

# Paragliding festival: understanding stakeholder perception of environmental attitudes and tourism performance

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Paragliding festivals have become significant events in the global tourism space, attracting tourists to local and international destinations. The purpose of this study was to assess environmental attitudes and rate the performance of the paragliding festival of the Kwahu traditional area in Ghana, from the perspectives of four stakeholder groups.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This study was grounded on the salient stakeholder theory. A quantitative cross-sectional study, with a convenience sampling approach, collected 372 useable questionnaires from four major stakeholders/participants (i.e. Kwahu residents, Kwahu returnees, non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and foreigners). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the data.

**Findings** – The findings of the Games-Howell post-hoc test show no significant differences among the four stakeholder groups in the festival performance assessment. However, there is a significant statistical difference between the Kwahu residents and foreign tourists regarding environmental attitudes towards the paragliding festival.

**Practical implications** – Visitors' perceptions and experiences of the environmental performance could inform the planning and execution of festive events that have a direct impact on the natural environment. Policymakers at the community levels must enact environmental protocols that uphold the value propositions of the stakeholders and that of the community at large.

**Originality/value** – The study expands the application of the salience stakeholder model within festival tourism by highlighting under-represented stakeholder voices in a single study on paragliding festivals in a developing country context.

**Keywords** Festival tourism, Paragliding, Environmental attitudes, Performance, Ghana

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The growth of festival tourism had been attributed to its diversity and popularity among various stakeholders (Dodds and Walsh, 2018; Loots *et al.*, 2011) and had served as a vehicle for the socio-economic development of many African nations (Chebotibin *et al.*, 2018; Odabasi, 2016; Okyere-Manu and Antwi, 2016; Pretorius *et al.*, 2016). Meanwhile, several stakeholders have raised concerns about environmental issues, ranging from the devastating nature of the environment to waste generation and to sustainability of the environment during festivals (Gu *et al.*, 2021; Hazel and Mason, 2020; Wu and Cheng, 2017; Wut *et al.*, 2020). In the last decade, paragliding festivals have become significant events in the global tourism space and attracting tourists to local and international destinations (Çalık *et al.*, 2021; Sahin, 2014; Terra *et al.*, 2013). Such paragliding festivals include those in Oludeniz, Turkey (Çalık *et al.*, 2021; Sahin, 2014); Aspen, Colorado (Global paragliding, 2020) and in Slovenia (Terra *et al.*, 2013). In Ghana, the fourth edition of the “Corporate Paragliding Festival”, dubbed “Fun and Fly” took



centre stage when Ghana commemorated 400 years of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans, capped “The Year of Return, Ghana 2019”.

Paradoxically, festivals have extreme costs and negative repercussions on the environment with the potential of negative impacts on the socio-cultural cohesion of various communities (Collins and Cooper, 2017; Dodds and Walsh, 2018; Wallstarm *et al.*, 2020). Indeed over the years, global leaders have criticised the devastating nature of the environment and the effects on healthcare, world trade and other social and economic costs (Agarwala, 2021; Dodds and Walsh, 2018; Moosa and Pham, 2019). These situations have caused individuals with various interests in the environment to redefine their perceptions towards festivals and other social events (Aronow, 2020; Dodds *et al.*, 2020; McClinchey, 2020). Nonetheless, festive events provide opportunities for networking and bonding among visitors from different ethnic backgrounds (McClinchey, 2020). The festival tourism literature has reported on the interest of researchers and event organisers on participants’ evaluation of performance of festivals (Gu *et al.*, 2021) and pro-environmental attitudes of different stakeholders (Dodds and Walsh, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2020). Notably, the attention of researchers had been drawn to the subject matter of environmental attitudes and festival performance within the tourism sector (Baker and Draper, 2013; Gu *et al.*, 2021; Song *et al.*, 2015), and these motivated the direction of this study. Indeed, extant literature had given some attention to stakeholder perceptions of how the destination environments of the paragliding events could be sustained (Dodds *et al.*, 2020; Gannon *et al.*, 2020; Gu *et al.*, 2021; Song *et al.*, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2021). Yet, most of the studies had focused mainly on festival attendees (Muhs *et al.*, 2020; Gannon *et al.*, 2020; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012; Rossetti, 2021; Scholtz *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, extant literature on festival tourism shows that issues on environmentalism have gained limited attention of researchers in other geographical contexts (e.g. Alonso-Vazquez and Ballico, 2021; Hazel and Mason, 2020). Moreover, studies on festivals in developing country contexts (e.g. Abbasian *et al.*, 2021; Adongo and Kim, 2018; Eyisi *et al.*, 2021; Quan-Baffour, 2020) have neglected issues relating to environmentalism. This has created a scenario of limited and under-represented voices on environmental issues in the event tourism development agenda (McClinchey, 2020; Tuckett, 2018). In addition, there is scant research on holistic stakeholder perspectives on paragliding events (Sahin, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2015). Notably, some authors (e.g. Adongo and Kim, 2018; Khazaei *et al.*, 2015; Li *et al.*, 2020; McClinchey, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2021) had called for cross-cultural studies that catered for the perspectives on festival tourism from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Paragliding festivals are unique within the tourism sector because of the emotional and psychological stress that patrons go through, arising from fear of deaths and possible injuries associated with the event (Cahk *et al.*, 2021; Terra *et al.*, 2013). A research inquiry on these participants could unravel deep-seated and rational information on the entire festive occasion. This direction of study will therefore add to the festival tourism literature by highlighting how stakeholder groupings rate the festival performance and environmental attitudes in relation to the paragliding festival, in context. Therefore, this study argues that investigating paragliding stakeholder groups, namely Kwahu residents, Kwahu returnees, non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and foreigners in a single study will glean the relevant information in response to the calls for studies that focus on diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. To this end, the following research questions received due attention: (1) how do different stakeholder groups evaluate environmental attitudes towards paragliding festivals, and (2) how do different paragliding stakeholder groups rate the event performance in Ghana?

Furthermore, this direction of research that is underpinned by the stakeholder theory will be a response to calls for a more holistic research approach in examining the salience of stakeholders’ perceptions on festival performance and the impacts on the environment. This study envisages that cross-fertilisation of heterogeneous stakeholders’ ideas and opinions,

and categorising the four festival stakeholder groups in a single study will help local practitioners to improve on the performance of future paragliding festivals.

### Literature review

Study context: *Kwahu Easter and paragliding festival, Ghana*

Over the years, festival tourism has become “an emerging giant” within the global economy (Getz and Frisby, 1988, p. 22). Globally recognised festivals include Gezici Festival or “Festival on Wheels” in Turkey (Odabasi, 2016); the environmental art festival held in the Noosa Biosphere in Australia (Marks *et al.*, 2016) and the “Olojo and Ojude Oba” festivals in south-western Nigeria (Agbabiaka *et al.*, 2017). Festival tourism is a well-developed concept of “event tourism” and a place-marketing tool that is deliberately created with clear objectives of branding and re-positioning the city or communities for sustainable development (Felsenstein and Fleischer, 2003; Quinn, 2006; Whitford and Dunn, 2014). Interestingly, paragliding has become a recreational sport for repositioning some rural communities as tourist destinations (Costa and Chalip, 2005).

In Ghana, the Kwahu Easter paragliding festival stands out as one of the major paragliding events in the West African sub-region that has drawn many participants from Ghana and abroad (Gyasi, 2013). In the last decade, the paragliding festival has become attractive and popular with the Kwahu Easter celebration, along with side events, such as street carnival, jam night, etc., leading to economic gains and community cohesion (Doe *et al.*, 2020). The people of Kwahu are a dialectic subset of the Akan speaking people of Ghana who are domiciled around the western side of Lake Volta in the mountainous part of the Eastern Region of Ghana (Kwahu South District Assembly, 2012). In the year 2019, the fourth edition of Ghana’s Corporate Paragliding Festival, dubbed “Fun and Fly”, coincided with the UN World Trade Day held on Mount Odweanoma at Atibie–Kwahu in the Eastern Region from September 27–29, 2019 (Ghana News Agency, 2019).

This research is of interest to Ghana for several reasons. First, tourism is one of the main socio-economic drivers of foreign income, job creation and means of stimulating the growth of other industries within the economy. Tourism is the fourth highest home earner for Ghana after gold, cocoa and oil. The Cable News Network’s (CNN) travel report showed that Ghana was the fourth most interesting tourism destination, out of 19 nations of the world (CNN Travel, 2019). In the year 2017, about 1.3 million international tourists visited the country, and this was expected to increase by 8.4% in the year 2021 (Oxford Business Group, 2018). Second, the three-day Easter observation and paragliding events have become one of the most celebrated festivals in Ghana, far exceeding any other festival in terms of popularity and participation by different types of visitors (Okyere-Manu and Antwi, 2016).

In this study, the four heterogeneous stakeholder groups at the Kwahu paragliding festival in Ghana were identified as follows: Kwahu residents, Kwahu returnees, non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and foreigners. These stakeholder groups have different socio-cultural background characteristics that signify the under-represented voices in the festival tourism literature. Notably, Kwahu residents are entrepreneurial by nature, look for business opportunities associated with the paragliding festival and will be interested in the continuous performance of the festival. The Kwahu returnees might have had business experiences outside Kwahu and were likely to have been exposed to other cultures while abroad and would therefore return to their ethnic town with new business ideas and expectations. These Kwahu returnees were likely to focus on networking and exploiting business opportunities associated with the tourism events, as suggested by several authors (e.g. Quinn, 2006; Whitford and Dunn, 2014). Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists might not have experienced the paragliding festival before their visit, would come with high expectations and might seek the opportunity to build business relations and marketing networks. Finally, this study

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envisaged that the perspectives of foreign tourists were likely to be influenced by foreign cultures and their personal experience on green and sustainable business practices in other foreign destinations, hence the relevance of such voices.

### Theoretical underpinning

In recent years, insights from the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) have been applied to analyse and evaluate events and festivals (Adongo and Kim, 2018; Braun and Starmanns, 2009; Nyanjom *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the stakeholder salience model (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) derived from the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) was applied to explore participants' environmental attitudes and performance rating, in context. The stakeholder salience model (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) succinctly explained stakeholders' resources and capabilities in terms of urgency, power and legitimacy. *Power* has three dimensions: coercive – “based on the physical resources of force, violence or restraint”; utilitarian – “based on material or financial resources” and normative – “based on symbolic resources”, such as prestige, esteem, love and acceptance. Legitimacy implied a desirable social good based on individuals or organisations. That is, how individual or organisation stakeholders worked for the good of others rather than for self-interest. Urgency is the “degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention” (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997, p. 867). Though the stakeholder theory was applied in the festival tourism context, there has been a scant application of the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model to understand the perceptions of heterogeneous participants about environment and perception of tourism performance, within context. Subsequently, Braun and Starmanns (2009) explored stakeholders' salience by combining four environmental stakeholders' attributes (i.e. power, legitimacy and willingness to co-operate) to determine “who and what counts”. In addition, Waligo *et al.* (2013) found minimal stakeholder participation as a major obstacle to sustainable tourism, which lacked insights on how to resolve this problem. This study followed Arnstein's (1969) “tokenism” concept, one of the citizenship participation classifications by Mitchell *et al.* (1997), which signified that “citizens received information and had the opportunity to express their opinions” (p. 179). This concept guided the current study in the collection of salient and pragmatic information from all the four stakeholder groups who were ready to provide personal perspectives on the phenomena under consideration. Again, as in the Mitchell model, the “urgency” of environmental attitudes and sustainability in global tourism has been recorded in the literature (e.g. Cotterell *et al.*, 2019; Wu and Cheng, 2017). Hereafter, the respondents/stakeholders were expected to be objective in providing appropriate responses on the question of environmental attitudes and to rate or score the level of performance accordingly. The performance rating and environmental attitudes, therefore, fitted the “urgency” and “tokenism” attributes of the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model and was reflected in the items for data collection in this study. Guided by these concepts, this study selected participating stakeholders based on their experience and influence and envisaged that information so derived would provide insights into environmental concerns and direct future studies, planning and the organisation of future paragliding events.

Stakeholder theory has not been without controversy, as critics argued that an assessment based on the theory might be subjective, since stakeholders' interests could vary, thereby making satisfaction of stakeholder needs very difficult to achieve (Crane and Ruebottom, 2011; Mansell, 2013; Operations Management, 2016). In this study, we anticipated that four (4) different levels of stakeholder influence and concerns on the environment might be shared equally. Therefore, the participants' interests were likely to blend and thereby ameliorate the possible challenge of satisfying varying interests. The sustainability of festivals depends on the support of key stakeholders (Andersson and Getz, 2008). As such, an objective assessment of diverse stakeholder issues, such as environmental attitudes, would unravel relevant information that would enhance the development of strategies for future paragliding

festival events. Interestingly, the study expands the application of the salience stakeholder model within festival tourism by highlighting the under-represented stakeholder voices on paragliding festivals in a developing country context.

### Environmental attitudes

Milfont and Duckitt (2010) define “environmental attitudes” as an emotional evaluation and responses to the natural environment with some degree of favour or displeasure. Hence, this study operationalises environmental attitudes as tourists’ perceptions of the use of the natural environment during festive occasions. Extant literature attests that general environmental knowledge shapes environmental attitudes and behaviour towards the environment (Liu *et al.*, 2020), suggesting the pro-environmental attitudes of tourists. Significantly, pro-environmental attitudes are expressed as environmentally-friendly (eco-friendly) behaviour where individuals took protective actions toward the environment (Alonso-Vazquez and Ballico, 2021). Indeed, Alonso-Vazquez and Ballico (2021) confirmed that the provision of eco-friendly initiatives and effective environmental communication approaches influenced festival patrons’ pro-environmental behaviour (PEB). Determinants of PEB included personal factors, such as childhood experience, knowledge and education, personality and self-construal, sense of control, values, feelings of responsibility, cognitive biases and place attachment (Gatersleben *et al.*, 2014; Wut *et al.*, 2020). The literature also affirmed that when individuals considered environmentalism as a central part of their self-identity, they increased engagement in pro-environmental acts (Gatersleben *et al.*, 2014; Ramkissoon *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, environmental attitudes demonstrated individuals’ strong desire to preserve the environment while maintaining attitudes that encouraged proper use of the natural environment (Ajdukovic *et al.*, 2019; Gifford and Sussman, 2012; Kurisu, 2015). This meant that individuals with positive emotions towards the environment would act positively to preserve the natural environment. It was therefore envisaged that a positive perception towards the natural environment during festivals would encourage tourists’ personal decisions and positive word-of-mouth to prospective festival tourists. Invariably, pro-environmental attitudes might change depending on several personal characteristics and environmental variables (Liu *et al.*, 2020).

Indeed, within the context of paragliding, Sahin (2014) found significant correlations of marital status, age and level of education, while young individuals were largely motivated by enjoyment and good health associated with the festive occasion. However, the Sahin (2014) study had no evidence to support the fact that participants’ involvement in paragliding was based on perception of the impacts on the environment. This was a gap that this study sought to fill in context. In a similar study, Choi *et al.* (2012) examined the role of environmental attitudes in respect of visitors’ perception and satisfaction in the context of the nature-based Boryeong Mud Festival of Korea. Interestingly, the authors confirmed that visitors’ perception of the nature-based festival was related to their environmental attitudes. Other studies affirmed that visitor behaviour and future decisions were influenced by the perceived value accruable to them (e.g. Dwaikat *et al.*, 2019; Song *et al.*, 2015). This could be so because customers’ satisfaction with services created either negative or positive emotions that had a significant influence on their future behaviour (Dwaikat *et al.*, 2019; Liu *et al.*, 2020; Mohaidin *et al.*, 2017). Further, whereas Gannon *et al.* (2020) revealed that residents’ perception of the impacts of festival tourism played a mediating role in shaping environmental attitudes and tourism development, the residents’ perception regarding the impact on the tourism event was ignored.

Extant literature had identified several factors that could influence the decisions to patronise festivals and related events, such as infrastructure, festival anxiety, fun, etc. (e.g. Agbabiaka *et al.*, 2017; Graci and Vliet, 2020; Koumelis, 2018). These implied that anticipated

and actual experiences could influence visitors' decisions to travel to those destinations. Therefore, insights into all aspects of participants' perception on various dimensions of festivals in different contexts have become relevant for the planning and implementation of festivals and for future studies.

### Rating of festival performance

Rating of the performance of festivals and related events have become very topical due to the global attention given to environmental and related issues (Collins and Cooper, 2017; Hazel and Mason, 2020). In a Chinese context, Song *et al.* (2015) rated the performance of festivals based on residents' perceived benefits, perceived cost and impacts. This study operationalises festivals' performance as participants' perception of the value accrual to them, which is likely to inform the type of behaviour towards future festivals. Notably, the literature established that tourism performance could be anticipated and enhanced by incorporating holistic ideas from heterogeneous groups (Khazaei *et al.*, 2015; Nyanjom *et al.*, 2018; Zhong *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, this study envisaged that insights from diversified stakeholders' perceptions would enhance the development of specific content and satisfy a wider frame of participants' needs.

Indeed, extant literature has reported on the multi-level perspectives of festivals' impacts on the environment and behaviour of participants (Bagiran and Kurgun, 2016; Marks *et al.*, 2016; Miller *et al.*, 2015). It was estimated that tourism contributed to greenhouse gases emissions, being approximately 5% of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), primarily from tourist transport (75%) and accommodation (21%) (Reid and Meis, 2016; UNEP, n. d). This study recognised the complexity of the nature of stakeholders as was reported recently by some authors (e.g. Hazel and Mason, 2020; Nyanjom *et al.*, 2018; Song *et al.*, 2015; Zhong *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the focus on the perceptions of varied stakeholder groups would provide much holistic insights and appreciation of environmental concerns from different perspectives.

### Methodology

The sample for this research emanated from paragliding festival attendees (Kwahu residents, Kwahu returnees, non-Ghanaian tourists and foreigners) who participated in one of Ghana's topmost festivals located at the Kwahu traditional area of the Eastern regions of Ghana. The paragliding festival was selected due to its recognition by both local and international tourists. Presently, this has been the only paragliding festival in the country that provided paragliding services to both local and international tourists (Touring Ghana, 2005). This study utilised the convenience sampling method, aided by ten data collectors. The use of this number of data collectors was also due to the nature of the festival in context. The data collectors were recruited through a research institution, trained on the modalities for good data collection, and were given an orientation on the purpose of this study. Notably, the paragliding festival stretches over three days in April. Considering this short period, more data collectors were recruited to gather sufficient data for this study. The data collection team assisted in explaining the purpose of the research to the participants and attended to each sampled respondent separately to avoid the possibility of participants discussing the questions among themselves. The following precise steps were taken: first, all the ten data collectors (i.e. enumerators) were dressed in customised T-shirts, with embossed numbers for visibility. The wearing of the T-shirts aided the respondents to recall those enumerators who had engaged them and to confirm their participation in the completion of the questionnaire, to avoid completing the same set of questionnaires again. Second, two of the enumerators were assigned as supervisors and eight (8) as on-site data collectors. Each supervisor was responsible for four (4) on-site data collectors to provide leadership and to ensure that the data



collection processes were executed seamlessly. Each of the eight (8) on-site data collectors gathered an average of 20 questionnaires each day of the three-day festival duration. At the close of each day (i.e. 17.00 h GMT), the supervisors cross-checked the collected questionnaires whether they were rightfully completed. These steps were done to ensure data collection credibility. The study used a total of 20 survey questions which were close-ended and scale-type questions, using the five-point scale anchored from strongly disagree as "1" to strongly agree as "5" for this study. In this study, stakeholder perception being the independent variable was measured using categorical responses. Values 1, 2, 3 and 4 were assigned, respectively, as proxy measures for the four stakeholders' perceptions. Next, this research employed the regression factor score analysis to compute the factor scores for each of the dependent constructs (environmental attitudes and tourism performance), employing the method due to maximisation of validity of the items used (Distefano *et al.*, 2009). The SPSS software package was useful in estimating factor scores and for the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The resulting scores were uncorrelated, with mean equals zero and a standard deviation equals one (Hatcher, 1994).

In all, 480 self-administered questionnaires (See: [Appendix](#)) were administered on-site, and 372 returned questionnaires were found to be valid with a response rate of 77.50%. In this study, the researchers enhanced the response rate by allowing the participants to complete the survey questions on-site since the questionnaire was developed in simple English language. Before the main data collection, pre-testing was conducted involving 30 festival attendees who were conveniently sampled to confirm whether the questions were clear and easy to understand. The pilot-testing exercise was useful as all the 15 items symbolising the main variables were retained. It was also observed that the pre-tested instrument was completed within 20-min average since the questions were easily understood by the respondents. This study followed the recommendation of Cohen (1988) in sample size determination of four dependent groups ANOVA, where the expected medium effect size ( $f = 0.28$ ), alpha of 10% and power of 90% produced a minimum sample size of 228. This signified that 228 respondents and above was the acceptable sample size; hence, the sample size of 372 was appropriate for this study.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments used in this study were all modified scales. This study adapted twelve (12) items from [Stefănică and Butnaru \(2015\)](#) to measure environmental attitudes. In this study's context, environmental attitudes were contextualised to build the sense of the festival attendees' desire and perceptions of the use of the natural environment during festive occasions. Within context, three (3) items used for measuring festival performance were adapted (see: [Baker and Crompton, 2000](#); [Chen and Klimoski, 2003](#); [Song \*et al.\*, 2015](#)) and operationalised as factors that highlighted the festival attendees' perception of the value that accrued to them, which was likely to inform the behaviour towards future festivals.

### **Demographics of the stakeholder groups**

Next, the descriptive results of the demographics of the attendees showed that most attendees were male (54.5%), aged between 31 and 40 years (56.2%), and the majority of the attendees (75.1%) had a first-degree. Further, the data revealed that 35.22% were Kwahu residents, 27.15% Kwahu returnees, 20.43% non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and 17.20% were foreigners. In, the average, 57.3% of the participants earned monthly income between £ 5001- £ 6000 (Ghana cedis), which was equivalent to \$1000 US dollars (approximate). Majority of the participants (76.8%) indicated that they had participated in the paragliding festival more than once. The descriptive results of the four clusters on the environmental

attitudes and festival are performance presented in Table 1. The results showed that Cluster 3 (non-Kwahu tourists) had the highest average score of 3.98 on environmental attitudes, while Cluster 2 (Kwahu returnees) recorded highest average score of 3.88 on festival performance.

### Factor analysis

Following the recommendation of Hair *et al.* (2010), this study used the principal axis factorial approach with equamax rotation method employed, which parsimoniously simplified the number of items and the underlying factor structure of the adapted constructs. The results of the 15 items of the environmental attitudes and festival performance showed that Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) (0.723) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity  $\chi^2 = 2,273.73$  were adequate in conducting a factor analysis. The findings showed two factors that accounted for 68.78% of total variance explained. Further, Factor 1 was recognised as environmental attitudes, which

Items	Cluster 1 <i>n</i> = 131	Cluster 2 <i>n</i> = 101	Cluster 3 <i>n</i> = 76	Cluster 4 <i>n</i> = 64	Reliability values
<i>Environmental attitudes</i>	3.23	3.86	3.98	3.30	
The environmental issues are influenced by tourism development	3.60	3.68	3.77	2.96	0.86
The environmental issues threaten the human existence	2.75	3.33	3.50	2.79	0.85
The environmental issues are more serious than the economic crisis	3.66	4.13	4.20	3.58	0.81
The environmental issues are more serious than terrorism	3.29	4.12	4.20	3.68	0.89
The environmental issues are serious than personal problem	2.12	3.20	3.40	2.74	0.87
The most serious environmental issue is water pollution	3.41	4.04	4.20	3.95	0.88
The most serious environmental issue is destruction of biodiversity	2.68	3.62	3.87	2.89	0.82
The most serious environmental issue is air pollution	2.44	3.67	3.70	2.68	0.86
The most serious environmental issue is phonic pollution	3.96	4.45	4.50	3.95	0.82
The most serious environmental issue is waste increase	3.40	4.02	4.13	3.37	0.85
The most serious environmental issue is natural resourcing depletion	4.18	4.15	4.07	3.26	0.79
The most serious environmental issue is global warming	3.93	3.92	4.17	3.58	0.81
<i>Festival performance</i>	3.53	3.88	3.80	3.33	
Has always been held successfully, thus far	3.90	4.13	3.83	3.63	0.82
Perform the best, in comparison to other festival of a similar kind	4.41	4.27	4.27	3.26	0.85
Has performed better than what I have expected	2.29	3.24	3.30	3.11	0.86

**Note(s):** \*Scale: 1 “strongly disagree”–5 “strongly agree”

\* Cluster 1 = Kwahu residents, cluster 2 = Kwahu returnees, cluster 3 = non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and cluster 4 = Foreigners

**Table 1.**  
Mean response of cluster to environmental attitudes and festival performance



explained 42.53% of the total variance with a composite reliability value of (0.87) Factor 2 was known as festival performance, which explained 23.25% of the total variance with a composite reliability value of 0.92.

**Data analysis**

In this study, the normality test was conducted to establish whether the distribution of data deviated from normality. The results revealed that all items of environmental attitudes and festival performance were above 0.05, signifying no deviation from normality (Brown, 2006). This study used a cross-sectional data, where data were collected from the same participants at the same time and using the same technique for explanatory and predicted variables (Heppner *et al.*, 2008). The simultaneous loading of all the items in a principal component factor analysis produced a total variance of 26.18% (< 50%), an acceptable maximum threshold of the total variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). This indicated that common method bias was not present in the dataset. Finally, the inter-factor correlation matrix coefficients shown in Table 2 were not above the threshold of 0.80, showing that multicollinearity was not an issue in the data (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Also, all reliability values in Table 2 were above the threshold of 0.70, indicating an acceptable level internal consistency within the data of the study (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

**Results**

The results of the one-way ANOVA and the Games-Howell post-hoc test were conducted using environmental attitudes and festival performance as the dependent variables and cluster membership as the fixed factor (see: Tables 3 and 4). The findings of the Games-Howell post-hoc comparison test revealed a significant difference in environmental attitudes between Kwahu residents and foreigners:  $F(2,369) = 17.198, p = 0.009$  in environmental attitudes towards the festival (see: Table 4 and Figure 1). Alternatively, the cluster analysis could have been used in this study to identify heterogenous groups of tourists that had similar thoughts on environmental attitudes and festival performance into different segments. However, this study had pre-determined clusters based on literature, which undermined the application of the cluster analysis. According to Hair *et al.* (2010), cluster analysis is an unsupervised learning algorithm, meaning that the researcher does not know how many clusters exist in the data before running the model.

Figure 1 is a visual representation of the theoretical model adopted for the research, showing stakeholder groups and their perceptions on environmental attitudes and tourism performance.

Construct	AVE	CR	1	2
Environmental attitudes	0.78	0.87	<i>0.88</i>	
Festival performance	0.84	0.92	0.43*	<i>0.91</i>
Mean	–	–	4.35	4.48
SD	–	–	0.17	0.32

**Table 2.** Mean, SD, reliability measures and inter-correlation for constructs

**Note(s):** SD = standard deviation, AVE = average variance explained and CR = composite reliability. All inter-correlation coefficients are significant at  $*p < 0.05$ . Italic diagonal figures represent the square root of the AVE; sub-diagonal figure is the latent construct for inter-correlations

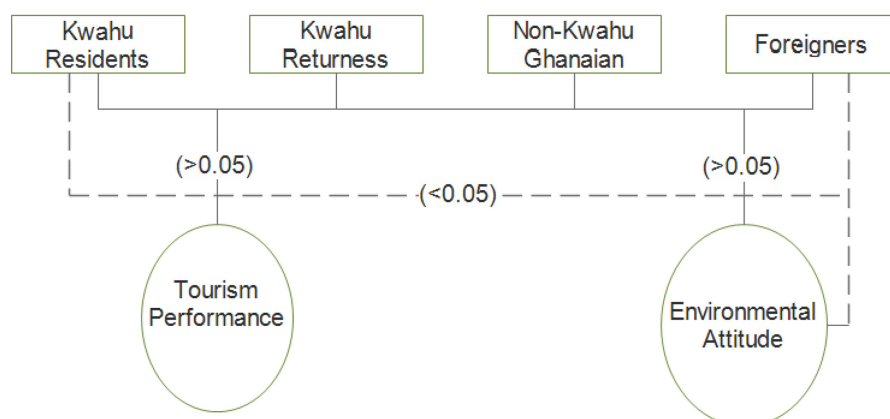
Variables	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	Homogeneity of variance Levene statistics	df1	df2	Sig
Environmental attitudes	Between groups	2	8.899	11.599	0.002	4.934	2	369	0.007
	Within groups	369	0.767						
	Total	371							
Festival performance	Between groups	2	3.259	3.438	0.061	3.572	2	368	0.024
	Within groups	368	0.948						
	Total	370							

**Table 3.**  
ANOVA test of  
homogeneity of  
variance,  
environmental  
attitudes and festival  
performance by  
clusters

**Table 4.**  
Post-hoc test, Games-Howell multiple comparison by clusters

Dependent variable		Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Festival performance	Kwahu residents	-0.07914	0.15791	0.959	-0.4952	0.3369
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	-0.22811	0.12745	0.285	-0.5617	0.1055
	Foreigners	-0.14151	0.09081	0.408	-0.3792	0.0962
	Kwahu residents	0.07914	0.15791	0.959	-0.3369	0.4952
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	-0.14897	0.18643	0.855	-0.6361	0.3382
	Foreigners	-0.06238	0.16358	0.981	-0.4926	0.3679
	Kwahu residents	0.22811	0.12745	0.285	-0.1055	0.5617
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	0.14897	0.18643	0.855	-0.3382	0.6361
	Foreigners	0.08660	0.13442	0.917	-0.2652	0.4384
	Kwahu residents	0.14151	0.09081	0.408	-0.0962	0.3792
	Kwahu returnees	0.06238	0.16358	0.981	-0.3679	0.4926
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	-0.08660	0.13442	0.917	-0.4384	0.2652
Environmental attitudes	Kwahu residents	-0.45255	0.10416	0.183	-0.7243	-0.1808
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	-0.25742	0.12587	0.179	-0.5865	0.0716
	Foreigners	0.59255*	0.11013	0.009	-0.7746	-0.0860
	Kwahu residents	0.45255	0.10416	0.183	0.1808	0.7243
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	0.19513	0.13934	0.502	-0.1686	0.5588
	Foreigners	0.02225	0.14320	0.999	-0.3545	0.3990
	Kwahu residents	0.25742	0.12587	0.179	-0.0716	0.5865
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	-0.19513	0.13934	0.502	-0.5588	0.1686
	Foreigners	-0.17288	0.15969	0.701	-0.5911	0.2454
	Kwahu residents	0.59255*	0.11013	0.009	0.0860	0.7746
	Kwahu returnees	-0.02225	0.14320	0.999	-0.3990	0.3545
	Non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists	0.17288	0.15969	0.701	-0.2454	0.5911

**Note(s):** \*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level



**Note(s):** Broken lines represent significant differences; Straight lines show no significant differences

**Figure 1.** Differences in tourists' environmental attitudes and tourism performance

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess environmental attitudes and the performance of paragliding festival events from the perspectives of four major participants (i.e. Kwahu residents, Kwahu returnees, non-Kwahu Ghanaian tourists and foreigners). The study sought to address the first question: 1) how do different stakeholder groups evaluate environmental attitudes towards paragliding festivals. To this end, this study found significant differences between Kwahu residents and foreigner tourists, with regard to assessment of environmental attitudes during the paragliding festival. This signifies that the Kwahu residents and foreigner tourists have differences in subjective assessment of the festival. This supports the salience stakeholder theory and buttress Arnstein's (1969) "tokenism" concept defines how individuals received information and expressed them in their opinions. An explanation from the context of environmental attitudes revealed that these two clusters mentioned above (i.e. Kwahu residents and foreign tourists) valued and appreciated the soundness of the natural environment differently during the festivals. The difference was especially in area of waste management (plastic waste, solid waste, etc.), phonic pollution or noise pollution, and water pollution based on their culture, exposure, level of awareness and understanding of environmental factors. Remarkably, this finding complemented the view of Choi *et al.* (2012) that visitors might hold different viewpoints on environmental attitudes in respect of satisfaction with the nature-based festival. Furthermore, the findings support arguments by some authors (e.g. Collins and Cooper, 2017; Gifford and Sussman, 2012) that pro-environmental attitudes could change depending on a given situation. This is more likely to inform re-visit intentions and decisions on future events. Additionally, the study of Song *et al.* (2012) found that environmentally-conscious perceptions of tourist visitors varied in terms of seriousness and importance to decision-making. Festival organisers would therefore be obliged to undertake surveys on prospective participants/attendees to elicit information on their environmental value propositions to influence the planning and implementation of the events. In a related study, Okonkwo and Odey (2018) found the "love for the natural environment" was a motivator for the choice of a festival tourism destination. Furthermore, a Quan-Baffour (2020) study on the Apo festival in a Ghanaian context confirmed socio-economic impacts on the rural community, while Adongo and Kim (2018) found disparities with regard to stakeholder involvement in the organisation of festivals. Curiously, these studies (Adongo and Kim, 2018; Okonkwo and Odey, 2018; Quan-Baffour, 2020) in the

contexts of developing countries neglected how participants evaluated environmental attitudes towards the natural environment. Notably, other similar studies (Alonso-Vazquez and Ballico, 2021; Mathew and Sreejesh, 2017; Wut *et al.*, 2020) have established direct relationships between festival attendees' values and eco-friendly behaviour, in contexts. For instance, Wu *et al.* (2020) established direct relationships among festival attendees' lifestyle, social norms and PEB. Significantly, the "tokenism" and "urgency" dimensions of Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) salience stakeholder model highlight the need for festival organisers to provide timeous information on environmental values and to attach great interest in ensuring that festival attendees' expectations were met. Hence, this study's findings on paragliding festival's stakeholder perspectives on environmental values contribute to the event tourism literature, in context. Notably, this study's finding on environmentalism during the paragliding festival is relevant to the tourism literature as it highlights stakeholders' value propositions on environmentalism at a single study in a developing country context.

Foregoing, future researchers in the festival tourism space might be inclined to explore underlying factors that underpinned festival attendees' attitudes towards the natural environment in culturally-diverted contexts for further insights into stakeholders' perspectives on environmental attitudes. Such research is significant given the multidimensional structure of environmental behaviour (Larson *et al.*, 2015). Indeed, the recent work of Abbasian *et al.* (2021) on festivals in a Stockholm city attested that festival venues gave visitors positive emotions, place attachment, place identity and a sense of place. Sense of place is the feelings, emotions, values, meanings, perception and attitudes, attachments that individuals and groups have, while place attachment relates to the venue and meanings attributed to those places by the festival attendees (Abbasian *et al.*, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2017). Undoubtedly, the Kwahu Easter paragliding festival has become a unique ethnic-cultural festival in a developing country context that can give a sense of place and place attachment among different ethnic groups from both local and foreign origins. Therefore, further studies that seek to understand psychological predictors of paragliding festival attendees' perception of environmental attitudes in developing country contexts will contribute significantly to the festival tourism literature. For instance, "motive" predictors, such as self-rewarding, self-satisfaction self-actualisation, social conditions, etc. (Al-Fattal and Ayoubi, 2013; Triyanto, 2019), could unravel peculiar personal and situational factors underlying festival attendees' evaluation, in context. This is so because motives may stimulate individuals' conscious choice among many alternatives (Jaramillo and Spector, 2004). Such further studies in developing country contexts will help improve emotive communication approaches and encourage revisiting intentions of festival attendees.

Furthermore, this study addresses the second question: 2) how do different paragliding stakeholder groups rate the event performance in Ghana? Remarkably, this study found no significant differences in the performance rating by the four stakeholder groups who had the opportunity to rate the festival performance. In most instances, stakeholder expectations differed due to differences in privileges, experiences, socio-cultural background, etc (Nyanjom *et al.*, 2018; Song *et al.*, 2015; Zhong *et al.*, 2020). Interestingly, the finding from this study does not support differences with regard to stakeholders' expectations on the event performance. Although the tourists did not represent a homogenous group, they were likely to have "interacted" with the natural environment based on a myriad of modalities. It could be that in this instance, although their personal value propositions about the soundness and integrity of the natural environment diverged, their expectations on the entire festival performance were met. In of a similar study, Johansen and Mehmetoghe (2011) find that tourism visitors' rating of an indigenous festival performance was highest for habitat, compared with handicraft, heritage and history, and this positively influenced visitor satisfaction. This signifies that festival organisers, managers and other stakeholders ought to understand visitors' expectations on pro-environmental and performance issues. This is

necessary because eco-friendly attitudes and socio-cultural values are matters of importance to festival participants. In this study, the performance rating was based on perceived values accruable to the attendees, which made the assessment subjective. Hence, further research based on objective measurement of rating of festival performance could enhance replication and comparability of such findings in other socio-cultural contexts.

Significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted negatively on the socio-economic gains from festive occasions. The pandemic has negatively affected business opportunities, like employment in the local pubs, nightclubs, restaurants, guesthouses, motels, hotels for indigenes as well as revenue generation for the community, local authority and the state. Currently, the Kwahu paragliding festival has been suspended to prevent the spread of the virus during the mass gatherings and interactions among the festival attendees. Meanwhile, there are studies underway (Mensah and Boakye, 2021) to find ways of sustaining the tourism industry in Ghana, after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, by the involvement of diversified experience and exposures of diverse stakeholders, this study has contributed to the festival tourism literature by first, confirming “who and what counts” as salient stakeholders in context. Interestingly, the critics have argued that an assessment based on the stakeholder theory might be subjective; therefore, satisfaction would be difficult to achieve due to possible variation in stakeholder interests and expectations (Crane and Ruebottom, 2011; Mansell, 2013). Contrary to this position, the four stakeholder groups found common grounds regarding their perceptions on the performance of the paragliding festival, and this could justify further research direction from the perspectives of diversified stakeholders in other contexts.

This paper concludes that performance is of utmost interest to all the four major stakeholders during paragliding events, albeit there are significant differences between Kwahu residents and foreigner tourists about environmental attitudes, and these are equally important for sustainable tourism development. Further, the significance of the “tokenism” and “urgency” dimensions of the salient stakeholder model (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) highlighted in this study require festival organisers to provide adequate information on pragmatic steps taken to address environmental concerns. Indeed, such timeous information ought to inform the planning, promotion and execution of festivals to establish the importance of PEB to all festival stakeholders. This is relevant since the festival attendees’ would be encouraged to consider revisiting and inclined to provide positive word of mouth to prospective festival attendees. Hence, festival practitioners and policymakers ought to adopt holistic measures that satisfy the diverse needs and expectations of stakeholders.

## Implications

### *Theoretical implications*

The study expands the application of the salient stakeholder model (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) within the festival tourism sector and compliments the Braun and Starmanns’ (2009) study that applied the salient stakeholder theory in the manufacturing sector, thereby showing the relevance of the model in the tourism service sector. This information has provided insights into salient stakeholders’ expectations with regard to the environmental performance of a paragliding event. Specifically, this study expands the application of the salience stakeholder model (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) within the paragliding festival tourism context. This affirms the relevance of the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model within the festival tourism research space and the need to address the expectations of salient stakeholders when designing research works in other geographical contexts. Significantly, the salient stakeholder theory has a unique advantage of enhancing the gauging of relevant information from diversified stakeholders’ perspectives and is likely to address common method biases and methodological issues within festival tourism research. Invariably, some studies which explored different aspects of



festivals attested that festival tourism was a developing phenomenon that warranted further studies in different sciences (Cudny, 2013, 2016; Lain, 2018). Broadly speaking, the findings of this study from a different geographical context add to the body of knowledge on environmental attitudes and tourism performance in developing country context, as it highlights the underrepresented voices within the tourism sector and in the context of a paragliding festival. Besides, the study expands the application of the salience stakeholder model within the paragliding festival in a developing country context. In addition, this study's findings have extended the scope of current baseline information on paragliding performance, in context, and could direct future research in other socio-cultural contexts. Notably, this study's findings help fill the gap in context regarding stakeholder influence by extending the finding of the Sahin (2014) study. Remarkably, Sahin (2014) found no evidence about the fact that participants' involvement in paragliding was based on perceptions of the impact on the environment. Forgoing, this study highlights environmental behaviour and stakeholders' value propositions as integral variables in festival tourism research that are necessary for ensuring sustainability of paragliding festivals, in context. Indeed, environmental attitudes and festival performance ought to be considered simultaneously when developing models for measuring the success of paragliding and other festive events.

#### *Managerial implications*

Remarkably, this study encourages organisers and promoters of the Kwahu Easter and paragliding festival and similar events to highlight the significant steps taken to ensure environmental sanity and to lay emphasis on this value proposition in media exposures. It also encourages practical involvement of different pro-environment participants from host communities, service providers, attendees and sponsors to cooperate in finding ways to enrich the discourse on eco-friendly behaviours and in the planning and execution of festivals. This might ease some of the complexity associated with tourism development. Undoubtedly, paragliding festivals have become a pleasurable event for many holidaymakers, especially for those who might want a feel of the natural environment, and were attracted towards such events. Despite the attraction, many of such tourists were not oblivious of the impacts of these events on the natural environment, which could create negative or positive emotions and could influence future decisions (Choo *et al.*, 2016; Dwaikat *et al.*, 2019; Mohaidin *et al.*, 2017). Invariably, most festival visitors who travelled to such event destinations might have had varied or similar experiences in other geographical jurisdictions and were likely to come with different expectations. Therefore, managers ought to engage pro-environmentalists in the planning and execution stages so as to align participants' practical experiences with expected adherence to environmental protocols by all stakeholders. Policymakers at the district or community levels must also adopt monitoring measures to ensure the environmental protocols do not compromise the value propositions of the stakeholders. This will help the development of sustainable festival tourism for improving the environmental and socio-cultural aspects of our society.

#### **Limitations and future studies**

This study adopted a cross-sectional design, thus implications about causality should be made cautiously. Although this study applied the salience stakeholder theory, it did not succinctly explore the urgency, power and legitimacy dimensions. Therefore, future studies should focus on assessing these dimensions in a multi-stage analysis, for holistic insights into the phenomenon under consideration. This study relied on four clusters of stakeholders as the unit of analysis with subjective measures for rating environmental performance. Further research may consider utilising a segmentation analysis of the clusters in identifying

heterogeneous groups of tourists that have similar thoughts on environmental attitudes and festival performance in similar or different geographical contexts. Again, future studies can also apply an objective measure of performance to enhance the generalisability of the findings. Future studies can also investigate the validity or otherwise, regarding the findings of no significant differences among the clusters, as well as significant differences between Kwahu residents and foreign tourists by applying other statistical approaches in similar or different geographical contexts. Given that the study was undertaken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, further studies may consider assessing the variables considered in this study to understand stakeholders' post-pandemic perceptions in the context of paragliding festivals.

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**SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Paragliding Festival Tourism in Kwahu**

This form is to collect information on paragliding festival experience in Kwahu. You have been invited to participate in this survey because of the insights you can provide to us and also your valuable feedback. All information collected will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. No information will be shared that could identify you as a person. The questions will take approximately 20-30 minute to complete. We will highly appreciate your answers. We would like to remind you that you are not in any way obliged to participant and that you mathe y freely withdraw at any time, even after you have started. Please provide genuine information to enrich Ghana's tourism sector.

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**Section A: Demographic Information**

1. Gender of the festival attendee or participant.
    - a. Male
    - b. Female
  2. Please kindly indicate your age range.
    - a. 18-20 years
    - b. 21-30 years
    - c. 31-40 years
    - d. 41-50 years
    - e. 51-60 years
    - f. 61 years and above
  3. The highest qualification
    - a. Junior High school certificate
    - b. Senior High school certificate
    - c. Higher National Diploma
    - d. First- degree
    - e. Second degree (Master degree)
    - f. PhD/DBA
    - g. Others
  4. Please, kindly indicate your residency.
    - a. Kwahu resident
    - b. Kwahu returnees
    - c. Non-Kwahu Ghanaians
    - d. Foreigners
  5. Please, kindly indicate your income indicate range.
    - a. Up to ₵1000
    - b. ₵1100- ₵2000
    - c. ₵2001- ₵3000
    - d. ₵3001- ₵4000
    - e. ₵4001- ₵5000
    - f. ₵5001- ₵6000
    - g. ₵6001 and above
-

**Section B: Complete the following questions on Environmental Attitudes of paragliding festival.** Tick 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (A), 3=Undecided/don't know (U), 4=Agree (A) and 5= Strong agree (SA)

	<b>Environmental Attitudes</b>	SD	D	U	A	SA
1.	The environmental issues are influenced by tourism development	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The environmental issues threaten the human existence	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The environmental issues are more serious than the economic crisis	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The environmental issues are more serious than terrorism	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The environmental issues are more serious than personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
6.	The most serious environmental issue is water pollution	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The most serious environmental issue is destruction of biodiversity	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The most serious environmental issue is air pollution	1	2	3	4	5
9.	The most serious environmental issue is phonic pollution	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The most serious environmental issue is waste increase	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The most serious environmental issue is natural resourcing depletion	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The most serious environmental issue is global warming	1	2	3	4	5

**Section C: Complete the following questions on Paragliding Festival Performance**

Tick 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (A), 3=Undecided/don't know (U), 4=Agree (A) and 5= Strong agree (SA)

13.	Has always been held successfully, thus far	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Perform the best, in comparison to other festival of a similar kind	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Has performed better than what I have expected.	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank You for Completing the Questionnaire**

**RESPONSE TO COMMENTS**

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REVIEWER COMMENTS	AUTHORS' RESPONSE
<p>There are still some minor issues that need to be adjusted.                      - line 12 - "Meanwhile, the general public" - there are many stakeholders, not just the general public who have issues with waste - these references do not just discuss the general public and I believe that Dodds and Walsh (2018) do not discuss the public at all?                      - line 15 - (Dodds and Welsh, 2018). Should be Dodds and Walsh, 2018                      - line 41 - Dodd et al., 2020 - I believe this should be Dodds?                      Please review all citations to ensure they are correct as this is three corrections within 20 lines...</p>	<p>Thank you. The concerns raised in 'line 12' have been addressed accordingly, and highlighted. All citations have been reviewed.</p>
<p>There is some very good detail on festival literature in this study however the citations discussed in the intro and early part of the lit review are not mentioned at all in the discussion - if they are so indeed used for context, it would be useful to outline if the findings of such studies were supported or negated with the author(s) findings?</p> <p>Finally, why is there no linkage back to PEB or stakeholder theory in the discussion or conclusion - how does stakeholder theory hold up? Power? legitimacy? etc?                      In addition, a lot was added on P.7 about PEB but this is not linked back in the discussion/conclusion.</p>	<p>Thank you for bringing these important issues to our attention. The required reviews have been done in various sections of the 'discussion section' [pp. 12-17], and highlighted accordingly.</p>
<p>Quality of Communication: Yes apart from a few issues with spelling of citations.</p>	<p>Errors with the spelling of some citations and grammar have been corrected.</p>

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