. They argue positive surprise can initiate positive WOM and negative surprise can cause negative WOM.

The authors define surprise as an emotion elicited by unexpected or mis-expected products, services and attributes. A surprise is as a result of something differing from our expectations. A surprise can be seen in a person through subjective, physiological and behavioural characteristics. As a result of the surprise, a secondary emotion is felt, which is either positive, potentially felt through joy, or negative, potentially felt through anger.

Surprise can contribute to WOM as surprise elicits emotions and is characterised by something that challenges our expectations, when we are challenged and dealing with unexpected emotions we are more likely to share this with someone else, than keep it to ourselves. The authors therefore argue that the likelihood of WOM is higher when dealing with people who have experienced as surprise.
Three studies examined the effects of experimentally manipulated surprise expressions on the experience of surprise. Surprise was induced by a sudden, unannounced change of the stimulus presentation during a computerized task. Facial expression was manipulated by leading participants to adopt an expression akin to surprise, or by forcing them to look up steeply to a monitor. The expression manipulations of unexpectedness and mental load has strong effects. In addition, mental load was found to affect beliefs about facial expression, suggesting that the participants used their feelings of surprise to infer their probable facial displays. Path analyses supported this reverse self-inference hypothesis.

In this article Reisenzein and Studmann discuss the emotion surprise and the impact facial expressions have on the experience. Surprise is characterised as one of the basic emotions and characteristics of surprise include distinctive facial expressions such as eye brow raising, jaw dropping. Facial expressions are not necessary to experience emotions, they do however believe they intensify the experience and the emotions felt.

This article provides substantial information on the Facial Feedback Hypothesis (FFE) in relation to the emotion surprise. However, there is little information provided relevant to this study.
Surprise


Surprise is often defined in terms of disconfirmed expectation, whereby the surprisingness of an event is through to be dependent on the degree to which it contrasts with a more likely, or expected, outcome. The authors investigate the alternative hypothesis that surprise is more accurately modelled as a manifestation of an ongoing sense-making process. In a series of experiments, participants were given a number of scenarios and rated surprise and probability for various hypothetical outcomes that either confirmed or disconfirmed an expectation, Experiment 1 demonstrated that representational specificity influences the relationship that hold between surprise and probability ratings. Experiment 2 demonstrated that the inclusion of an enabling event lowers surprise ratings for disconfirming outcomes. Experiment 3 explored the reason for this effect, revealing that enabling events lower surprise by reducing uncertainty, thus enhancing ease of integration. Experiment 4 evaluated the contrast hypothesis directly, showing that differences in contrast are not correlated with differences in surprise. These results provide converging support for the view that the level of surprise experienced for an event is related to the difficulty of integrating that event with an existing representation.

The authors of this journal article focus on exploring the level of surprise experienced, using a variety of different scenarios. Maguire and Maguire also explore the contrast hypothesis of surprise. This theory proposes that the level of surprise experienced is influenced by the difference in the expected and actual outcomes.

Surprise is defined as one of the basic human emotions and occurs as a result of a surprising event. When a surprise is experienced, it interrupts our current activities and our focus is redirected to the surprising event. Further to this, surprise challenges our views and forces us to change our beliefs and expectations.
The majority of this article focuses on the experiments conducted to test the level of surprise. The authors however do provide highly relevant theoretical background information on surprise, relevant to this study.
The present investigation sought to examine the differential effect of expected versus unexpected information on interpretive activity. It was predicted that expected information would involve an automatic mode of processing, while unexpected information would prompt a more controlled mode. More specifically, we examined the proposition that unexpected or inconsistent information would lead to attempts at generating explanations for the discrepancy, and that the resulting explanations would tend toward maintaining the original expectation. Subjects were exposed to a general description of an actor, and then received additional information consistent or inconsistent with that description; the strength of or confidence in the original expectation was also varied. The primary experimental task involved subjects retelling these stories. The data revealed that, relative to processing consistent information, subjects tended to provide explanations spontaneously for the unexpected events. These findings were discussed in terms of unexpected events producing greater observer involvement, which in turn increases the likelihood of interpretative activity.

This article focusses on investigating the interpretive activities triggered by expected and unexpected events. The points raised relevant to this study are discussed below.

Clary and Tucker discuss how unexpected events can increase observer participation and involvement as the surprise is inconsistent with original expectations. This is due to the observer spending more time to explain the unexpected event, as it is not consistent with standard beliefs and attitudes. This can also be attributed to observers being more engaged with the event, due to having to interpret what they have witnessed.

Reaction time to surprising events is also examined. When an observer has strong expectations of an event, they responded slowly when the event was not consistent with their expectations. However, when the observer did not have set expectations, they were quicker to respond to the inconsistent event.

The authors tested the hypothesis that East Asians, because of their holistic reasoning, take contradiction and inconsistency for granted and consequently are less likely than Americans to experience surprise. Studies 1 and 2 showed that Korean participants displayed less surprise and greater hindsight bias than American participants did when a target's behaviour contradicted their expectations. Studies 3 and 4 further demonstrated that even when contradiction was created in highly explicit ways, Korean participants experienced little surprise, whereas American participants reported substantial surprise. We discuss the implications of these findings for various issues, including the psychology of conviction, cognitive dissonance, and the development of science.

The focus of this article is discussing the difference in behaviours in different cultures, specifically responding to surprise. This is achieved by analysing the holistic reasoning theory, where everything is related and that a change to one element, will impact on other elements. The authors argue, that as a result of cultural reasons, people can either be more or less surprised at an unexpected event, due to their cultural background and upbringing.

The majority of this article is focussed on proving this theory, which is not directly relevant to this study. However, it is worth taking into consideration the cultural backgrounds of the audience when staging a surprise at an event. As discussed previously, the level of surprise and satisfaction felt as a result of a surprise is dependent on cultural backgrounds.
Tourist performance


This article explores the metaphor of performance to investigate how tourism can be conceived as a set of activities, imbricated with the everyday, whereby conventions are reinforced and broken. By looking at the contexts in which tourism is regulated, directed and choreographed or, alternatively, is a realm of improvisation and contestation, I will consider the constraints and opportunities which shape the ways in which tourist space (here considered as ‘stages’) and performance are reproduced challenged, transformed and bypassed. A range of examples will be used to exemplify the ways in which tourism is staged and performed. I will also focus on how the global proliferations of tourist practices and attractions acts to theme tourist space in highly commodified ways and simultaneously decentre normative modes of performing tourism.

The focus of this article is looking at tourism as a means of performance and the opportunities to increase the tourist experience at a destination, by concentrating on staging.

Tourism is defined by Edensor (2001, p.60) as a process involving the ‘ongoing (re)construction of praxis and space in shared contexts”. The (re)production however is not regulated and Edensor discusses his concerns about undermining tourist codes and conventions by non-conformist performances. These concerns need to be taken into consideration when planning a staged surprise at an event. The surprise needs to enhance and increase the tourist experience at an event, not decrease the audience satisfaction by staging and event that does not confirm with current codes and conventions.

Edensor discusses the importance of the tourist experience in allowing the tourist to be themselves and step away from their normal behaviour, through exploring, letting go, and taking on new roles. A surprise at an event needs to allow the tourist to have these experiences, whilst also providing them with an enjoyable and meaningful experience.
There are various stages that a tourist experience can take place. Each stage is appropriately distinguished and stage managed to provide the tourist with an understanding of the activities that take place on the stage. The surprise needs to occur on a relevant stage that symbolises the performance that will take place. The organisation and qualities of that stage will then determine the experience the tourist will have, if managed successfully the tourist will immerse themselves in the surprise and have a positive and meaningful experience. Failure to take into consideration the needs of the tourist may result in alienating the tourist causing them to feel uncomfortable and have a poor experience.
Tourist Performance


This article develops a critique of aspects of Urry’s ‘tourist gaze’ through an analysis of contemporary tourism on New Zealand. We argue that the metaphorical basis of the gaze seems to lie in the experience of tourism in Europe among particular classes of tourists. In that situation, tourists spend a considerable amount of time looking at historical landscapes and related interpretive sites/sights. By contrast, both international and domestic tourists in European settler societies such as New Zealand participate in active forms of the tourist experience. This leads us to suggest that a better metaphorical approach to tourism is to talk about the tourist performance, which incorporates ideas of active bodily involvement, physical activity and gazing.

The focus of this article is analysing the tourists performances using the theory of Urry’s “Tourist Gaze”. This article discusses tourist behaviour, relevant to this study.

Perkins and Thorn analyse tourist behaviour, noting that tourist performance comprises of gaze, “accompanied by physical, intellectual and cognitive activity and bodily sensation” (2001, P.187). The challenge is the tourists gaze is always changing and the challenge is attempting to continuously capture their gaze.

Perkins and Thorn examine the travel styles of tourist, specifically noting the increase in need for different and novel experiences.

They also touch on the issue of staged authenticity and authentic experiences and the requirement to secure authentic experiences for tourists. The post-tourist is a type of tourist who avoids staged events and seeks out the authentic experiences.

When planning a surprise at an event, the event organiser needs to ensure they are capturing the tourist gaze. They also need to consider if the experience is an authentic and novel experience. If these elements are incorporated into the surprise, the audience satisfaction will be increased.
Destination Image


The actual and ideal destination images of 400 backpacker visitors to the wet tropics region of northern Australia were examined together with enjoyment ratings and revisitation intentions. Most prominent ideal destination images involved positive ratings of the friendliness of local residents, high quality tourist information, and freely available suitable accommodation. Most prominent actual images involved positive ratings of the varied physical environment, friendly local residents, and the destination’s authenticity. Images involving friendly local residents were found to be more related to revisit intentions and higher levels of enjoyment than had been expected. Implications of these findings for this growing visitor segment are examined.

Ross focussed on destination image in this article with the study highlighting specific examples in Northern Australia. Destination imaged is not directly relevant to this study, however Ross raises relevant points about tourist’s experiences transferable to this study.

Tourist satisfaction with their experiences at a destination is dependent on ensuring idea images are developed prior to visiting the destination and positive experience are had at the destination. Positive destination image encompasses the entire experience. This is worth taking into consideration when staging a surprise at an event. The audience needs to have a positive image of the event for the surprise staged at the event to have a positive impact and to increase audience satisfaction. According to Ross the surprise alone will not increase audience satisfaction.

Ross also highlights the importance of creating an authentic experience for visitors. He notes the most highly rated experiences in his study were those that had a varied physical environment, friendly locals and authentic environment. These factors also can contribute to increasing audience satisfaction through the use of surprise if they are incorporated into the event.
Staged Authenticity


Much of today’s heritage tourism product depends on the staging or recreation of cultural traditions. This study analyzes the role of perceived authenticity as a measure of product quality and as a determinant of tourist satisfaction. The event studied was the Flora McDonald Scottish Highland Games held in North Carolina (United States). Tourists and event organizers were asked to evaluate the authenticity of specific festival events on a Likert scale. The study revealed that high perception of authenticity can be achieved even when the event is staged in a place far away from the original source of the cultural tradition. Important differences in perceived authenticity were observed among various groups of visitors.

The focus of this article is on analysing staged authenticity, with a focus on heritage tourism. The authors provide information on staging tourism, relevant to this study.

Chhabra, Healey and Sills define staged authenticity as a product/atraction the hosts put on in order to create an appealing attraction for the tourists. Often, the staged authenticity is altered to meet the perceptions of the visitor. Tourists seeking an authentic experience may become the victims of a staged attraction, thus not giving them a genuine experience and insight into the destination they are visiting.

When staging a surprise at an event, in particular a heritage attraction, it is vital the surprise is authentic and appropriate to the local culture and heritage. Many tourist sites and destinations attractions are distorted to meet the needs of the audience and their hosts. In order to ensure a surprise enhances the audience satisfaction, the authenticity needs to be appropriate and relevant to the setting.
References

Allen, J., O’Toole, W., McDonnell, I. & Harris, R. (2011). Festival and Special Event Management (5th ed.). Queensland, Australia: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.


Appendix 1: Factors to take into consideration when planning a staged surprise at an event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reisenzein &amp; Schutzwoh 1999</td>
<td>Age of the audience</td>
<td>Event designers must consider the age of their target audience when planning a staged surprise at an event. Reaction time to an event is dependent on the age of the person as each age range has different methods of processing new information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choi &amp; Nisbett, 2000</td>
<td>Cultural background of the audience</td>
<td>The cultural background of the audience need to be considered when programming a staged surprise at an event. The audience will respond differently to the surprise, some may not even find an event surprising, depending on their cultural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axelrod, 1979</td>
<td>Timing of the surprise</td>
<td>The timing of the surprise needs to be planned when staging a surprise at an event. The surprise needs to be produced at the optimum time to elicit the greatest positive response from the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axelrod, 1979</td>
<td>Cost of the surprise</td>
<td>The Event Designer need to ensure that the costs of the surprise does not outweigh the benefit, in this case increased audience satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clary &amp; Tesser, 1983</td>
<td>Audience participation</td>
<td>The level of audience involvement required needs to be considered by Event Designers when planning a staged surprise at an event as unexpected events can increase audience participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors, Year</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clary &amp; Tesser, 1983</td>
<td>Reaction time</td>
<td>The reaction time of the audience needs to be considered when staging a surprise at an event. The surprise needs to be produced in a manner that allows the audience to respond and react at the appropriate time as specified by the Event Designer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbaix &amp; Vanhamme, 2003</td>
<td>Positive and negative reactions</td>
<td>The Event Designer needs to take into consideration that there are both positive and negative reactions to surprises. The surprise needs to be staged to ensure the appropriate reaction is felt by the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keren &amp; Teigen, 2003</td>
<td>Challenging audience expectations</td>
<td>Surprises can challenge and change the audience’s beliefs and expectations. This needs to be taken into consideration when planning a surprise at an event to ensure that the audiences beliefs and expectations are challenged resulting in a positive reaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edensor, 2001</td>
<td>Enhancing audience experience</td>
<td>The surprise needs to conform with codes and conventions. Failure to ensure conformity by the Event Designer could result in the surprise decreasing the audience’s satisfaction with the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edensor, 2001</td>
<td>Experiencing new events</td>
<td>The surprise needs to allow the tourist the opportunity enjoy and explore new experiences. The event designer needs to ensure the surprise is an enjoyable and meaningful experience for the audience that allows the audience the opportunity to experience something they have not previously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edensor, 2001</td>
<td>Staging of the surprise</td>
<td>Event designers need to ensure the location of the surprise is relevant and will symbolise to the audience where performance will take place. If this process is managed successfully the audience will immerse themselves in the surprise and have a positive and meaningful experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins &amp; Thorn, 2001</td>
<td>Capturing the audience’s gaze</td>
<td>The Event Designer must capture the audience’s gaze when staging a surprise at an event. The surprise needs to be staged in a manner that will attract the audience’s attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhabra, Healey &amp; Sills, 2003, Perkins &amp; Thorn, 2001, Ross, 1993</td>
<td>Authenticity of the surprise</td>
<td>The Event Designer needs to take into consideration the authenticity of the surprise they are staging. The surprise must be appropriate to the local culture and heritage to ensure the audience satisfaction is increased by the surprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross, 1993</td>
<td>Destination image</td>
<td>The event planner needs to ensure the audience has a positive image of the event destination. Positive destination image will increase the audience satisfaction, therefore increasing the likelihood of a positive reaction to a staged surprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbaix &amp; Vanhamme, 2003</td>
<td>Additional benefits</td>
<td>The Event Designer needs to take into consideration the other benefits that a staged surprise can have on the audience. An example is surprise can be used as a means of enhancing or damaging word of mouth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>