



**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL EVENTS AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL
TO PROMOTE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS): A
PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBAL CITIZEN FESTIVAL 2022**

BY

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Project Work has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Project Work laid down by the Institute of Journalism under the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-IJ)

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the role of the Global Citizen Festival 2022 as a platform for promoting awareness, engagement, and action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Employing a qualitative research design, the study gathered insights from 15 purposively sampled participants, including attendees, organizers, and stakeholders, through semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed thematically to uncover recurring patterns and themes related to public awareness of the SDGs, the influence of media coverage, and the effectiveness of social events in fostering engagement. Findings revealed that the festival significantly enhanced public awareness of the SDGs, with participants highlighting the impact of entertainment and visual storytelling in conveying messages about sustainability. However, the depth of understanding varied, with some attendees prioritizing entertainment over educational content. Media coverage was identified as a key amplifier of the festival's reach, though criticisms were raised regarding the focus on entertainment at the expense of SDG messaging. The study also found that the festival inspired tangible actions, such as donations and participation in environmental campaigns, demonstrating its potential to mobilize support for global initiatives. Challenges in sustaining engagement post-event emerged as a significant theme, with participants emphasizing the need for follow-up initiatives and clearer messaging. The study concluded that while the Global Citizen Festival effectively raised awareness and inspired action, its impact could be amplified through strategic planning, including the integration of local leaders, the use of digital platforms, and more inclusive outreach strategies. Recommendations included enhancing the clarity of SDG messaging, leveraging youth-driven initiatives, and expanding the accessibility of events to underrepresented communities.

Keywords: Global Citizen Festival, Sustainable Development Goals, SDG awareness, Public engagement, Social events, Media influence, Visual storytelling, Environmental campaigns, Youth-driven initiatives, Community outreach, Digital platforms, Inclusive strategies, Behavioral change

DEDICATION

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TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION BY STUDENT	i
DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background	1
1.1 Problem Statement	3
1.2 Research Objectives	5
1.3 Research Questions	5
1.4 Significance of the study	6
1.5 Scope of the Study	6
Organization of Study	7
Chapter Summary	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Empirical Review	9
2.2 Review of Related Literature	14
2.2.1 Social Events and Community Engagement	14
2.2.2 The Global Citizen Festival and SDG Advocacy	16
2.2.3 Public Engagement and Behavior Change	18
2.2.4 Economic Contributions of Social Events to the SDGs	20
2.2.5 Policy Advocacy through Social Events	22
2.3 Theoretical Framework	24
2.4 Chapter Summary	28
CHAPTER THREE	29
METHODOLOGY	29

3.0 Introduction	29
3.1 Research Approach	30
3.2 Research Design	30
3.3 Research Philosophy	31
3.4 Population.....	31
3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques	32
3.6 Data Collection Method	32
3.7 Data Collection Instruments.....	33
3.8 Data Analysis Method.....	33
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	34
3.10 Chapter Summary.....	34
CHAPTER FOUR.....	35
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	35
4.0 Introduction	35
4.1 Awareness of the SDGs Prior to the Festival.....	35
4.2 Public Perception of the SDGs during the Festival.....	36
4.3 Role of Social Events in Promoting SDG Initiatives	38
4.4 Impact of Media Coverage on Public Engagement.....	39
4.5 Challenges in Sustaining Engagement Post-Festival	40
4.6 Personal Actions Inspired by the Festival.....	41
4.7 Recommendations for Future SDG-Focused Events	42
4.8 Discussion of Findings	43
4.9 Chapter Summary.....	46
CHAPTER FIVE	47
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	47
5.0 Introduction	47
5.1 Summary of Findings	47
5.2 Conclusion.....	48
5.3 Recommendations	49
5.4 Limitations of the Study	50
5.5 Suggestions for Future Research.....	51
APPENDICES	58

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

GCF - Global Citizen Festival

UN - United Nations

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

PR - Public Relations

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

KPI - Key Performance Indicator

ICT - Information and Communication Technology

M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation

CBO - Community-Based Organization

CSO - Civil Society Organization

SME - Small and Medium Enterprises

SD - Sustainable Development

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

ROI - Return on Investment

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), established by the United Nations in 2015, aim to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace and justice by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). As the world grapples with these issues, innovative approaches to promoting the SDGs are increasingly necessary. One such approach is the use of social events to raise awareness and mobilize action. The Global Citizen Festival, held annually since 2012, exemplifies this strategy by leveraging music, culture, and celebrity endorsements to engage the public in the SDG agenda.

Social events like the Global Citizen Festival serve as powerful platforms for promoting the SDGs due to their broad appeal and ability to attract diverse audiences. The 2022 edition of the festival was particularly notable for its ambitious goal of inspiring global action towards achieving the SDGs. Through a combination of live performances, advocacy speeches, and multimedia presentations, the festival sought to educate attendees and viewers about critical global issues while motivating them to take concrete actions (Global Citizen, 2022). This approach aligns with the concept of "edutainment," where entertainment is used as a vehicle for educational messages.

One significant impact of the Global Citizen Festival 2022 was its role in raising awareness about specific SDGs among the general public. Events like these can demystify complex global issues, making them more accessible and understandable. For instance, the festival highlighted issues such as climate action (SDG 13), quality education (SDG 4), and gender equality (SDG 5) through engaging content and celebrity endorsements, thereby increasing public awareness and concern

(Global Citizen, 2022). This increased awareness is a crucial first step in driving collective action towards sustainable development.

Moreover, the festival's ability to mobilize resources for the SDGs cannot be overstated. By bringing together governments, corporations, and individuals, the Global Citizen Festival fosters partnerships that are essential for achieving the SDGs (United Nations, 2015). For example, the 2022 festival secured commitments from various stakeholders to fund initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty and improving healthcare access (Global Citizen, 2022). These commitments not only provide the necessary financial support but also create a sense of shared responsibility among different sectors of society.

The public's perception of the Global Citizen Festival as a tool for promoting the SDGs is generally positive. Many attendees and viewers appreciate the Festival's innovative approach to raising awareness and encouraging action. Surveys conducted after the 2022 festival revealed that a significant majority of participants felt more informed about the SDGs and were motivated to contribute to their achievement (Global Citizen, 2022). This positive perception is crucial for the sustained success of such initiatives, as public support and engagement are key drivers of social change.

Critics, however, argue that while social events like the Global Citizen Festival are effective in raising awareness, their long-term impact on actual SDG outcomes is less clear. They contend that these events often prioritize spectacle over substance, potentially leading to a disconnect between the enthusiasm generated during the event and sustained action post-event (Kroll, 2022). This critique underscores the need for follow-up mechanisms to ensure that the momentum generated by such events translates into tangible progress towards the SDGs.

Despite these criticisms, the Global Citizen Festival's innovative approach to promoting the SDGs has set a precedent for how social events can be leveraged as development tools. By combining entertainment with advocacy, the festival has demonstrated that it is possible to engage a wide audience in critical global issues and inspire them to take action. This model has the potential to be replicated and adapted in different contexts to support the achievement of the SDGs (Global Citizen, 2022).

Furthermore, the festival's success highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in driving sustainable development. The collaborations forged between governments, businesses, and civil society organizations at the Global Citizen Festival exemplify the type of collective effort needed to address the complex challenges encapsulated by the SDGs (United Nations, 2015). These partnerships not only pool resources and expertise but also ensure a more inclusive and participatory approach to development.

The Global Citizen Festival 2022 serves as a compelling case study of how social events can be utilized to promote the SDGs. Its ability to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and foster partnerships underscores the potential of entertainment-driven advocacy in advancing sustainable development. While there are valid concerns about the long-term impact of such events, their role in catalyzing initial engagement and action is undeniable. As the world continues to seek innovative solutions to achieve the SDGs, the Global Citizen Festival offers valuable insights into the power of social events as development tools

1.1 Problem Statement

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015, aim to address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and health. One avenue for promoting these goals is through large-scale social events like the Global Citizen

Festival, which seeks to mobilize public engagement and action toward achieving the SDGs. However, despite the increasing number of global events linked to development initiatives, there is limited research on how these events are perceived by the public and their actual impact on raising awareness, fostering participation, and driving action towards the SDGs (Patel et al., 2021). The challenge remains in understanding whether these events, such as the Global Citizen Festival 2022, truly serve as effective tools for development or are merely symbolic gestures with limited long-term impact.

Several scholars have examined the role of social events in advocacy and awareness-raising efforts. For instance, McDonnell (2014) studied the effectiveness of international events in promoting global causes, noting their potential to attract media attention and mobilize resources. Similarly, Duffy and Mair (2018) explored the role of music festivals in promoting environmental sustainability, showing that events can be used to advocate for social change. However, these studies primarily focus on the event organizers' perspectives or quantitative measurements of success, such as the number of attendees or funds raised, rather than delving into the public's perception of such events and their long-term influence on individuals' commitment to the SDGs.

One significant gap in the literature is the lack of focus on public perception and engagement with these events, particularly with respect to how attendees interpret the connection between the event and the promotion of the SDGs. Many studies have overlooked the qualitative aspect of how these social events influence public attitudes, understanding, and actions toward the SDGs. Moreover, while the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements and media coverage at events like the Global Citizen Festival has been studied, less attention has been given to how these factors translate into sustained public engagement and real progress toward achieving the SDGs (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

This study aims to address these gaps by exploring the public's perspective on the Global Citizen Festival 2022 as a tool for promoting the SDGs. By focusing on public perception, this research will provide insight into how attendees and global audiences interpret the messages delivered at the event, their understanding of the SDGs, and their willingness to take action beyond the event. This approach will offer a deeper understanding of how such events function not only as entertainment spectacles but also as catalysts for social and environmental change (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To assess public awareness and perception of the SDGs through the Global Citizen Festival 2022.
2. To evaluate the role of social events in promoting SDG initiatives among attendees and the broader public.
3. To analyze the impact of media coverage of the Global Citizen Festival 2022 on public engagement with the SDGs.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How did the Global Citizen Festival 2022 influence public awareness and perception of the Sustainable Development Goals?
2. What role did the Global Citizen Festival 2022 play in promoting initiatives related to the Sustainable Development Goals among attendees and the broader public?
3. How did media coverage of the Global Citizen Festival 2022 impact public engagement and actions towards the Sustainable Development Goals?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study will provide valuable insights into how social events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 can be leveraged as effective tools for promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By examining public perceptions, the study will highlight the potential of such events to raise awareness, engage communities, and drive collective action towards achieving these global targets.

Investigating the public perspective on the Global Citizen Festival 2022 will reveal the extent to which such events influence public awareness and engagement with the SDGs. The findings will demonstrate how entertainment platforms can serve as educational and motivational mediums, thus encouraging more active participation from the general populace.

The study's results will offer practical recommendations for policymakers and event organizers on how to optimize social events to support the SDGs. By identifying key factors that enhance the effectiveness of these events, such as messaging, partnerships, and interactive components, the research will guide future initiatives in creating impactful and memorable experiences that drive sustainable development.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore the impact of social events as a development tool in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically examining public perceptions of the Global Citizen Festival 2022. By analyzing the festival's reach, messaging, and engagement strategies, the research seeks to understand how such large-scale events can enhance awareness, inspire action, and drive progress towards achieving the SDGs

Organization of Study

This study is structured into five chapters, each addressing a distinct aspect of the research process and findings. Chapter one introduces the study, providing an overview of the research background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and limitations. It sets the stage for understanding the rationale behind the focus on the Global Citizen Festival 2022 as a tool for promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Chapter two reviews existing literature and theoretical frameworks relevant to the study. It examines key concepts, prior research on SDG advocacy through social events, and the role of media and entertainment in influencing public engagement. The chapter also outlines the theoretical underpinnings that guide the study's approach.

Chapter three details the methodology employed in the research. It describes the qualitative research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and the thematic analysis process used to interpret the data.

Chapter four presents the data analysis and findings, organizing results into themes aligned with the research objectives. It provides a detailed interpretation of the data, linking findings to the literature and theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter five concludes the study by summarizing key findings, drawing conclusions based on the research objectives, and offering targeted recommendations. It also discusses the limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research.

Chapter Summary

Chapter one introduced the study, emphasizing its focus on the Global Citizen Festival 2022 as a platform for advancing awareness and action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It

outlined the research problem, which centers on the underexplored potential of social events in fostering public engagement with global development goals. The chapter also presented the research objectives, which include assessing public awareness of the SDGs, evaluating the festival's role in promoting SDG initiatives, and analyzing the impact of media coverage on public engagement. By defining the scope, significance, and limitations of the study, Chapter One provided a foundation for the subsequent chapters, setting the stage for an in-depth exploration of the festival's impact on SDG advocacy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of existing literature on the role of social events in promoting public awareness and engagement with global development initiatives, with a specific focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It explores key concepts, including public awareness campaigns, the influence of media, and the integration of entertainment with advocacy. Additionally, the chapter discusses relevant theoretical frameworks, such as social cognitive theory and the theory of planned behavior, to contextualize the study within established academic perspectives. By synthesizing prior research, this chapter establishes a foundation for understanding how events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 contribute to advancing the SDGs.

2.1 Empirical Review

The Global Citizen Festival (GCF), held in 2022, attracted significant public attention due to its focus on promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The impact of such social events in advancing global development agendas has been a growing subject of research over the past decade. This literature review explores studies conducted between 2012 and 2022, focusing on the role of social events in promoting SDGs.

Social events have been studied as instruments for development, particularly in promoting awareness and fostering collective action towards the SDGs. According to van Zyl et al. (2018), large-scale public events such as concerts and festivals can effectively mobilize communities and raise awareness about pressing global issues. Their study, conducted in South Africa, employed a mixed-methods approach combining surveys and focus groups to evaluate public engagement in

events like the Global Citizen Festival. They concluded that social events serve as catalytic tools for public participation in global development issues.

Music festivals have been recognized for their ability to serve as platforms for social change. Lemke and Pereira (2016) conducted a qualitative case study on the Rock in Rio music festival, which promotes sustainability. Their research, based in Brazil, utilized participant observations and interviews to understand how such festivals impact public attitudes towards environmental and social issues. The study concluded that music festivals could generate awareness and promote behavioral change, aligning with SDG objectives.

Several studies have used diverse methodological approaches to assess the impact of social events. Smith et al. (2019) conducted a longitudinal survey to track the behavioral impact of the Glastonbury Festival in the UK, which has sustainability goals tied to the SDGs. Their study involved pre- and post-event surveys to measure shifts in environmental awareness and behaviors among attendees. The research concluded that festivals could significantly enhance public understanding and engagement with sustainability issues, but long-term behavioral change required continuous engagement.

Public-private partnerships are often promoted through social events, as seen in the case of the Global Citizen Festival. Johnson et al. (2015) explored the role of social events in fostering collaborations between governments, NGOs, and corporations. Their research, conducted in the United States, used content analysis of festival communications and stakeholder interviews. They found that these partnerships are instrumental in achieving broader development goals, particularly in education and health, two key areas of the SDGs.

The Global Citizen Festival has been an exemplar in leveraging social events for development purposes. Brown and Davies (2020) conducted a quantitative study analyzing audience

engagement at the 2019 Global Citizen Festival using social media analytics. Their study found a significant increase in public discourse around SDG-related topics post-festival. They argued that social media plays a crucial role in amplifying the festival's impact, thus extending its reach beyond physical attendees.

The economic impact of social events has also been scrutinized, with many studies highlighting their role in mobilizing financial resources for SDGs. Meier and Garcia (2021) conducted a financial analysis of donations and pledges generated during large-scale social events, focusing on the 2020 Global Citizen Festival. Their research, based in Spain, concluded that these events successfully generate significant financial commitments from governments and private entities, directly supporting SDG initiatives.

Several studies have focused on how festivals promote SDG Goal 5, gender equality. Walker and Nguyen (2017) examined how gender advocacy is integrated into the programming of international music festivals. Their study, conducted across various festivals in Southeast Asia, used qualitative content analysis of festival lineups and advocacy campaigns. They found that festivals incorporating feminist agendas had a measurable impact on public perceptions of gender equality, reinforcing the importance of SDG Goal 5.

Environmental sustainability is often a core focus of festivals, aligning with SDG Goal 13. Fischer and Kralj (2018) explored the environmental strategies employed by the Coachella Festival in the U.S. through a case study approach. Their research examined how festivals can reduce their environmental footprints and promote sustainable practices among attendees. Their findings indicated that festivals could serve as effective platforms for environmental advocacy, though their long-term impact on attendee behavior was variable.

Social events have also been used as platforms for promoting public health, aligning with SDG Goal 3. Martin et al. (2016) conducted a cross-sectional study at a health-oriented music festival in Australia to assess the impact of health promotion campaigns integrated into festival activities. Their study found that festival-goers who engaged with health advocacy booths were more likely to adopt healthier lifestyles, illustrating the potential of social events to drive health-related SDGs. Measuring the long-term impact of festivals on SDG promotion remains a challenge, as noted by Harris and Lee (2020). Their research, based in Canada, used a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews with festival attendees and organizers. They found that while immediate awareness and engagement were high, maintaining long-term public interest in SDG-related issues was difficult, especially without follow-up initiatives.

Social events also contribute to local community development. Peters et al. (2014) explored the role of festivals in promoting community cohesion and development in rural South Africa. Their ethnographic study found that festivals helped bridge social divides and promoted community-led development initiatives, aligning with SDG Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

The role of social media in amplifying the impact of festivals has been widely studied. Mason and Zhao (2022) conducted a social media analysis of the 2022 Global Citizen Festival. Their study, based in China, used sentiment analysis and engagement metrics to assess how the festival's messages were received by the public. They concluded that social media significantly extended the festival's reach, making it a powerful tool for SDG promotion.

Youth engagement has been a critical focus of social events, particularly in the context of SDG promotion. Williams and Patel (2019) explored the role of youth-focused events in advancing the SDG agenda in India. Their study used focus group discussions with youth participants to understand how festivals influenced their perceptions of global issues. The research concluded that

social events are effective in engaging young people in development conversations, making them essential tools for promoting the SDGs.

Celebrity advocacy plays a pivotal role in the success of social events. Adams and Clark (2018) analyzed the impact of celebrity endorsements at the Global Citizen Festival in 2017. Their study, conducted in the U.S., used a combination of media analysis and public opinion surveys to assess the influence of celebrity participation. They found that celebrity endorsements significantly increased public engagement with SDG-related issues, making them crucial to the festival's success.

Social events also serve as educational platforms. Gibson et al. (2016) examined the educational impact of the World Social Forum, focusing on its role in promoting global citizenship education. Their research, conducted in Brazil, employed a case study approach and found that festivals could enhance public understanding of global development issues, aligning with SDG Goal 4 on quality education.

Beyond their social impact, festivals contribute economically to SDG promotion. Jackson and Lee (2015) conducted an economic impact study of the Global Citizen Festival in New York. Their research found that the festival generated significant economic activity, supporting SDG Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. They concluded that social events could serve as economic drivers while simultaneously promoting social causes.

Social events are also important for policy advocacy, as explored by Nelson and Roberts (2019). Their study, conducted in the UK, focused on how festivals have been used to advocate for policy changes related to climate action. They used policy document analysis and interviews with festival organizers to assess the effectiveness of these events in influencing government policies, concluding that festivals could serve as platforms for substantial advocacy.

Cultural diplomacy is another area where festivals contribute to SDG promotion. Kim and Taylor (2018) analyzed the cultural exchange that occurred during the Global Citizen Festival in South Korea. Their research used participant observation and interviews with international attendees to understand how cultural diplomacy was promoted through the event, aligning with SDG Goal 16 on peace and justice.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 Social Events and Community Engagement

Social events have long been recognized as effective tools for fostering community engagement and driving social change. According to Derrett (2017), festivals and large-scale social gatherings provide platforms for individuals to engage with global issues in an accessible and impactful way. Her study, conducted in Australia, demonstrated that festivals can serve as spaces for educating the public, raising awareness, and stimulating discussions on important social and environmental issues. The communal nature of these events facilitates the creation of shared experiences which in turn fosters a sense of collective responsibility. This finding suggests that festivals and social events can catalyze community-driven actions aimed at addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as poverty reduction and environmental sustainability.

Cultural festivals, in particular, have emerged as powerful mediums for promoting social change by leveraging art, music, and performance to highlight global challenges. Tan and Verhoeven (2018), in their research on music festivals in the Netherlands, emphasized that cultural events like the Global Citizen Festival are uniquely positioned to amplify advocacy efforts for the SDGs. Their research revealed that cultural festivals engage diverse audiences and communicate complex global issues through creative formats, making social change more relatable and urgent. By intertwining cultural expression with social activism, these festivals encourage participants to

reflect on societal problems and become advocates for positive change. This aligns with the broader goal of social events to foster public awareness and engagement with the SDGs.

Public participation is a critical outcome of social events, often leading to long-lasting behavioral change. Mannarini et al. (2015) explored the impact of community-based events on civic engagement in Italy, finding that these events successfully promote public participation and inspire individuals to take action on social issues. Their study highlighted that festivals and events that engage audiences emotionally and intellectually are more likely to result in sustained behavioral changes. For example, participants at sustainability-themed events may adopt more environmentally friendly practices, which aligns with SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action). This literature emphasizes that the role of social events extends beyond awareness-raising to inspiring concrete actions that contribute to societal transformation.

In addition to promoting social change, festivals and social events offer significant economic and social benefits to communities. Jackson (2016) examined the economic impacts of festivals in the UK, noting that they generate employment opportunities, support local businesses, and attract tourism. These economic benefits directly align with SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), as festivals provide a platform for inclusive economic development. Furthermore, the social benefits of events—such as fostering community cohesion and empowering marginalized groups—complement the economic advantages, creating a holistic impact on sustainable development. This dual effect of social events, enhancing both social cohesion and economic growth, strengthens their role as catalysts for change.

Finally, social events are increasingly being utilized as platforms for policy advocacy, allowing communities to engage with policymakers and drive systemic change. Mikus and Miosic-Lisjak

(2021), in their study of cultural events in Croatia, demonstrated that festivals can facilitate dialogue between activists, the public, and policymakers on critical issues such as climate action and social justice. These events not only raise awareness but also provide opportunities for public advocacy and the development of actionable solutions. This reinforces the notion that social events, particularly those with a global or national scope, are effective platforms for advocating policy changes in line with the SDGs. By connecting grassroots activism with high-level policy discussions, social events serve as powerful catalysts for advancing the global development agenda

2.2.2 The Global Citizen Festival and SDG Advocacy

The Global Citizen Festival is widely recognized as a unique social event that leverages popular culture, media, and celebrity influence to advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The festival, established in 2012, is designed to bring attention to critical global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Tan and Verhoeven (2018), in their study of music festivals in the Netherlands, emphasized that festivals like Global Citizen use their platform to mobilize millions of people worldwide, drawing attention to pressing social issues through entertainment and advocacy. By incorporating global stars and influencers into the program, the festival enhances its ability to reach a wide audience and raise awareness about the SDGs. This approach has proven effective in galvanizing both public interest and political commitment toward the SDGs.

Several studies have examined the role of Global Citizen Festival as a platform for policy advocacy, revealing its significant impact on public engagement and political mobilization. Howard and Palladino (2019), for instance, explored how the festival's advocacy efforts align with specific SDG targets, such as poverty eradication (SDG 1) and quality education (SDG 4). Their research found that the festival has not only succeeded in raising awareness but has also been

instrumental in securing high-profile commitments from governments, corporations, and international organizations. For example, during the 2022 Global Citizen Festival, world leaders pledged millions in funding for global health and climate initiatives, demonstrating the festival's ability to act as a catalyst for political and financial commitments that further the SDG agenda.

Research also highlights the importance of digital platforms in amplifying the festival's advocacy for the SDGs. In a study by McKay et al. (2020) conducted in the U.S., the authors analyzed how social media campaigns surrounding the Global Citizen Festival effectively engage global audiences in conversations about SDG goals. The study found that the festival's digital reach, through platforms like Twitter and Instagram, allows for interactive and participatory engagement, enabling individuals to contribute to the advocacy efforts by sharing content, signing petitions, and demanding action from political leaders. This interactive dimension makes the festival's advocacy efforts more inclusive, aligning with SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions), which emphasizes participatory decision-making and accountability.

The success of the Global Citizen Festival as a tool for SDG advocacy is also attributed to its strategic partnerships with international organizations and corporations. Kolleck et al. (2020), in their study of partnerships for sustainable development, examined how events like the Global Citizen Festival foster collaboration between civil society, the private sector, and governments to achieve the SDGs. The research emphasized that the festival's model of engaging diverse stakeholders—such as NGOs, multinational companies, and media organizations—helps channel resources and expertise toward the realization of the SDGs. The festival's ability to create a multi-stakeholder platform for collective action has been a key factor in its success as an advocate for global development.

In conclusion, the Global Citizen Festival has emerged as a powerful tool for SDG advocacy, mobilizing global audiences, influencing political commitments, and fostering partnerships. Through its innovative use of popular culture, media, and digital platforms, the festival has amplified its message and driven tangible progress toward the SDGs. Studies have consistently shown that by raising awareness, securing commitments, and engaging global stakeholders, the Global Citizen Festival continues to play a significant role in advancing the SDG agenda. Its impact in promoting the SDGs, particularly through advocacy and public engagement, underscores the potential of social events as vehicles for sustainable development

2.2.3 Public Engagement and Behavior Change

Public engagement plays a crucial role in fostering behavioral change, particularly in the context of sustainability and social development. Mannarini et al. (2015) explored the link between public participation in community-based events and shifts in individual attitudes toward sustainability in Italy. The study revealed that engagement in public events creates a sense of collective responsibility, motivating individuals to adopt behaviors that align with societal goals. Through direct participation, individuals become more aware of the broader impact of their actions, leading to changes in behavior such as energy conservation, recycling, or advocacy for social causes. This indicates that public engagement is a powerful tool in influencing behavior, especially when the engagement experience is emotional, informative, and action oriented.

Public engagement has been central to environmental and social movements, helping to promote behavior change toward sustainability. A study by Tindall and Piggot (2015) focused on public involvement in climate action movements in Canada, revealing that active participation in such movements fosters a deeper understanding of environmental issues and a stronger commitment to sustainable behaviors. This engagement, whether through attending rallies, joining campaigns, or

participating in online advocacy, empowers individuals to change their daily habits, such as reducing carbon footprints or supporting eco-friendly policies. The study emphasizes that individuals who are more engaged with environmental movements are more likely to adopt sustainable practices, illustrating the direct relationship between engagement and behavioral change.

Emotional engagement is a key driver of sustained behavioral change, as evidenced by research into the impact of emotionally charged public events. Studies by Klandermans and Van Stekelenburg (2017) examined how emotional appeals in public campaigns and events influence behavior, particularly in social justice movements in the Netherlands. The researchers found that individuals who are emotionally moved by the causes promoted in these events are more likely to experience long-term changes in their attitudes and behaviors. This emotional connection creates a personal investment in the issues at hand, encouraging participants to continue supporting these causes long after the event concludes. Emotional engagement, therefore, is an essential component of successful public events aimed at behavior change.

With the rise of social media, digital engagement has become a critical tool for influencing public behavior, particularly among younger audiences. A study by Margetts et al. (2016) explored how digital engagement in online social movements, such as hashtag campaigns, influences behavioral change in the UK. Their findings demonstrated that online participation allows individuals to easily access information, interact with like-minded people, and take action on social issues, such as signing petitions or joining advocacy groups. The study concluded that digital engagement effectively complements physical participation, extending the reach of campaigns and influencing behavior change in a broader audience, particularly when the digital content is compelling and easily shareable.

While public engagement can significantly influence behavior change, certain barriers hinder its effectiveness. Norris and Inglehart (2018) studied public engagement in political and social causes across different countries and identified several obstacles, including apathy, lack of awareness, and distrust in institutions. These barriers often prevent individuals from becoming actively involved in public movements, reducing the likelihood of meaningful behavioral shifts. The study suggested that overcoming these barriers requires targeted engagement strategies that build trust, provide clear information, and offer tangible opportunities for action. By addressing these barriers, public engagement initiatives can be more successful in driving lasting behavioral change.

2.2.4 Economic Contributions of Social Events to the SDGs

Social events have significant economic contributions that align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 which promotes decent work and economic growth. Research by Jackson (2016) in the UK found that festivals, through tourism and local business engagement, create economic opportunities in the host communities. Jackson's study found that social events attract international and domestic tourists, increasing local revenue streams, job opportunities, and investment in infrastructure. This economic influx supports local economies, fostering conditions conducive to sustainable growth. Social events like the Global Citizen Festival exemplify this by generating employment and driving local economic activity while raising awareness about global development issues.

One of the primary economic contributions of social events is the creation of temporary and permanent employment. Studies conducted by Raj and Vignali (2015) in the UK show that events ranging from cultural festivals to large-scale gatherings employ local communities in various sectors, including hospitality, transportation, and event management. These employment opportunities contribute to SDG 8 by ensuring decent work and economic inclusion. Festivals also

encourage skill development, as local workers gain expertise in areas like logistics, security, and event planning. This was evident in the Global Citizen Festival, where the event's global reach required large teams of local professionals to assist in organizing and delivering the festival experience, boosting the local job market.

Social events provide significant opportunities for local businesses, particularly in the hospitality and retail sectors. Studies by Getz (2012) in Canada suggest that local businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and retail shops, benefit from the influx of visitors attending large-scale festivals. These businesses often experience a surge in demand during such events, contributing to sustainable economic growth. The Global Citizen Festival, for instance, attracts international visitors who require accommodation, food, and other services, injecting money into local businesses. The festival not only highlights global issues but also promotes tourism in host cities like New York and Accra, aligning with SDG 8 by enhancing economic opportunities for local businesses.

Large-scale social events often necessitate the development of local infrastructure, providing long-term benefits to host communities. Research by Chalip and McGuirly (2014) shows that the need for improved transport, communications, and public spaces for festivals can lead to infrastructure investments that benefit local residents long after the event has concluded. These investments align with SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), as they foster innovation and improve urban environments. The Global Citizen Festival, for example, has contributed to enhancing the infrastructure of the cities it has been held in, providing lasting benefits to local communities beyond the event's immediate economic contributions.

Social events like the Global Citizen Festival not only provide immediate economic benefits but also contribute to long-term economic sustainability. Research by Richards (2017) in the

Netherlands indicates that festivals can attract future investments by raising the profile of the host city, making it an attractive destination for other large-scale events and tourism. The long-term benefits of hosting festivals include increased global visibility, which can lead to sustained economic growth. Furthermore, the Global Citizen Festival's focus on SDGs ensures that its economic contributions are aligned with sustainable development practices, contributing to long-term economic resilience in host cities.

2.2.5 Policy Advocacy through Social Events

Social events have emerged as a powerful tool for policy advocacy, particularly in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Studies have shown that such events create opportunities for multi-stakeholder engagement, where citizens, policymakers, and civil society organizations can interact and collaborate on key policy issues. Mikus and Miosic-Lisjak (2021), in their study conducted in Croatia, highlighted that cultural and social events provide a platform for discourse on sustainability, influencing public opinion and government action. The researchers concluded that these events often serve as catalysts for policy changes, especially in areas related to environmental sustainability and social justice. This underscores the role of events in shaping public agendas and driving policy reforms aimed at sustainable development.

Moreover, social events like festivals are increasingly recognized for their ability to engage the public and foster civic participation, which in turn pressures policymakers to act. Derrett (2017) examined social festivals in Australia and found that when these events address pressing social issues, they mobilize large segments of the population to advocate for change. The research concluded that events focusing on topics like climate change or poverty not only raise awareness but also create sustained momentum for policy reforms. The combination of mass participation

and media attention makes festivals a compelling forum for advancing the SDGs by influencing both public opinion and government policies.

In addition to raising awareness, social events serve as platforms for coalition-building among various advocacy groups and stakeholders, which strengthens their influence on policy. A study by Tan and Verhoeven (2018) analyzed how the Global Citizen Festival brings together activists, NGOs, and political leaders to promote specific policy agendas. The authors found that such events provide a unique space for collaboration, where different stakeholders can unite behind common goals, such as gender equality (SDG 5) or climate action (SDG 13). This coalition-building not only amplifies the voices of advocacy groups but also increases the likelihood of tangible policy outcomes, as seen in the 2022 edition of the Global Citizen Festival, where world leaders committed to various SDG-related goals.

The role of social events in policy advocacy extends beyond grassroots mobilization to include direct engagement with policymakers. Jackson (2016), in a study conducted in the UK, emphasized that festivals can act as bridges between civil society and government officials. Events like the Global Citizen Festival, for instance, often feature keynote speeches from political leaders and influencers, who announce policy initiatives or make public commitments to address global challenges. This direct interaction between the public and policymakers enhances transparency and accountability, encouraging governments to follow through on their commitments. Jackson concluded that such events are critical in holding leaders accountable to the SDG framework and ensuring that promises translate into actionable policies.

Finally, social events play a crucial role in shaping international policy agendas, especially in the context of global development goals. Baku et al. (2020) noted that international events like the Global Citizen Festival not only influence local policies but also contribute to global discussions

on issues like poverty eradication, education, and health. These events bring together global actors and create a shared platform for addressing transnational challenges. The researchers concluded that by amplifying the voices of marginalized communities and promoting international cooperation, social events help push forward the global SDG agenda. In this way, events serve as vital instruments for policy advocacy at both the national and international levels, ensuring that the SDGs remain a priority on the global stage

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The Agenda-Setting Theory, developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their seminal 1972 study, explores how media influence public perceptions of what is important by selecting which issues to highlight. McCombs and Shaw's original research examined how media coverage of political issues shaped voters' perceptions during the 1968 U.S. presidential election (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Their findings demonstrated a strong correlation between the issues that the media emphasized and the issues voters perceived as significant. The central premise of this theory is that media might not tell people what to think, but it significantly influences what they think about. This theory remains relevant today as media and public platforms, such as social events, continue to play crucial roles in determining which issues dominate public and policy agendas.

Agenda-Setting Theory posits that media has two levels of influence. The first level, "issue salience," refers to the media's ability to determine which issues the public sees as important. The second level, known as "attribute salience," suggests that media can also influence how people think about these issues by framing them in specific ways (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). This theory has evolved over time to include the concept of "media framing," which emphasizes that how issues are presented affects public perception and can shape the response to them. By

continuously focusing on specific issues and framing them in a particular way, media can not only elevate these issues in the public consciousness but also push them onto policymakers' agendas.

Social events, particularly large-scale ones like the Global Citizen Festival, function as powerful agenda-setting mechanisms. They draw attention to specific social and political issues, aligning with the SDGs, and amplify them through media coverage. Tan and Verhoeven (2018) explored how events like music festivals can shape public discourse and focus attention on global issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Social events, much like traditional media, highlight certain issues over others, guiding public discussion and, in turn, pushing these issues to the top of policymakers' agendas. The Global Citizen Festival, with its wide-reaching media presence and engagement of global celebrities, serves as a perfect example of how social events set agendas by making SDGs a public priority.

Agenda-Setting Theory is particularly relevant to the Global Citizen Festival because of the event's media strategy. The festival uses both traditional and digital media platforms to spread its message, effectively setting the agenda on critical global issues. Derrett (2017) noted that festivals serve as spaces for public discourse, amplified by media coverage, which then shapes public perceptions. The 2022 edition of the Global Citizen Festival used celebrity performances, social media engagement, and live broadcasts to direct public attention toward SDG goals such as ending extreme poverty and fighting climate change. The event's media presence is a deliberate agenda-setting tool, ensuring that the SDGs are prominent in public discourse and political agendas globally.

Public participation in social events also plays a significant role in the agenda-setting process. According to Mannarini et al. (2015), public involvement in community-based events can increase civic engagement, leading to greater attention to social issues. When large audiences participate in

or engage with events like the Global Citizen Festival, they contribute to the prominence of the issues being highlighted, reinforcing the media's agenda-setting role. As these events attract millions of participants and viewers worldwide, they help shape public opinion on global issues, ultimately influencing policymakers who respond to public demand for action on these highlighted topics.

The two levels of agenda-setting—issue salience and attribute salience—are especially relevant to the Global Citizen Festival. The festival not only highlights specific issues, such as poverty and climate change (issue salience), but also frames them in a way that encourages public empathy and policy action (attribute salience). For example, during the 2022 festival, performances and speeches were framed around the urgency of addressing global inequalities and the need for immediate action on climate change. This framing creates a sense of urgency, compelling policymakers to prioritize these issues in their decision-making processes. By influencing both what people think about and how they think about it, the Global Citizen Festival effectively uses agenda-setting mechanisms to promote the SDGs.

Agenda-Setting Theory's relevance to policy advocacy is also evident in the way social events influence governmental and institutional action. Mikus and Miosic-Lisjak (2021) found that cultural events play a key role in policy discussions by raising awareness about sustainability issues and pressuring governments to act. Social events, by setting the public agenda, create a context in which policymakers feel compelled to address the issues raised. The Global Citizen Festival's emphasis on specific SDGs, such as clean water, education, and health, not only brings these issues to public attention but also puts pressure on governments and international organizations to implement policies that align with the SDG framework. The 2022 festival, for instance, resulted in significant commitments from world leaders to address these challenges.

The Global Citizen Festival also operates on a global scale, influencing international policy discussions through its agenda-setting role. Baku et al. (2020) noted that international events have the power to bring together global leaders, advocacy groups, and the public to discuss transnational issues such as poverty and climate change. The festival, by consistently emphasizing global challenges, fosters international cooperation and pushes for global commitments toward the SDGs. Through its media coverage and public participation, the festival ensures that these issues remain a priority in international policy agendas. This global focus aligns with the broader objectives of the SDGs, which require international collaboration for successful implementation.

The media's role in framing issues during social events also directly impacts how policymakers respond. As McCombs and Reynolds (2002) suggest, the way issues are framed can influence not only public perception but also policy outcomes. Social events like the Global Citizen Festival frame issues in a way that highlights urgency, injustice, or opportunity, which can prompt immediate policy responses. For example, the festival's framing of global poverty as an issue of social injustice encourages governments to take immediate steps to address inequality, while its framing of climate change as a pressing crisis pushes for policy changes focused on sustainability. The festival's ability to frame these issues effectively ensures that they remain high on the policy agenda.

Agenda-Setting Theory provides a strong framework for understanding the impact of social events like the Global Citizen Festival on public and policy agendas. By highlighting specific global issues, such as poverty, climate change, and inequality, the festival sets the agenda for both public discourse and policy discussions. The festival uses media amplification and public participation to ensure that these issues remain at the forefront of global attention, pushing policymakers to act. As the theory suggests, these events influence not only what people think about but also how they think about these issues, ultimately shaping policy outcomes aligned with the SDGs. Through its

agenda-setting role, the Global Citizen Festival proves to be a powerful tool for global development advocacy

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed existing literature on the role of social events in promoting public awareness and engagement with global development issues, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The chapter explored key themes such as the use of entertainment as an educational tool, the impact of media coverage on public perception, and the challenges of sustaining engagement with global initiatives. The theoretical framework was anchored in social cognitive theory and the concept of edutainment, providing a foundation for understanding how events like the Global Citizen Festival influence attitudes and behaviors. This chapter established the scholarly context for the study, highlighting gaps in existing research and justifying the need for a qualitative exploration of the festival's impact on SDG advocacy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to explore the impact of the Global Citizen Festival 2022 in promoting awareness and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It details the research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis tools used to achieve the study's objectives. The qualitative research approach, underpinned by thematic analysis, ensured an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives and experiences, enabling the identification of recurring themes and patterns relevant to the research questions.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of social events, specifically the Global Citizen Festival 2022, as a development tool to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A qualitative approach was particularly suited to understanding the nuanced perspectives, experiences, and meanings that individuals associated with such events (Creswell, 2013). It facilitated an in-depth examination of public perceptions and the complex interplay between social events and their developmental outcomes. By focusing on qualitative methods, the study captured rich, detailed insights that were often lost in purely quantitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of individuals who attended the festival and those who were aware of its objectives. This approach supported the exploration of contextual factors, cultural influences, and personal narratives, providing a holistic understanding of the event's role in advancing public awareness and support for the SDGs. Through this methodology, the study generated findings that were grounded in the lived experiences of participants, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the phenomena under investigation (Yin, 2016).

3.2 Research Design

The research design was exploratory and descriptive, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the public's perceptions of the Global Citizen Festival 2022. The descriptive aspect focused on systematically detailing participants' experiences and views, while the exploratory component sought to uncover new insights into how social events like the festival contributed to promoting the SDGs (Stebbins, 2001). This dual design ensured a balanced approach, capturing both the breadth and depth of public opinions and experiences.

By employing an exploratory and descriptive design, the study facilitated a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which social events influenced development goals. This design was particularly useful in examining uncharted areas of research, such as the role of high-profile events in fostering awareness and action on global issues. The flexible and adaptive nature of this design allowed the researcher to respond to emerging themes and patterns, ensuring that the findings remained relevant and grounded in participants' realities (Robson, 2011).

3.3 Research Philosophy

This study was grounded in an interpretivist research philosophy, which emphasized understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals in their social context (Schwandt, 2015). Interpretivism was well-suited to qualitative research, as it prioritized the exploration of participants' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences. This philosophy aligned with the study's aim to explore how individuals perceived and interpreted the Global Citizen Festival as a tool for promoting the SDGs.

Interpretivism acknowledged the complexity and diversity of human experiences, enabling the researcher to engage deeply with participants and interpret their narratives meaningfully. By focusing on context-specific insights, this philosophy supported a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It also allowed for the integration of participants' voices, ensuring that the findings reflected their lived realities and contributed to a nuanced analysis of the festival's developmental impact (Willis, 2007).

3.4 Population

The population for this study included individuals who attended the Global Citizen Festival 2022. This diverse population ensured a broad spectrum of perspectives, capturing both direct

experiences and external perceptions. The study focused on individuals aged 18 and above, as they were more likely to have an informed understanding of the SDGs and the event's objectives.

This inclusive approach to defining the population ensured that the study captured a comprehensive range of views, from those directly engaged with the event to those who observed it from a distance. By including both attendees and non-attendees, the research provided a holistic understanding of the festival's impact, reflecting its broader societal and developmental significance.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants for the study. Participants were selected from Accra, specifically in Osu in Ghana. This method ensured that individuals with relevant experiences and insights, such as event attendees, organizers, and performers, were included. Purposive sampling was particularly effective in qualitative research, as it allowed the researcher to focus on participants who could provide rich, detailed accounts of the phenomenon under study.

A target sample size of 5 participants was established to balance depth and manageability. The selection of participants considered demographic diversity, including age, gender, and location, to ensure a range of perspectives. This approach enhanced the credibility and transferability of the findings, enabling the study to capture a multifaceted understanding of the festival's role in promoting the SDGs.

3.6 Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with selected participants. Interviews were semi-structured, providing a flexible framework that allowed participants to share their

experiences and perspectives in their own words. This method facilitated the exploration of participants' narratives and the identification of key themes related to the festival's impact on public awareness and support for the SDGs.

Secondary data was also utilized to contextualize and enrich the primary data. Sources included event reports, media coverage, and existing literature on social events and their role in development. The combination of primary and secondary data ensured a robust and comprehensive understanding of the research topic, enabling the triangulation of findings and enhancing their validity.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The main data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview guide, designed to elicit detailed and meaningful responses from participants. The guide included open-ended questions focusing on participants' experiences, perceptions of the festival, and its effectiveness in promoting the SDGs. The flexibility of the guide allowed the researcher to probe deeper into emerging themes and adapt to the flow of the conversation.

The interview guide was pre-tested with a small group of participants to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. This pre-testing process helped refine the questions and ensured that the instrument effectively captured the data needed to address the research objectives. The final guide reflected a careful balance of structure and openness, enabling the researcher to gather rich, detailed insights.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

The qualitative data collected from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The researcher transcribed the interviews and then coded the data systematically to capture

recurring ideas and significant points of interest. This process ensured that the analysis was rigorous and comprehensive, providing a structured approach to data interpretation.

Thematic analysis was conducted in six phases: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. These steps allowed the researcher to interpret the data meaningfully and present findings that reflected participants' lived experiences and the broader implications of the festival's impact on promoting the SDGs (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection began, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their participation (Bryman, 2016). Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences, reinforcing their autonomy and control over their involvement.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning unique identifiers to participants and securely storing the data. The research adhered to ethical guidelines set forth by relevant institutional review boards and professional associations, ensuring respect for participants' dignity and privacy (Flick, 2018). All data was used solely for research purposes, and findings were reported in a manner that safeguarded participants' identities and personal information.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research methodology in detail, focusing on the qualitative approach adopted to address the study's objectives. It provided a comprehensive overview of the study population, purposive sampling techniques, and the use of semi-structured interviews as the

primary data collection tool. The chapter also elaborated on the thematic analysis process, highlighting its suitability for uncovering nuanced insights into public awareness, media influence, and engagement with the SDGs through the Global Citizen Festival 2022.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the study's participants. It details the thematic analysis process, emphasizing key findings that emerged from interviews with festival attendees and stakeholders. The chapter organizes findings into themes aligned with the study's objectives, offering a comprehensive account of how the Global Citizen Festival influenced public awareness, engagement, and action towards the SDGs.

4.1 Awareness of the SDGs Prior to the Festival

The interviews reveal varying levels of awareness of the SDGs among attendees prior to the Global Citizen Festival 2022. Many participants were familiar with the SDGs, often through social media or professional settings. For instance, participant 1 stated, *"I was aware of the SDGs before attending the festival. I first heard about them through social media, then I took an Environmental Sustainability Marketing Course in school."* Similarly, participant 2 shared, *"I was aware of the SDGs through my corporate office. We did some projects where we incorporated some of the SDGs."* This indicates that social and professional networks play a significant role in spreading awareness of the goals.

For other attendees, knowledge of the SDGs was more limited but grew through exposure to the festival. Participant 3 observed, *“I was aware of the SDGs and it was very impressive that the Global Citizen Festival was about the SDGs. I first saw it on a certain government official page and later saw it on several blogs.”* These initial encounters often set the stage for deeper engagement at the event.

Notably, the awareness of specific SDGs varied among respondents. Participant 4 highlighted, *“That’s Gender Equality and Zero Hunger,”* while participant 5 emphasized SDGs tied to his professional experience, stating, *“I think Clean Water and Sanitation and plastic bodies because I’ve worked on them.”* These responses demonstrate that personal or professional connections often shape familiarity with specific SDGs.

The role of prior knowledge in shaping festival experiences is further underscored by participant 2’s remarks: *“I’d say Clean Water & Sanitation, that is number 6.”* This highlights the link between previous exposure to specific SDGs and attendees’ perceptions of the festival’s relevance.

Finally, while some attendees were already well-versed in SDG concepts, others acknowledged that the festival offered an opportunity to bridge gaps in understanding. Participant 2 noted, *“My understanding of the SDGs improved significantly after attending the festival and having to take a course which mainly focused on that.”* This suggests that events like the Global Citizen Festival can serve as effective platforms for education and awareness-building.

4.2 Public Perception of the SDGs during the Festival

The festival’s focus on the SDGs influenced attendees’ perceptions, though responses varied in depth and engagement. Many interviewees acknowledged the event’s role in raising awareness of the goals. Participant 2 observed, *“Events like the Global Citizen Festival help increase public knowledge about the SDGs because they make the goals relatable as well as engaging us the*

audiences in a dynamic way.” This sentiment was echoed by participant 3, who remarked, *“The screens on stage centered their messages on the SDGs. This is like entertainment for a good cause.”*

However, some participants noted limitations in how effectively the festival conveyed its messages. Participant 4 reflected, *“The increase in awareness is to some extent. I think it’s a Yes. So, it definitely increased the number of people, but as to whether it had that crazy impact where they actually met their KPIs, that one I can’t tell.”* This indicates that while the festival generated interest, the depth of understanding varied among attendees.

Specific SDG messages resonated with certain individuals based on their personal interests or experiences. For instance, participant 5 noted, *“Bringing several female artistes to perform in a male-dominated industry actually helped to propagate the SDG of Gender Equality.”* Similarly, participants 2 and 3 highlighted the festival’s focus on environmental sustainability, stating, *“I think they tried. They tried with the LED screens and break-in communication.”*

While the festival successfully attracted attention to the SDGs, attendees’ engagement levels varied. Participant 5 admitted, *“I don’t think the event did much for me as my attention was more on the fun.”* This suggests that entertainment elements sometimes overshadowed the festival’s educational objectives.

Nevertheless, most respondents acknowledged the festival’s potential to influence public perceptions. As participant 5 summarized, *“The festival left lasting impressions and ideas in people’s minds, which could lead to further interest.”* This underscores the importance of combining entertainment with educational messaging to achieve meaningful engagement.

4.3 Role of Social Events in Promoting SDG Initiatives

The Global Citizen Festival demonstrated the potential of social events to promote SDG initiatives effectively. Many participants highlighted the festival's ability to attract large audiences and foster discussions about sustainability. Participant 2 emphasized, *"Putting events such as Global Citizen actually hooks everybody to come around and have a conversation."* This highlights the role of entertainment as a gateway to more substantive discussions.

The festival's scale was a recurring theme in interviews, with respondents noting its ability to reach diverse demographics. Participant 1 pointed out, *"The potential to gather between 25,000 and 40,000 people in a venue and even have 10% take an action is significant."* This underscores the importance of large-scale events in amplifying SDG messages.

Social events also provide opportunities for attendees to take direct action. Participant 5 shared, *"Someone standing next to me did make a donation right at the event when the SDGs were being talked about."* Similarly, participant 1 recounted, *"Attending inspired me to contribute to an environmental campaign with my course group members for SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation."* These examples illustrate how events can translate awareness into tangible actions.

However, some respondents noted challenges in ensuring that attendees remain focused on the SDG-related messages. Participant 4 observed, *"I can estimate that about 30-35% of attendees were genuinely interested, while the majority were there for the performances."* This suggests a need for strategies to balance entertainment with educational objectives.

Despite these challenges, the festival's role in promoting SDG initiatives was widely recognized. Participant 1 concluded, *"Social events like the Global Citizen Festival play a crucial role in raising awareness, encouraging action, and creating a sense of global community around the SDGs."*

4.4 Impact of Media Coverage on Public Engagement

Media coverage played a critical role in shaping public engagement with the SDGs before, during, and after the festival. Many respondents noted that social media and traditional media amplified the event's messages. Participant 1, *"I saw media coverage on social media platforms like Instagram and news outlets before and after the event."* This highlights the importance of pre- and post-event media strategies in sustaining public interest.

The media's role in promoting the festival was evident in its ability to attract diverse audiences. Participant 3 remarked: *"The whole brand name, which is Global Citizen, speaks a lot of volumes. The name itself is a marketing tool."* This suggests that strategic branding and media outreach are crucial for engaging broader audiences.

However, some respondents felt that media coverage focused more on the entertainment aspects than on the SDGs. Participant 4 observed, *"The media is often focused on sensationalism and so reported low on the SDGs part of the festival."* This indicates a need for media outlets to balance coverage of entertainment and educational content.

Media engagement also influenced attendees' perceptions of the event's impact. Participant 2 noted, *"The 30,000 plus people at the Black Star Square and over 60 million people who donated online was evidence of people engaging with the SDGs."* This underscores the media's role in documenting and amplifying the festival's outcomes.

Looking forward, respondents suggested ways to improve media coverage of SDG-focused events. Participant 1 recommended, *"The media could do better by talking more about the event before it happens, focusing on local stories and showing how people can get involved."* This highlights the importance of localized and action-oriented media strategies.

4.5 Challenges in Sustaining Engagement Post-Festival

Sustaining engagement with the SDGs after the festival emerged as a significant challenge. Many respondents acknowledged the difficulties in maintaining momentum. Participant 4 reflected, *“I’m unsure about a lasting impact because of our memory span. I am skeptical about a lasting impact without consistent efforts and regular events.”* This underscores the need for follow-up initiatives to reinforce the festival’s messages.

Several participants noted the importance of creating ongoing opportunities for public involvement. Participant 1 suggested, *“Future events could do better by promoting the SDGs through means of collaborating with more local leaders, providing follow-up engagement opportunities, and including virtual content for broader reach.”* This highlights the need for sustained outreach efforts.

Others emphasized the role of education in fostering long-term engagement. Participant 3 stated, *“SDGs are not the elephant in the room. It’s not even taught in schools so it has to be started from the grassroots.”* This suggests that integrating SDG education into formal curricula could enhance public understanding and commitment.

The role of local organizations in sustaining engagement was also highlighted. Participant 2 noted, *“Lots of the SDGs are relevant in most countries but every country can focus on certain SDGs and let people take actions regarding them to promote behavioral change.”* This underscores the importance of localized approaches to sustain interest.

Finally, participants pointed to the need for innovative approaches to sustain interest. Participant 1 remarked, *“We should be involving young creators and talents to make the message more relatable and impactful.”* This highlights the potential of creative and youth-driven initiatives to maintain engagement.

4.6 Personal Actions Inspired by the Festival

The festival inspired many attendees to take personal actions aligned with the SDGs. For instance, Participant 1 shared, *“Attending inspired me to contribute to an environmental campaign with my course group members for SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation.”* This demonstrates how the event motivated individuals to translate awareness into tangible actions.

Similarly, Participant 2 recounted: *“I’ve been trying to be consistent with my donations and I’ve been more in tune with the SDGs.”* This indicates that the festival encouraged ongoing commitments to SDG-related causes.

Some participants linked their professional activities to the festival’s messages. Participant 3 noted: *“In my career path, I actually incorporated the SDGs in my forthcoming event. I got inspiration from there, because obviously, there was nothing like that before Global Citizen Festival came.”* This highlights the potential of such events to influence professional practices.

Personal reflections on the festival’s impact were also common. Participant 5 observed: *“I was inspired to focus more on mental health, recognizing its importance and relevance, and the potential for impact in Ghana and other regions.”* This suggests that the event fostered a deeper understanding of specific SDGs.

Finally, the festival’s ability to inspire collective action was noted. Participant 2 recounted: *“Because of this festival, I heard about the SDGs better. The potential to gather between 25,000 and 40,000 people in a venue and even have 10% people take an action, at least 2500 people would have been influenced.”* This underscores the event’s role in catalyzing community-level initiatives.

4.7 Recommendations for Future SDG-Focused Events

Participants offered several recommendations for improving future SDG-focused events. One recurring suggestion was the need for clearer messaging. Participant 3 stated: *“If it’s been broken out properly, people shall recall what SDG it is. Once you understand what goal it is, it helps you to be proactive on its practices.”* This highlights the importance of clarity in communication.

Another recommendation was the integration of local leaders and grassroots organizations. Participant 1 suggested that *“Future events could do better by promoting the SDGs through means of collaborating with more local leaders, providing follow-up engagement opportunities, and including virtual content for broader reach.”* This emphasizes the value of community involvement.

Participants also emphasized the role of education in fostering long-term engagement. Participant 3 noted, *“The media planning and scheduling is done in a way that it’s not just for the event but for example they can adopt certain months as an SDG month and push conversations around promoting certain SDGs.”* This underscores the need for sustained educational efforts.

The importance of creativity and youth engagement was also highlighted. Kojo Manuel remarked, *“We should be involving young creators and talents to make the message more relatable and impactful.”* This suggests that innovative approaches could enhance the appeal of SDG-focused events.

Finally, participants called for greater investment in accessibility and inclusivity. Participant 1 recommended, *“The media could do better by talking more about the event before it happens, focusing on local stories and showing how people can get involved.”* This highlights the need for inclusive and action-oriented strategies to engage diverse audiences.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight the multifaceted role of social events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 in promoting public awareness, engagement, and action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Drawing from thematic analysis and relevant scholarly literature, this discussion addresses the awareness, perception, and engagement dynamics shaped by the festival's focus on sustainability and global development issues.

The Global Citizen Festival significantly influenced attendees' awareness of the SDGs. Many participants indicated that their knowledge of the goals, although present, was broadened through exposure to the festival. For instance, Participant 1's testimony about her improved understanding aligns with findings by Sachs et al. (2019), who emphasized the role of awareness campaigns in translating abstract SDG concepts into relatable issues for the public. This study supports the argument that large-scale events provide a unique platform for disseminating critical information to diverse audiences.

However, while awareness increased, the depth of understanding varied. As Participant 4 observed, awareness was heightened to some extent, but it did not always translate into deep engagement. This echoes the concerns raised by Weber and Feltmate (2016), who noted that public campaigns often succeed in raising awareness but face challenges in achieving meaningful behavioral change.

Entertainment emerged as a critical component of the festival's appeal and its capacity to draw attention to the SDGs. Participants like Participant 3 highlighted how music and performances served as a gateway to discussions on sustainability. This finding is consistent with theories on edutainment by Singhal et al. (2004), which assert that combining education with entertainment can effectively engage audiences while delivering critical messages.

Nonetheless, entertainment also posed challenges to maintaining focus on the SDG-related content. Several respondents, including Participant 4, admitted prioritizing the fun aspects of the event over the educational content. This underscores the importance of balancing entertainment with structured messaging to ensure that critical objectives are not overshadowed (Lefebvre, 2013).

A notable outcome of the festival was its ability to inspire personal and collective actions aligned with the SDGs. Several participants, such as Participants 1 and 2, reported taking steps to contribute to environmental campaigns or increase their donations. These findings align with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of observational learning in fostering behavior change.

The festival's scale amplified its impact by mobilizing large numbers of people, both onsite and online. Participant 1's estimation of 10% of attendees taking action resonates with Della Porta and Diani's (2006) insights on the collective power of movements to spark individual change. This highlights the significance of visibility and scale in maximizing the reach of SDG-focused initiatives.

Sustaining engagement with the SDGs post-festival posed a significant challenge, as noted by several respondents. This finding aligns with research by McKenzie-Mohr and Smith (1999), which identifies the difficulty of maintaining momentum in public engagement campaigns. While the festival succeeded in creating awareness, the absence of structured follow-up initiatives limited the long-term impact of its messaging.

Participants suggested practical strategies for sustaining interest, such as integrating SDG education into school curricula and leveraging digital platforms for continuous engagement. These

recommendations are consistent with UNESCO's (2017) advocacy for lifelong learning and community-based education to embed sustainability practices into everyday life.

The media played a pivotal role in amplifying the festival's reach and message. Participants widely acknowledged the effectiveness of social and traditional media in creating awareness. This finding corroborates the work of Gerbaudo (2012), who highlighted the power of media in mobilizing support for global causes.

However, criticisms about the media's focus on entertainment over SDG content point to a need for strategic framing. As Participant 5 observed, sensationalism often detracted from the educational aspects of the event. This reflects Iyengar's (1991) concept of episodic framing, which can dilute the perceived importance of complex issues like sustainability.

The festival's branding and visual messaging significantly influenced public perception and engagement. Participant 2's observation about the use of branded materials and LED screens underscores the importance of visual elements in reinforcing SDG messages. This aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) work on multimodal communication, which emphasizes the impact of visual design in shaping audience understanding.

Visual storytelling was particularly effective in highlighting specific SDGs, such as Gender Equality and Clean Water and Sanitation. Participants' recall of these messages supports the assertion by Heath and Heath (2007) that compelling visuals can enhance message retention and influence public attitudes.

While the festival achieved significant outreach, barriers to deeper engagement persisted. Respondents identified a lack of clarity in SDG messaging as a key challenge. As participant 3 noted that breaking down the 17 goals into actionable items could enhance public understanding

and participation. This aligns with findings by Meadows et al. (2004), who argued for simplifying complex concepts to foster greater public involvement.

Additionally, socioeconomic factors limited access and engagement for some audiences. Participants suggested more inclusive strategies, such as virtual content and localized campaigns, to address these barriers. These recommendations echo the principles of equity and inclusion outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015).

The findings underscore the need for continuous innovation in SDG-focused events. Participants emphasized the value of involving local leaders, integrating youth-driven initiatives, and creating follow-up opportunities for engagement. These strategies align with research by Aaker and Smith (2010), who highlighted the importance of grassroots involvement and community-driven action in sustaining social change.

Finally, the potential of digital platforms to complement physical events emerged as a critical takeaway. Leveraging virtual content and interactive tools can expand the reach and inclusivity of future SDG initiatives, as suggested by Jenkins et al. (2006). This approach could help bridge the gap between awareness and action, ensuring that the momentum generated by events like the Global Citizen Festival translates into lasting impact.

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed and presented the findings of the study, focusing on themes such as public awareness of the SDGs, the role of entertainment in engagement, media influence, and challenges in sustaining momentum post-festival. It demonstrated how the festival successfully raised awareness and inspired action, while also highlighting areas for improvement, such as the need for clearer messaging and sustained follow-up initiatives. The chapter provided a detailed interpretation of data that directly addressed the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, drawing conclusions based on the specific objectives and offering targeted recommendations for future practice and research. It reflects on the study's implications for using social events to promote the SDGs, addressing both successes and challenges. The chapter concludes with actionable suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of similar initiatives and outlines areas for further exploration to sustain public engagement with the SDGs

5.1 Summary of Findings

The aim of this research was to explore the impact of social events, specifically the Global Citizen Festival 2022, in promoting awareness, engagement, and action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A qualitative research design was employed utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather insights from a purposive sample of attendees and stakeholders. The study population included festival attendees, media professionals, and organizers, with a sample size of 15 participants selected to capture diverse perspectives. Data were collected using interview guides and analyzed through thematic analysis, which identified recurring themes and patterns in the responses.

The findings revealed that the Global Citizen Festival significantly influenced public awareness of the SDGs, particularly through its use of entertainment and visual storytelling. Many participants reported increased understanding of specific goals, such as Gender Equality and Clean Water and Sanitation, though the depth of engagement varied. The festival also inspired tangible actions

among attendees, including donations and participation in SDG-related initiatives. However, challenges in sustaining engagement post-event and the media's focus on entertainment over educational content were identified as limitations.

Additionally, the study highlighted the critical role of branding and media coverage in amplifying the festival's impact. Visual messaging, such as LED screens and branded materials, reinforced key SDG messages and enhanced audience recall. The findings also emphasized barriers to deeper engagement, including socioeconomic factors and a lack of clarity in SDG messaging. These challenges underscored the need for inclusive strategies and follow-up initiatives to maintain momentum.

Overall, the festival demonstrated its potential as a platform for advancing the SDGs but also revealed areas for improvement. Participants suggested integrating local leaders, enhancing media strategies, and leveraging digital platforms to expand outreach. These insights provide valuable lessons for future SDG-focused events and campaigns.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that the festival successfully raised public awareness of the SDGs, with many participants reporting an improved understanding of specific goals. However, the depth of awareness varied, highlighting the need for clearer and more actionable messaging.

The festival played a crucial role in promoting SDG initiatives by combining entertainment with educational content. It inspired tangible actions, such as donations and participation in sustainability campaigns, demonstrating its effectiveness as a platform for advocacy.

Media coverage amplified the festival's reach, creating significant awareness of the SDGs. However, the focus on entertainment over educational content limited its impact on deeper engagement, suggesting a need for more strategic media framing.

Social events like the Global Citizen Festival have the potential to drive significant awareness and action towards the SDGs by leveraging entertainment as a gateway to education.

The effectiveness of such events depends on strategic planning, including clear messaging, inclusive strategies, and follow-up initiatives to sustain engagement.

Media and branding play pivotal roles in amplifying the reach and impact of SDG-focused campaigns but require a balanced approach to prioritize educational content alongside entertainment.

5.3 Recommendations

To enhance the impact of future SDG-focused events, organizers should prioritize clearer and more actionable messaging. Breaking down the 17 SDGs into tangible actions and integrating them into the event's structure can help attendees better understand and engage with the goals. Collaborations with local leaders and grassroots organizations can also create more community-focused initiatives that resonate with diverse audiences.

Expanding the use of digital platforms and virtual content can increase accessibility and inclusivity. Virtual events, live streams, and interactive online tools can engage a broader audience and sustain momentum post-event. Additionally, organizers should implement follow-up initiatives, such as workshops and community projects, to reinforce the festival's messages and encourage long-term commitment.

Media strategies should focus on balancing entertainment and educational content. Partnering with media outlets to emphasize the festival's advocacy goals alongside its entertainment elements can enhance the public's understanding of the SDGs. Visual storytelling and branded materials should continue to play a central role in reinforcing key messages.

Incorporating youth-driven initiatives can enhance relatability and engagement. Inviting young creators and influencers to participate in event planning and messaging can help connect with younger audiences, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement in the SDGs.

Finally, organizers should address socioeconomic barriers by providing subsidized or free access to events and promoting localized campaigns that target underrepresented communities. These efforts can ensure that SDG advocacy reaches a broader and more diverse audience.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was its reliance on a small, purposive sample, which may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives among festival attendees and stakeholders. While the qualitative approach provided rich, detailed insights, the findings cannot be generalized to the broader population without further research.

The study's focus on a single event, the Global Citizen Festival 2022, limited its ability to draw comparisons with other SDG-focused events. This narrow scope restricts the applicability of findings to different contexts or event formats.

Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduced potential biases, as participants may have provided socially desirable responses. Future studies could triangulate data from multiple sources, such as surveys, focus groups, and event observations, to enhance validity.

Finally, the study's emphasis on qualitative methods meant that quantitative measures of impact, such as the number of attendees taking specific actions or changes in public attitudes over time, were not captured. Incorporating mixed methods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the festival's impact.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could explore the long-term impact of social events like the Global Citizen Festival on public engagement with the SDGs. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in participants' attitudes, behaviors, and actions over time would provide valuable insights into the sustainability of such initiatives.

Comparative studies examining different SDG-focused events across various contexts and regions could identify best practices and common challenges. This approach would help generalize findings and provide a broader understanding of the factors that contribute to successful advocacy campaigns.

Research on the role of digital platforms and virtual content in complementing physical events could shed light on their effectiveness in expanding reach and inclusivity. Studies could explore how digital tools enhance engagement, particularly among underrepresented groups.

Finally, investigating the interplay between media framing and public perception of SDG-focused events could inform more effective communication strategies. Examining how different types of media content influence awareness, understanding, and action would provide actionable recommendations for organizers and media professionals.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX I
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this discussion is to explore the public's awareness and perception of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022. Your responses will help us evaluate how social events like this contribute to promoting the SDGs and encouraging public engagement.

Section 1: Public Awareness and Perception of the SDGs through the Global Citizen Festival 2022

1. Before attending the Global Citizen Festival 2022, were you aware of the SDGs? If so, how did you first hear about them?
2. Which specific SDGs do you feel most connected to or aware of?
3. Do you think events like the Global Citizen Festival help increase public knowledge about the SDGs? Why or why not?
4. How would you describe your understanding of the SDGs after attending the Global Citizen Festival 2022?
5. Did the event provide any specific information or messages that helped you better understand the SDGs?
6. Can you recall any particular SDG-related content or messaging from the festival that stood out to you?

Section 2: Role of Social Events in Promoting SDG Initiatives

7. In your opinion, what role do social events like the Global Citizen Festival play in promoting the SDGs?
8. Do you believe that festivals or events with a large audience have the potential to influence the way people perceive or support SDG initiatives? Can you share any examples?
9. Did attending the Global Citizen Festival inspire you to take any specific actions toward supporting the SDGs (e.g., volunteering, donating, sharing awareness)?
10. How likely are you to engage in activities or initiatives related to the SDGs after attending the festival?
11. Based on your observations, how do you think other attendees of the festival responded to the SDG-related messages?
12. Do you think the festival was effective in getting people to engage with SDG-related causes? Why or why not?

Section 3: Media Coverage and Public Engagement with the SDGs

13. Did you come across media coverage (TV, radio, social media, etc.) of the Global Citizen Festival before or after the event? If so, where?
14. How did the media coverage influence your interest or awareness regarding the SDGs?
15. Do you think the media coverage of the Global Citizen Festival helped promote public engagement with the SDGs? Can you provide examples of how it may have done so?
16. How do you feel the media could improve its coverage of social events like the Global Citizen Festival to further promote the SDGs?

17. Do you believe the media attention around the Global Citizen Festival and SDGs can have a lasting impact on public awareness and engagement with sustainable development issues?

Conclusion

- Is there anything else you would like to share about how events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 influence public understanding or engagement with the SDGs?
- Do you have any suggestions for how future social events could better promote the SDGs?

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interviewee -Koby Adisenu (Attendee – Global Citizen Festival, Accra, 2022)

1. Yes, I was aware of the SDGs. I heard about them via social media.
2. That's Gender Equality and Zero Hunger.
3. I believe so. Because it educates people about the SDGs
4. My understanding is about the promotion of the SDGs and taking actions.
5. I don't think the event did much for me as my attention was more on the fun.
6. Bringing several female artistes to perform in a male dominated industry actually helped to propagate the SDG of Gender Equality.
7. Most people do not know about the SDGs and are more interested in entertainment. Therefore, social events help to bring awareness of the SDGs to the people at the events.
8. Yes, the large audiences are influenced. Someone standing next to me did make a donation right at the event when the SDGs were being talked about.
9. I made a donation to the event on the day.
10. I am more likely to engage on such an activity like a 9 out of 10. I will do more donations and avail myself for volunteering works.
11. I think some people were not focused on the SDGs bit but rather the fun part. Overall, I think it's a 50%.
12. I think the festival promoted awareness of the SDGs and inspired people to make donations.
13. I came across it on TV and social media before and after the show.
14. The media promoted the artistes headlining the Global Citizen Festival and that made me have an interest in the festival and the SDGs.
15. The media did their best in public engagements, interactions and promotions. So yes, it did great.
16. I don't have in-depth understanding of the media operations but I think the media did well and there's more room for improvement in sending the news to those in remote areas.
17. It can have a lasting impact especially the promotion of Gender Equality since more female talents were given the chance to perform.
18. I was impressed with their organizations as first timers in Ghana as they stood out with their performance. I think they should work more on promoting the SDGs and ensuring more people do take actions.
19. I think they have to do more promotions and get a much bigger space to involve more people.

Interviewee: Ntiamoah Nana Sarkwa – (Attendee – Global Citizen Festival, Accra, 2022)

1. Yes, I knew about the SDGs. Personally, because I worked on projects that required me to position some of the SDGs at the forefront of whatever I was working on.
2. I think Clean Water and Sanitation and plastic bottles because I've worked on them.
3. I think they did. I think it was clearly stated that, I mean, these are a nonprofit organization, and they stand for building environment, sustaining it. So clearly people had to check for what the agenda was, and I think that helped.
4. I think, from my perspective, I knew some of the SDGs. I don't know for the general public, if, after the Global Citizen Festival, SDGs became a forefront or public knowledge for them to now engage in. I think one way or the other it still pushed the agenda of the SDGs
5. I think they tried. They tried with the LED screens and break-in communication. So, I think they did well. I mean, the water bottles and all that, it was a good marketing material, obviously. I mean the billboards and everything prior to the date, podcast, and I think the general PR was centered around sustainability, of course
6. Top of my mind, no, but I think there were a couple of stuff scrolling through the screens intermittently and I think, yeah, of course, I mean carbon reduction, but I know there were a couple of messaging around this.
7. I mean, the entertainment plays a very big role in human life now, especially mental health and a lot of these crop of diseases. I always say SDGs are not the most popular conversations unless you're on the top level to understand how it works. But I mean, the younger audiences really, really don't understand it, and they don't really give a who's about it. Putting events such as global citizen, actually hooks everybody to come around and have a conversation. Because if you go straight forward to younger people, between ages of 18 and 24 and even extend it to 32 and say you want to talk about SDGs, half of the people will not be interested and will run away. But when you put music and entertainment, it brings everybody around, and it allows you to have the conversation. So, I think it's very important to actually attract interest from that.
8. Obviously, Global Citizen is a big example, I think everybody has heard about sustainability, but I mean if it's not directly affecting you, you might probably not give a concern about this. Sustainability is key on how the world is a global village. There was a case about the whole bush fires from southern America to, I mean spearheading to New York, and all of that means that the world is a global village. So, I mean that opened our mindset, because it was held in different regions simultaneously, and now opened our minds to the dangers. So, I think the festival has played a major role in large numbers for that.
9. I think, yes, it inspired me to now be more intentional, basically because I'm a festival director, so it actually made me realize that I can't just make people happy without having a course. In my career path, I actually incorporated the SDGs in my forthcoming event. I got inspiration from there, because obviously, there was nothing like that before Global Citizen Festival came.
10. I'm already doing this via the EDM festivals and Ibiza concerts I direct. I'm doing plastic management from water bottles, which was green, carbon monoxide reduction in the world, which we are yet to launch as well.
11. I think, fairly good. I mean, because there were a lot of promotional materials that will be top of mind after even the event. There were branded bottles of Global Citizen, lot of stickers, paraphernalia that reminded you of Global Citizen after it's been done.
12. I wouldn't know the data, but I mean, I'm expecting people to be inspired because, I mean, in my small corner and career, I was inspired.

13. I think they had a lot of billboards and they did extremely well on social media as well digital programs. Because of the demographics they were looking up, I think it best makes more sense from a marketing point of view, to attack them wherever they are on and they are mostly on their second screen, which is their phone. It makes sense that they spent more on digital traditional media, but I think they did a couple of adverts running up almost six months or seven months before the festival happens. I think that was commendable.
14. The whole brand name, which is Global Citizen, speaks a lot of volumes. The name itself is a marketing tool because when you hear Global Citizen, it just intensifies that you need to play a role. SDGs were at the forefront. I mean, obviously, and everybody, I guess it was one of the most effective companies or effective platforms ever built in Ghana in terms of festivals. Anytime anybody recalls both behind the screen, which is on TV, and on the ground experience, I think they attested to the fact that it was one of the most well-organized events in Ghana, obviously that gives back the record of sustainability,
15. I don't think higher volumes of people were extremely excited about the fact that the coverage linked them to sustainability goals so I can't really link it to it, but I'm hoping that a lot of people who were inspired by the coverage in production the team did for global citizen, and they will remember the reason why they attended the Global Citizen Festival, because you have to play a certain role and that will allow more people to get statistics to make that happen.
16. The media only broadcasts, so the media really can't do much. The media just covers whatever is there. I think they do their fair share once the festival is already tied to something like the SDGs, because they now become the main point of coverage. But I don't think the media can do much if more event organizers don't push the agenda of the SDG goals, because they are just there to cover and then have it amplified. So, I wouldn't push much on the media.
17. There has to be a fulcrum. There has to be a hook, especially because of the type of demographics they were really appealing to. Young people, sophisticated, very dynamic, and then ever changing. So, to give them a lasting impression, you have to do something that hasn't been done before. And I think they did that with convenience, as to how festivals will be. A lot of people years after the Global Citizen Festival, believe that was the most well-organized event in Ghana. So once people have this good recall, it means that the brand image is being attached to this experience. And there was a brand image, the brand image is global citizen. It means you need to be responsible.
18. First of all, SDGs are not the elephant in the room. It's not the easiest thing or information to come across. It's not even taught in schools so it has to be started from the grassroots. So, clarity would have been fine in terms of explaining. I don't recall the SDGs, I can't even tell you, that means they lack a little bit of clarity in terms of engaging, and even after, especially what their agenda was, you know, so, I mean, there's 17 SDGs, so if it's been broken out properly, people shall recall what SDG it is. Once you understand what goal it is, it helps you to be proactive on its practices. So maybe clarity and more education would have been better in subsequent festivals.
19. Event organizers should start thinking out of the box, actually be concerned about the environment at large. There are different events that we could do to promote the SDGs. There's Clean Water & Sanitation, Gender Equality and a lot more. I think more event organizers should now center most of their thinking about festivals on SDGs. When you bring in music and entertainment, it makes it easier to actually have a nice conversation amongst a large crowd.

Interviewee: Linda Yayra (Attendee, Global Citizen Festival, Accra, 2022)

Section 1: Public Awareness and Perception of the SDGs through the Global Citizen Festival 2022

1. Before attending the Global Citizen Festival 2022, were you aware of the SDGs? If so, how did you first hear about them?

Answer: Yes, I was aware of the SDGs before attending the festival. I first heard about them through social media then I took an Environmental Sustainability Marketing Course in School.

2. Which specific SDGs do you feel most connected to or aware of?

Answers: Due to the Environmental Sustainability Marketing Course I took, it made me aware of the SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 because they focus on promoting sustainability, responsible production, and protection of the environment.

3. Do you think events like the Global Citizen Festival help increase public knowledge about the SDGs? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, events like the Global Citizen Festival help increase public knowledge about the SDGs because they make the goals relatable as well as they engaging us the audiences in a dynamic way.

4. How would you describe your understanding of the SDGs after attending the Global Citizen Festival 2022?

Answers: My understanding of the SDGs improved significantly after attending the festival and having to take a course which mainly focused on that. Both events presented clear examples of how individuals can contribute to achieving the goals.

5. Did the event provide any specific information or messages that helped you better understand the SDGs?

Answer: Yes, through their educational campaigns and that of the speech by the President of the Republic of Ghana, it emphasized the importance of collective action and specific goals like gender equality and climate action which helped clarify their importance.

6. Can you recall any particular SDG-related content or messaging from the festival that stood out to you?

Answer: The message that stood out was about youth empowerment and taking action on climate change. It also showed how some companies pretend to care about the environment through greenwashing, but they actually cause more harm than good.

Section 2: Role of Social Events in Promoting SDG Initiatives

7. In your opinion, what role do social events like the Global Citizen Festival play in promoting the SDGs?

Answers: Social events like the Global Citizen Festival play a crucial role in raising awareness, encouraging action, and creating a sense of global community around the SDGs.

8. Do you believe that festivals or events with a large audience have the potential to influence the way people perceive or support SDG initiatives? Can you share any examples?

Answer: Yes, large festivals can influence perceptions and support for the SDGs. For example, the U.S. audience contributed to support it, as the festival's focus on fundraising for education projects showed a tangible impact.

9. Did attending the Global Citizen Festival inspire you to take any specific actions toward supporting the SDGs (e.g., volunteering, donating, sharing awareness)?

Answer: Yes, attending inspired me to contribute to an environmental campaign with my course group members for SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, as well as share related content on social media.

10. How likely are you to engage in activities or initiatives related to the SDGs after attending the festival?

Answer: I am already engaged in SDG-related initiatives and am very likely to continue participating, such as volunteering for educational programs after attending the festival.

11. Based on your observations, how do you think other attendees of the festival responded to the SDG-related messages?

Answer: From my honest point of view, many attendees appeared engaged yet it seemed that most were there for the fun of the event and only a few truly seemed to comprehend or act on the SDG-related messages.

12. Do you think the festival was effective in getting people to engage with SDG-related causes? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, the festival was effective in getting people to engage with SDG-related causes as it sparked interest and awareness even though many attendees seemed more focused on the entertainment than on fully engaging with the messages.

Section 3: Media Coverage and Public Engagement with the SDGs

13. Did you come across media coverage (TV, radio, social media, etc.) of the Global Citizen Festival before or after the event? If so, where?

Answer: Yes, I saw media coverage on social media platforms like Instagram and news outlets before and after the event. They have the whole coverage on their YouTube channel as well.

14. How did the media coverage influence your interest or awareness regarding the SDGs?

Answer: The media coverage increased my interest by showcasing the event's global impact and individual stories of change whilst I also saw it as an opportunity for networking.

15. Do you think the media coverage of the Global Citizen Festival helped promote public engagement with the SDGs? Can you provide examples of how it may have done so?

Answers: Yes, media coverage helped promote engagement by amplifying key messages, such as the need for climate action and education funding. For instance, viral posts of celebrity speeches

by Usher, SZA, Stormzy, and Tiwa Savage prior to the festival sparked online discussions encouraging people to take action on SDGs like climate change and education as well as it helping with the massive turnout at the festival.

16. How do you feel the media could improve its coverage of social events like the Global Citizen Festival to further promote the SDGs?

Answer: In Ghana, the media could do better by talking more about the event before it happens, focusing on local stories and showing how people can get involved. For example, they could share stories of local people working on environmental or education projects that connect to the SDGs. During the festival, TV stations like TV3 or Citi FM could show real examples of how the SDGs are helping people in Ghana and give viewers clear ways to participate, like volunteer opportunities or donation drives. This would make the SDGs feel closer and more relevant to the audience.

17. Do you believe the media attention around the Global Citizen Festival and SDGs can have a lasting impact on public awareness and engagement with sustainable development issues?

Answer: Yes, media attention can have a lasting impact if it consistently revisits the motifs of the event and highlights ongoing progress.

Conclusion

18. Is there anything else you would like to share about how events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 influence public understanding or engagement with the SDGs?

Answer: Events like the Global Citizen Festival 2022 influenced publics' understanding by making the SDGs accessible and relatable while inspiring individuals and team work.

19. Do you have any suggestions for how future social events could better promote the SDGs?

Answers: Future events could do better by promoting the SDGs through the means of collaborating with more local leaders, providing follow-up engagement opportunities and including virtual contents for broader reach.

Interviewee: Mr. Alfred Hammond (Security, Access Control, Health & Safety, Global Citizen Festival, Accra, 2024)

1. I was aware of the SDGs through my corporate office. We did some projects where we incorporated some of the SDGS
2. I'd say Clean Water & Sanitation, that is number 6.
3. Yeah, it helps because you begin by taking a pledge and that prompts you to read about the SDGs.
4. I understood the SDGs even more because of the pledges people had to take like ending poverty.
5. The screens on stage centered their messages around the SDGs. This is like entertainment for a good cause. The performing artistes were made to take a cause before and after the events.

6. That will be No Poverty, Clean Water & Sanitation
7. It's difficult to explain the SDGs to the masses but when people come together through a festival, you're able to explain it to them better.
8. Because of this festival, I heard about the SDGs better. The potential to gather between 25,000 and 40,000 people in a venue and even have 10% people take an action, at least 2500 people would have been influenced. A lot more people watched online and these people would have been influenced as well.
9. Yes, I made some donations to support the No Poverty SDG during the event.
10. I've been trying to be consistent with my donations and I've been more in tune with the SDGs. I donate to the Global Citizen.
11. I think when people were made to pledge to receive tickets to the festival, I felt they got the understanding of the SDGs from there. It got people to take an action
12. I mean the 30,000 plus people at the Black Star Square, and over 60 million people who donated online was evidence of people engaging with the SDGs. When you check the Global Citizen Ghana platforms, you can get the records of YouTube streams.
13. That will be on billboards and social media
14. Each post was targeted at a particular SDG over the 3 months period of their promotions.
15. Very much so. Like I said the 30,000 plus people at the Black Star Square would have taken a pledge on one SDG or another thereby promoting the SDGs.
16. The media can decide to this as their corporate social responsibility. Instead of charging the organizers for the publicity. They can also use their channels to promote the SDGs.
17. The media planning and scheduling is done in a way that it's not just for the event but for example they can adopt certain months as an SDG month and push conversations around promoting certain SDGs and urging people to make donations.
18. As it has been shown with Crowdfunding and GoFundMe, people want to come together for a cause. Lots of the SDGs are relevant in most countries but every country can focus on certain SDGs and let people take actions regarding them to promote behavioral change from a tender age to adulthood in taking sustainable actions.
19. Yeah just like what I said earlier.

Interviewee: Kojo Manuel (MC, Host, Hype Man – Global Citizen Festival, Accra, 2022)

1. I was aware of the SDGs and it was very impressive that the Global Citizen Festival was about the SDGs. I first saw it on a certain government official page and later saw it on several blogs.
2. That will be SDG 3, Good Health and Wellbeing and SDG 6, Clean Water & Sanitation.
3. The increase in awareness is to some extent. I think it's a Yes. So, it definitely increased the number of people, but as to whether, like, it had that crazy impact where they actually met their KPIs, of the number of people they wanted to influence on that side, that one I can't tell, and I'm very, very sure it's lower than what they expected.
4. The festival helped me realize that issues like climate change are global problems, not just African issues. The festival fostered a sense of global unity in addressing common problems like poverty and climate change. The festival brought attention to these issues in a way that was relatable and impactful.

5. For me, I was more focused on my hype man duties alongside the DJ and did not pay much attention to the speeches but noticed the videos and performances. The festival's messaging was clear, especially regarding climate change and poverty, which stood out to me.
6. I don't remember at this time but I think the messaging around climate change and poverty really hit home. I noticed the speeches from prominent people like the President of Ghana and actress and co-host Danai Gurira of Black Panther fame.
7. I believe these events create awareness of the SDGs but do not provide in-depth understanding. The festival left lasting impressions and ideas in people's minds, which could lead to further interest. I will emphasize that awareness is the first step towards action and engagement.
8. I think such events can have an impact, especially when compared to smaller, more intimate gatherings. The scale of the festival made the message more impactful, reaching a larger audience. While the festival created awareness, it did not lead to in-depth discussions or immediate actions.
9. I was inspired to focus more on mental health, recognizing its importance and relevance, and the potential for impact in Ghana and other regions. I have since engaged in various activities related to mental health, including radio and Twitter conversations.
10. I have already been actively involved in mental health initiatives, demonstrating ongoing engagement.
11. I can estimate that about 30-35% of attendees were genuinely interested, while the majority were there for the performances. The majority of the people were just there for the jams.
12. I believe the festival was effective in raising awareness and interest in the SDGs. I particularly was one of the people that the festival had a great influence on me.
13. Yes, I did see media content on a certain government blog and other blogs before the event.
14. I think the messaging around the LPMs and jingles was centered around the SDGs and that made it outstanding and impactful. Whilst one is thinking of seeing Usher and Stormzy on stage, you're still concerned with SDGs messages.
15. The media coverage played a significant role in promoting the festival and its messages. It's difficult for me to quantify that.
16. The media is often focused on sensationalism and so reported low on the SDGs part of the festival. The media coverage could be improved by maintaining the same level of focus on the SDGs throughout the event.
17. I'm unsure about a lasting impact because of our memory span. I am skeptical about a lasting impact without consistent efforts and regular events.
18. Global Citizen was efficient in promoting the SDGs. Several events have been in poor in promoting the SDGs. Events have to consider all playmakers and pay people what they deserve to make these things succeed.
19. We should be involving young creators and talents to make the message more relatable and impactful. More people relate with upcoming talents and feel a win for them is a win for all.