

## **Deciphering the Socio-Economic Impact of a Major Cultural Event in Cape Town During and Post-Pandemic Era**

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### **Abstract**

This study sought to consider the socio-economic impacts of the Cape Town Carnival, given the significant impacts impinged on the event's exponential socio-economic potential in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the period 2020 and 2021, the event was suspended as the world grappled with mobility-restricting and other pandemic-related regulations, which grounded almost all social and economic activities. Through strategic planning and innovative efforts by the event's organisers to curtail the pandemic's impact, a reimagined format was conceptualised in 2022, while a post-pandemic version returned in 2023, explorations of which form the focus for the current study. Relying on CTC pre-pandemic socio-economic impact studies, pandemic, and postpandemic era empirical investigations of 800 spectators provided data for socioeconomic impact exploration. SPSS version 29 software was utilised in the analysis and exploration of variable relationships in the collected data. The findings of the study suggest that spectators displayed positive perceptions of the socio-economic benefits of the CTC relating to job creation, tourism revenue generation, and community empowerment. The negative impact of the pandemic on the CTC's ability to deliver these benefits was acknowledged. The study highlights the importance of mitigating the negative effects that come with unprecedented events such as COVID-19 through the development of resilience strategies including adaptation, diversification of revenue streams, development of new partnerships, and investment in community engagement opportunities. The study recommends the need for a qualitative inquiry exploring stakeholder insights with key stakeholder groups to assimilate socio-economic objectives for the event for comparative purposes. Additionally, a deeper investigation into specific sectors, such as accommodation, catering, and local businesses is recommended for a more holistic view on the socio-economic impacts while a participant survey is suggested to determine the aspects of job creation and innovation, as envisioned by the objectives of the CTC.

**Keywords:** Cape Town Carnival, socio-economic impacts, cultural event, event tourism, during-and postpandemic