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Article

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Ticket sales versus catering challenges for entrepreneurial hospitality workers at international events: A case study of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival

Paul Strickland, Vanessa Ratten

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the article is to examine the catering challenges for hospitality workers versus ticket sales at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF) in terms of their entrepreneurial behaviour.

Research Design & Methods: This qualitative conceptual paper is based on interviewing hospitality workers at the MICF. Semi-structured interviews were used to survey venue managers and temporary hospitality workers whilst working at the MICF.

Findings: The findings showcase that although some service processes at international comedy festivals can improve, it is unlikely to change in any significant way due to the nature of how comedy festivals are operated and for the duration for the individual shows. It is not feasible to have too many full-time staff or event part-time staff when a temporary or casual work force can service ticket holders even though some people may have a negative experience. Therefore, the workers need to develop entrepreneurial skills in order to succeed in the competitive marketplace.

Implications & Recommendations: Investigating the challenges hospitality workers experience at the MICF when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance is the first attempt at qualitative research in this field of study bridging the gap in event management, festival, and hospitality literature. It highlights the use of temporary hospitality workers as the main labour force of international comedy festivals and showcases some of the challenges hospitality workers experience. It acknowledges the need to think outside the box and to be innovative with work decisions.

Contribution & Value Added: This paper adds to the growing body of literature in challenges for the hospitality industry, temporary hospitality workers, international comedy events and last-minute ticket sales and offers practical implications to assist in future large-scale comedy and fringe festivals for the first time.

Article type: research article

Keywords: Melbourne International Comedy Festival; temporary hospitality workers; ticket sales; stock control; festivals; events

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INTRODUCTION

The arts play a significant role in Australia and around the globe and can be gauged by the economic, cultural, and social implications they bring to cities and regions including festivals. We usually gauge the success of festivals and events by ticket sales, food and beverage sales and audience attendance as it is more difficult to benchmark the cultural and social benefits (Allen, 2001). The Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF) is a leading international comedy event which was first launched in 1987 by Peter Cook and Barry Humphries to showcase international comedy talent (MICF, 2023a). Over

thirty-three MICF annual festivals have evolved to attract over 770 00 audience members hosted in March-April annually with an average ticket price of AUD 37.00 (MICF, 2023a). The MICF describes 'itself as an international festival, the Melbourne International Comedy Festival sells 91% of its tickets to local Melbourne residents, with only 4% of attendees visiting from other Australian states and, 1% from overseas' (Frew, 2009, p. 221). However, the official website states 'the annual Melbourne International Comedy Festival is the culmination of our ongoing activities and for three and a half weeks each year, makes Melbourne the centre of the comedy universe'. It now offers a roadshow scaled-down version which extends to India, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia.

In a study prepared for the Board of the MICF, Allen (2001, p. 12) confirmed 'there is no doubt that a range of important social and cultural benefits are delivered' at the MICF. These include social networks, people's confidence, employability and enhance creativity within the realm of arts and culture. The MICF also takes over unused spaces and venues to showcase comedy talents. This has led to temporary and 'pop-up' food and beverage service areas in locations which do not have permanent facilities or staff to cater for the audience needs in a relatively quick period-of-time (Dimitropoulos *et al.*, 2019). This brings challenges for hospitality workers when ticket sales continue to sell until the opening of the comedy act leaving the temporary bars uncertain of how much food and beverage products to stock, how many temporary hospitality workers to employ and what these service standards will be. This topic is important as it can impact the experience of individual audience members and hospitality workers service standards reflecting on the MICF. The objective of this article is to explore this topic in detail, asking the overarching question: *What are the challenges hospitality workers experience at international comedy festivals when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance?* By delving into the challenges of hospitality workers in such as environment, the practical implications will assist in future product and service offerings and add to the positive enhancement of hospitality workers and ticket holders attending a comedy festival which can be applied at other comedy festivals around the world. This is the first-time research at an international comedy festival has been explored from the hospitality workers' perspective offering original findings. The article is structured firstly by literature review offering definitions of festivals and comedy festivals, ticket sales and hospitality workers. Secondly, the methods sections highlight how the interviews were conducted. Thirdly, results and discussion elaborate on the findings, and lastly the conclusion offers practical implications, limitations, and future direction for research in hospitality and festival literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Festivals

Festivals around the global remain popular as festivals are 'an event, a social phenomenon, encountered in virtually all human cultures' (Falassi, 1987, p. 1). Festivals have been researched in anthropology, sociology, religion, and folklore for the last century however there is more to explore as festivals are created, developed, and improved. The word festival derives its meaning from the Latin term 'festum' which translates to 'public joy, merriment and revelry' (Falassi, 1987, p. 2). Originally festivals were based on religious and folklore customs which usually involved a celebration. This could be to support gods, seasons, crop harvests, and archaic folklore traditions among others. In the modern world, festivals are comprised of a selection of events forming a designated programme for visitors to select from (Taylor & Shanka, 2002). Modern festivals often innovate to showcase different product offerings or themed to specialise in sectors such as wine, the arts (fringes), culture, religion, and comedy (Davras & Özperçin, 2023).

Comedy Festivals

When applying this forementioned definitions, comedy festivals are a specific subset of festivals. Comedy festivals can be defined as 'is a celebration of comedy with many shows, venues, comedy performers (such as stand-up comics, sketch troupes, variety performers, etc.) and is held over a specific block of time' (Lobell, 2018). When applying the world 'fringe' to a comedy festival, it allows for a greater number of diverse, original, and artistic performances. The five largest comedy festivals in the world

in order of attendance numbers are: 1) Just for Laughs – Montreal; 2) Just for Laughs 42 – Toronto; 3) The Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Edinburgh; 4) Leicester Comedy Festival – Leicester; and 5) Melbourne International Comedy Festival – Melbourne (Lobell, 2018). However, this fluctuates depending on crowd numbers and performers as Smithwick’s Cat Laughs Comedy Festival, Kilkenny, Ireland has made the top five and MICF ranked third in 2012 (The Guardian, 2007).

Although the positive economic and social implications of comedy festivals are well known, Allen (2001) acknowledges comedy festivals and the arts in general can have negative impacts to performers and audience members. This could be perceived value for money based on ticket price and the quality of the performance, the quality and quantity of food and beverage products available and overall service standards such as ticket sales efficiency, cleanliness of toilets, rubbish and drunken behaviour by attendees and performers. Comedians are judged on their original content but may have to contend with negativity relating to sexism, sexual preference, stereotypes, religion, and popularity (Bouchareb & Fadlaoui, 2022; Tomsett, 2023). However, Allen (2001) suggests comedy festivals offer a platform for individual and social growth which often can only be achieved through trial and error and continuous practice in front of live audiences and is generally positive.

Ticket Sales

The purpose of offering a definition of tickets sales is they are a major source of revenue to justify staging a comedy festival. Ticket sales are the ‘sale of one or more tickets to an event, whether sold online, in person, or in any other manner’ (Law Insider, 2023). By law, the entire price must include all taxes, shipping and handling fees however may exclude preferential seating, private conference gatherings and national tournament areas designated for performers. The MICF has four main platforms for purchasing tickets: 1) online via a third-party tickets sales platforms Ticketek and Ticket Master; 2) online directly through the MICF official website; 3) by phone; or 4) in person from outside the Melbourne Town Hall which will have a ‘pop-up ticket sales booth’ usually selling last-minute tickets (MICF, 2023b). To reduce the number of tickets being scalped (for an inflated price), the tickets sales booth has a re-selling scheme meaning they will resell the tickets on the current ticket holder’s behalf at face value which is becoming common practice (Behr, 2021). This is currently the only way ticket sales can be somewhat regulated by the MICF.

Ticket sales are an indication of how many audience members will be attendance, predicted revenues and impact staffing levels which are generated based on this information and a prediction of additional ticket sales (Beaven & Laws, 2012). Due to the nature of comedy festivals, ticket sales are not always in advance therefore more difficult for hospitality workers to gauge staffing levels, amount of stock required for each show and potentially impacting service standards. This is compounded when ticket sales continue until the show begins and audience members still wanting food and beverages prior to entry and not miss the beginning of the performance. Ticket holders have a desire for quick service by hospitality workers which is a common occurrence in many performances such as the arts, opera, music events and comedy festivals (Maughan & Radošević, 2016).

Hospitality and Temporary Hospitality Workers

Hospitality workers are people who work in service industry including food and beverage establishments such as bars, restaurants, cafes, hotels, and casinos among a host of other offerings (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023). Temporary hospitality workers have always been employed in Australia for labour shortfalls in many industry sectors including hospitality and will continue to do so (Wright *et al.*, 2021). However, there was a mass exodus of temporary workers from the hospitality sector due to the global pandemic. The flow on affect is many food and beverage establishments needed to find temporary workers to fill the hospitality worker gaps (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023). The most common way of finding legal temporary hospitality jobs is through employment agencies specialising in recruiting temporary hospitality workers (Knox, 2014). These temporary job seekers are often people between jobs, looking for flexible working hours, students, immigrant workers, backpackers, or people looking for additional income (Mooney *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, this has always been a very common recruitment solution

for festivals and events such as The Australian Open, Melbourne Cup and the MICF as labour is required for a short period of time, in different locations, for different tasks and demand driven.

The same applies to comedy festivals which provide food and beverages often in a limited capacity based on audience turnover between performances, flow of audience movements within the venue, and the number of permanent and 'pop-up' food and beverages stations at the venue. Therefore, it is appropriate to explore the role of the hospitality worker at comedy festivals and the tasks they must perform to give a positive experience for ticket holders and themselves. Studies have shown that positive experiences by both hospitality workers and festival attendees are more likely to return the following year whereas a negative experience will yield the opposite result (Davras & Özperçin, 2023; Koronios *et al.*, 2023). The gap in the literature is the challenges hospitality workers experience at Comedy Festivals when pre-purchased ticket sales are not the best indication of how much stock and hospitality worker labour is required impacting service standards for audience members for each comedy performance (Towers & Pratten, 2003). This creates the overarching research question: *What are the challenges hospitality workers experience at international comedy festivals when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance?* This will give insight into the challenges they experience when pre-sold ticket sales may not be the best indication regarding the number of audience members who attend individual performances. It considers the practical implications to assist the service sector in improving the challenges of hospitality workers and the overall experience of ticket holders at international comedy festivals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A case study approach was used to interview hospitality workers at the MICF. Using exploratory and qualitative case studies is a common method in tourism research as a case study approach allows the investigator to explore individual opinions and delve deeper into contemporary real-life situations (Atithal *et al.*, 2023; Morrison, 2023; Shrestha & L'Espoir Decosta, 2021). Case studies also allows for participant support, theoretical clarification, and replication of studies (Koščak, 2023). The interviews were conducted at four comedy stand-up events over two nights with ethics approval. Each comedy act lasted no longer than an hour conducted in Melbourne, Australia in April 2023. The venue locations were not designated comedy clubs but surplus rooms in the Melbourne Town Hall (2 performances) and two different rooms in local Melbourne establishments (2 performances). Convenience sampling was applied based on the researcher's ability to visit these sites (Yin & Campbell, 2014) after purchasing tickets at each performance. Participants were randomly approached to participate at the place of their employment based on their uniforms and hospitality tasks they were performing identified by the investigator. Participants were selected on their ability to conduct a 10-minute semi-structured interview which was audio recorded prior to or after each comedy event. No other criteria were applied and each temporary hospitality worker sort approval from a manager before agreeing to be part of the study. Participants could withdraw at any time. Consent was implied by responding to questions. Each participant was allocated an alias number for anonymity and given to each participant. For instance, Participant 1 was coded as P1 and the first to be interviewed and so forth. This created responses from P1-P8 in order of interview sequence. Furthermore, the investigator offered a university email address to have the ability to withdraw from the study at any time however no participants withdrew from the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employee Information

There was a gender balance of four male and four female participants, no-one identified as non-binary, and all were hospitality workers at the MICF. All were over 18 years of age with the medium age of twenty-two years old. Three participants managed the venue which included tasks of supervising staff, cashiering, and stock control whereas the other five participants were employed to sell food and beverages, clean the venue and re-stock products. Two participants were full-time employed directly by the venue (P1 and P6), P8 was permanent part-time for a bar and the other five (P2, P3, P4, P5 and P7)

were casually employed by the same recruitment agency specialising in temporary hospitality employment (refer to Table 1).

Table 1. Employer information: Who do you work for?

Pseudo Name	Response
P1	Directly by the venue
P2	Temporary Recruitment Agency
P3	Temporary Recruitment Agency
P4	Temporary Recruitment Agency
P5	Temporary Recruitment Agency
P6	Directly by the Town Hall
P7	Temporary Recruitment Agency
P8	Directly by the venue

Source: own study.

When asked the types of tasks each hospitality worker had to complete during their shifts, similar responses were given. The tasks were repetitive, and overwhelming included the selling of alcoholic beverages. P4 stated ‘we do sell packets of chips and chocolates, but most people want a beer or wine...that is why we have these pre-packaged plastic wines or a can [beer, cider or spirits] to speed up the process’. All venues had a ‘pop-up’ or ‘temporary bar’ to cater for the audience members in a timely manner. On average, venues had 10 minutes to disperse audience members from a show, clean the venue of obvious rubbish, and seat other audience members for the next show. In that time period, food and beverage sales also take place giving a time challenge for hospitality workers to cater for all ticket holders needs prior to the show commencing. As one manager mentioned ‘timing is everything... we have to be as quick as we can’ (P6). What became apparent was all staff knew their exact role and the tasks they were to perform. The manager of the Town Hall summarised similar opinions of others:

‘We have about ten staff here tonight and everyone has a specific job to do. There are six people serving and the others will be stocking the bars and clearing away glasses and rubbish...guests are always messy at these types of venues’ (P6) and,

‘We expect the staff to be trained and simply take over even if they are temporary workers...this is why we pay higher wages for their skills (P1).

This is important as these comments support findings by Knox (2014) and Liu-Lastres, Wen and Huang (2023) as temporary workers need to be previously trained and ready to offer their skills in a quick and timely manner with little intervention by managers. It also means each staff member can focus on their tasks and not be concerned what others are undertaking even though it is a team effort.

Stock Control

When asked: ‘who orders the stock for the bars?’, only one temporary agency worker did not know (P5) whereas the venue managers all stated to have ordered stock by other participants. Having managers order stock is common practice in the hospitality industry to reduce pilferage, especially when alcohol is involved (Mooney *et al.*, 2016). The question: ‘who stocks the bar?’ was also asked. There was an array of different responses from ‘we all help’ (P4), and ‘we all have to help but then we have certain staff who will continually stock the fridges’ (P3) and ‘I don’t stock the fridges as I serve at the bar. I think [insert name] is stocking the fridges tonight’ (P8). This is more evidence that temporary hospitality workers are concerned with their own tasks and assume the bar refrigerators will be stocked if it is not specifically assigned to them.

To try and understand actual stock control procedures at the MICF using pop-up bars, the question posed was: ‘how do you determine stock par levels for each show/the night?’. Three temporary hospitality workers did not know (P2, P3 and P5) whereas the others offered more substantial answers. P1 stated:

'The stock for the bars come from a central location in the delivery area. We just keep filling up the fridges as much as we need.... [insert name] orders all our supplies. We do have par levels, but I don't exactly how much they are....it would have to be 10% at least I would think'.

Similarly, P6 commented:

'I do all the ordering. I estimate on seating capacity which is 300 seats. Then I multiply it by how many shows for the evening and allow for 1 ½ drinks each. This is because most people will have at least one drink, others may have two which accounts for the other half. Then I add another 10% so we don't run out. So tonight, we have 4 shows all sold...let me write this down. Four shows times 300 seats times one and a half drinks equals 1800 drinks. Then I try and break it down from previous sales to see what I should be ordering like how many rose bottles based on seven drinks per bottle. Then add 10%. It is a little tricky, but it works'.

Additionally, P4 stated how it can affect customers:

'We have to make sure we have enough stock for the night or at least another option...as you can see, you have three types of white wine, three reds, sparkling and rose...if we run out, they [tickets holders] will have to choose something else'.

Each venue at the MICF has their own method of ordering stock based on the venue design and if a permanent or temporary venue. This is in line with Frew (2009) who found that individual preference behaviour influenced the success of a festival. What is significant about these comments are hospitality workers are striving to maintain stock levels to service audience members based on either refrigerator capacity or historical food and beverage sales. However, P4 mentioned if stock 'runs out', ticket holders have to select something else. Although not the best attitude for quality service, it is a realistic approach that occurs in all sectors, not just MICF. For instance, a venue manager stated: 'we can't sell something we do not have' (P6) and 'people just want a drink quickly, so they'll order anything available' (P2). It was mentioned that the transactions are quick therefore no real negativity would be generated from not having the customers' first choice of beverage (P3 and P4). This corresponds to research by Falassi (1987) who found that festival organisers need to continually respond to new contexts.

The next questions were: 'have you ever run out of stock?' and 'can you remember what it was?' Four participants either did not know or could not recall. However, the other four participants responses were:

'We occasionally run out of individual items. Last week we ran out of Allen's Snakes but that is not a big seller. Some wines run out but it's rare' (P1),

'We ran out of apple cider at the start of the festival because we had a promotion on...it was a big hit...nothing else though' (P3),

'Of course, we run out of stock every now and then. Everything has a shelf life so we to make sure we turn the stock over as quickly as possible. That means, sometimes stock runs out, but it is of benefit for the next customers as they won't have anything old or sitting there for ages' (P6), and

'I cannot believe you came on a night when we had to shut the bar because we basically ran out of everything. There was a miscommunication with the stores and the Food and Beverage Manager left with the key. We had to call him back and reopen the central stores. We were able to restock when you were watching the show [laughing]. It's one of things, it had to happen when you came to interview me' (P7).

It is important to acknowledge that stock control is essential at festivals such as the MICF in order to adequality service the paying audience. These four participants understand that products occasionally run out of stock, nonetheless it can be managed by offering substitute products. Furthermore, although amused by laughing, P7 identified a communication issue which resulted in the closure of the bar for an hour. This meant a loss of sales, disgruntled ticket holders and embarrassed staff by not having a second key to the storeroom (Towers & Pratten, 2003). This will be investigated for future shows.

Ticket Sales

This research included questions regarding ticket sales. It was to establish if the hospitality workers are aware of how busy their shift/night will be. Ticket sales have a flow on affect for stock control, abilities of hospitality workers and the quality of service for the ticket holders. Table 2 indicates a brief response from each participant answering the question: 'do you know how the tickets are sold to the comedy show tonight?'

Table 2. Knowledge of ticket sales: Do you know how the tickets are sold to the comedy show tonight?

Pseudo Name	Response
P1	I think it is a sell-out (capacity is 850 seats)
P2	I have no idea
P3	Nope, wouldn't know
P4	No, I only count the number of drinks and food sold
P5	We were told it was full (capacity is 450 seats)
P6	At 6:45pm we had sold 272 tickets (capacity is 300 seats – show started at 7pm)
P7	We expecting to be full as it's [insert name] tonight (capacity is 700 seats)
P8	We had 17 spare seats when I checked during the show (capacity is 80 seats)

Source: own study.

This is significant as it indicates the communication between managers and temporary employees or lack of. It also showcases the differences between venue managers wanting to know ticket sales and temporary workers who show less interest, or it does not impact their employment duties. Furthermore, Table 3 highlights the question: 'how many shows are at this venue tonight?' These responses indicate comedy performances at the MICF are not consistent in number at each venue and the briefing of staff of how many shows is not always occurring. Venue managers were briefed on ticket sales however temporary hospitality workers were not always briefed or did not pay attention if they were. It was suggested that 'we sign on for a number of hours, so it doesn't really matter how many shows are on' (P5). Table 3 shows a summary of responses.

Table 3. Knowledge of number of shows in an evening: How many shows are at this venue tonight?

Pseudo Name	Response
P1	We have three shows tonight and can seat about 850 people
P2	3 shows
P3	I think it is two
P4	Only 2 shows
P5	Being Friday, we have 4 shows
P6	This is a popular venue and go from 6pm until 11pm so I think that is four shows
P7	We have 4 shows tonight
P8	Pretty sure it is only 2 but one show is 90 mins, not 60

Source: own study.

This is compelling as it indicates the different tasks hospitality workers are required to perform and hints to their motivations of hospitality employment. From the responses, venue managers are full time and have an invested interest in tickets sales, stock control and hospitality labour costs which are all linked to the venue's revenues. Conversely, temporary hospitality workers are willing to perform their tasks in a professional manner but are more motivated by their wages, not necessarily the revenues of the venue. This is confirmed with statements such as 'I get paid well' (P2), 'it's helping me pay for university' (P3) and 'I love everything about it...it's challenging and financially rewarding and never a dull moment' (P7).

There were negative responses highlighted by working in hospitality which were 'the long hours' (P1), 'missing out on social occasions' (P3), 'lack of public transport when the shift is finished' (P5) and 'drunk people' (P8). Regardless of these, working in hospitality at the MICF, participant motivations

were currently working full time in hospitality, and 'this is just part of the role', (P3) paying for university, wanting to become a hotel manager, earning money for travel and the others were unsure.

Changes to Service Delivery at the MICF

Finally, the question: 'If there was something you would change about service delivery at the MICF, what would it be?' was asked. Responses varied from: 'Everything is plastic but easy to clean up, but I prefer to serve wine and champagne in proper glasses' (P1); 'MICF is really well known for comedy. I don't think anyone really cares about service standards as long as they get a beer or wine quickly (P4), and 'I don't think there is much else we can do different' (P2). However, there were some suggestions:

'This is my first MICF so I know this must be the best way of doing things, but I would try and change the queuing systems. There is no clear line and who to serve next. Customers have to be polite and work out who is next for themselves' (P5), and

'[Laughing], now that you didn't get a drink, I guess we need to work out where the spare key [to the storeroom] is? In terms of service, I think we have the balance right.... I was told that over 750 000 people attend the MICF every year, so it is hard to give the best possible service to everyone' (P7).

It is important to continuously evaluate service standards in the hospitality sector. Although these suggestions are ideal from a quality and improved service standard point-of-view, due to mass audience patronage and quick performance turnovers, hospitality workers understand that this is not always possible. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that these service standards are common at comedy festivals globally (Behr, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper explored the challenges hospitality workers experience at an international comedy festival when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance. Service standards and tasks which involved temporary hospitality workers using MICF as a qualitative case study was applied. The article explored with the overarching research question: *What are the challenges hospitality workers experience at international comedy festivals when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance?* Firstly, employees were either full time venue managers or temporary hospitality workers employed through a hospitality recruitment agency. Staff are expected to be skilled in food and beverage tasks such as cashiering, selling food and beverage products, cleaning, and re-stocking products (Behr, 2021). The main task for many was selling alcoholic beverages. Secondly, stock control of food and beverage products was essential to the success of selling products in a short period of time. This included the use of 'temporary' or 'pop-up' bars to maximum sales in a timely manner and striving to meet ticket holders' expectations. On average, it was ten minutes between shows to clear the venue of audience members, clean up, serve incoming ticket holders with food and beverages, and get them seated ready for the next comedy performance. Not having access to stock and/or running out of products may result in a reduction of sales, although most ticket holders would select another alcoholic beverage if unavailable. Thirdly, it was important for venue managers to know ticket sales to forecast staffing levels, par-stock levels and tasks required to be performed by hospitality workers. This included knowing how many shows per night which was not important to temporary hospitality workers. They were more concerned with their remuneration and how many hours they were working. Temporary hospitality workers may not have been told how many tickets were sold, or how many performances, and if they were, may not have paid attention as it was not of concern to complete their shift.

Fourthly, some hospitality workers would like to see better service standards such as reducing plastic and using reusable glassware, however, understand due to the nature of the MICF, audience movements, time restraints and use of pop-up bars, it is not practical. This type of service happens at many comedy festivals and the expectations are most likely lower from an audience viewpoint. Investigating the challenges hospitality workers experience at the MICF when ticket sales are continually sold up until the performance is the first attempt at qualitative research in this field of study

bridging the gap in event management, festival, and hospitality literature. It highlights the use of temporary hospitality workers as the main labour force at international comedy festivals and showcases the challenges hospitality workers experience being employed in this sector. The findings showcase that although some service processes at international comedy festivals can improve, it is unlikely to change in any significant way due to the nature of how comedy festivals are operated and for the duration for the individual shows and overall festival. It is not feasible to have too many full-time staff or event part-time staff when a temporary or casual work force can service ticket holders even though some people may have a negative experience. International comedy festivals would not survive if more food and beverage options and greater service standards were to be offered. The key to the success of comedy festivals is crowd control and the flow of the audiences between shows. Venue stakeholders should brief hospitality workers prior to performance as many workers did not know any additional information to assist in their expected tasks, they were just given guidance of their specific role for the shift however, it appears to work.

The limitations of this study are that one comedy festival, the MICF was the case study for the data collection and analysis. Therefore, it would be useful to compare and contrast the MICF with other international comedy festivals to see if the hospitality workers are entrepreneurial in the same way. Culture may play a role in how hospitality workers adapt to changing circumstances and how they build business ventures. In addition, as the festival type was comedy other types of festivals such as art and music could also be investigated to see if the same type of responses were received. This means obtaining additional longitudinal data to see the effects over time based on context.

Future directions include to include different stakeholder perspectives from the employee, employer, festival organizer and government perspective. Each person may have a different approach to how they can or cannot be entrepreneurial at a comedy festival. It would be interesting to compare private and public forms of events in terms of prices and location to understand entrepreneurial behaviour. As not much has been done on comedy festivals in the entrepreneurship literature this research will partly fill a research gap about entrepreneurship and festivals thereby paving the way for new research to focus on this interesting topic.

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Conflict of Interest

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