KEYWORDS
Repurchase intentions, satisfaction, service quality, small-scale festivals, word-of-mouth communication

INTRODUCTION
There is a general assumption in many societies that growth is normal and good, and, therefore, festival growth is a desirable outcome (Allen et al., 2012; Andersson et al., 2013). However, only a limited number of festivals can grow significantly due to the number and diversity of events which might make it difficult for event organisers to secure permanent support or sufficient resources to grow (Andersson et al., 2013; Getz, 2002). Furthermore, most communities produce a host of festivals that are targeted mainly at local audiences and staged for social, fun and entertainment value (Allen et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2010). Growing festivals which need funding from government or sponsors for survival may be required to fulfil criteria focus that may be incongruent with the festival’s initial purpose of operations which can alienate locals (Getz & Page, 2016). Consequently, residents may not support festival growth due to it causing harmful socio-cultural impacts in the long-run or seeking to attract a tourist cohort that may not be interested in the initial purpose of the small-scale festival (Small, 2007).

Despite considerable insight into first examining why festivals have failed and second identifying attendees’ festival service quality evaluations, current research is limited in two ways. First, small-scale festival service quality evaluations of attendees are largely neglected in academia, despite the majority of planned festivals being small, with a minimal budget and limited media attention. Second, there is limited insight of service quality evaluations across multiple festivals and if these items influence behavioural intentions, either directly or indirectly through satisfaction. Consequently, the generalisability of current research findings is limited. The purpose of this research, is therefore, to measure the service quality evaluations, satisfaction level and behavioural intentions of attendees to multiple small-scale festivals.

To identify if festival service quality directly influences satisfaction, a hypothesis (H1) is offered:
H1: Festival service quality significantly influences attendee satisfaction at small-scale festivals.

To measure the direct relationship between service quality and behavioural intentions, two hypotheses (H2 and H3) are outlined:
H2: Service quality significantly influences attendee repurchase intentions directly at small-scale festivals.
H3: Service quality significantly influences attendee word-of-mouth (WOM) communication directly at small-scale festivals.

To identify whether satisfaction of attendees to small-scale festivals directly influences their behavioural intentions, two hypotheses (H4 and H5) are listed:
H4: Attendee satisfaction significantly influences attendee repurchase intentions directly at small-scale festivals.
H5: Attendee satisfaction significantly influences attendee WOM directly at small-scale festivals.

To investigate the relevance of satisfaction as a mediator between service quality and behavioural intentions, two further hypotheses (H6 and H7) have been developed:
H6: Festival service quality significantly influences attendee repurchase intentions indirectly when mediated by attendee satisfaction at small scale festivals.
H7: Festival service quality significantly influences attendee WOM indirectly when mediated by attendee satisfaction at small scale festivals.

METHODS AND RESULTS
Data was collected at two Australian and two South African festivals via a self-administered survey. A convenience sampling approach was employed where all potential attendees over the age of 18 were asked to complete the survey. The survey was designed based on previous literature. After incomplete responses were removed, 529 (97.9%) valid surveys were analysed. Most respondents were aged over 45 (44.5%) and had a University Degree (67.8%). Attendees were residents (82.0%) and experienced the festival with either family (28.8%) or friends (21.8%). Chi-square analysis determined that 16 of the 20 service quality items were rated differently by respondents at each of the four festivals. Slightly fewer significant differences (60.0%) were noted between these ratings and the Australian and South African festivals when combined. Furthermore, although the differences between the categories was highly significant for all of the festival and three of the four country demographic items, the post-purchase evaluations were insignificant for first, festival type, and second, country.

Using structural equation modelling (AMOS), the study then ran a confirmatory factor analysis on the festival service quality measures. The fit of the model was good. The average variance extracted ranged from 0.43 to a maximum of 0.67. The minimum composite reliability values of this study ranged from 0.69 to 0.91. The test confirmed the measurement model discriminant validity. Next, to test for mediation effects, two separate bias-corrected bootstrap analyses with satisfaction as the mediators were conducted using a series of multiple regression analyses.

Performance (β = 0.58, p < 0.000), Environment (β = 0.14, p = 0.020) and Professionalism (β = 0.24, p < 0.000) were the three identified service quality factors. All three significantly influenced attendees’ satisfaction. Hence, H1 is supported. Moreover, Performance (β = 0.41, p = 0.000) and Environment (β = 0.17, p = 0.003) significantly influenced attendees’ repurchase intentions. However, Professionalism did not significantly influence attendees’ repurchase intentions (β = 0.02, p = 0.700). Thus, H2 is only partially supported. Performance significantly influenced attendees’ WOM (β = 0.19, p = 0.000). Furthermore, Environment (β = 0.15, p = 0.284) and Professionalism (β = 0.01, p = 0.761) did not significantly influence attendees’ WOM. Hence, H3 is partially supported. Finally, the results show attendees’ satisfaction significantly influences their repurchase intention (β = 0.52, p = 0.000) and WOM (β = 0.64, p < 0.000). Therefore, H4 and H5 are supported. In regards to the mediating effects, the results indicated that attendees’ satisfaction mediated the relationship between Performance → repurchase intentions (0.20; 0.42); Performance → WOM (0.25; 0.51). However, attendees’ satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between Environment → repurchase intention (-0.18; 0.01) and Environment → WOM (-0.21; 0.01). Thus, H6 is partially supported. Finally, the analysis shows that attendees’ satisfaction mediated the relationship between Professionalism → Repurchase intentions (0.05; 0.21) and Professionalism → WOM (0.06; 0.25). Hence, H7 is supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
Within a small-scale festival context, festival performance quality directly influenced both satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Second, although festival service quality (performance and professionalism) significantly influenced both repurchase intentions and WOM, this was partially mediated by satisfaction. Third, this study identified that environment does not predict repurchase intentions directly or indirectly through satisfaction. Similar to the literature (Li & Vogelsong, 2006), small-scale events attracted mostly residents. Consequently, this study suggests that neglecting residents in future marketing strategies limits the economic and growth potential for festival organisers. It can also be assumed that festival attendees are first satisfied with the quality of the small-scale festival they have experienced and second behave favourably. If festival organisers desire to target a larger cohort and focus further on external markets, a slightly modified marketing approach could be applied. Here, a message focusing on local understanding and cultural celebration could be employed where locals that are satisfied are encouraged to bring family and friends of similar demographics with them to experience the next festival.

REFERENCES