BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS

Exploring how business improvement area (BIA) organizations engage customers

By

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Abstract

Business Improvement Area (BIA) organizations have evolved over the past 40 years and are now prevalent in Canada and worldwide. These organizations bring community stakeholders, partners, and members together to enhance a designated area in a specific region (TABIA, 2020). BIA organizations can range in size, budget, and focus depending on the community's needs (BIABC, 2020). BIA organizations pursue various initiatives, including capital improvements, enhancing the appearance, safety, and facilitating events that highlight the unique attributes of an area and bring people to the community (Giraldi, 2009). This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. An exploratory sequential mixed-method approach was used to explore how BIA organizations use events to enhance engage customers through hosting events and use social media to interact with customers. The events studied were produced prior to the pandemic. Thematic analysis provided insight into the BIA organization's perspective on how events are used to interact with customers and how social media is used during event production. The study used descriptive statistics, social network analysis, and content analysis to conduct social media analysis to validate the responses found in the interviews (Creswell, 2012). The findings confirmed that BIA organizations believe events and social media engagement can help foster relationships with customers. The research displays the importance of creating a partnership with community stakeholders and governments during event production. The findings suggest BIA organizations may not be using social media to it's fullest potential and may have a simplistic view of customer engagement.

Key words: Business Improvement Area (BIA), community events, customer engagement, social network analysis

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis and give enormous gratitude to my family. This thesis would not have been possible to create without the love and support I received from my family.

Mom and Dad, thank you for the unconditional love and support you give me. There are no amounts of words that can express how much you both mean to me. I am very grateful, and I feel blessed to have such incredible parents. You both never doubt me and always believe in my all dreams. I love you so much.

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The Lord Is My Strength and My Song

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid;

for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

And you will say in that day: "Give thanks to the Lord, all upon his name,

make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.

"Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

Isaiah 12:2-6

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List of Abbreviations

BIA…………Business Improvement Area
TABIA…………Toronto Association Business Improvement Area
SM…………Social Media
TA…………Thematic Analysis
IOR…………Inter-Organizational Relation

Chapter One: Introduction

Business Improvement Area Organizations

Business improvement area (BIA) organizations have become a widely known model consisting of sub-local governance between community organizations and cities worldwide. BIA organizations are formed by groups of businesses and property owners creating community development opportunities by voluntarily taxing themselves to improve the urban area's appearance, safety, and facilities (Giraldi, 2009). These organizations are active in their communities by promoting businesses, tourism, safety, and physical revitalizations. BIA organizations can help create economic benefits for shops, restaurants, and other businesses by promoting their areas geographically as business and shopping districts (BIABC, 2020).

Some BIA organizations allocate funds for community event production. Derrett (2003) sees community events as events that are open to the public. He defines *community events* as an investment to generate a range of services that enhance social outcomes, such as strengthened community feeling; heightened notions of community belonging; improved social and civic engagement; increased avenues for building community renewal and resilience; and aid the economy through generating employment and tourism dollars. Derrett (2003) states that local councils, organizations, and stakeholder groups who invest some of their resources in festivals, fairs, and farmer's markets can enhance the community in a designated area. Community events can be a crucial component to enhance a BIA and contribute to a community by attracting tourists and residents to the designated area (Derrett, 2003). Yolal et al. (2016) discuss that communities organize public events for a variety of reasons, such as; showcasing their cultural heritage, promoting their city, attracting tourists, and providing additional cultural entertainment offerings to residents, and providing opportunities to improve their quality of life (Cudny et al., 2012). Public

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events can create a sense of community among the residents (Derrett, 2003). In addition, events can provide opportunities for cultural exchange between visitors and hosts and provide entertainment and recreational opportunities for locals (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Yolal et al., 2016). While these outcomes of event production are commonly cited within the literature, it is unclear how BIA organizations see the value of events for their communities (BIABC, 2020). Since BIA organizations are third parties and can represent an extensive variety of businesses in their designated area, this study provides insight into how BIA organizations produce events and interact with their customers.

While BIA organizations typically focus on the local communities, BIAs can help facilitate urban tourism by offering events as an attraction in their designated areas (Giraldi, 2009). Events are a vital element within the recreation and entertainment portfolio of the tourism sector (Judd, 1995). In today's global economy, urban areas compete to attract businesses and residents to their municipality (Giraldi, 2009). Giraldi (2009) discusses that this attraction trend is similar in the tourism sector, with each destination seeking to enhance its appeal and promote itself to visitors. Jansen-Verbeke's (1986) research shows that tourism offers value to urban areas and states "a larger number of visitors [are] spending more leisure time in the urban environment" (p. 80). Tourism attractions and hosting events can be a priority for BIA organizations that value bringing people to the designated area and interacting with customers (Hernandez & Jones, 2005). Studies have shown many destinations have been successful in this quest to promote their areas for tourism (Giraldi, 2009).

BIA organizations can enhance the profile of a district by facilitating events and showcasing these events to residents and visitors. Organizations that host events, such as BIA organizations, may use social media to communicate and connect with their visitors resulting in customer

engagement (Sashi, 2012). Scholars have used Brodie & Hollebeek's (2011) definition for customer engagement as "a psychological state that occurs by interactive, co-creative customer experiences" (p. 260). Customer engagement is a behaviour that "goes beyond transactions and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (Van Doorn et al., 2010, p. 254). Conducting events and using social media to interact with customers can be an efficient way to create customer engagement (Sashi, 2012). Customer engagement is essential because it reflects the customer's connection to a brand to manifest in cognitive, affective, and behavioral actions outside of the purchase (King & Sparks, 2016). Wang and Fesenmaier (2012) recognized the emerging importance of customer engagement as a strategic imperative for building customer–brand relationships. Understanding how BIA organizations use events and social media to engage customers can show how customer engagement develops between the BIA and the public.

Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March 2020. The pandemic has created severe global, social, and economic disruption (UNWTO, 2020). This study was affected by the pandemic. The researcher who conducted this study recognized the impacts of the pandemic throughout the research. COVID-19 has impacted universities and colleges through limited in-person activities, with repeated disruptions to research and training (Government of Canada, 2020). Recent studies have shown that many graduate students have faced new barriers in regards to completing research due to the COVID limitations, rules and restrictions of conducting in person research studies (Chenneville & Schwartz-Mette, 2020; Thompson, 2020). The pandemic impacting participants' experience and perspectives has influenced research methodology. One of

the worst sectors effected by the pandemic has been the events industry (Chenneville & Schwartz-Mette, 2020; Thompson, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many events worldwide to be canceled or postponed because a country's government-imposed restrictions on large gatherings (Wikipedia, 2021). Although this study analyzes events and Twitter usage before the pandemic, the interviews and social media data collection occurred during the pandemic, which may have influenced event organizers' perspectives.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to understand how BIA organizations engage with their customers. Specifically, this research examined BIA organizations' use of community events and social media activity on Twitter to gain insight into customer engagement. The study explored how BIAs used community events to engage with customers and explored the role of social media in fostering customer engagement. By better understanding how events can engage customers, we may also learn about the business customer relationships. Through this research we may gain insight into how social media fosters (or not) this connection, and how customer engagement develops between the BIA, businesses in the designated area, and the public.

Passion and Interest for BIA Organizations

My curiosity in business improvement area organizations stems from my time I spent in Victoria, BC, in 2019 for one semester. I was enrolled in the Master of Arts in Tourism Management program, and I took the Sustainable Tourism Management course and Strategic Planning for Tourism course at Royal Roads University.

The Sustainable Tourism Management course took the class on a field trip to visit Sidney, BC. On the field trip, the class explored Sidney's tourism attractions. During our time in Sidney, we met the director for the Downtown Sidney BIA organization and the Mayor of Sidney. Both the BIA Director and Mayor talked highly of the Business Improvement Area organization and how beneficial the organization has been for the city. They both explained the issue Sidney was having when tourists would arrive onto Vancouver Island via ferry. Sidney is a 10-minute drive south of the Swartz Bay ferry terminal. Often tourists will leave from the mainland ferry terminal and arrive at Swartz Bay to visit the south areas of Vancouver Island. When tourists arrive into Swartz Bay, the majority of them assume they have arrived on the outskirts of Victoria and simply take the Patricia Bay Hwy 17 and drive right past Sidney to get to Victoria. This became a problem for Sidney because tourists were not spending time in their community, even though many tourists were driving through Sidney to get to Victoria. A few community leaders came together and proposed creating a BIA organization for the city. The BIA organization and city council have developed a strong partnership and advocated for Sidney businesses to become members of the BIA. Since creating the BIA organization, Sidney's tourism has seen a massive increase in foot traffic. Many tourists are visiting and checking out Sidney's attractions, shopping, and going to restaurants.

After I heard the incredible story of what the BIA organization did for the town of Sidney, I instantly became curious about these organizations. I wanted to understand how BIA organizations work and how they could benefit a wide variety of communities. With my curiosity piqued, I learned about the many BIA organizations across Canada and worldwide. I started exploring the BIA organization's websites and started following BIA organizations on social media. I began to see how many BIA organizations are active on social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook,

and Instagram. As my interest started to grow, so did my passion for BIA organizations. My passion led me to study how BIA organizations use events and social media to engage with their customers. Specifically, I wanted to answer the following research questions.

Research questions. The research questions were inspired by my curiosity about BIA organizations. They were informed by Hernandez and Jones's (2005) study, which examined five broad areas BIA organizations contribute to their designated area. The questions are connected to MacKay et al.'s (2017) research, which addressed social media usage by festival stakeholders. The following research questions were adopted to guide this study to advance our understanding of how BIA organizations interact with their customers:

1. How are events used by BIA organizations to enhance their customer engagement?
2. How is Twitter used by the BIA organizations to engage customers during events?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review will describe the roles and contributions business improvement area (BIA) organizations provide communities. How BIA organizations engage with their customers through events and social media will be discussed in depth. The review begins with a brief history and definition of business improvement area (BIA) organizations and the growing impact these organizations have in communities across Canada. Next, the literature touches on the economic development and benefits BIA organizations can achieve through hosting community events. Finally, this chapter will conclude by discussing the role of social media in contributing to customer engagement at public events.

Canadian Business Improvement Area (BIA) Organizations

Over 60,000 Business Improvement Area (BIA) organizations exist worldwide (Charenko, 2015). BIA is the commonly used acronym for business improvement organizations found in Canada. In the United States of America and parts of Europe (such as England and Scotland), the organizations are called Business Improvement District (BID) organizations. While the BID organizations found in America and Europe are often larger in scale and budget than their Canadian counterparts (BIA), the two models are essentially the same in form and function (Giraldi, 2009). As the BIA organizations chosen for this study are found in Canada, Business Improvement Area or BIA acronym will be used throughout the rest of the document.

According to the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) (2020), *Business Improvement Area* (BIA) organizations are defined as organizations that commercial property owners and tenants create within a defined area of a city that works together to create

thriving, competitive, and safe business areas. These associations attract businesses, and tourists and locals who are shoppers, diners, and sightseers to the designated area. Toronto Association Business Improvement Area (TABIA) (2020) articulates that when companies work collectively as a BIA, local businesses have the organizational and funding capacity to be catalysts for civic improvement, enhancing the quality of life in their local neighborhood, community, and city. BIA organizations use promotional strategies to highlight their designated area and engage with various visitors such as locals and tourists. Events are often used by BIA organizations to stimulate visitation and spending and may be used to facilitate customer engagement (Charenko 2015).

BIA organizations were first created in Canada in 1970. The first BIA originated in Bloor West Village, a neighborhood found in the West Toronto area (Houstoun & Levy, 2003). Local business owners in Bloor West Village became concerned when large corporate shopping malls and subway systems were planned for the neighborhood. The large corporate shopping malls drove Bloor West shoppers away from the local retail area (TABIA, 2020). Under Provincial legislation (Section 217 of the Municipal Act, RSO 1980, suspended by section 220, RSO 1990), the local business owners in the area were able to create a self-help program. The legislation empowered the BIA organization members to collectively use their funds to enhance and promote their main street area. The collected funds also went into making several physical improvements to the area such as banners, flowers and benches to help increase foot traffic and bring customers back to the Bloor Street Village community. The funds not only benefited the local businesses in charge of the BIA organization, but also effected and benefitted the surrounding neighborhood (TABIA, 2020).

Since 1970, BIA organizations have grown and spread across the nation and there are now hundreds across Canada. The first BIA in Bloor West village helped save local businesses and

contributed to the thriving business in the area (Charenko, 2015). Since then, many other BIA organizations have been created and provide positive economic impacts to communities across North America. Bradley Segal who is a long-time BIA organizer states that BIA organizations function by assessing the "property within a defined geographic boundary. Revenues from this assessment are directed back to the defined area to finance a myriad of services, including security, maintenance, marketing, economic development, parking, and special events" (Charenko, 2015, p. 2).

A board of directors, established by business owners within the designated area, typically runs the BIA organization. (TABIA, 2019). Depending on the size of the BIA organization, some might have the financial means to have staff help run the organization. Smaller BIA organizations might have one or two employees who hold a BIA coordinator role (Baby Point Gates, BIA 2020). Larger BIA organizations can often provide a variety of employment opportunities. For example, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) has over 30 full-time employees. The Vancouver BIA supports, promotes, and represents over 8,000 businesses and property owners in a 90-block radius of Vancouver's downtown area (DVBIA, 2020). Large BIA organizations can create economic development within the community by providing employment opportunities such as hiring executives, marketing and communication, placemaking and public spaces, economic development, and community safety teams (DVBIA, 2020).

BIA organizations use various activities, policies, and services to establish and fulfill their role within communities. Mitchell (2001) provides a descriptive list of nine potential service areas a BIA can achieve to help enhance a community and create community development to a designated area. As commercial business owners and community members, BIA organizations can "channel private-sector energy toward the solution of public problems" (MacDonald, 1996, p. 42).

These organizations can be involved in varying degrees with nine different services: capital improvements, consumer marketing, economic development, maintenance, parking and transportation, policy advocacy, public space regulation, security, and social services (Mitchell, 2001). The province of Ontario established an association called Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA) dedicated to advocating and creating economic impacts for BIA organizations. The city of Toronto also has an association that works with BIA organizations found within the city. The TABIA (2019) is a non-profit umbrella organization working with over 80 Business Improvement Area organizations within the City of Toronto, representing more than 40,000 business and property owners.

Studies suggest that community development meets the community's economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs (Randell & Koster, 2005). Associations such as OBIAA and TABIA help BIA organizations facilitate community development by providing a variety of different services as mentioned in Mitchell's (2001) study. The services include assisting BIA organizations in pooling their resources to achieve capital projects and advocating the interest of the organizations in government tourism policies and the implementation of those policies (OBIAA, 2020). Associations like OBIAA and TABIA assist BIAs through joint initiatives and collaboration with groups within the community on issues and projects, including studies and research in marketing. Mitchell (2001) encouraged BIA organizations to exchange information, experiences, and ideas among BIA organizations through social media, newsletters, seminars, and workshops to benefit the BIA and its members. TABIA and OBIAA have provided community support and advocacy to influence BIA organization's policies and obtain funds and services from all levels of government, institutions, agencies, and other organizations (TABIA, 2019).

Mitchell's (2001) nine service areas illustrate the variety of roles BIA organizations can perform to meet the needs of their communities and designated areas. The list shows the many elements BIA organizations can bring to enhance communities of all sizes by providing resources and services. Gross (2005) studied 41 BIA organizations in New York City. The study showed different activities across large and small BIA organizations. Gross (2005) explains that the BIA size is determined by the size of the community or downtown area. The BIA size determines the power among critical stakeholders and the wealth of the community. The size of the BIA may determine the community services and elements the BIA organization will want to create and establish depending on the resources available.

There are many reasons a district chooses to create a BIA; they typically allow businesses to undertake projects that they could otherwise not do alone; develop new approaches and take needed risks, and adapt quickly to capitalize on new opportunities (Gross, 2005). BIA organizations help businesses present a united front by encouraging cooperation in the business community and an integrated secured funding source. BIA organizations can increase sales revenues by enticing more consumers to use local businesses (Gross, 2005). These organizations can be responsible for increasing property values, halting the deterioration of downtowns, reducing crime, increasing sales and profits, developing vibrant local economies (Hernandez & Jones, 2005). Hernandez & Jones (2005) built onto Mitchell's (2001) nine service areas and created five broad areas to which BIA organizations can contribute to communities.

- Marketing: Understanding who customers are and creating effective promotions to retain and expand the customer base

- Business recruitment: Working with property owners to ensure that available space is occupied and that an optimum business and service mix is achieved and maintained

- Streetscape improvement and other amenities: Providing for more customer-friendly lighting signage, street furniture, planters, banners, and sidewalk treatment

- Seasonal decorations: Creating a unique and pleasant environment for customer and staff of all businesses, retail and non-retail through the use of decorations that are appropriate for the season and holiday

- Special events: Organizations and partnering in special events that highlight the unique attributes of the area and increase customer visits (Hernandez & Jones, p. 796, 2005)

Gross's (2005) key findings suggest that large and small BIA organizations fulfill different goals and objectives. The small BIA organizations studied focused on the physical maintenance of an area. The midsized BIA organizations concentrated on marketing and promotional activities, and the largest BIA organizations were involved with maintenance, promotion, and capital improvement activities in the downtown areas of large cities. Hochleutner (2003) explored practical steps communities can use to establish BIA organizations in their area regardless of the community or downtown size. The study demonstrates that creating a BIA is traditionally a two-step process. First, the district property or business owners must vote for formation. Secondly, local elected officials must enact an ordinance that formally creates the BIA and determine its powers and boundaries (Hochleutner, 2003). Both of these steps may involve numerous public hearings and other opportunities for community debate, helping to ensure the existence of significant local backing or at least the lack of significant opposition (Hochleutner, 2003).

BIA organizations must also be able to monitor their performance and success. Hogg (2007) discussed the performance indicator that Manhattan BIA used to analyze the foot traffic

for events. The BIA counted the number of visitors at key attractions and the length of hotel stays to determine how successful events were. Many American BIA organizations have concentrated their efforts and resources on improving tourism within their area. In order for a BIA to be successful and sustainable, benchmarks must be put into place. Although BIA organizations offer many services to promote a community and contribute to economic growth there are some drawbacks to these organizations (Business Improvement Area of Sidney, BC, 2020).

Limitations to Business Improvement Area (BIA) Organizations

BIA organizations can be benefit communities but some issues exist. Hochleutner (2003) argues that power struggles may arise in the production of BIA organizations with city public officials. A small a BIA located in a large city may have less power in their district. Russo and Van Der Borg's (2002) study articulated the challenges BIA organizations have with recurring incidents of friction which can cause a BIA to be unsustainable. If the various aspects of the community the BIA are involved with such as events, transports, information centers are not managed properly they can create an unsustainable environment can result in the BIA being unsuccessful. BIA organizations must ensure their efforts contribute to the overall urban attractiveness of the area in order to align with their interests as a BIA (Russo & Van Der Borg, 2002). Although all BIA organizations may not have the same priorities, the research illustrates the benefits BIA organizations can have on communities if facilitated correctly.

Enhancing Communities through Tourist Attractions

A *community* can be defined as a group of people who interact with one another, share social and psychological experiences, spend time together and create long-term common

betterment (Randall & Koster, 2005). Freidmann (1992) states that community exists when people live in the same geographical area. Groups then arise to address issues in the geographic place where people live and act out their daily lives (Randall & Koster, 2005). Rendall and Koster (2005) discussed how attractions can contribute to a community by enhancing visitor spending and creating a sense of community. Their study undertook five case studies in small towns in Saskatchewan. Each case chosen for the study had a mural-based tourism attraction in the community. The findings showed that each community used the mural attraction for community development and saw a significant economic impact (Randall & Koster, 2005). Van Winkle, Woosnam, and Mohammed (2013) discussed festivals in tourism destination marketing strategies. Hosting events as tourism attractions can benefit a community by generating economic benefits, including investments and employment, and contributing to local pride and sense of identity (Derrett, 2003; Rollins et al., 1999). Another study by Kelly Planning (2015) discussed the positive impacts community tourism has on Vancouver Island. Kelly Planning noted the range of community development and tourism opportunities. Local government agencies, tourism-related businesses, local business organizations, nonprofit organizations, community members, residents, tourism goods, attractions, and services can enhance local government, business owners, and residents in the community (Planning, 2015).

BIA organizations address community development in diverse ways. Stokes (2007) studied BIA organizations in the San Diego area. The research found that wealthier communities with BIA organizations are more likely to be involved in the commercial promotion and special event facilitation and production (Stokes, 2007). The study noted that the BIA organizations in less wealthy areas were more likely to focus on community development by fulfilling the community's needs, which led to less opportunity to host events and provide tourism

opportunities. The findings from Stokes (2007) are consistent with Gross's earlier study (2005) of BIA organizations in New York City. This study revealed that BIA organizations in wealthier areas (often larger BIA organizations) had a diverse customer base: residents, workers, and tourists, where the less wealthy BIAs (smaller BIA organizations) often focused more on the needs of the community members and visitors. Armstrong (2001) studied a BIA in Kingston, Ontario, and found that the primary purposes of the BIA organizations were to create a place where the community could gather by creating a place where people want to live and work and where most goods and services can be purchased so the locals do not have to travel far and tend to stay in the designated area (Armstrong, 2001).

Tourism and events may not be a key focus for every community, especially those dealing with poverty (Collins, 2014). However, most BIA organizations use events and other promotional activities to attract tourists to their destination (Takahashi, 2017). Tunbridge's (2001) study on Ottawa's Byward Market BIA found that the BIA played a significant role in the area's development by producing the festival marketplace by using film festivals. The festival gave community leaders resources to manage shared concern issues: area improvement and promotion collectively. Many BIA organizations strive to attract tourists to their area through event production. They do this to promote the area and generate spending within the community (Hernandez & Jones, 2005). Conducting community events can help enhance the area by creating value for locals and increasing economic development.

Enhancing Communities through Event Production

While not all BIA organizations produce events to attract visitors, it is clear that BIA organizations are capable of producing community events that can enhance social outcomes, such as strengthening the community feeling; enhancing people's notions of their sense of

community; improving social and civic engagement; increasing avenues for building community renewal and resilience; and aiding the economy through generating employment and tourism and events dollars (Derrett, 2003; Hernandez and Jones, 2005, Van Winkle et al., 2020). Derrett (2003) articulates the value of festivals and states that they can give residents a grand view of their community by offering an opportunity for a sense of belonging, support, empowerment, participation, and safety. According to the literature, communities that provide social interaction opportunities such as events help the community grow and be economically successful (Hernandez & Jones, 2005).

BIA organizations are active organizations within a community that can create opportunities to host public events and bring people together. Houstoun and Levy (2003) discuss that BIA organizations can bring together large groups to engage in a community through events. These organizations create opportunities for community engagement and interaction between the public and businesses (Houstoun & Levy, 2003). Given BIA organizations roles in promoting business interests in a region, these organizations are driven to engage customers. Events offer a way to accomplish this. The word *engagement* is defined as "a state of being involved with and committed to a specific market offering" (Taheri et al., 2019, p. 322). Engagement is developed through social consumption activities/places with others (Bryce, Curran, O'Gorman, & Taheri, 2015; Curran et al., 2018; Taheri et al., 2019). Engagement has grown into customer engagement. Engaged customers generate product/brand referrals, co-create experience and value, contribute to organizational innovation processes and exhibit higher loyalty (Sashi, et al., 2019).

Customer engagement. In the last few years, customer engagement has emerged as a topic of great interest to managers and consultants in diverse industries and companies

worldwide (Wikipedia, 2020). Scholars have used Brodie & Hollebeek's (2011) definition for customer engagement as "a psychological state that occurs by interactive, co-creative customer experiences" (p. 260). Customer engagement is a created behaviour that "goes beyond transactions and may be specifically defined as a customer's behavioral manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (Van Doorn et al., 2010, p. 254). Customer engagement may also be a cycle involving processes over time and "may emerge at different levels of intensity over time, thus reflecting distinct engagement states" (Brodie & Hollebeek, 2011, p. 105).

Customer engagement during event production. The literature has recognized the emerging importance of customer engagement as a strategic imperative for building customer–brand relationships (Wang & Fesenmaier 2004). Customer engagement in the cyber brand community involves specific interactive experiences between consumers and the brand (Sut et al., 2017). Harrigan et al., (2017) research on customer engagement builds on So et al.'s (2014) conceptualization of customer engagement, which incorporates five dimensions: enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction, and identification. The literature describes the five dimensions of customer engagement.

- Enthusiasm: Represents an individual's "strong level of excitement or zeal" and interest in a brand (Vivek, 2009, p. 60). So et al. (2014, p. 308) note that this enthusiasm "…differentiate the construct of engagement from other similar constructs such as satisfaction" (Harrigan et al., 2017)

- Attention: Refers to a customer's level of focus, consciously or subconsciously, on the brand. Constant attention towards a brand is likely to lead to higher levels of engagement (Lin, Gregor, & Ewing, 2008; Scholer & Higgins, 2009; Harrigan et al., 2017).

- Absorption: Goes further than attention, where it refers to a customer's high level of concentration and engrossment in a brand (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002; Harrigan et al., 2017). Absorption is a positive trait, where customers will be contently absorbed in or with the brand, most likely unaware of how much time they are devoting to the brand (Patterson et al., 2006; Scholer & Higgins, 2009; Harrigan et al., 2017).

- Interaction: Is fundamental to customer engagement and involves sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and feelings about experiences with the brand and other customers of the brand (Vivek, 2009). The brand community literature supports interaction between customers of the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This interaction, as well as direct brand interaction, is a behavioral element of customer engagement (Harrigan et al., 2017).

- Identification: Customers will identify more with certain brands than others, particularly those that match their self-image (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Harrigan et al., 2017). This notion draws on social identity theory, where individuals have a personal identity and a social identity. In this context, the groups that one is a member of, and the brands with which one engages, manifests the brand's social identity with that person (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Harrigan et al., 2017).

Research has shown that events can be used to engage customers by being active on social media. Cabiddu et al.'s (2014) study discuss how the tourism industry and events can trigger engagement if organizations are active on social media platforms. *Social media* (SM) can be defined as activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather

online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media (Sashi et al., 2019. SM interaction can be displayed as a customer contributing to an online community facilitated by tourism destinations, events, or festivals (Sashi et al., 2019). Throughout the years of existence SM has grown in importance, usage, and influence. "Billions of people use social media in urban areas" (Gupta & Brooks, 2013, p. 77). The literature shows that SM provides the purpose of "allowing users to come together online and exchange, discuss, communicate and participate in any form of social interaction" and can create customer engagement opportunities through interaction (Sashi, 2012, p.151). The following sections will discuss how community events use SM.

Social media.

The World Wide Web (Web) initially provided information to users and did not involve interactions. The Web has evolved into the Web 2.0, which allowed co-creation where producers and consumers are involved in sharing information and knowledge (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Munar & Jacobsem, 2014; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Liburb, 2012).

The Web 2.0 facilitated social media (SM), a form of interactive media, which is described as activities practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to interact, share information and knowledge. SM can contribute to various aspects of attendees' event experiences and can enhance their opportunity to have a voice in evaluating and advocating for events and festivals (Hudson & Hudson, 2013). "Social media are becoming popular also in the event industry. Numerous event companies are using social media in event promotion" (Xiang & Tussyadiah, 2014, p.132). In the events context, customer engagement through SM has been found to boost loyalty, trust and brand evaluations (So, King & Sparks,

2014). Hudson and Hudson suggest the understanding of how SM interaction with consumers is beginning to expand product and brand recognition (Hudson & Hudson, 2013).

SM represents an important evolution for the events industry. This is because SM allows effective informational exchanges among people (Cox, et. al., 2009; Schmallegger & Carson, 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) that can affect potential tourists' experiences (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). SM allows users to connect and share content online such as text, photos and videos (Kaplan & Haenlein, 20210). SM engagement allows for large scale and immediate connections to happen and expands the opportunities available organizations to connect with customers. SM platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have become increasingly important in consumers' lives (Birkbeck, 2016). The literature shows that the interactive nature of SM has ultimately changed how consumers engage with brands (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). When using SM on a regular basis, consumers come in contact with a myriad of brands and products by reading, writing, watching, commenting, liking, sharing, and so forth (Birkbeck, 2016).

Social media, customer engagement and event production. The literature shows organizations such as BIA organizations can create customer engagement by being present on SM and using the platforms to create a sense of an online community (Sashi et al., 2019). To engage consumers, organizations interact with customers and not remain passive on SM platforms. While organizations may expect feedback from customers, the customers similarly expect feedback from organizations (Hvass & Munar, 2012; Mackay et al., 2016).

Twitter is a commonly studied form of SM in the events research. Twitter has been seen to be an effective way for event organizations to share quick information to their customers (Sash1, 2012). Past research found that event organizers do use Twitter to communicate with

visitors, and to keep them informed of latest developments (Hudson & Hudson, 2009). Becker et al.'s study (2012) discusses how Twitter may be used during the event to obtain real-time updates. Kietzmann et al. (2011) articulate how Twitter engagement is short-lived and tweets require no obligation for response. For organizations using Twitter to engage with customers, this SM platform is driven by timely updates and seen as a way of reaching out to, interacting with and understanding consumer behaviour (Hays et al., 2013; Mackay et al., 2017). During an event, Twitter can be used for information sharing and enhancing the customer's experience. When the event is over, event organizers may use Twitter to sustain loyalty between their customers (i.e. repeat visitation) that will help create legacy as a way to maintain the festival's presence (Mackay et al., 2016).

SM can facilitate relationships and build customer engagement between customers and sellers (Sashi, 2012). SM provides the opportunity to connect with customers using a variety of media with great reach (Thackeray et al., 2008). The literature shows that organizations such as BIA organizations can create customer engagement by being present on SM and using the platforms to create a sense of an online community (Sashi, et al., 2019). To engage consumers, organizations should be active, not passive, on SM platforms. SM creates interaction between customers and organizations. While organizations may expect customer feedback, the customers expect feedback from organizations on SM platforms (Mackay et al., 2016). Organizers use Twitter extensively to communicate with visitors and keep them informed of the latest developments (Hudson & Hudson, 2009). Using SM, organizations can enhance relationships with existing and new customers by forming online communities to understand problems better and develop solutions for them.

Becker et al.'s study (2012) discusses how Twitter may be used during the event to obtain real-time updates (Mackay et al., 2016). Kietzmann et al.'s (2011) articulate how short-lived Twitter engagement and tweets require no obligation for a response. For organizations using Twitter to engage with customers, this SM platform is driven by timely updates and seen as a new way of reaching out to, interacting with, and understanding consumer behaviour (Hays et al., 2013; Mackay et al., 2016). Studies have shown that SM can allow customers to connect and interact in rich and complex ways with other customers and can influence others on SM networks (Sashi, 2012). During an event, SM can be used for information sharing and enhancing the customer's experience. When the event is over, event organizers may use SM to sustain loyalty between their customers (i.e., repeat visitation) that will help create a legacy as a way to maintain the festival's presence (Mackay et al., 2016).

Mackay, et al. (2016) conducted a study that explored the multi-phase experience of festivals to understand the nature, purpose, and degree of SM use before, during, and after the festival occurrence and how this may inform better engagement of attendees. The researchers collected posts from two SM sites: Facebook and Twitter. Their study looked at discovering the purpose and nature of the content of the festival posts. The findings showed that the primary purpose of the posts collected was for information sharing (Mackay, et al. 2016). It was noted in the study that although a small portion of the posts collected identified as relationship building among SM users, the festival's SM pages produced majority of relationship-building content. A majority of the posts collected were promotional content created by the festival. The study shows excellent value in festivals using SM to communicate and interact with their attendees (Mackay, et al. 2016).

Sashi's (2012) study described how to achieve customer engagement. According to Sashi's (2012) research, there are seven stages in the customer engagement cycle: connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement (figure 1). The study developed a conceptual model of customer engagement that improved understanding of the concept and provided the foundation strategies to satisfy customers better using Web 2.0 tools such as SM platforms. The study explored how engaged customers can become partners who collaborate with the provider and add value to satisfy their needs. Sashi (2012) also discussed how SM can facilitate the establishment of intimate relationships, building trust, and commitment between sellers and buyers.
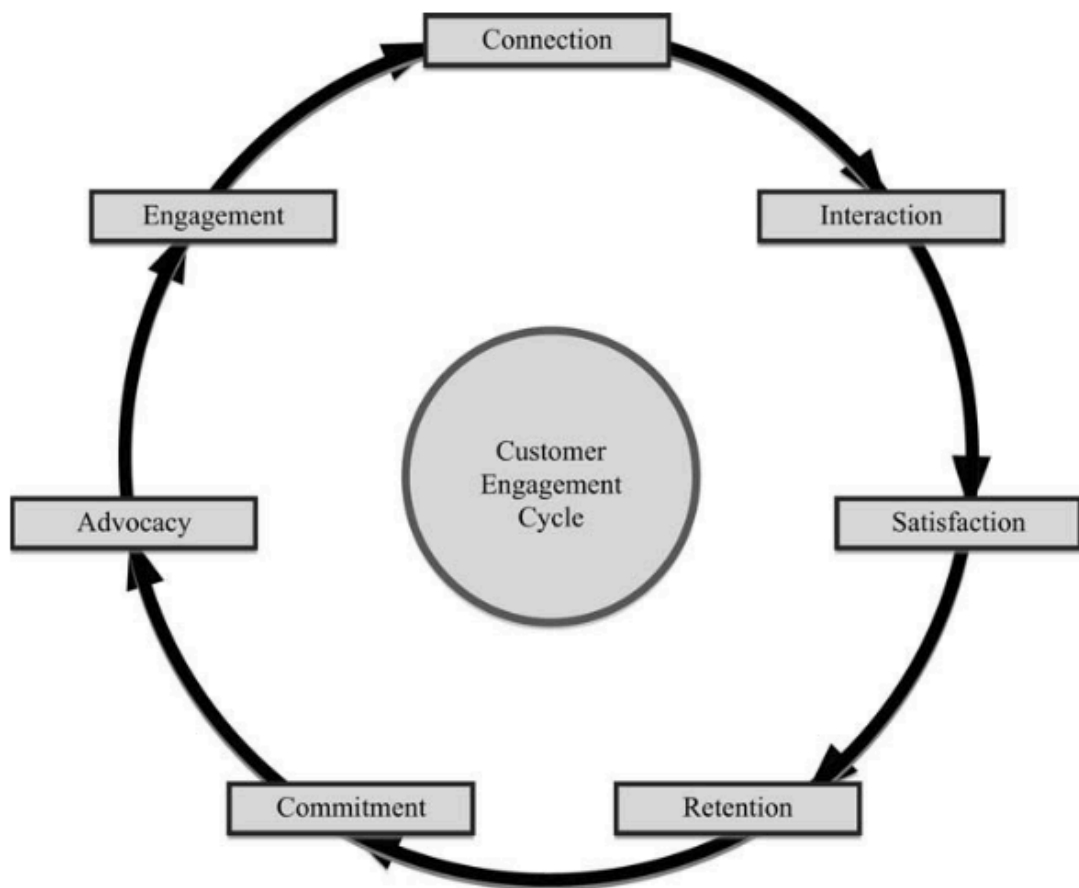
Figure 1. Customer Engagement Cycle (Sashi, 2012)

Sashi (2012) suggested that loyal customers develop feelings of intimacy and emotional attachment and become fans of the product, brand, or company resulted in customer engagement. Consumers can evolve from customers into fans through the Customer Engagement Cycle, which includes:

1. Connection: Connection brings sellers and customers together. Connections may be established using traditional offline methods like salespeople and online methods like social networking. SM greatly facilitates the establishment of connections with a large number and wide variety of individuals and firms (Sashi, 2012).

2. Interaction: Interaction can be seen through a communication or direct involvement between sellers and customers. Interaction can improve customer needs, especially changes in these needs over time, and facilitates modifications to existing products or development of new products to satisfy needs. For example, social interaction in virtual worlds, where users communicate and interact in real-time, can connect with customers, provide information and experiences, and obtain customer input (Tikkanen et al., 2009; Sashi, 2012).

3. Satisfaction: Satisfaction involves the fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this. Satisfaction allows sellers and customers to stay connected and to continue to interact with one another leading to engagement. A high level of satisfaction is achieved when customer expectations are exceeded and emotions become positive (Oliver et al., 1997; Sashi, 2012).

4. Retention: Retention refers to the ability of a seller and customers to retain its customers over time. Retention can result from either satisfaction over time or highly

positive emotions. Retention may result from enduring relationships without emotional bonds or emotional bonds without a long-term relationship (Sashi, 2012).

5. Commitment: Commitment in a relationship has two primary dimensions: affective commitment and calculative commitment (Gustafsson et al., 2005). Calculative commitment leads to higher levels of customer loyalty and enduring relationships with sellers. Affective commitment is emotional and results from trust and reciprocity in a relationship. Affective commitment leads to higher trust and emotional bonds in relationships with sellers (Sashi, 2012).

6. Advocacy: Advocacy is an activity by the seller that influences customer's decisions. "If a company advocates for its customers, they will reciprocate with their trust, loyalty and purchases – either now or in the future" (Urban, 2004 p. 44). Customers, in turn, become advocates for sellers among those with whom they have connections and interactions. In the future, sellers and customers are expected to look after each other's interests, and the focus will be on the exchange of values that transcend their self-interest (Nordin, 2009; Sashi, 2012).

7. Engagement: Engagement requires affective commitment and calculative commitment or trust, as well as a commitment between sellers and customers. Engagement occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers. Customer engagement expands the role of customers by including them in the value-adding process as co-creators of value (Sashi, 2012).

SM allows fans to connect and interact with other fans, increasing mutual satisfaction and advocacy. Fans can also connect with non-customers, turning them into transactional customers and launching the customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012).
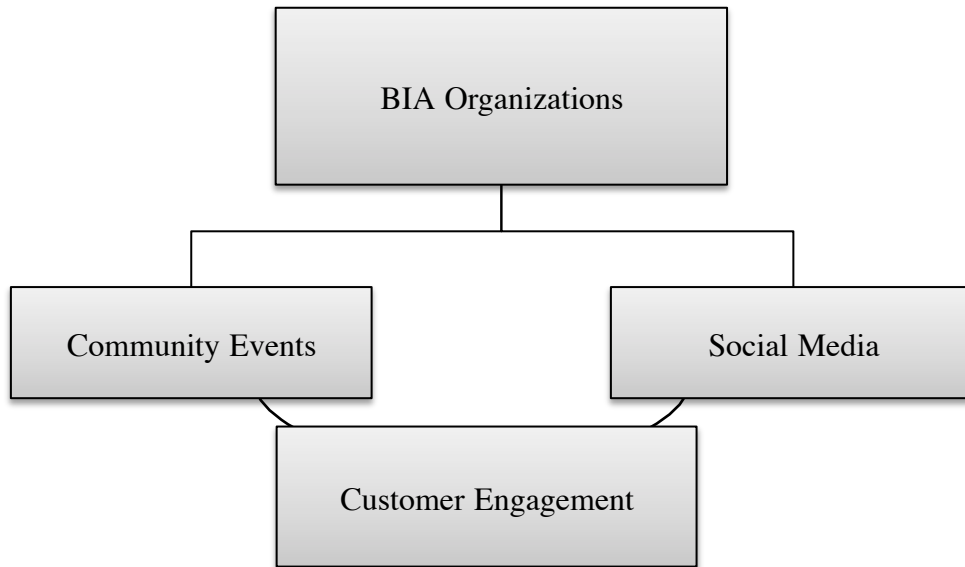
Figure 2. Concept figure of main topics discussed in the Literature Review

This thesis contributes to building knowledge about how customer engagement can be facilitated through community events and SM. The literature highlighted the likely values of producing events to engage customers; however, little is known about how this happens in the context of business improvement areas. This study explores why BIA organizations facilitate community events and explores the role of events and SM in engaging customers.

Chapter Three: Methods

This chapter describes the mixed-methods research design used to address the follow research questions:

1. How are events used by BIA organizations to enhance their customer engagement?

2. How is Twitter used by BIA organizations to engage customers during events?

Post- Positivist Paradigm

My post-positivist perspective, where multiple measures and observations were used in the research to explore how BIA organizations use events to engage customers and the role SM plays in this process, influenced the study design. According to Panhwar, Ansaria, and Shah (2017), post-positivism balances positivist and interpretive approaches. This paradigm focuses on analyzing research by displaying the majority of the participant's experiences and conducting analysis that highlights what most participants experienced (Phillips & Burbules, 2000; Wildemuth, 1993; Panhwar et al., 2017). Post-positivist paradigm is concerned with the subjectivity of reality and moves away from the objective stance formed by the logical positivists (Ryan, 2006; Panhwar et al., 2017). Mixed-methods research aligns with post-positivism because it promotes qualitative and quantitative methods that explore the diversity of the data collected through various methods while respecting and valuing all findings (Clark, 1998 & Fischer, 1998; Panhwar et al., 2017).

Mixed-Methods Research Approach

This research used a mixed-method approach. A mixed-method approach involves collecting, analyzing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data. The central premise of this approach is to use qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination to provide a better understanding of the research problems than either approach could alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Mixed-methods research has been debated as an approach because qualitative and quantitative approaches have historically been seen as misaligned (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). However, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) also explain that mixed methods provide an opportunity to use multiple perspectives in research to help the researcher address the purpose of the research study.

Exploratory Sequential Approach

This study used an exploratory sequential approach where quantitative data collection followed qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2011). The first phase of the research is based on interviews that informed the second phase of the study, where social media data was collected and analyzed (Creswell, 2012; Greene et al., 1989). Qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews provided insight into how the BIA organizations believed they engaged customers by producing events and communicating on Twitter. The participants were asked questions focusing on why events were produced and how BIA organizations connected with customers through events. Participants were also asked about the Twitter platform used by the organization to inform the second phase of the study. In addition, there were questions regarding BIA event production and specific detailed questions about a particular event. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to be actively involved during the interview process with the participant and to explore shared ideas more in-depth during the interview process (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Conducting interviews, the researcher allowed for a common and uncommon understanding of how events can enable customer engagement to be explored across four Canadian regions (DiCicco-Bloom & Cradtree, 2006).

The SM analysis explored customer engagement on Twitter to add insight into customer engagement not derived from the interviews (Creswell 2012). Social network analysis, content analysis, and descriptive statistics were conducted on the Twitter content. Netlytic social network analysis software was used first to display and analyze the collected Twitter data (Gruzd & Mai, 2018). Netlytic is a community-supported text and social networks analyzer summarizing and visualizing public online conversations on SM sites (Gruzd & Mai, 2018). Netlytic network properties were used to explore how individuals interact, how information flows, and whether there are distinct voices and groups within the network (Gruzd et al., 2016).

Next, this study used quantitative content analysis using MacKay, Van Winkle, and Halpenny's (2016) study on coding the nature and purpose of the content found within the tweets. Content analysis can analyze Twitter data by individual posts, people, organizations, and communities from the data displayed on excel files (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). In addition, this process can analyze written, verbal, or visual communication messages and posts (Elo & Kynas, 2008). Finally, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to measure the frequency to examine when the BIA organizations were posting compared to when other users posted about the event. With the flexibility of Twitter content analysis and semi-structured interviews, this research attained a well-rounded analysis and representation of Twitter data (Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Participants Recruitment

After receiving university ethics approval (Appendix A), the search for potential participants began. A master list of Canadian BIA organizations (Appendix B) was formed to search for appropriate BIA organizations to participate in the study. Google search was used to explore BIA organizations in the five Canadian regions created from the master list: west coast, prairie, central, east coast, and northern. The criteria of ensuring all Canadian five regions were represented in this study was to allow diverse perspectives from BIA organizations across Canada. During the Google search, the researcher could not find BIA organizations from the northern region of Canada. Therefore, the northern region of Canada was not included in this study. The final master list included 80 Canadian BIA organizations separated into four regions: west coast, prairie, central, and east coast.

There were five BIA organizations chosen randomly from each region for a total of 20 BIA organizations. The master list was reviewed to ensure that diverse sizes of organizations were included. Senior staff at each BIA was sent an e-mail invitation (Appendix C) to participate in the study. The invitations were sent to potential participants in October 2020. Due to the pandemic many events were being cancelled during participant recruitment. The e-mail invitation stated that BIA organizations must have hosted at least one community event prior to the pandemic time period in between February 2019 - February 2020. Of the 20 invitation e-mails sent out to potential participants, no responses were received from the east coast region. In total, six BIA organizations responded to the invitation e-mail. The six participants were then sent a follow-up e-mail (Appendix D) and a consent form (Appendix F). The BIA organizations chosen for this study reflected a variety of communities found in three regions of Canada: the

west coast region (British Columbia), prairie region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), and central Canada region (Ontario and Quebec).

Description of Participants

There were seven Canadian BIA organization employees from six BIA organizations who participated in the semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted six interviews. One interview included two BIA employees. Participants in this study were BIA senior staff employed as directors, event coordinators or SM public relations employees. In order to preserve participant confidentiality, pseudonyms are used to identify the seven participants. These are JG, CN, MR, BM, QM, KP, and JM. Brief descriptions of each of the participants and the BIA organization they are employed in are presented in table 1.

Table 1

List of Participant

Participant Acronyms	Size/ Canadian Region	Event and Duration of Event
JG	Small city in Western Region (BC)	Christmas event (4 weeks)
CN	Large city in Western Region (BC)	Summer event (8 weeks)
MR	Small city in Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)	Farmer's Market event (16 weeks)
BM	Large city in Prairie Region (AB, SK, MB)	Summer event (12 weeks)
QM	Small city in Central Canada Region (ON)	Summer event (1 day)
KP and JM	Large city in Central Canada Region (ON)	Summer Promenade event (12 weeks)

Data Collection

The following section provides an overview of the semi-structured interview method used to collect qualitative data from the participants and how Twitter posts were captured to collect quantitative data.

Interview Data Collection

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews that provided an in-depth understanding of how BIA organizations present events, how the BIA and social media's role engages customers in this process. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview method allowed the researcher to explore ideas more in-depth and remain actively involved during the interview (Creswell, 2013; DeCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Turner, 2010; Markula & Silk, 2011). According to Markula and Silk (2013), in-depth information into experiences can be gained through individual interviews. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with a staff member of each BIA.

An interview guide (Appendix G) was created based on the literature reviewed to discuss BIA and SM usage events. The first section of questions focused on building rapport, identifying whom the participant works for, their role with the BIA, and information on the BIA. The second section of questions was about a particular event the BIA staff chose to discuss. The third and fourth section of questions was to gain the participant's perspectives on how Twitter is used during the production of events hosted by their BIA. Finally, the last section of questions was additional questions to ensure nothing was missed.

Since participants were located across Canada and there were travel restrictions in place due to the pandemic, the researcher could not conduct in-person interviews. Instead, the researcher conducted interviews using Zoom Video Communications. This virtual online

communication service is used for teleconferencing, telecommuting, distance education, and social relations (Zoom Video Communications, 2021). Since the beginning of 2020, Zoom's software usage has experienced a significant global increase after public quarantine measures were adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Wikipedia, 2021). The six interviews took place in November 2020, a month after the invitation e-mails were sent out to potential participants. Out of the six interviews two interviews were conducted using the video features from Zoom, the other four interviews only used the audio function on Zoom. The participants were given the choice of having a video call or an audio call during the interview production. The interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 45 minutes. The average length of the interviews was 30 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and saved to ensure the researcher was able to successfully transcribe the interviews conducted.

Social Media Data Collection

The second phase of data collection was designed to better understand how BIA organizations use Twitter during event production and how Twitter usage may engage customers. Twitter can provide a platform for people to communicate with organizations, it is freely available, and past public posts can be obtained for research purposes (Maecker et al., 2016). During the interviews, participants were asked to identify and answer questions regarding a public event that occurred between February 2019 - February 2020. The events discussed in the interviews by the participants took place between May 2019- October 2019. Participants were also asked about their organization's use of Twitter related to the public event. Participants discussed keywords that best described the events, and that could be found in Twitter posts. Twitter was chosen as the social media platform for this study because Twitter data can be

examined in Netlytic; where as recent changes have created issues for analyzing Facebook and Instagram. Tweets were then collected from Twitter, searching and copying, and pasting posts containing keywords about the event during the time frame that the events took place (see table 2). Once Twitter data was collected and formatted in a CSV file, this was uploaded into Netlytic for social network analysis. The CSV file was also converted to an Excel file for content analysis and descriptive analysis

Table 2

Key words used to collect Tweets

Participants	Events	Key words
JG	Christmas event	N/A
CN	Movie Night events	movie
MR	Farmer's Market event	market
BM	Summer Plaza event	plaza OR square
QM	Summer event	N/A
KP and JM	Summer Promenade event	summer OR promenade

Data Analysis

The following section provides an overview of the thematic analysis used to analyze qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and social media analysis to analyze the Twitter posts.

Interview Analysis

Analysis of interviews was undertaken to understand how events are used by BIA organizations to enhance (or not) their customer engagement. To accomplish this, the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (TA). This type of analysis helps researchers identify, analyze and report patterns and themes within the data. Braun and Clarke (2008) argue that thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis because it provides core skills for conducting a wide variety of qualitative analyses. TA was used to identify patterns and themes found in participant's experiences, views, perspectives, behavior, and practices.

Thematic analysis can produce valid findings (Braun & Clarke, 2008); however, no consistent agreement exists in the literature that describes how researchers can rigorously apply the method (Nowell et al., 2017). While TA can be flexible and an insightful way to analyze data, the flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes from the research data (Holloway & Todres, 2003; Nowell et al., 2017). Despite these limitations, TA is an appropriate analysis technique to use for this study because it provides accessible and systematic procedures for generating codes and themes found in the semi-structured interviews. This is accomplished by exploring explicit and implicit meanings within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2008).

The transcriptions from each participant interview were read to create deep reflection on emerging patterns (Saldana, 2009). When the researcher believed she understood the context and

ideas presented, themes were created. Once all of the transcripts were coded and reoccurring themes emerged to address research question one. Using thematic analysis allowed the semi-structured interviews to be analyzed and identified, organized, and described the reporting themes found within this data set (Braun & Clarke, 2008). Boyatzis (1998) described the thematic analysis as a translator for those speaking the languages of qualitative and quantitative analysis, enabling researchers who use different research methods to communicate with each other (Nowell et al., 2017). The findings from the thematic analysis for the semi-structured interviews were sufficient evidence for research question one.

The six interviews completed for the study were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The study used guidelines for inductive thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clark (2006). There are six steps in the guideline for conducting thematic analysis. Familiarization with the data was the first step. The researcher immersed herself in the data to become familiar with the depth of the content by repeatedly reading over, listening to the interviews, taking notes of the interview transcripts, and highlighting specific sentences or words. The second step consisted of generating the initial codes by highlighting ideas and grouping meaningful ideas together (Bruan and Clarke, 2006.). The third step was conducted when the initial codes were extracted from the data. The researcher sorted through the codes created and put them into potential themes. The fourth step involved reviewing and refining both extracted and candidate themes to ensure they fit together to capture the same idea. The fifth step involved defining the themes and identifying what aspects of the data were captured in each theme created. The sixth step consisted of categorizing the themes, wrapping up the analysis, and writing up the findings. The findings provided insightful evidence from the data extracts and demonstrated the theme's findings (Bruan and Clarke, 2006).

This study used member checking to ensure the research findings were valid. Member checking allows the participants to validate their engagement/ responses in the study; this technique can be used to explore the credibility of the findings. Data or findings are returned to participants to check for accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). The information contributed to credibility because it provided the researcher with a general understanding of the participants who represented six BIA organizations in this study (Shenton, 2004).

Social Media Analysis

The Twitter posts collected were analyzed in multiple ways. First social network analysis (SNA) was undertaken followed by content analysis and finally descriptive statistics were measured by frequency of Twitter posts.

Social network analysis (SNA). SNA was used to explore Harrigan et al.'s (2017) and Sashi's (2012) interaction dimension of customer engagement. Interaction involves communication or direct involvement between sellers and customers (Sashi, 2012). Interaction involves sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and feelings about experiences with the brand and other customers of the brand (Vivek, 2009; Harrigan et al., 2017). SNA reveals how information flows through ties in a network and how a network's structure displays knowledge to be disseminated and created across various platforms (Haythornthwaite, 2011) (Gruzd et al., 2016). SNA provides a framework and methods to visualize communities as relational networks separate from their geographic locations (Williamson & Rumming, 2016). This type of analysis can help researchers understand how and why networks are connected by their interaction patterns between individuals (Gruzd et al., 2016). The SNA provided insight into whether customer engagement, specifically looking into interaction, was seen in Twitter posts. A name

network was created, and the nodes and edges features on Netlytic were used to understand if Twitter users and the organization are were interacting.

Name network. A name network looks at content in the tweets and what has been repeated and tweeted among Twitter users. This enabled the researcher to see who was tweeting out to BIA organizations and the types of content in the messages. Using a name network analysis, the researcher created descriptive and meaningful visualizations on Netlytic by displaying the data collected (Grudz & Mai, 2018).

Nodes. Are known as the people, individuals, organization and other entitles, they are represented by dots on the social network analysis visual (Grudz & Mai, 2018). The nodes will help identify "who" is involved in the interaction during the data analysis.

Edges. Edges are the lines between the nodes. They are the connections that illustrate interactions such as conversations and identify who is talking to whom (Gruzd and Mai, 2018).

There were four Netlytic network properties used to analysis the data (table 3).

Table 3

Netlytic Network Properties

Network Properties	Description
Density	Density measures the total number of possible ties within the network. The density is calculated by dividing the number of existing ties (connections/ edges) by the number of possible ties (nodes). The closer this measurement is to 1, the more close-knit the community/conversation and illustrates that users are talking with others. Conversely, if the value is closer to 0, not many users are connected to other nodes in the network (Gruzd & Mai, 2018).
Reciprocity	Reciprocity measures two-way communication in relation to the total number of existing edges. A higher value indicates that many participants have a two-way conversation. Conversely, a low reciprocity value illustrates that many conversations are one-sided, resulting in little back and forth conversation (Gruzd & Mai, 2018).
Centralization	Centralization measures the average degree of all nodes within a network. When a network has a high centralization value close to 1, there are a few central participants who dominate the flow of information in the network. A network with a low centralization closer to 0 shows a decentralized where information flows more freely between many participants, and there are not many significant nodes sharing information (Gruzd & Mai, 2018).
Modularity	Modularity looks at the clusters of nodes and edges in the network visualization. Modularity can help determine whether the clusters found represent distinct communities in the network. Higher values of modularity show clear divisions between clusters. Low values of modularity, usually less than 0.5, show clusters found will overlap, and the network is more likely to consist of a core group of nodes (Gruzd & Mai, 2018).

Content analysis. Content analysis has become a common method to analyze and SM (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Schwartz & Ungar, 2015). Content analysis allows researchers to explore individual posts, people, organizations, and communities online (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; Schwartz & Ungar, 2015.) A directed content analysis was used to explore the content of tweets. Existing categories for understanding the nature and purpose of the posts were used based on work by MacKay, Van Winkle, and Halpenny (2017). MacKay et al. (2017) multiple sources of literature to create categories for coding the nature and purpose of tweets. The purpose of the Twitter content refers to the user's intention for posting. The Twitter content was coded for the purpose based on classifications developed by Java et al. (2007): information sharing, information seeking, friendship/relationship and, others. The four purpose categories are defined in table 4. The nature of the Twitter content was coded to help understand how the users were attempting to achieve their purpose. The nature of tweets was coded into four categories: conversational, promotional, informational, and unclassifiable (MacKay et al., 2017). The four categories for nature are defined in table 5.

Table 4

Purpose of the Tweets

Purpose of Tweet	Definition	Twitter Example
Information sharing	Any tweet that provides information to followers about a particular event, subject, idea, etc.	@BM-BIA COME Check out what's going on TOMORROW at the PLAZA! Come between NOON-2PM!!
Information seeking	Any tweet that asks/ request information from follower(s)	@PublicUser @MR-BIA How much $$ do you charge for your pancake breakfast at the farmer's market?
Engagement/ relationship building	Any tweet used to engage, build a relationship with, or express appreciation to a follower(s)	@PublicUser @PublicUser Can't wait to see you ladies today! Going to check out the @MR-BIA farmer's market. I hope it doesn't rain. We might need to pack an umbrella…
Other	Tweets that do not belong in any of categories above	@PublicUser @PublicUser @PublicUser @CN-BIA EYYYYYYYYYOO #movie

(MacKay et al., 2017)

Table 5

Nature of the Tweets

Nature of Tweet	Definition	Twitter Example
Conversational	A tweet that directly addresses another user(s) by asking/ answering a question, involving them in the Tweet or using @	@PublicUser @KPJM-BIA Will Emma be back again this summer for promenade events???
Promotional	A tweet marketing/ promoting an event, activity, contest, website, artist, etc. that urges the user to partake in an action	@CN-BIA MOVIE NIGHT is TONIGHT! Come and watch the Avengers at 8:30pm and meet some local hero's before the show at 7:00pm! @CITYFireDepartment
Informational	Any tweet that presents an update or live discussion of an event, reports news or provides information within urging users to partake in an action	@BM-BIA Sorry for any inconvenience, folks programs at the Plaza today are cancelled due to lightning and the rainstorm.
Unclassifiable	Tweets that do not belong in ant of the categories above	@KPJM-BIA summer' ðŸ˜‡ Just sayin' ðŸ˜‡ ðŸ˜‡ ðŸ˜‡ ðŸ˜‡

(MacKay et al., 2017)

Descriptive data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarizes the Twitter data (Dubois et al., 2018). The data description was presented by measuring the frequency of how often tweets are posted during the time of when event production occurred (Hayes, 2019). Descriptive frequency data were separated into three histograms for each event. The three descriptive data histograms were separated as

- all tweets collected during event production,

- only BIA Twitter content collected during event production, and

- all tweets excluding BIA tweets collected during event production.

In the histograms, the X-axis's articulated the dates of when tweets were posted, and the Y-axis's displayed the number of tweets posted (Dubois et al., 2018). Dividing the Twitter data into three separate histograms helped the researcher view when BIA organizations were posting most and when other users were posting most about the events (Hayes, 2019).

Trustworthiness

This study took several steps to ensure trustworthiness in the research. The study demonstrates logical connections between the various steps of data collection and analysis by using the four components based on the guideline by Lincoln & Guba (1986): credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility

Ensuring participants read and signed demonstrated credibility a consent form requested from all participants before they took part in the study. Through the consent form, participants could find out the exact purpose and the steps of the project. Member checking was also applied, which included returning the transcripts of interviews to participants to review the

accuracy of the content.

Transferability

Shenton (2004) explains the importance of creating boundaries in the research to ensure transferability, a detailed description of participants' context selection methods and characteristics, and the required data collection and analysis process (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). The researcher ensured that no directly identifying information about the participants was disseminated in the research findings, and the participants are kept confidential. There are detailed descriptions of the seven participants and the BIA organizations they work for provided in chapters 3 and 4 of this study to allow for population comparisons with other researchers or studies.

Dependability

According to Shenton (2004), if qualitative studies are seen as credible, they are also classified as dependable. Implementation of the data collection process was present in the study. During the data analysis, the researcher shared the themes, codes, and findings with her supervisor to limit any bias and check the findings' accuracy and consistency (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

To confirm findings, It is essential to share the information collected with participants before comprehensively analyzing the data collected (Shenton, 2004). A detailed transcript of the findings was shared with the participants to ensure the summaries were accurate and correct. The researcher demonstrated confirmability in the study using direct quotes from the data collected (Shenton, 2004).

Chapter Four: Findings

The findings are presented to address the research questions. First the findings of the thematic analysis of interviews are described. Then the social network analysis, content analysis and descriptive analysis are presented.

Research Question One Findings

Analysis of research question one addressed:

1. How are events used by BIA organizations to enhance their customer engagement?

In total, 20 Canadian BIA organizations were contacted by email and a senior staff person was invited to participate in the study. Of the 8 BIA senior staff who responded to the email invitation, 7 were interviewed representing 6 BIA organizations. There was one interview that included two employees from the same BIA.

Participant Descriptions

In order to preserve participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms are used. These are JG, CN, MR, BM, QM, KP, and JM. Below are brief descriptions of each of the participants and the BIA organization they are employed by.

JG description. JG is a full-time employee for a small BIA organization found in the western region of Canada. The BIA organization is in a downtown area with a population of 12,000. The staff interviewed had worked for the BIA for the past five years and holds an executive position. The BIA currently has 12 board members, two full-time employees, one seasonal staff in the summer, and approximately 75 volunteers they utilize regularly. The BIA hosts approximately 12 events a year. The majority of the businesses found in the BIA are retail stores and restaurants. The BIA is active on Instagram and Facebook. JG chose to discuss the

2019 Christmas event during the interview. This annual event runs from the end of November until the end of December. The Christmas event is the largest event hosted by the BIA organization and receives the greatest amount of foot traffic. JG stated in her interview the BIA is not active on Twitter. The BIA organization is active on Facebook and Instagram but not Twitter. There were no social media data collected for this BIA organization in the study.

CN description. CN is a full-time employee for a large BIA organization in the western region of Canada. The BIA organization is in a downtown area of a city with more than two million residents. CN holds an event production position and has been working for the BIA for four years. The BIA currently has 33 full-time employees and 15 board members. The BIA hosts two types of events: there are member-only events and public events. Member-only events include tradeshow networking events and educational conferences. Public events are free of charge and include anyone who wants to come to attend the event. The BIA hosts member events and a few public events primarily. The BIA is extensive and has the financial means to sponsor many organizations that want to put public events in the downtown area. The BIA organization is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. CN chose to discuss a 2019 summer movies event. This event has become an annual event that takes place July – August.

MR description. MR is a full-time employee for a small BIA organization found in the prairie region of Canada. The BIA organization is found in a downtown area of a city with a population of 100,000. MR holds an executive position and has worked for the BIA organization for eight years. There are currently six employees and 11 board members. The BIA is involved in hosting and partnering with approximately 100 events a year. A majority of the businesses found in the designated area are retail stores and restaurants. The BIA organization is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. MR chose to discuss the 2019

farmer's market. This annual event runs every Wednesday afternoon from June to October.

BM description. BM is a full-time employee for a large BIA found in the Prairie Region of Canada. The BIA organization BM works for uses the BID acronym: Business Improvement District. The BID organization is found in a downtown area of a city with a population of 260,000. BM works in visitor services and has been employed by the BID for four years. There are five full-time staff members and 17 part-time season staff that are hired in the summer months. There are currently 11 board members that are a part of the BID organization. The BID organization hosts over 100 events a year. Some of the events are reoccurring. The BID counts their events in program hours. For example, a two-day event is tracked as 16 program hours. According to the BID there are approximately 700 program hours of events that happen a year. The BID organization is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. BM chose to discuss the 2019 summer event from the beginning of June to the end of August.

QM description. QM is a part-time employee for a small BIA found in the Central Canada region. Although the BIA is found in a city with a population of 6.2 million, the BIA has a small designated area covering two city blocks. QM is the coordinator and has been employed for the BIA for one year. There are six board members and only one part-time employee. The BIA is a part of the TABIA Toronto Association of Business Improvement Associations (TABIA) and Ontario Business Improvement Association (OBIAA). Although the BIA organization is small in a large city, the BIA receives great assistance and resources from these two associations TABIA and OBIAA. The BIA hosts approximately two events a year. The BIA organization is active on Facebook and Instagram but not Twitter. QM chose to discuss the 2019 summer event that took place in June. There were no social media data collected for this BIA organization in the study.

KP and JM description. KP and JM are full-time employees for a large BIA organization found in the Central Canada region. The BIA organization is in a downtown area of a city with a population of over 700,000. KP is one of the executives and has worked for the BIA for seven years, and JM works in marketing and communications for the BIA for the last three years. The BIA currently has 11 board members and three full-time employees. There are seasonal staff and students hired during the summer months. The BIA hosts approximately four events a year. The majority of the businesses found in the designated area are professional services: law firms, courthouses, insurance brokers, and accounting offices. The BIA is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. KP and JM chose to discuss the 2019 summer promenade event during the interview. This summer event is an annual event running from Tuesday – Friday in the afternoons from the end of May to August.

Thematic Analysis Findings

Thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyze the seven semi-structured interviews conducted for this study. The TA conducted produced three broad themes and sub-themes for this study. The themes identified were: 1) Offering an attraction, 2) Partnerships, 3) Engagement between businesses and visitors. These themes were further broken down into sub-themes that provide deeper insight into BIA organizations' event production and their SM use with regards to the events (see table 6).

Table 6

List of Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Offering an Attraction	a) Economic Impacts c) Ensure Inclusivity b) Enhance BIA Image d) Promote a Safe Place
2. Partnership	a) Organizational Engagement b) Focus on Community Needs c) Target Local Visitors
3. Engagement Between Businesses and Visitors	a) Effectiveness of Social Media b) Immediacy of Social Media c) Demands of Social Media

Offering an Attraction. This theme highlights the importance of conducting events. BIA organizations are expected to generate business to a designated area. BIA organizations are a third party to and do not have sales or promotions on goods and services to help business, instead BIA organizations support business by bringing people to the designated area by offering attractions such as events. Participants discussed how important it is for the BIA to offer events because the businesses the serve see great benefits. Offering attractions can bring customers to businesses, enhance the image of the area, promotes inclusivity and perceptions of safety. CN explained how their BIA organization sees the benefit in sponsoring events that take place in their downtown area. They stated,

Events which we sponsor, they are very important to us because they will bring people around town. If you bring people down town they will go and get to dinner before the movie or they will go shopping before the movie. So, it will spend money in downtown. It's going to help down town business.

The sub-themes were a) Economic impacts, b) Enhance BIA image c) Ensure events are inclusive d) Promote a safe place.

Economic impacts. This sub-theme describes how hosting community events provide positive financial impacts to the businesses found in the designated area. BIA organizations promote and support businesses through event production by increasing business's income. Participants talked about financial impacts the businesses in their area see when the BIA hosts a public event for their community. BM talked about bringing people to the downtown area as a main reason for event production. They discussed how bringing people downtown can increase the odds that people will spend money at the businesses and will return to the business in the future. They explained,

Events are focused on bringing people down here with the hope that they will then go to a restaurant and eat or go to a store and spend some money. Feet in the streets, bills in the tills.

They added,

So, the more people we can bring down here, the more likely it is that people will come down here again, feel comfortable down here and then spend their money down here. We're hyper focused on getting those people back down here.

JG noted that one of their main reasons for hosting events is to bring foot traffic into their designated area. They stated,

> To bring the footsteps to the CITY, which is the mandate of the CITY BIA. So, any event would be to inspire foot traffic to our downtown area, and that's providing an economic impact towards our downtown businesses.

Enhance BIA image. This sub-theme describes how BIA organizations advocate for the designated area by enhancing the perception people have of the community. Participants discussed how events help to promote the designated area and provide a great way to showcase what their community has to offer. Event image can help make the area seem more vibrant, in hopes their visitors will enjoy themselves. BM discussed how their BID organization promotes the downtown area as a place where people want to spend their time. They explained,

> In general, we say we want to make a downtown be a place where people want to
> visit and businesses want to invest. So, we're really interested in bringing people
> to come down to live, work and play downtown.

> BM also added,
> The more people are downtown and active and engaging, and respectful, fun
> events it helps people see the city specifically the downtown in a more positive
> light.

QM explained how events can create positive community spirit and encourages people to and visit the designated area. QM noted,

> Events definitely promote community spirit and it gets people out here. We want people to enjoy our community and spend time here. Even if they're just walking down the street they may notice the business that they never noticed before. Our businesses have really benefited from increased foot traffic when we have events.

They also explained how events keep the area aesthetically appealing. They stated,

Events to keep the area vibrant. Events keep our area looking good and attractive for new businesses to come and to retain business that we have there. They give people a chance to come out.

Ensure inclusivity. Events discussed in the study were inclusive. This sub-theme explains how events hosted by the BIA organizations bring a wide variety of people to the designated area. Participants discussed how their public events include people with diverse socio-economic status. The public events are for those who want to enjoy themselves regardless of their financial situation. JM noted,

One of my favorite pictures was a Crown Attorney playing chess with a guy who probably doesn't have a home. They were both enjoying the music, talking and laughing, it was really nice to see

QM explained the constant demographic change in their neighborhood with people moving into their designated area. QM noted,

There are a lot of population changes, with people moving in and out of apartments in or around our designated area. So, we try to inspire the newcomers to come check us out well and come to our events.

BM discussed how their BID is inclusive to a wide range of socio-economic groups. BM stated,

It's also a really good way to engage some people who are experiencing a lot more socio-economic issues and who are living in poverty our events make sure those people still feel a part of a community regardless of your income. Especially in a

community that's typically seen as kind of corporate and kind of money driven, as many downtowns are we want to make sure everyone feels welcome and can enjoy our events.

BM also noted,

> So, it's kind of neat place where you can see both the person in a business suit and someone who maybe hasn't had a place to sleep for five days playing Ping-Pong and interacting together. Are summer programming events are nice community-bridging events.

Promote a safe place. BIA organizations ensure the neighbourhood is a safe and enjoyable place for all. The participants discussed how BIA organizations promote their area as free from danger and secure for visitors. CN discussed how their BIA advocates for the downtown area and want it to be a place where people feel comfortable and safe. CN stated,

> The goal for us to help business and downtown CITY and to make sure that the downtown CITY is a place where people want to come, want to stay there and want to have fun. And to make sure that downtown is a safe place that is full of vibrant and active public spaces for everyone to enjoy.

BM discussed how events help change the public's perspective on the downtown area. BM stated,

> I think events 100% fulfill the needs of changing the perception of downtown and making it be animated and offering it as a safe, accessible space to all people. Like I do think it's successful in that. The more we get people downtown and they see Downtown is not a scary place the more they might come back again.

Partnerships. This theme highlights how by working with community organizations, the municipality and residents the success of events hosted by the BIA is enhanced. Since the

pandemic was declared, BIA organizations have been relying heavily on their partnership and communication with municipal, provincial and federal governments to ensure their businesses are following the restrictions. Engaging with the community provides the BIA with information to help local businesses and the members of their community. QM discussed how her BIA continued to provide a lot of information regarding events through SM and emails to businesses throughout the pandemic. Through SM, the BIA shares updates on government rules and regulations during the COVID 19 pandemic. QM stated,

> So we sort of pivoted and we're just trying to help our businesses in anyway we can by looking at ideas that the other BIAs are doing or have done. Every time new restrictions come out I upload the information on social media and send out e-mails to our businesses. I have contacted our municipality government so many times to ensure I know what the restrictions are stating. Sometimes the restrictions are so confusing and vague. We have worked way more with city officials lately to make sure everyone is following the rules.

The sub-themes for this theme are a) Organizational engagement b) Focus on community needs c) Target local visitors.

Organizational engagement. This sub-theme describes the positive impacts BIA organizations can have working with their city government and other organizations. Participants talked about receiving grants and support from organizations that help them to produce successful events. JG discussed how their BIA works closely with community organizations to help with event production. They stated,

> Different community partners or organizations usually meet together once a month to be able to discuss what events are coming up, and if there's ways that we can assist one

another with promotion or additions and making sure that there's no dates clashing, and then just the opportunity to brainstorm and collaborate on ideas. It makes it really nice with things like our month long Christmas events, because it's not just one organization or one person having to do all of the work. It's a real team collaboration with other organizations.

MR talked about how they have the opportunity to apply from grants from the city to help put on public events. MR said,

 We apply for grants through the city to host events and partner with tourism CITY to co-host events. We work hand in hand with the city. We've just partnered with them actually to do a promotion for downtown restaurants and we received a grant. I would say that the BIA has a good relationship with the city.

BM had a great relationship with their city. They stated,

We work with the city quite frequently. We always say — obviously, we're not run by the city, but we're kind of like a distant cousin. We kind of go to the city and say, "Hey, listen, this is all this stuff that we need improvements on or kind of complaints that we're having. Is there anyway that we can fulfill these and make them better and improve them with your help?"

Focus on community needs. This sub-theme explains the importance of pivoting to community members' needs in order for the BIA organization to be successful. The participants discussed the current pandemic situation and the constant changes the BIA organizations have made to support the public and their businesses. Many events were canceled due to the strict pandemic restrictions from the provincial and federal governments. JG discussed how they have become a support system for their community during the pandemic. They stated,

With COVID, our stakeholders were looking for assistance and supports as our businesses were pivoting to meet the needs of the community, whether that be through deliveries or curbside pickup. Our main focus lately has just been to advertise on behalf of our businesses here in CITY during these hard times.

JG also added how they have had to rely on their locals to support their downtown through the pandemic area more so then tourists. JG stated,

It's definitely different even within the marketing side of things, because we're really relying on our local residents within 35 to 50 kilometers to be sustaining our town and the economy.Right now, being October, we would normally see a big influx of European travelers or folks coming up from the US. But with COVID we don't tourists. COVID is also giving an opportunity to really evaluate what we're offering through our events and what's best for the business community. There are some positives happening, as we are able to take a step back and look at the way we've always done things and what things need to change in order for our businesses to be sustainable without our tourists.

JM explained how their SM platforms were a key way for their BIA to provide information during the pandemic. They explained how the BIA made some adjustments when hosting events during the pandemic. JM stated,

During Covid when it was in worse with the shutdown, we had highlight with our Instagram where you could see who is open and who is close and we add to that every day as we find new posts online about that. We more pivoted our events and same with Halloween we weren't able to run our usual event with the fun hay maize and rides and everything like that. So, we've pivoted for the city's needs and doing what we can do for events.

BM discussed how learning and staying relevant is important in order to assist their businesses and community. BM stated,

We're pretty flexible especially now with the pandemic and just learning that like things have to change. Period. We're just really interested in staying relevant and on top of it and doing whatever we need to do and using whatever mechanisms we need to do, to make sure people know who we are, what we're doing and why we're doing it

Target local visitors. This sub-theme illustrates that the target audience for events is local. The participants noted that tourism is not one of their main focuses for the events they produce. Their main audience is people who live around the designated area or city where the BIA is located. MR discussed their main visitors are people who live in the city where the BIA is located. They stated,

We would like to attract the visitor and tourist economy more. I'm sure we get a little bit of that by default anyway. But mainly it's visitors are people that live in CITY.

JG explained that they do see the most foot traffic during the summer months when tourism is high but their local population supports the businesses when tourism is low. They said,

We carve out a good portion of our budget for destination or tourism marketing, but then, when it comes down to is bread and butter of people who live in our community. We do see our highest numbers of foot traffic in the summer, so we are a tourism community. But we do know that it's our local population that carries us through the times where we don't have tourists in town. Especially right now during COVID we are so much on our locals.

KP discussed how tourism is not their main focus because they are not apart of the city's tourism mandate. They stated,

So tourism is not focused for our event. We are not within our tourism offices mandate to focus on tourism with the city of CITY. So, we do not get anything unless our event

advertising brings in a draw for people who live 40km or farther. We don't have a good relationship with Tourism CITY.

BM talked about working with tourism organizations with their city but still see higher numbers in locals attending their events rather then tourists. They stated,

> We also work with tourism CITY and tourism PROVINCE with conferences and all that kind of stuff to bring tourists downtown as well. But it's not — again, I'm visitor services I don't know for sure. But I'm going to say it's probably like a 70, 30. 70% for local, 30% for people who are outside of CITY and beyond.

Engagement Between Businesses and Visitors. This theme highlights the positive impact SM and events can have on BIA organizations' ability to engage with their businesses and customers. Participants discussed the variety of ways their organization uses SM when producing events. SM activity can be an effective way for BIA organizations to communicate information and interact with the public during events. KP explained how SM during events helps their organization to reach a wider audience compared to other marketing and information platforms. SM is the main way their organization engages with the public during event production. Overall, interviewees noted that BIA organizations see the most SM action during event production. KP stated that their BIA sees an increase of SM followers after hosting an event,

> Like using our local newspaper, radio, and things like that. It really wasn't tractable and it really doesn't give us the reach that we wanted. Social media keeps us engaged with people outside our little pool. It just keeps us engaged with people year round and I think every time we do a special event we get more followers.

The sub-themes for this theme are a) Effectiveness of Social Media, b) Immediacy of Social Media and, c) Demands of Social Media.

Effectiveness of Social Media. This sub-theme describes how BIA organizations are able to reach a wide demographic on SM and share up-to-date information with their visitors and the public. JG explained how important SM has become when they stated,

> It's our touch point with our demographic of people that are spending time in CITY, whether that be a local resident or somebody who is interested in visiting for a vacation.

They also added how SM is used to interact with people during event production,

Social media is huge for us. It not only allows for us to get an idea of what the interaction and attendance of the event will be as we approach an event date, but it also allows us to interact with those that are coming and promote internal details about the event to those that are interested. All across the board, I would say probably social media is the most important piece of our communications when it comes to marketing the event.

KP explained the wide variety of groups their organization interacts while being active on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook during event production. KP stated,

> We do often cross between Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and I find through three different demographics that you kind of reach there. We do have a pretty good coverage because as we said, we're quite professional in our demographic so I find Twitter hits that really well and Facebook hitting the families and everything. While, Instagram kind of beats the younger generation here. Using these three social media handles helps us connect to a large demographic when we host events.

CN discussed how their BIA uses SM to display information to the public. They stated,

Social media is used to inform the SM audience about what's happening in downtown. What are the new businesses that are opening in downtown. What events are happening in downtown? What cool projects we're doing in downtown? It's very informative. It is just to inform the audience.

Immediacy of Social Media. This sub-theme describes how SM gives the public access to the organization to ask informal questions and voice their concerns to the BIA. Events hosted by the BIA are short term there is a need to respond quickly when customers have questions during event production. SM offers a unique advantage when dealing with customers during events that are not possible with other forms of communication such as sending a formal e-mail, phone call or writing a letter to the organization. BM explained that they have noticed many people using SM handles to ask the BIA questions regarding the downtown area and public events hosted by the BID. BM stated,

> We do get a lot of personal messages, which we obviously respond to as quickly as possible. And a big portion of that quick response is that everyone has access. So, we can answer those kinds of questions really fast. And they're not public. So, you don't necessarily have to obviously be respectful but you don't have to be like, is this the exact, right, whatever?"

JG discussed their role as a destination marketing organization (DMO) in the area and the importance of answering questions the public has regarding the downtown area. JG stated,

> We respond very quickly to questions. As the DMO for the area, it's kind of our responsibility to respond across the board to different questions. As it pertains to events, definitely, we're ready and able to answer all questions that we expect them to. We find that the majority of our questions that are coming through for events or campaigns, they're all coming through our social media.

KP said that they don't interact with negative questions or comments on SM. They said,

> If we do it's often reaching out through direct messages on Instagram and of course answer all of those as thoroughly as we can. We don't necessarily engage with negativity too much on social media. In downtown you can get people complaining about the area like the homeless crowd or the lack of parking. So, we do get some negative comments here and there on social media.

MR discussed the many questions the BIA organization receives regarding COVID 19 restrictions over SM platforms. They noted,

> It's a great way for people to interact with us. People are often asking us if it's raining, "Are you on? Can you send me an application? What kind of COVID measures do you have in place?" So it's a great way for people to connect quickly with us. And beyond every single communication.

Demands of Social Media. This sub-theme discusses how SM takes an enormous amount of time and work. Most of the participants said their organization has someone who is assigned to oversee SM platforms. Participants see value in having an employee in charge of SM for the organization. Especially during event production when SM activity is high. Having an employee in charge of the SM accounts ensures SM is a successful marketing and promotional tool for the organization. Engaging with customers on SM during event production is time consuming but the BIA organizations find it worthwhile to have an employee is designated to the SM accounts. JG talked about how critical it can be to have someone in charge of SM to ensure SM is successful because it is such a big undertaking. They explained,

> Our visitor experience manager, who's the other full-time staff with the BIA; She manages both the accounts, all three of our social media accounts through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. To have one person and is really important and beneficial to

plan, it seems like it's sometimes easiest just to post when you find something or retweet or whatever. It's just like, if you have a planned direction, sort of like when you budget, if you know where your efforts are going and what your goals are, it's an entire game changer. During event production we always come up with a plan of how we are going to promote our event on social media.

JG added how important managing SM can be during event production because the high volume of SM activity. They stated,

I think anybody who manages social media will say that it's such an enormous undertaking. It's your frontline staff they're the face of your business. If people are asking questions, you want to be responding right away, you want to have professional and correct information to provide to them. While it is consuming, it's, I would say, one of the most vital parts of any business, especially for the BIA. We see lots of social media action when events are going on. We need to have someone who is active on our social media accounts during events.

CN talked about a recent hire the BIA organization did. They stated,

We just hired a new digital marketing coordinator. So she really improved our Instagram and now the Instagram is purely focused on promoting downtown CITY and downtown businesses in CITY. Before, it was kind of -- It didn't really have a purpose. But now our Instagram is great.

MR had a different take on SM. MR's BIA organization does not have one employee who is hired to run the SM accounts. Instead are a few employees who share the role of being responsible for SM. Their organization does not think SM should be the only form of marketing and promotion. They stated,

I would love to be more active on social media, but social media is not the be all and end all of the marketing position. So unless we had somebody focus somebody hired just to maintain all social media platforms, I don't think we'll ever get to a point where we're happy with the amount of posts and interaction that we have.

Summary of Thematic Analysis Findings

By completing a thematic analysis of the interviews, research question one was addressed. Specifically, the interviews reveal that BIA organizations can engage customers by using events as an attraction to bring people to the designated area. The findings show that events can make the designated area more appealing by promoting inclusivity, enhancing designated areas' image, and promoting a safe place for customers to visit. Participants discussed the economic impacts that can occur during event production. The findings show that economic impact opportunities allow customers to engage with businesses when hosting events.

The interviews show the importance of creating partnerships during event production. The interviews discuss creating partnerships within community organizations and governance can be essential when hosting events. The findings show that partnerships can help BIA organizations focus on community needs and target local visitors. By creating partnerships, BIA organizations can create customer engagement opportunities when working with other organizations and ensuring the needs are met for businesses and locals within there designated area. Especially during the pandemic creating strong partnerships with different levels of governance and other organizations has been crucial for BIAs.

The findings reveal some engagement opportunities through social media. Interviewees discussed how social media could help them interact with customers and ensure information is displayed virtually about an event. In addition, social media can provide immediate engagement

between the BIA and customers, whether customers have questions about the event or about a business in the designated area. Participants can answer questions and quickly respond to customers' requests on social media handles. The findings articulate the high demands of social media within event production and the current need to have an employee dedicated to running the social media channels.

Research Question Two Findings

Analysis of research question two addressed:

2. How is Twitter used by the BIA organizations to engage customers during events?

This section presents the data collected from Twitter posts related to events produced by the BIA organizations is included in the study. For tweets to be included in this study the BIA had to have a Twitter account, keyword(s) about the event had to be used and tweets had to be made during the time period when the event was taking place (table 7).

Table 7

Twitter Data Collection Criteria

BIA organizations	Twitter account	Key words	Time period
CN	@DowntownCN	movie	July 3 - August 21, 2019
MR	@DowntownMR	market	June 5 - October 2, 2019
BM	@BMDowntown	plaza OR square	June 3- August 31, 2019.
KP and JM	@DwnTwnKPJM	Summer OR promenade	May 28 - August 30, 2019

According to the BIA staff interviewed, two BIA organizations were not active on Twitter. JG and QM's BIA organization are not found on Twitter, there were no SM data collected from these two organizations in this study. Therefore, only four out of the six BIA organizations included in the interview portion of the study were in the SM analysis.

Social network analysis on CN-BIA data. Tweets were collected to represent the CN-BIA event had both "@CN-BIA" and the word "movie" found within the tweet. The keyword "movie" was used to collect tweets for the Movie Night event to ensure tweets collected for the study were relevant. The movie night event was ongoing throughout the summer and therefore collection started on the first day the event took place and continued until the last day the event took place. The movie event took place for eight consecutive Wednesdays from July 3 to August 21, 2019. The movie event dates were July 3, July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31, August 7, August 14, and August 21.

By exploring the major node clusters, CN-BIA is the main node during the study period (see table 8). The second major node cluster was the CN-BIA President/CEO's Twitter account. The BIA organization and the BIA President did not interact, and other users did not interact with either the BIA organization nor the BIA President. The third major node cluster was a local musician tweeting about their experience at the movie night. A few conversational tweets were found in the third node cluster from the local musician who replied and retweeted other users' posts about their musical performance.

Table 8

CN- BIA Top Three Major Node Clusters

Twitter Account	CN-BIA Twitter account	CN-BIA President/ CEO Twitter account	Personal Twitter account by local musician
Total tweets collected	36	7	4
Current followers	47, 000	3580	311
Current following	2209	1991	589

When exploring the network properties of the Netlytic visualization created for CN-BIA data, the following was found about the four properties (see table 9):

CN-BIA density. This property shows the value 0.031170 is closer to 0 and farther from 1 showing that there is almost no connection between the major node network clusters collected.

CN-BIA reciprocity. This property indicates the value 0.0000 is zero showing there are no two-way conversations between Twitter users; there were more ones-sided conversations.

CN-BIA centralization. This property shows the value 0.307100 is closer to 0 than 1 showing the network is decentralized and information flows more freely between Twitter users.

CN-BIA modularity. This property shows the value 0.574100 is higher than .5 indicating clear divisions between communities represented by the node clusters.

Table 9

Figure 3. Netlytic illustration created for

CN-BIA Netlytic Network Properties

CN-BIA data (Nelytic, 2021)

Network Properties	
Density	0.031170
Reciprocity	0.00000
Centralization	0.307100
Modularity	0.574100
Total tweets collected:	153
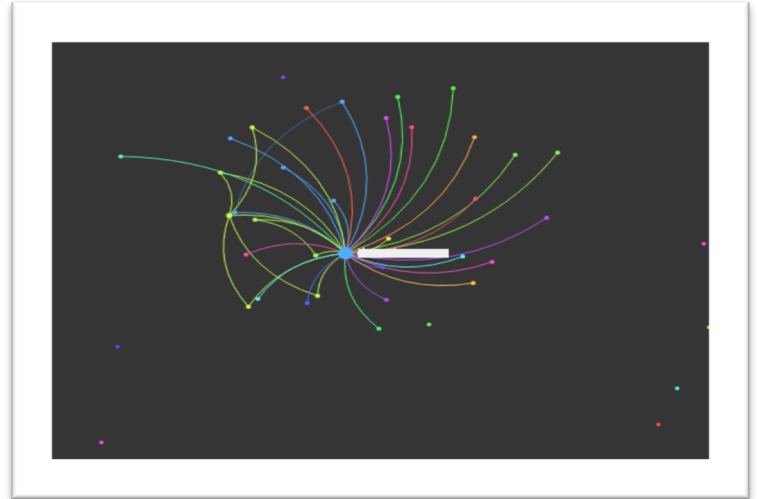
Content analysis on CN-BIA data. According to the content analysis, the nature of the tweets was mainly promotional encouraging people to come to check out the movie and activities going on before the movie (see table 10). Information sharing was the primary purpose of the tweets collected about the movie event. According to the coding for the nature of the tweets, there were few conversational tweets found. There were not many tweets classified as information seeking posts. Very few users tweeted questions about the Movie Night event. Although other users were tweeting about the event, there were not many tweets found showing CN-BIA interacting with users.

Table 10

Nature and Purpose of CN-BIA data

Natural of Tweets	Total Tweets	Purpose of Tweets	Total Tweets
Conversational	19	Information sharing	137
Promotional	131	Information seeking	3
Informational	3	Engagement/ relationship building	13
Unclassified	0	Other	0

Descriptive frequency analysis on CN-BIA data. The Movie Night event took place on eight consecutive Wednesday's: July 3, July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31, August 7, August 14 and August 21.The frequency of Twitter posts show that the majority of the tweets were posted on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between July 3 – August 21 (see graph 1). Graph 2 displays the frequency of tweets by the BIA and shows that most tweets were posted on the days the events took place and the day after the events: Wednesday and Thursdays. When looking at tweets posted by anyone other than the BIA the most common days were events days: Wednesdays (see graph 3).

Graph 1

All Tweets for CN-BIA Movie Night Event
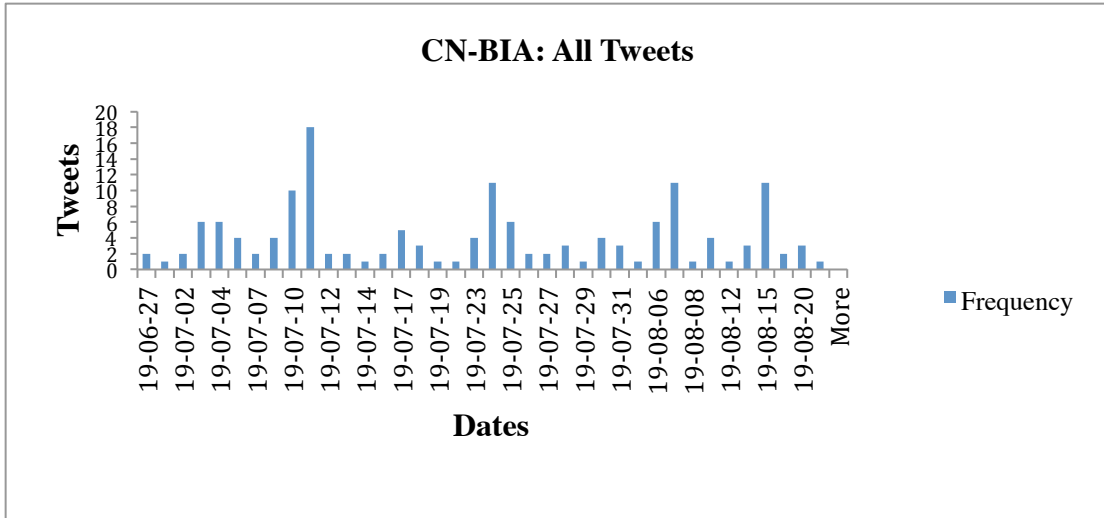
Graph 2

Only CN-BIA Tweets Movie Night Event
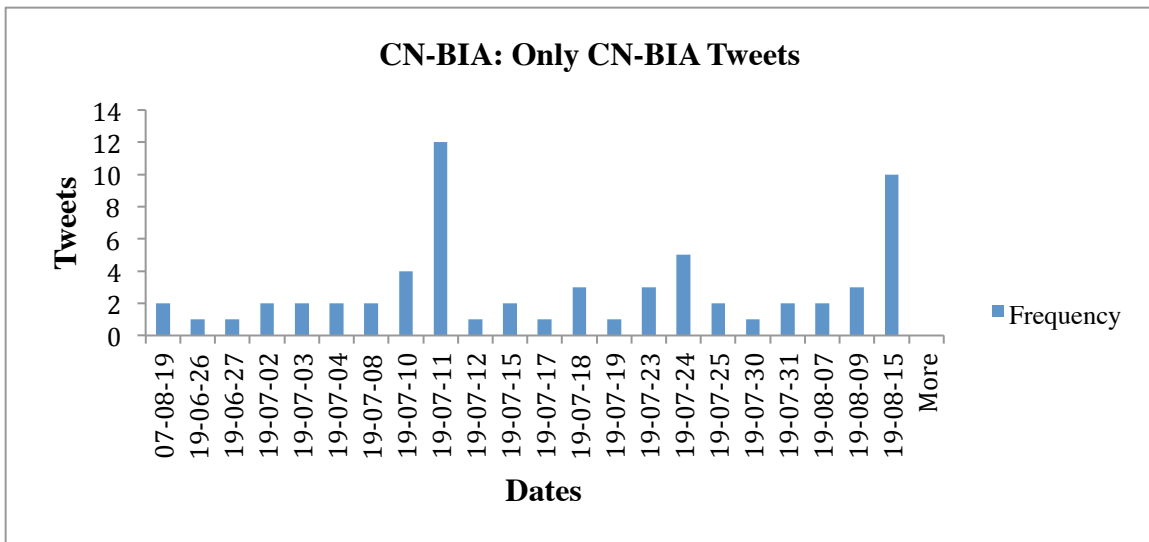
Graph 3

All other tweets excluding CN-BIA Tweets Move Night Event

CN-BIA: Excluding CN-BIA Tweets
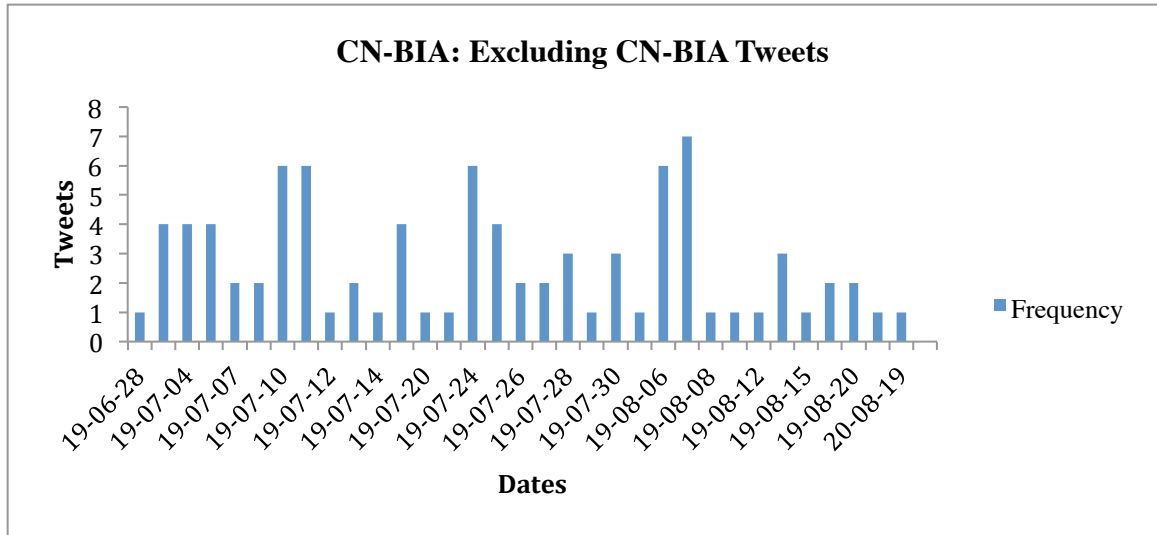
Social network analysis on MR-BIA data. Tweets were collected for the MR-BIA event that had both "@MR-BIA" and the word "market" within the tweet. The word market was chosen to ensure the tweets collected would be relevant to the farmer's market. The farmer's market took place for 18 consecutive Wednesdays from June 5 to October 2, 2019. The dates of the farmer's market were: June 5, June 12, June 19, June 26, July 3, July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31, August 7, August 14, August 21, August 28, September 4, September 11, September 18, September 25 and October 2.

The main node clusters was the BIA (see table 11). The second and third node clusters were from city organizations promoting the event. These two Twitter accounts have a high follower base, and their tweets were centralized on information sharing and promotional posts about the farmer's market. Although two large profile accounts were tweeting about the farmer's

market, there were no two-way conversations between them and a clear division between the three major node clusters. There were not many two-way conversations found in the network. The majority of the tweets were one-way conversations.

Table 11

MR-BIA Top Three Major Node Clusters

Twitter Account	MR-BIA Twitter account	City Twitter account where BIA is located	City tourism Twitter account where the BIA is located
Total tweets collected	52	8	5
Current followers	6628	16,000	5291
Current following	732	547	909

When exploring the network properties of the Netlytic visualization created for MR-BIA data the following was discovered about each of the properties (see table 12):

MR-BIA density. This property shows the value 0.033240 is far from 1 and closer to 0 showing that there is almost no connection between the major node network clusters collected.

MR-BIA reciprocity. This property shows the value 0.07500 is close to 0 showing that there are not many two-way conversations between Twitter users; there were more ones-sided conversations.

MR-BIA centralization. This property shows the value 0.3955200 is closer to 0 than 1 showing the network is decentralized and information flows more freely between Twitter users.

MR-BIA modularity. This property shows the value 0.509500 is higher than .5 indicating clear divisions between communities represented by the node clusters.

Table 12

MR-BIA Netlytic Network Properties

Network Properties	
Density	0.033240
Reciprocity	0.07500
Centralization	0.3955200
Modularity	0.509500
Total tweets collected:	185

Figure 4. Netlytic illustration created for

MR-BIA data (Nelytic, 2021)
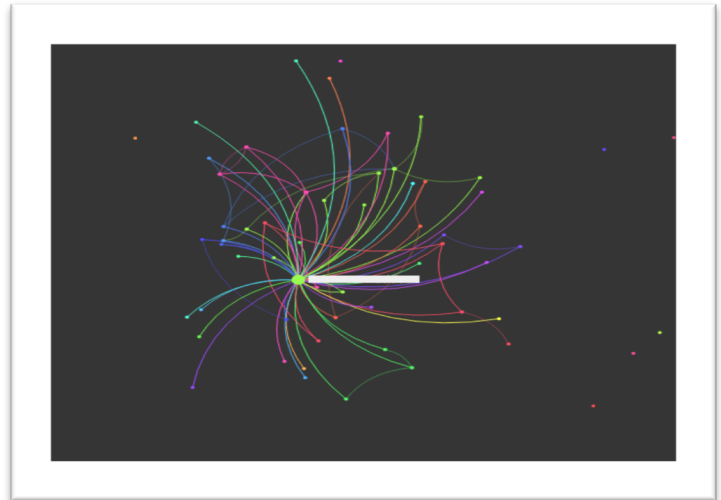
Content analysis on MR-BIA data. After conducting the content analysis, it was clear that the tweets' nature was mainly promotional, highlighting what was sold at the farmer's market and describing activities going on (see table 13). The purpose of the tweets was often information sharing about the farmer's market. There were also some Tweets coded to engage and build relationships. The nature of the conversational tweets was mainly among users reaching out and sharing their experiences with MR-BIA and businesses and what they bought at the farmer's market. Some of the tweets collected were seeking information from people who had questions about the farmer's market. A few Twitter users asked certain vendors if the farmer's market was canceled due to the weather and COVID restrictions.

Table 13

Nature and Purpose of MR-BIA Data

Natural of Tweets	Total Tweets	Purpose of Tweets	Total Tweets
Conversational	52	Information sharing	127
Promotional	109	Information seeking	15
Informational	16	Engagement/ relationship building	35
Unclassified	8	Other	8

Descriptive frequency analysis on MR-BIA data. Overall the majority of the tweets were posted on Wednesdays (see graph 4) with June 19th having the most tweets. June 19 was the third farmer's market event. Tweets occurred more often in August than in other June, July, September or October. When looking at only tweets posted by the BIA (see graph 5), there were only 20 tweets were collected during the 2019 farmer's market season and majority of the tweets were posted on Wednesdays, the day of the farmer's market took place. Despite MR-BIA posting very little, there was a high volume of tweets by other Twitter users on Wednesdays and Fridays; the day of the farmer's market events and two days after the farmer's market event (see graph 6).

Graph 4

All the Tweets for MR-BIA Farmer's Market Event
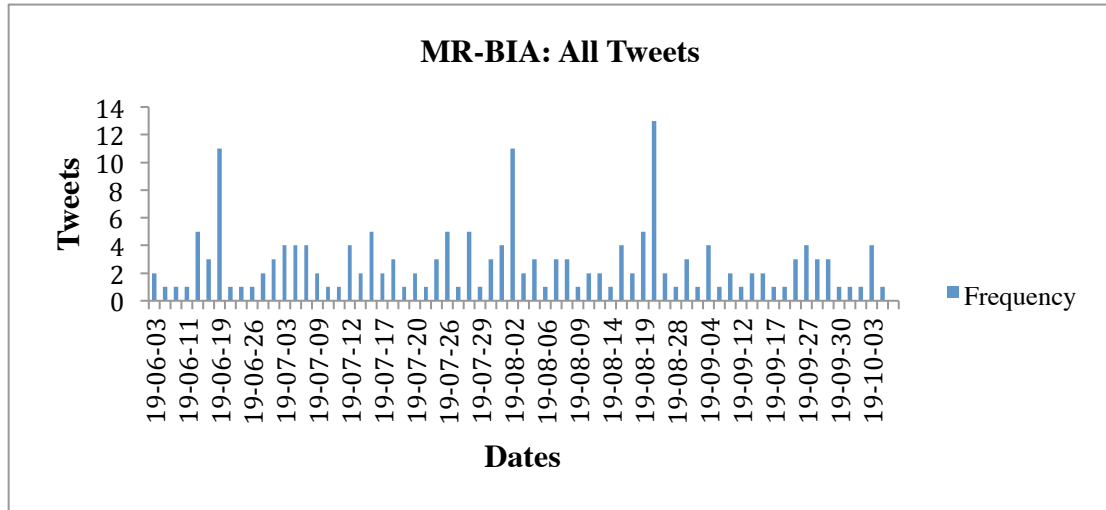
Graph 5

Only MR-BIA Tweets Farmer's Marker Event
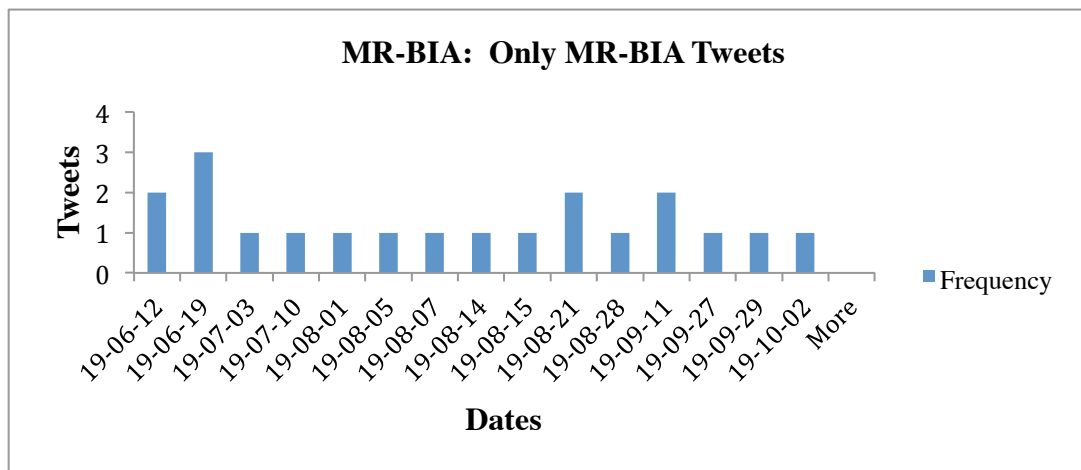
Graph 6

All Tweets Excluding MR-BIA Tweets Farmer's Market Event

MR-BIA: Excluding MR-BIA Tweets
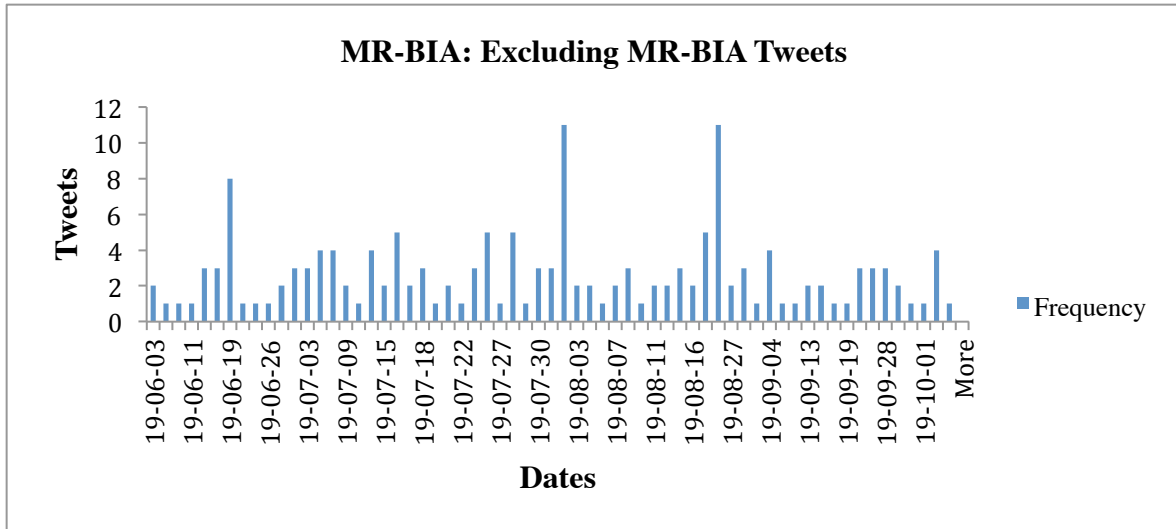
Social network analysis on BM-BID data. Tweets were collected that had "@BM-BID" account and either the word "plaza" or "square" within the tweet. The summer plaza event took place six days a week from Monday – Saturday from June 3- August 31, 2019. The words "plaza" or "square" were chosen because the summer events are held in the downtown plaza and square area. Using "plaza" or "square" as keywords ensured the tweets collected were relevant to the event.

By exploring the major node clusters the findings show the BID-BM created the largest cluster (see table 14). The two other main node clusters were by the city's Twitter account and another local BID's Twitter account. These two Twitter accounts have a high follower base and their tweets were predominantly information sharing. There were not many two-way conversations found within the node clusters.

Table 14

BM-BID Top Three Major Node Clusters

Twitter Account	BM-BID Twitter account	City's Twitter account where BID is located	A different BID Twitter account (this BID is found close to the BM-BID)
Total tweets collected	161	41	24
Current followers	13,000	57, 700	1371
Current following	1137	382	1826

When exploring the network properties of the Netlytic visualization created for BM-BID the following four properties were found (see table 15):

BM-BID density. This property shows the value 0.018950 is far from 1 and closer to 0 showing that there is almost no connection between the major node network cluster collected.

BM-BID reciprocity. This property shows the value 0.076730 is close to 0 showing that there are not many two-way conversations between Twitter users; there were more ones-sided conversations.

BM-BID centralization. This property shows the value 0.454300 is closer to 0 than 1 showing the network is decentralized and information flows more freely between Twitter users.

BM-BID modularity. This property shows the value 0.4776200 is lower than 0.5 showing there are not many clusters in the visualization. This could be from the result of very small data collected for this time frame.

Table 15

BM-BID Netlytic Network Properties

Network Properties	
Density	0.018950
Reciprocity	0.076730
Centralization	0.454300
Modularity	0.4776200
Total tweets collected:	443

Figure 5. Netlytic illustration created for

BM-BID data (Nelytic, 2021)

Content analysis on BM-BID data. According to the content analysis, the most common nature of the tweets was promotional. The majority of the tweets collected promoted activities that were taking place in the downtown area (see table 16). The purpose of a majority of the tweets was information sharing. Many tweets posted were coded as information sharing about the summer event. There were 25 tweets coded as information seeking. Some Twitter users asked questions about specific activities going on and downtown accommodations, and where to park. A large number of tweets were coded as engaging and building relationships. Many conversational tweets were collected, users were engaging with each other about the summer downtown activities. Users were tagging other Twitter users in their posts and responding to other tweets.

Table 16

Nature and Purpose of BM-BID Data

Natural of Tweets	Total Tweets	Purpose of Tweets	Total Tweets
Conversational	151	Information sharing	267
Promotional	255	Information seeking	25
Informational	12	Engagement/ relationship building	126
Unclassified	25	Other	25

Descriptive frequency analysis on BM-BID data. The first two weeks in June saw the most tweets overall, with a peak on June 8. This summer plaza event took place six days a week from Monday – Saturday from June 3- August 31, 2019. June 8 was a busy Saturday with a variety of programs that took place in the downtown plaza. Despite the significant number of tweets collected on June 8, only three Tweets were made by the BID organization, and other users made 51 tweets. The BM-BID Twitter activity consisted of one to three posts every few days (graph 8) about the summer plaza event throughout the summer. The BM-BID posted the most during June and the least in August (graph 9). When looking at tweets excluding BM-BID tweets, the most tweets were collected in June, and the least amount of tweets were posted in July (graph 10). Graph 8 shows that the majority of tweets were posted by the BM-BIA (graph 9), and other Twitter accounts (graph 10) were on Thursdays during the summer plaza events.

Graph 7

All the Tweets for BM-BID Summer Plaza Event
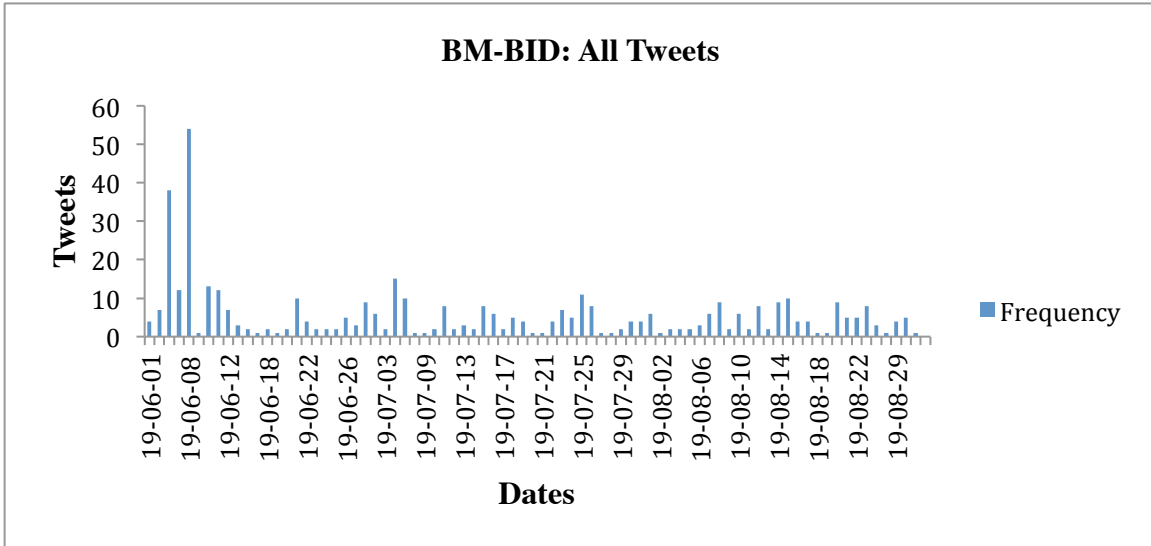
Graph 8

Only BM-BID Tweets Summer Plaza Event
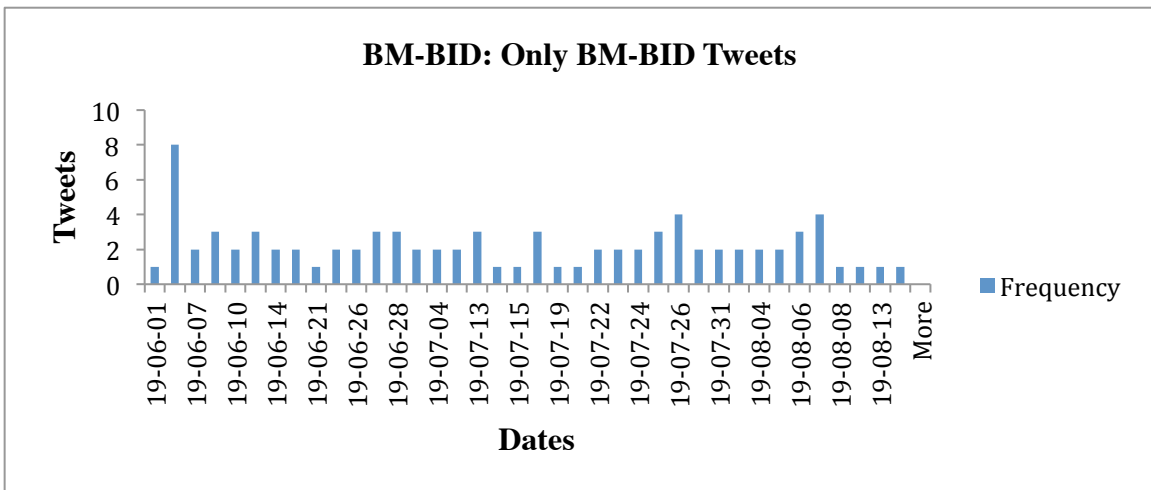
Graph 9

All Tweets Excluding BM-BID Tweets Summer Plaza Event
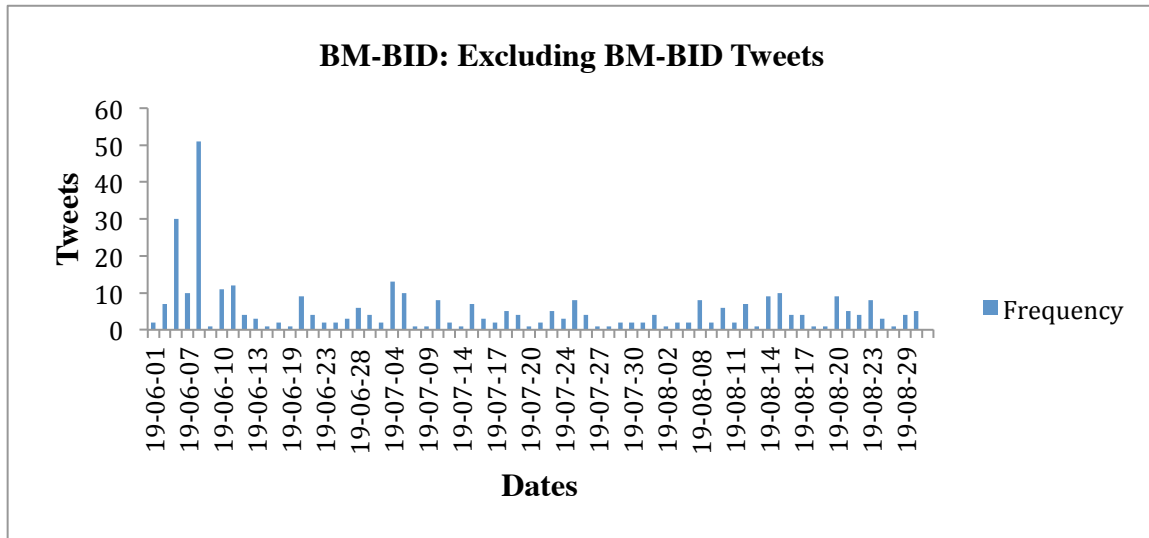
Social network analysis on KPJM-BIA data. Tweets were collected that had both "@KPJM-BIA" and either words "summer" or "promenade" within the tweet. The words "summer" and "promenade" were both chosen to ensure tweets collected were relevant to the event. The summer promenade event took place from May 28 to August 30, 2019. The event ran four days a week from Tuesday to Friday during the afternoon.

By exploring the major node clusters KPJM-BIA produced the largest node cluster in the network (see table 17). The two other main node clusters were from personal accounts. One of the main clusters was created by a person who has a high number of followers and works as a city planner. Their posts were mainly promotional posts about activities going on in the downtown area. The other major post was by a local resident who works downtown and enjoys

attending city events. They mainly tweeted about their experiences at the summer promenade events.

Table 17

KPJM-BIA Top Three Major Node Clusters

Twitter Account	KPJM-BIA Twitter account	Personal Twitter account of someone who works at city planning for the BIA's city	Personal Twitter account from someone who lives in the BIA's city
Total tweets collected	103	32	9
Current followers	9185	11, 300	350
Current following	615	1084	927

When exploring the network properties of the Netlytic visualization created for KPJM-BIA data the following properties were discussed (see table 18):

KPJM-BIA density. This property shows the value 0.031910 is far from 1 and closer to 0 showing that there is almost no connection between the major node network clusters collected.

KPJM-BIA reciprocity. This property shows the value 0.211100 is close to 0 showing that there are not many two-way conversations between Twitter users; there were more ones-sided conversations.

KPJM-BIA centralization. This property shows the value 0.539500 is closer to 1 than 0 suggests there are a few central participants who dominate the flow of information in the network

KPJM-BIA modularity. This property shows the value 0.480200 is higher than .5 indicating clear divisions between communities represented by the node clusters.

Table 18

KPJM-BIA Netlytic Network Properties

Netlytic Properties	
Density	0.031910
Reciprocity	0.211100
Centralization	0.539500
Modularity	0.480200
Total tweets collected:	266

Figure 6. Netlytic illustration created for

KPJM-BIA data (Nelytic, 2021)
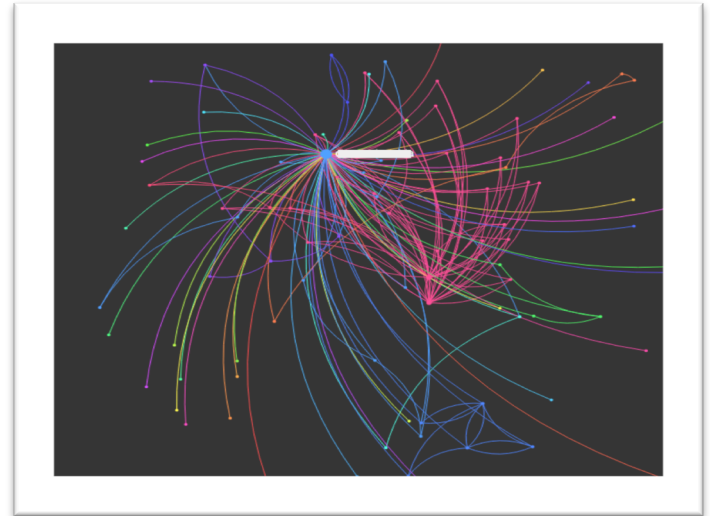
Content analysis on KPJM-BIA data. The content analysis shows the tweets collected were mainly promotional in nature about the entertainment and activities happening at the event (see table 19). Information sharing about the event was the most common purpose. There were conversational tweets collected that showed some two-way conversations between Twitter users regarding the event. Engaging in relationship building purposes was found within 41 tweets collected. Since the summer promenade events are tailored to people who work downtown, many regulars attend during their lunch break. There were many tweets posted about people's experiences and enjoyment at the afternoon events. There were some information seeking tweets collected by people asking the BIA and other businesses about activities going on at the summer promenade.

Table 19

Nature and Purpose of KPJM-BIA Data

Natural of Tweets	Total Tweets	Purpose of Tweets	Total Tweets
Conversational	57	Information sharing	206
Promotional	198	Information seeking	11
Informational	3	Engagement/ relationship building	41
Unclassified	8	Other	8

Descriptive frequency analysis on KPJM-BIA data. Overall, The highest number of tweets was posted in July, with another cluster posted before the summer plaza event. The summer promenade event took place from May 28 to August 30, 2019. The summer event would run four days a week from Tuesday to Friday. When exploring tweets by others, the most frequent days for tweets were posted on Friday, the last day of the weekly events. The BIA posted the most tweets about the event on July 12, with 12 tweets collected (graph 11). Other users, excluding the BIA, posted the most two days later, on July 14, with 20 tweets collected (graph 12). The following day there were nine tweets collected from other users (graph 12). The BIA posted most tweets on Tuesday, the first day of the week the summer events took place. When looking at posts made by the BIA, June had the highest number of tweets, and May had the least tweets. Tweets collected from others experienced the most tweets in July and the least amount of tweets in May.

Graph 10

All Tweets for KPJM-BIA Summer Promenade Event
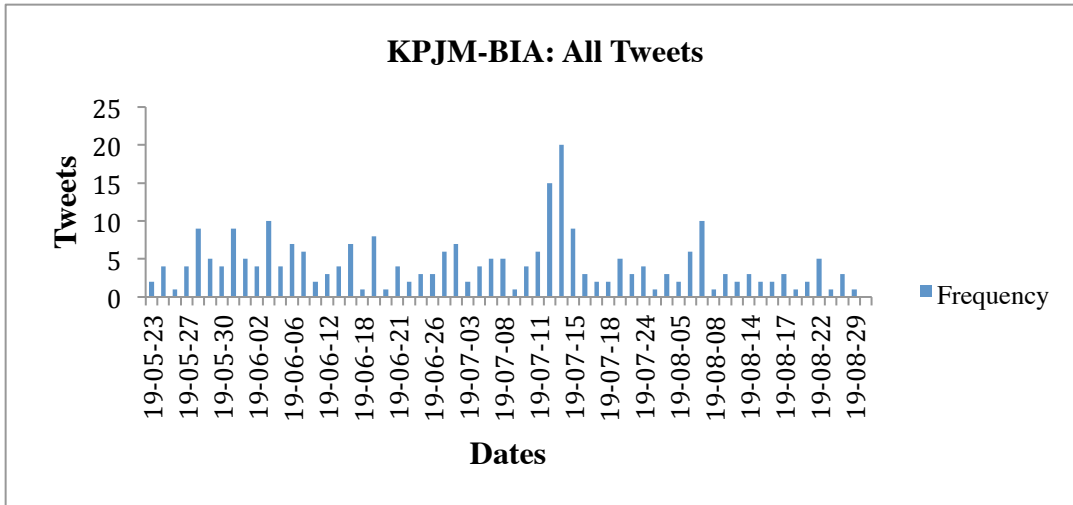
Graph 11

Only KPJM-BIA Tweets Summer Promenade Event
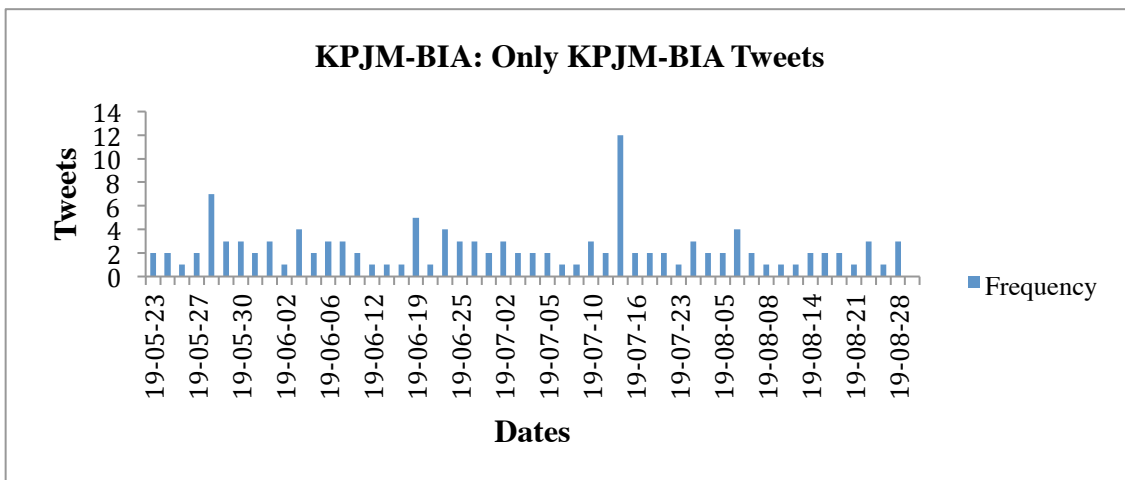
Graph 12

All tweets excluding KPJM-BIA tweets Summer Promenade Event
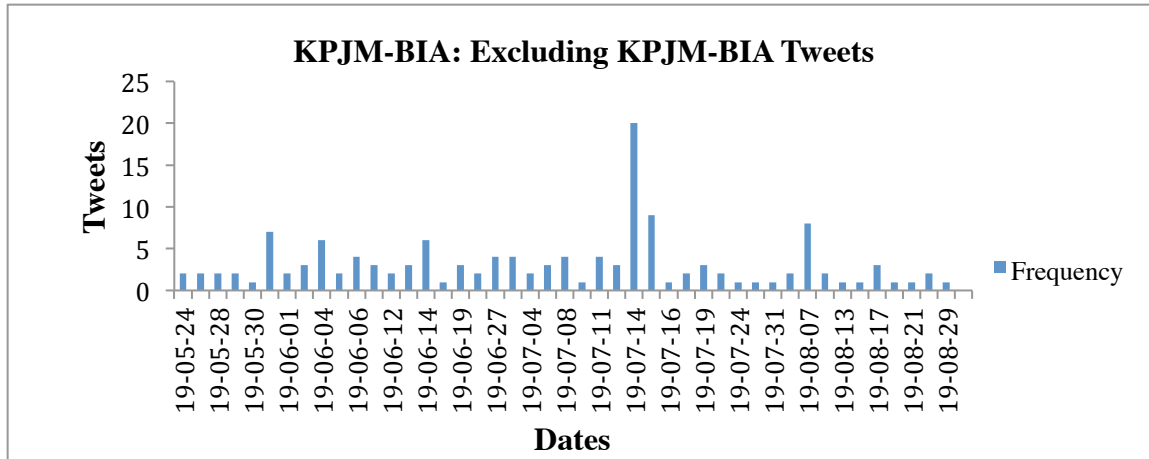
Summary of Social Media Analysis Findings

To address research question two, the researcher explored how the BIA organizations use SM to engage customers during events. Social network analysis, content analysis, and descriptive data frequency analysis provided insight. Since this study was exploratory, the researcher intended to gain knowledge about how BIA organizations use events to engage with their customers and how SM facilitates the engagement. The social network analysis displays interaction among Twitter users on the Netlytic social networks. Although forms of interaction and engagement were found, there were not many two-way conversations found according to the network properties descriptions. The content analysis shows that most tweets collected were categorized as promotional and informational sharing. There were not many tweets coded as conversations or relationship building. The descriptive data frequency analysis illustrates that most of the tweets collected were posted on the day events between the BIA organizations and other Twitter users.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The previous chapter shows the findings obtained through mixed-methods analysis, which provided answers to the research questions posed. The findings from the interviews suggests events can make a designated area more appealing by providing economic opportunities, promoting inclusivity, enhancing the designated areas' image, and promoting a safe place for customers to visit. Partnerships have been recognized in the findings as important dynamic relationship between BIA organizations and other organizations and local government. The research shows that according to the interviews, Twitter was used engage with customers; however, the quantitative social media analysis shows that BIA organizations might have a simple view of social media and these organizations might not be using Twitter to it's full potential. The study displays a lack of two-way conversations and interactions between BIA organizations and customers on Twitter. This chapter explores the role community events play in engaging customers and how Twitter contributes to this during community event production.

The researcher used qualitative thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews to explore event production by the six BIA employees who participated in the study to better understand how events may (or may not) contribute to customer engagement. Themes and sub-themes emerged through the thematic analysis regarding the BIA employee's perspectives towards community events and customer engagement. The literature guided the creation of open-ended interview questions, which were used to create meaningful conversations with participants regarding event production and SM usage (Braun & Clark, 2013).

Research question two explored how BIA organizations use Twitter during event production to engage with their customers (Sashi, 2012). Social network analysis showed if there were forms of interactions and engagement within the social media data (Gruzd & Mai,

2018). The content analysis displayed the types of nature and purpose within the Twitter posts (MacKay et al., 2017). A descriptive frequency analysis was done to measure the amount of tweets being posted during events.

Event Hosting By BIA Organizations

In the literature, numerous studies used Derrett's (2003) definition of community development. Derrett (2003) discusses the value of festivals and how festivals can enhance a community by offering an opportunity for a sense of belonging, support, empowerment, participation, and safety, residents gain a sense of community (Gross, 2005; Van Winkle, Woosnam & Mohammed, 2013; Johnson & Glover 2013). This study builds on Derrett's (2003) research by offering a better understanding how organizations, such as BIA organizations can contribute to community development by working with business owners to host events in a designated area. The findings from the interviews show that community events hosted by the BIA can assist communities by providing a platform for businesses to interact with customers. As BIA organizations represent various businesses in their designated area, the interviews show that BIA organizations can facilitate support and cooperation among businesses in a designated area when hosting community events (Gross, 2005).

The interviews from this study build on Randell and Koster's (2005) study about the importance of tourism attractions for community development and Takahashi's (2017) study on how BIA organizations use events and other promotional activities to attract tourists to their destination. The thematic analysis in this study show that an essential component of hosting community events is that they offer an attraction that bring people to the designated area. Each community chosen for Randell and Koster's (2005) case study used tourism for community

development and saw a significant economic impact. Their study undertook five case studies in small towns in Saskatchewan and only looked at mural-based tourism attractions in the community (Randell & Koster, 2005). The findings in this study build upon Randell and Koster's (2005) study by including communities across Canada and how the communities use events to attract people to a designated area. Through the thematic analysis, economic impact and enhancing community image by event attractions were noted. As BIA organizations work for various businesses located in a specific area, these arm's length organizations can be responsible for enhancing the community image through event productions.

Events as a Means to Engage Customers

According to the findings from the interviews, the BIA organizations recognize engagement by the number of people attending their weekly summer events. The interview discussions also suggest people might come to the event numerous times during the summer, establishing strong customer engagement and building relationships between the business and consumer. As reported by Brodie & Hollebeek's (2011) definition, customer engagement is a cycle involving processes over time and "may emerge at different levels of intensity over time, thus reflecting distinct engagement states" (p. 105). The findings from the social media analysis show that the participants, regardless of the BIA organization's characteristics (size or location), were interested in enhancing customer engagement. The findings from the study are somewhat different from what Gross (2005) found, where large and small BIA organizations fulfill different goals and objectives and that smaller BIA organizations do not tend to focus on hosting events. The thematic analysis for this research showed that large BIA organizations are interested in attracting locals and tourists, where the smaller BIA organizations used events primarily for

their locals. Gross's (2005) study focused on the small BIA's economic disadvantage compared to larger BIA organizations. This study demonstrated that although smaller BIA organizations have fewer economic resources, these organizations can still engage with customers and successfully host an event and gain benefits.

Hosting community events has been shown to enhance the designated area (Derrett, 2003). The interviews discussions showed that not all businesses within the BIA benefited from hosting events. Although BIA organizations host various events in their designated area, some businesses do not receive benefits compared to other business during event production (Gross, 2005). This study suggests that all businesses in designated areas see various benefits from events and direct economic increase is not the only benefit of event production. It is perceived by the BIA organizations in the findings that not all businesses receive economic impacts when events are hosted. The findings from the thematic analysis and social media analysis commiserate with Derrett's (2003) work illustrating the importance of hosting events for community engagement and development. The semi-structured interviews stated BIA organizations advocate for businesses to join their BIA community regardless of what type of business or service they sell (personal communication, October 29, 2020). It could be suggested for reluctant business owner to join a local BIA and participate in BIA event production to contribute to the designated area and attract foot traffic. Although they might not see economic impacts during the event, there are other benefits of hosting events, such as enhancing community image and promote safety and inclusion (Gross, 2005).

Hernandez and Jones (2005) discussed the five broad areas where BIA organizations can contribute to business communities. These are marketing, business recruitment, streetscape improvement, other amenities, seasonal decorations, and special events. In this study, the

effective use of partnerships within the community were considered essential to can help BIA organizations enhance their interaction with community members and help create successful events. The findings from the thematic analysis recommend adding partnership as the sixth broad area of Hernandez and Jones's (2005) BIA organizations descriptive table. Partnerships establish a synergistic relationship between organizations and create relationships where competition and cooperation co-exist (Morrison, 2013). A few scholars have adopted the inter-organizational relationships (IOR) theory involving collaboration between community organizations that can lead to a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to issues that can be addressed within one organization (Stokes, 2006). Some scholars build on stakeholder theories (Getz et al., 2007) to describe the organizations and individuals involved in event production and managing events. Below is a revised descriptive table for Hernandez & Jones's (2005) five board areas of BIA organizations, including partnership as one of the broad areas (table 20).

Table 20

Revised Model of Broad Areas of BIA Organizations

Five broad areas of BIA Hernandez & Jones (2005)	Definition of broad areas of BIA organizations
Marketing	Understanding who are customers are and creating effective promotions to retain and expand the customer base using SM platforms and adds, radio and TV commercials, newspaper adds and billboard apps (Hernandez & Jones, 2005).
Business recruitment	Working with property owners to ensure that available space is occupied and that an optimum business and service mix is achieved and maintained (Hernandez & Jones, 2005).
Streetscape improvement and other amenities	Providing for more customer-friendly lighting signage, street furniture, planters, banners and sidewalk treatment (Hernandez & Jones, 2005).
Seasonal decorations	Creating a unique and pleasant environment for customer and staff of all businesses, retail and non-retail through the use of decorations that are appropriate for the season and holiday (Hernandez & Jones, 2005).
Special events	Organizations and partnering in special events that highlight the unique attributes of the area and increase customer visits (Hernandez & Jones, p. 796, 2005)
Partnerships	Establishing synergistic relationships among organizations and creating relationships where competition and cooperation co-exist (Morrison, 2013) Involving collaboration between organizations and businesses to approach complex problems and situations within the designated area by the BIA (Stokes, 2006).

Adding partnerships as the sixth broad area within BIA organizations to Hernandez and Jones's (2005) descriptive table creates an area that addresses business relationships within the designated area. This study explored the roles BIA organizations have with the businesses they represent and how BIA organizations can facilitate partnerships between the businesses within their designated area. Although SM is categorized under the marketing in Hernandez and Jones's (2005) study, SM can also share information about current events and situations happening in a designated area. Specifically, during the COVID-19 global pandemic, BIA organizations have relied on SM to inform the public about new rules, restrictions, and updates on events, hospitality, and retail services. Maecker et al. (2016) explained that if companies take appropriate actions to respond promptly, they display to the consumer that they are sensitive to their concerns. Effectiveness, immediacy, and SM demands emerged into the sub-themes in the findings connecting to Maecker et al.'s (2016) study. Participants presented a sense of importance to be active on SM during event production in the interviews.

> Yeah. So, basically, we do get a lot of Twitter messages, which we obviously
> respond to them as quickly as possible. And a big portion of that quick response is that
> everyone have quick access to SM. So, we want answer questions really fast.
> And they're sometimes the answers are not public if people send us personal messages
> other times they are comments or tweets that we will reply publicly (personal
> communication, November 5, 2020).

How Social Media Facilitates Customer Engagement

The literature showed that SM shifts the focus from the organization to consumer and that the role of the organization on SM should be to create experiences and dialogue between the provider and the consumers (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). SM content should be focused less

on pushing information out to consumers and more on creating two-way conversations with consumers by responding to posts on their experiences and answering questions they may have (Woodcock et al., 2011). Studies show consumers are involved in SM because they wish to connect, collaborate, and interact with other users (Ang, 2011a). In this study, most of the social networks showed low density, meaning almost no connection between the major node network clusters collected from each of the four events (Gruzd et al., 2016). These findings are essential for BIA organizations to consider. With the knowledge gained here supports Wang & Fang (2012) study , BIA organizations should shift their SM strategies on Twitter, engage in more meaningful relationships, and interact with their consumers.

The findings also build on MacKay et al.'s (2016) study on exploring the nature, purpose, and degree of SM before, during, and after festivals to understand the multi-phase festival experience. This study incorporated a descriptive frequency analysis to compare the number of tweets posted during event production between BIA organizations and other online users. Using MacKay et al.'s (2016) coding scheme and performing descriptive frequency analysis, the researcher made connections and discovered different aspects of customer engagement. Instead of focusing on the three-time periods of before, during, and after event production similar to MacKay et al.'s (2016) study, this research focused on comparing BIA tweets to their consumer's tweets to see customer engagement was established. Separating descriptive data between BIA posts and others posting about the event allowed the research to see if BIA and other Twitter users were posting at similar times during event production.

Studies show that an interaction between the seller and customer can create customer engagement if providers are aware when their customers are online. Are engaged in SM that allows them to interact and create customer engagement (Sashi, 2012; Harrigan et al., 2017). It

could be suggested that providers who are not using or prioritizing various SM platforms miss out on opportunities to engage with the consumers who only use the other SM platform, such as Twitter. If BIA organizations are not prioritizing SM, they are not using SM to its fullest potential. According to the literature, Twitter can be an effective way to market community events and share information and can also be an effective engagement channel between providers and consumers, according to the literature (Hvass & Munar, 2012). It is recommended from this study that BIA organizations should put SM as a priority to market events and engage with their customers.

This study suggests that BIA organizations are not using Twitter to its full capability by creating more robust engagement and connections between consumers online. Twitter can be an effective way to market community events and share information; however Twitter can also be an effective engagement channel between providers and consumers (Hvass & Munar, 2012). Although this study focused on exploring social media as a form of interaction based on Sashi (2012) and Harrigan et al. (2017) models, other dimensions of customer engagement were found within the findings. According to Sashi (2012), achieving customer engagement requires facilitating customers' transition through seven stages in the customer engagement cycle: connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement (table 21). A mix of digital and non-digital technologies are required for each stage of the customer engagement cycle. The interviews and the findings from the SM analysis presented a few of the seven dimensions from the customer engagement cycle, suggesting BIA organizations may have a simplistic view of customer engagement.

Table 21

Customer Engagement Cycle (Sashi, 2012)

Customer Engagement Cycle	Definition of the Stages
1. **Connection**	Connections bring sellers and customers together and established using both traditional offline methods like salespersons and new digital online methods like social networking (Sashi, 2012).
2. **Interaction**	Interaction can be seen through communication or direct involvement between sellers and customer and can improve understanding of customer needs, and facilitate modifications to existing products or the development of new products to better satisfy these needs (Tikkanen et al., 2009).
3. **Satisfaction**	Satisfaction involves fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this and allowing sellers and customers to stay connected and to continue to interact with one another in the progress towards engagement (Oliver et al., 1997).
4. **Retention**	Retention refers to the ability of a seller and customers to retain its customers over some specified period. Retention can result from either overall satisfaction over time or highly positive emotions (Sashi, 2012).
5. **Commitment**	Commitment in a relationship has two major dimensions: affective commitment and calculative commitment (Gustafsson et al., 2005). **Calculative commitment** leads to higher levels of customer loyalty and enduring relationships with sellers. **Affective commitment** leads to higher levels of trust and emotional bonds in relationships with sellers (Sashi, 2012).
6. **Advocacy**	Advocacy is an activity by the seller that influences customer's decisions. If a company advocates for its customers, they will reciprocate with their trust, loyalty and purchases – either now or in the future (Urban, 2004).
7. **Engagement**	Engagement requires affective commitment and trust as well as commitment between sellers and customers. Engagement occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers. Customer engagement expands the role of customers by including them in the value adding process as co-creators of value (Sash, 2012).

The social network analysis, content analysis and descriptive frequency analysis findings provide evidence showing Sashi's (2012) connection and interaction dimensions. Through the interviews and SM data collected and analyzed, this study showed that BIA organizations rely on Twitter to help establish connections with customers and reach a broad audience. The dimension of connection was prevalent in both the interview findings and SM analysis findings. The interviews discussed how events are used as an attraction to bring people to the designated area. An event can act as a connection that brings sellers and customers together (Sashi, 2012; Maecker et al., 2016). The interviews also discussed using a variety of SM platforms to connect with their customers. Connections were also present in the SM analysis. Twitter was used to social network and connect with customers (Sashi, 2012).

Once connections are established, the customer can interact with the BIA organization's personnel and other customers (Sashi, 2012). The interaction dimension was displayed in the interview findings and social network analysis findings. This study suggested events could be used as a platform for BIA organizations to communicate with customers. The findings from the social media data contribute to Harrigan et al., (2017) study by showing some involvement in sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and feelings about their experiences between the BIA organizations and their customers that. Although evidence of interaction was found, most tweets collected were promotional and informational sharing posts. The limited interaction suggests BIA organizations have a simple value of interaction on Twitter.

BIA organizations can fulfill customer's expectations and needs through event production. Participants discussed focusing on the community's needs when hosting events, which is related to the satisfaction dimension noted above (Sashi, 2012). The participants explained the importance of pivoting to meet community members' needs to be successful.

Satisfaction was also evident in the SM analysis. Some tweets were coded as conversational and/ relationship building, suggesting positive interactions between BIA organizations and customers (Mackay et al., 2016). There were few two-way conversations in the social network analysis, suggesting that BIA organizations do not prioritize having online conversations with their customers.

The retention dimension was prevalent in the thematic analysis but not the SM analysis findings (Sashi, 2012). Most of the events discussed in this study were consecutive events during a specific period. Consecutive events allow customers the opportunity to attend the event repeatedly. Retention was present in the event production by the CN-BIA movie night events that occurred for eight consecutive Wednesday evenings, playing a different movie each week. Customers could attend the movie night event multiple times, building retention between the BIA and their customers (Brodie & Hollebeek, 2011). KPJM-BIA conducted weekly afternoon events that were tailored to people who worked downtown. Their central purpose was to get people out of the office and provide them with an attraction. Most people do not attend this summer afternoon event once, customers come throughout the week.

> The Gore Park Summer Promenade is a 14 week, four day a week, daytime
> festival that has food trucks, live entertainment and large-scale games. We kind of
> say it's like summer camp for office workers. So, kind of gives them a chance to go out at
> lunchtime and see some live music, bring their lunch, buy their lunch, get takeout. We've
> got a lot of engagements from locals that will come by a few times a week and employees
> who work downtown will often spend their lunch break at the Gore Park Summer
> Promenade. We see a lot of the same people coming out and checking out the festival
> (personal communication, October 29, 2020).

This study encourages hosting consecutive events that can gain retention with customers. There was no retention found within the SM analysis findings; this could be because most of the tweets collected mainly had promotional and information-sharing content (Mackay et al., 2016). The findings suggested that hosting consecutive events allows customers to come back and help build stronger relationships and thus building retention. Customers can be engaged by retaining them over a specific period and this can contribute to positive emotions and experiences (Sashi, 2012). The semi-structured interviews discussed the positive impacts organizations have hosting events that run for consecutive months and days of the week. For example, KPJM discussed the weekly summer event to give downtown office workers a place to go during their lunch break and often see the regular customers at their events (personal communication, November 7, 2020).

There were few examples of commitment found in the findings of the study. Calculative commitment described in Sashi's (2012) customer engagement cycle can lead to higher loyalty levels and ensure relationships with sellers (Sashi, 2012). The content in the tweets was not focused on building loyalty with their customers. Affective commitment can lead to greater trust and emotional bonds in the relationship between the BIA and their customers (Sashi, 2012). An affective commitment was not found in the thematic analysis interview findings or the SM analysis findings; this could be because BIA organizations have not established higher trust and emotional bonds with their customers. There were also examples of advocacy dimension found in the thematic analysis findings but not the SM analysis findings. The findings from the interviews show that BIA organizations want to influence their customers by promoting safety and enhancing the community image. Promoting safety and enhancing community image were sub-themes that emerged from the findings that connect to the advocacy dimension (Sashi, 2012).

So, the more people we can bring to our BID area, the more likely it is that people will come down here again, feel comfortable down here and then spend their money in the downtown area. A huge portion of offering, free events and programs is getting people comfortable and making them feel welcome downtown. And in the hopes that they will then spread that wealth into our businesses, but also spread that information to other people within the city and beyond to let them know that downtown is not this kind of scary place anymore. That it's a good, fun place to be (personal communication, November 5, 2020).

The participants discussed BIA organizations as an advocate for their designated area. Events can be used as an attraction to advocate for the community's needs. There seemed to be surface-level advocacy on SM analysis. Promotional and informational sharing about the event may influence customers to attend the event. According to the findings, engagement was limited and not used to full potential. Engagement requires both affective commitments as well as calculative commitment, and occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers. Customer engagement expands the role of customers by including them in the value-adding process as co-creators of value (Brodie & Hollebeek, 2011; Sashi, 2012). This last dimension was not represented in the findings suggesting that BIA organizations.

According to the findings from the social media analysis, engagement was limited within the Twitter data collected for the study. Engagement requires both affective commitments as well as calculative commitment, and occurs when customers have strong emotional bonds in relational exchanges with sellers (Sashi, 2012). Customer engagement expands the role of customers by including them in the value-adding process as co-creators of value (Brodie & Hollebeek, 2011). This last dimension was not present in the findings, suggesting that BIA organizations are not fully engaging with their customers to the best of their ability. Scholars

who want to explore customer engagement using Sashi's (2012) dimensions of customer engagement through SM usage can build on the findings from this research by exploring other social media platforms and engagement dimensions. BIA providers can use the findings in this study to help their organization establish strong customer engagement on social media platforms. Although the findings are based on Canadian BIA organizations and Twitter, the findings provide valuable insight on how BIA organizations interact with customers using events and Twitter. Overall, this chapter has incorporated existing community events, SM and customer engagement understandings to discuss the findings of this thesis to provide further insight for BIA organizations and customers with regards to event production and Twitter usage in producing customer engagement.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In this thesis, a better understanding of how BIA organizations engage customers through events and Twitter was achieved. Following a post-positivist framework, this mixed-methods study addressed how customer engagement can be facilitated through event production and Twitter activity. Limitations, recommendations, implications, and areas of future research are discussed in this chapter.

Limitations

Despite the efforts of the researcher to mitigate limitations, they still exist within this thesis and should be noted and considered when interpreting the findings. The current COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020 impacted this study. The pandemic produced a wide range of changes in daily life, rules and restrictions have been put into place by governments of countries worldwide to limit physical interaction and reduce transmission (Fritz et al., 2020). Large in-person events have not been possible in many areas throughout the past year. Studies have shown research has been greatly affected due to the pandemic (Zacks, 2020). The recent pandemic created some difficulty in participant recruitment for this study. There were many organizations who had automatic replies set to respond to email and therefore it was challenging to recruit participants. Many BIA organizations were closed or unavailable to participate due to large impacts of the pandemic, resulting in not all of Canada's five regions being presented in this study. The North and Eastern Canada regions were not represented in this study due lack of BIA organizations found and no responses from the participant invitations. This study only included employees who work for BIA organizations. The study did not include business owners or employees who work for a business represented by a BIA organization or customers who

attend events hosted by a BIA organization.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the pandemic may have impacted participants' perceptions of the role events and SM play in connecting with customers. BIA organizations have had to pivot and use their resources and supports to help businesses during this difficult time. As most large events were canceled starting in/ beginning in March 2020, the participants were asked to discuss an event between February 2019- February 2020. The participants in this study were interviewed in October- November of 2020. Given the gap in time, participant's recollection of specific details about the event may not have been as accurate as they may have otherwise been.

Social desirability bias may have been a limitation in the semi-structured interviews. This bias stems from research participants responding with what they believe to be desired answers to the interview questions (Fisher, 1993.) Participants might have wanted to please the researcher and therefore provided answers to reflect this. Bias is a limitation that occurs throughout self-report measures of data collection in the social sciences (Fisher, 1993). However, the researcher mitigated the social desirability effect during the semi-structured interviews. Participants were told that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions, and BIA organizations were encouraged to voice their honest opinions and knowledge about events and SM (see Appendix G: Interview Guide).

SM platforms continue to evolve. The data was collected from tweets posted on Twitter between May- September 2019. According to Olafson (2021), since 2019, new Twitter updates encourage users to add their thoughts and opinions to Tweets. In early September 2020, a Twitter update was made to help users better understand why something is trending in the explore section to create more attention to the trending topics. Recently, replying to tweets has become

easier, and users can now see entire conversations (Olafson 2021). These additional interaction opportunities were not discussed in this study because the recent updates were not created when tweets were posted and collected for the SM analysis. These features present new ways for consumers and providers to interact with BIA organizations by having more accessible access to understand online conversations.

Participants also discussed using Facebook and Instagram as a way to promote their events and engage with customers but due to resource limitations these were not included in this study. Some participants discussed that Facebook and Instagram are prioritized SM platforms, and they do not use Twitter very much (personal communications, November 5, 2020). As of September 2019, Netlytic stopped allowing Facebook and Instagram to be collected from the platform (Netlytic, 2019). The research showed that not all BIA organizations studied used Twitter or used SM as their primary tool to engage with customers. For example, QM-BIA and JR-BIA were not active on Twitter. JR and QM both stated the organization is not active on Twitter and mainly uses Instagram and Facebook (personal communication, October 29, 2019).

Recommendations

This section provides recommendations based on existing literature regarding customer engagement and Twitter in a community event context to diminish perceived drawbacks and enhance best practices (Sashi 2012; MacKay et al., 2017). Through this mixed-methods research, an understanding of the ways that BIA organizations and their customers are interacting on Twitter was gained. Guided by Harrigan et al.'s (2017) interaction dimension of customer engagement and Sashi's (2012) customer engagement cycle, this research identifies opportunities for improving how SM platforms are used to facilitate customer engagement at events.

The research showed the importance of creating partnerships within the community to help enhance events. Although partnership roles have recently changed from conducting events to relaying pandemic information, the enhanced role of BIA and partnership with governments and community organizations should continue once event production can take place. Establishing these synergistic relationships among community organizations, governments, and locals can create collaboration to address complex problems, situations, and events within the designated area by the BIA (Stokes, 2006). Engaging with the community by asking what they need assistance with can provide the BIA with information to help local businesses and the members of their community. Creating partnerships can establish more resources for BIA organizations, businesses, and customers. Partnerships can also help BIA organizations reach a larger audience when working with other community organizations.

Another recommendation for BIA organizations is to enhance their levels of customer engagement on Twitter and other social media platforms. The findings from the social media analysis suggest that the organizations are not using Twitter to its fullest potential to engage with customers. This study provides recommendations for BIA organizations to engage more with their customers on Twitter. Studies have shown positive impacts when providers interact and connect with their consumers. Urban (2004) discusses how providers can advocate for their customers by promoting goods and services that communities need. Advocating for the customers can build trust, loyalty, and purchases for now or in the future (Sashi, 2012). Even with the lack of events currently taking place in Canada, BIA organizations can create effective interaction on online with costumers by responding to SM posts and encouraging two-way conversations (Harrigan et al., 2017). This research can effect the way BIA organizations use Twitter to enhance customer engagement and serve their consumers. The study supports

successful practices for community events and customer engagement and has contributed to knowledge surrounding BIA organization conducting customer engagement through events and Twitter, which are valued research areas for both scholars and practitioners (Sashi, 2012; Mackay et al., 2017; Harrigan et al., 2017).

Finally, BIA organizations should consider prioritizing consecutive events over hosting one-day events. This could lead to greater customer retention. Retention can enhance customer engagement by retaining customers over a specific period, resulting in highly positive emotions and experiences (Sashi, 2012). The interviews from the study suggests that consecutive events can efficiently create retention and build more robust customer engagement (Harrigan et al., 2017). This research can support successful practices for customer engagement development and has contributed to knowledge surrounding BIA organizations, community events, and SM usage, which can be valued research areas for both scholars and practitioners (Derrett, 2003; Sashi, 2013, MacKay et al., 2017; Harrigan et al., 2017).

Implications

This research has varied implications. This study provides more knowledge and enhances the understanding of BIA organizations, community events, Twitter, and customer engagement. Incorporating customer engagement through Twitter and events and interviewing employees who work for BIA organizations contributes to a needed understanding of how organizations interact with their customers (Hernandez & Jones, 2005). Heller Baird and Parasnis (2011) suggest SM will become a gateway and potentially the primary communication channel to connect providers with their customers. This study adds perspective to the BIA organization industry. In particular,

future research can explore BIA organizations Twitter engagement through creating performance measures and benchmarking ideologies (Gretzel et al., 2006).

This research has implications for general SM usage and knowledge. The findings from the social media analysis address if the interaction dimension of customer engagement is present between providers and customers on Twitter through categorizing the posts in quantitative content analysis (Sashi, 2012; MacKay et al., 2017; Harrigan et al., 2017). The study used both Harrigan et al. (2017) and Sashi's (2012) definitions of the interaction dimension to discover if customer engagement was present in the findings. The research brought together social network analysis using the Netlytic software, Maykay et al.'s (2017) study on content analysis and a descriptive frequency analysis to determine if customer engagement was found in the study. Combining these three analyses can help providers better understand how to interact with their customers to see if their organization is producing customer engagement (Brodie & Hollebeek, 2011).

Conducting semi-structured interviews offered the chance for the six BIA organizations to actively reflect on how their organizations use events and SM to interact with customers. The findings of this study encourage BIA providers to consider how they can create more efficient Twitter connections that offer customer value and build stronger relationships on Twitter (Heller Baird & Parasnis, 2011). This thesis provides insight into organization's general use of SM platforms and how they can enhance their customer engagement. The study adds implications to better understanding how BIA organizations facilitate events and use Twitter to produce customer engagement.

This research has provided implications for adding the concept of partnership to the broad areas of BIA organizations descriptive table from Hernandez and Jones (2005) study that

providers and scholars should explore (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2004; Levy, 2001; Ratcliffe & Flanagan, 2004; Stokes, 2007). The study encourages other scholars to explore and examine other broad areas BIA organizations might contribute to their communities. Throughout the literature, there does not seem to be a set descriptive table or list of specific broad areas that BIA organizations bring to communities. This thesis can contribute to establishing the BIA organization's main broad areas and services. The findings from the research can support successful practices for customer engagement development and has contributed to knowledge surrounding BIA organizations, community events, and Twitter usage, which can be valued research areas for both scholars and practitioners (Derrett, 2003; Sashi, 2013, MacKay et al., 2017; Harrigan et al., 2017).

Future Research

This research provided insight into how BIA organizations create interaction to connect with their customers and how events and how Twitter can produce customer engagement. This thesis was conducted in using mixed methods exploratory sequential approach prioritizing on qualitative data has potential for future studies to build on the findings. The literature in this field is rapidly evolving and this thesis contributes to the foundation of knowledge regarding how SM will impact the events industry; however, more research is required (Derrett, 2003; Maecker et al., 2016). Future studies could address a variety of BIAs and analyze BIA organizations from across the world. Representing a broader diversity of organizations would benefit the sector and provide a better perspective of how BIA organizations conduct customer engagement in different regions (Ratcliffe & Flanagan 2004).

This study only analyzed the BIA organization's perspective on interacting with customers through semi-structured interviews and collecting tweets. Future studies could explore business owners' perspectives on how BIA organizations provide customer engagement and enhance their business's interaction with customers. Businesses represented by BIA perspectives and insights should be explored to see what engagement benefits or constraints they face with their BIA organizations. Although BIA organizations can serve as an economic and social anchor, helping stabilize and revitalize the local community, more insight should be explored from business owner's and employee's perspectives (TABIA, 2020). The customer's perspective towards BIA organization's customer engagement can also be explored in this area of research. Surveys and interviews can be conducted on customers during event productions to explore how they interact with BIA organizations and businesses in the designated area. Exploring business owners' and customers' perspectives on how BIA organizations facilitate customer engagement can provide insight into any gaps or constraints within the designated area.

Future research can examine the customer engagement cycle by Sashi (2012) and use SM, other digital media, and non-digital media to explore each stage of the customer engagement cycle and how customers transition from one stage to the next (Sashi, 2012). This thesis has provided insight into how BIA organizations use events and Twitter to interact engage customers through an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach. This research provided a better understanding of how BIA organizations facilitate community events and engage with customers on social media. The study explored how BIA organizations used community events to engage with customers and explore the role of Twitter in contributing to engagement. This thesis contributes to the literature by enhancing our understanding of how BIA organizations interact with customers within the context of the customer engagement cycle (Sashi, 2012). The findings

suggested BIA organizations might have a simplistic view on customer engagement, and not all of the seven dimensions of the customer engagement cycle were fulfilled (Sashi, 2012). By rallying businesses within a community, BIAs can help create stronger communities by supporting businesses and locals within their communities (BIABC, 2021).

Conclusion

This research has provided insight into how BIA organizations use events and Twitter to interact with their customers and engage customers through an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach. The study explored how BIA organizations used community events to engage with customers and explore the role of SM in contributing to engagement. This research contributes to the literature by enhancing the BIA organization's social interactions with customers and the customer engagement cycle dimensions (Sashi, 2012). The findings suggested BIA organizations might have a simplistic view on customer engagement, and not all of the seven dimensions of the customer engagement cycle were fulfilled (Sashi, 2012). The majority of the tweets posted were promotional and informational sharing. The interviews displayed the need to create partnerships within the community and governments and use events as an attraction. The findings provided insight into the roles of events and Twitter within a BIA organization. These types of organizations can help create stronger communities by supporting businesses and locals within their communities. This study displays how BIA organizations advocate on behalf of their businesses as a unified voice (BIABC, 2021).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

University of Manitoba | Research Ethics and Compliance

Human Ethics - Fort Garry
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
T: 204 474 8872
humanethics@umanitoba.ca

PROTOCOL APPROVAL

To: **Courtney Gabrielle**   **(Advisor: Christine Van Winkle)**
Principal Investigator

From: **Zana Lutfiyya, Chair**
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: **Protocol # E2020:056 (HS24236)**

Exploring how Business Improvement Areas (BIA) Conduct Eventsand Engage with Customers using SM

Effective: September 18, 2020   **Expiry:**   September 18, 2021

Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. ENREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri- Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.*

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

   i.   Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in the application only.

   ii.   Any modification to the research or research materials must be submitted to ENREB for approval before implementation.

   iii. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to ENREB as soon as possible.

   iv.   This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.

   v.   A Study Closure form must be submitted to ENREB when the research is complete or terminated.

   vi.   The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

Funded Protocols: Please e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UMProject Number, to the Research Grants Officer at ResearchGrants@umanitoba.ca

Appendix B: Master List of Canadian BIA Organizations

Canadian Regions	BIA Organization	Website
1. Western	Abbotsford Downtown BIA	www.downtownabbotsford.ca
2. Western	Ambleside-Dundarave BIA	www.adbia.ca
3. Western	Burnaby North Road BIA	www.burnabynorthroadbia.ca
4. Western	Cambie Village BIA	www.cambievillage.ca
5. Western	West End BIA	westendbia.com/
6. Western	Commercial Drive BIA	www.thedrive.ca
7. Western	Hastings North BIA	eastvillagevancouver.ca
8. Western	Kamloops North Shore BIA	nsbia.com
9. Western	Penticton BIA	downtownpenticton.org/
10. Western	Downtown Victoria BIA	downtownvictoria.ca/
11. Western	Sidney BIA	www.sidneybia.ca
12. Western	Downtown Courtenay BIA	www.downtowncourtenay.com
13. Western	Downtown Langley BIA	www.downtownlangley.com/
14. Western	Tsawwassen BIA	sunnytsawwassen.ca/
15. Western	Downtown Surrey BIA	www.downtownsurreybia.com
16. Western	Downtown Kelowna BIA	www.downtownkelowna.com/
17. Western	Uptown Rutland BIA	www.ourrutland.ca
18. Western	Collingwood BIA	www.shopcollingwood.ca/
19. Western	Downtown Vancouver BIA	www.downtownvancouver.net
20. Western	Vancouver Chinatown BIA	vancouver-chinatown.com/
21. Prairie	Downtown BIA of Edmonton	info@edmontondowntown.com
22. Prairie	Alberta Avenue BIA	www.alberta-avenue.com
23. Prairie	Beverly BIA	www.beverlybia.ca
24. Prairie	Chinatown Area BIA	www.chinatownandarea.ca
25. Prairie	Old Strathcona BIA	www.oldstrathcona.ca
26. Prairie	Downtown Red Deer BIA	https://downtownreddeer.com/
27. Prairie	Calgary Downtown BIA	https://downtowncalgary.com/
28. Prairie	Beltline BIA	beltlinebia.ca
29. Prairie	Bridgeland BIA	bridgelandbia.ca
30. Prairie	Mainstreet Bowness BIA	mainstreetbownessbia.ca
31. Prairie	Downtown Regina BID	https://reginadowntown.ca/
32. Prairie	Downtown Saskatoon BID	https://dtnyxe.ca/
33. Prairie	Discover Moose jaw BID	https://www.discovermoosejaw.com/
34. Prairie	Downtown Winnipeg BIZ	https://downtownwinnipegbiz.com/
35. Prairie	Brandon Downtown BIZ	http://brandondowntown.biz/
36. Prairie	West Broadway BIZ	www.westbroadwaybiz.com
37. Prairie	Transcona BIZ	www.transconabiz.ca
38. Prairie	South Osborne BIZ	www.southosborne.biz
39. Prairie	St Norbert BIZ	www.stnorbertbiz.com

40. Prairie	North End BIZ	www.northendbiz.com
41. Central	Downtown Midland BIA	https://www.thebeltline.ca/
42. Central	Downtown Mitchell BIA	https://downtownmidland.ca/
43. Central	Baby Point Gates BIA	www.babypointgatesbia.ca
44. Central	Downtown Brighton BIA	downtownbrightonbia.ca
45. Central	Downtown Barrie BIA	downtownbarrie.ca
46. Central	Waterfront BIA	waterfrontbia.ca
47. Central	Wellington West BIA	wellingtonwestbia.ca
48. Central	Toronto Downtown West BIA	tdwbia.ca
49. Central	Bloor West Village BIA	bloorwestvillagebia.com
50. Central	Queen Street West BIA	queenstreetwest.ca
51. Central	Uptown Yonge BIA	uptownyonge.com
52. Central	Beach Village BIA	to-thebeach.com
53. Central	The Kingsway BIA	thekingsway.ca
54. Central	Kennedy Road BIA	kennedybia.com
55. Central	Mimico Village BIA	mimicovillage.ca
56. Central	Little Italy BIA	tolittleitaly.com
57. Central	Toronto Financial District BIA	torontofinancialdistrict.com
58. Central	La Village BIA	https://levillagebia.com/
59. Central	Quartier Vanier BIA	quartiervanierbia.ca
60. Central	Downtown Kingston BIA	https://www.downtownkingston.ca/
61. Eastern	Downtown St. John BA	downtownstjohns.com
62. Eastern	Downtown Halifax BA	downtownhalifax.ca
63. Eastern	Downtown Digby BA	downtowndigbybusinessaccociation.ca
64. Eastern	Bridgewater Development BA	birdgewaterdevelopementassociation.ca
65. Eastern	Downtown Summerside BA	downtownsummerside.ca
66. Eastern	Downtown Charlottetown BA	downtowncharlottetown.ca
67. Eastern	Downtown Fredericton BA	downtownfredericton.ca
68. Eastern	Centre-Ville de Shediac BA	centrevilledeshediac.ca
69. Eastern	Centre-Ville Caraquet BA	centrevillecaraquet.ca
70. Eastern	Town of Torbay BIA	townoftorbay.ca
71. Eastern	Corner Brook Downtown BA	cornerbrookedowntown.ca
72. Eastern	Antigonish Downtown BA	antigonishamherstdowntown.ca
73. Eastern	Downtown Amherst BIA	downtownamherst.ca
74. Eastern	Downtown Dartmouth BA	downtowndarmouth.ca
75. Eastern	Downtown Truro Partnership BA	downtowntruro.ca
76. Eastern	Main Street Dartmouth BIA	mainstreetdarmount.ca
77. Eastern	Sackville BA	saskvillebusinessassociation.ca
78. Eastern	Quinpool Road BA	quinpoolroad.ca
79. Eastern	Spring Garden Area BA	springgardenarea.ca
80. Eastern	Sydney Downtown BA	sydneydowntowndevelopment.ca

Appendix C: Invitation Email to Potential Participants

Subject: Master's Thesis Study – How BIA Conduct Community Events

Hello,

My name is Courtney Gabrielle and I'm a graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management. I am working on my Master's thesis project, '*Exploring how Business Improvement Areas (BIA) Conduct Events and Engage with Customers using SM'*. My research study explores how BIA organizations use community events and if they engage with customers through social media platforms. Dr. Christine Van Winkle is a Professor at University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management and is supervising this Master's thesis study.

I am looking for participants who work for a Canadian BIA organization that hosts at least one community event a year.

If you or your organization agrees to participate in this study, I would like to interview one senior staff (executive director, communication manager, event coordinator) to participate in an interview about the BIA organization's community events. The interview is expected to take no more than 45-minutes.

Your name, the name of the BIA organization and the name of the community event hosted by the BIA and all other details about the BIA organization will remain confidential. If you are interested in participating in this project, I would be happy to send you an email with additional details about the study and an informed consent form for you to sign. If you are interested in participating but feel you do not have the time right now, we can be very flexible and work with your schedule.

If you would like to participant or have any questions please feel free to contact me by email (gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca)

Thank you,

Courtney Gabrielle
Graduate Student
Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management
227 Frank Kennedy
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Email: gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix D: Follow-up Email: to the participant's interested in participating in the study

Subject: Thank you for your Interest in Participating in the Study

Dear (Name of the Participant),

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study: *Exploring how Business Improvement Areas (BIA) Conduct Events and Engage with Customers using Social Media*

I would like to interview one senior staff (executive director, communication manager, event coordinator) to participate in an interview about the BIA organization's community events.

Please select a single date and time that works best for you. The time should be displayed in the time zone where you are located. If none of the times and dates listed work for you, please let us know and we can arrange alternate options.

We can use zoom, facetime, skype, whatsapp or phone call for the audio interview. Please note which platform you prefer and your number or user name.
Please find the attached *'Participant Informed Consent Form'* in this email and after reading it thoroughly, please sign and send it replying back to this email.

If you have any questions or concerns, I would be happy to address them by email (gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca)

Thank you,

Courtney Gabrielle
Graduate Student
Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management
227 Frank Kennedy
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Email: gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix F: Participant Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title
Exploring how Business Improvement Areas (BIA) Conduct Events and Engage with Customers using Social Media

This consent form will give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Principal Investigator: Courtney Gabrielle

Academic Advisor: Dr. Christine Van Winkle

Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management
University of Manitoba
Email: gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca

Purpose of the Research
The purpose of this study is to understand why BIA organizations facilitate community events and if and how these events engage customers. The study will explore how BIA use community events to engage with customers and will explore the role social media has in contributing to this. This study will use a mixed-methods approach by conducting semi structure interviews and doing a network analysis of publicly available tweets on Twitter about the community event.

If you agree to participate in this study you and your organization will be asked if you fit the research study criteria.

In order to participate in the study the BIA organization will have had to produce *at least one community event between Feb 2019 – Feb 2020.*
1.

> **Community events** are those that are open to the public. They are often seen as an investment to generate a range of enhanced social outcomes, such as a strengthening of community feeling; heightened notions of community belonging; improved social and civic engagement; increased avenues for building community renewal and resilience; and aiding the economy through generating employment and tourism dollars. Local councils, organizations, or similar stakeholder groups who invest their resources into an events

such as festivals, fairs, farmer's' markets, and fetes conduct community event (Derrett, 2003.

The semi-structured interview questions will ask you about your organization, the community events produced, and the organizations social media use

Research Procedures
Interviews will be used as the research instrument. The interview will be audio recorded (only with your explicit consent) and is expected to take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. After the interview, a copy of the transcription will be created a few days later and sent to you for member checking that should take approximately 30 minutes in to review. Member checking allows you to read over the interview transcript and ensure you have the opportunity to review what you said, add more information if you want to, and to edit what you said before the information from the interview will be used for the study.

Risks and Benefits
The risks for you are minimal, and no more than what one might encounter in daily life. You should also be aware that should you feel uncomfortable during the interview situation, you are free to withdraw from the study by stating that you would no longer be willing to participate and you can choose to withdraw your responses by informing the researcher. After you have reviewed the transcripts from the interview you will no longer be able to withdraw participation.

There are no direct benefits for participating in the study. The participant will have the opportunity to reflect on how your BIA organization uses community events and SM to engage with customers. The knowledge gained from these interviews can help BIA and the event industry better understand the use of community events and if customer engagement is found using SM platforms such as Twitter.

Confidentiality
My academic advisor Dr. Christine Van Winkle and I will do everything possible to keep your personal information confidential. Your name will not be used at all in the study records. A list of names and emails of the participants will be kept in a password protected file so the researcher can send you the transcription of your interview and a summary of the results of the study.

Since I will know participants by name and all identifying characteristics of the individual and their organization will be removed from the interview transcriptions and replaced with pseudonyms; so that they do not contain any identifying information. The audio-recorded interview files will be removed from the recording device immediately after the interview and transferred to an encrypted USB drive. I will be the only individual who has access to the raw interview data. I will have access to the files and personal identifying information about participants (contact information) which will be stored separately from data in another password protected file and numbers will be used to connect participants with their contact information. Information entered into computers will be stored in password-protected files on a password-protected computer. My advisor, Dr. Christine Van Winkle, will have access to the transcriptions once all identifying information has been removed from the document

The data will be destroyed once study in completed (no later than July 2021). I may submit the finding to a journal or use them in an academic presentation where the subject matter can provide knowledge and insight. It is estimated that the Master's thesis will be completed by July 2021. Once the full study has been completed, transcriptions will be deleted and the device will be wiped clean.

Dissemination and Debriefing
The results of this study will be used to complete my Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management Master of Arts Thesis. You will be sent a summary of the results by email and the summary will not contain any identifying information.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding your participation in the research project and agree to participate as a participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, from the legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

You will be provided with a copy of your transcript for review. How do you want to receive this transcript?

☐ Hard copy via Canada Post with a return postage stamped envelope
Please provide a mailing address where you would like the transcript sent:

_____

Or
☐ Email
Please provide an email address where you would like the transcript sent:

_____

Do you want to receive a summary of the findings from this research?

☐ Yes
Please provide and email or mailing address where you would like the report sent (You can expect to receive the summary of the findings within 4 months of your interview):
_____

Or ☐ No

Permission to Quote

The investigator may wish to quote your words directly in reports and publications resulting from this. Your quotes will be published without revealing your name and only by a general descriptor such as "a events or public relations staff or manager". The findings will be published in a master's thesis by the faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management. With regards to being quoted, please check yes or no for the following statement:

The researcher may publish documents that contain quotations by me under the following condition:	
☐ Yes ☐ No	I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published (I remain anonymous).

Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal from the Study

Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary. Your information and your identity will remain confidential; however, you have the right to refuse to participate in the study for any reason and/or you may withdraw from the study by simply stating that you are not interested in participating at any time before the beginning of the data analysis of the research (within 1 week after reviewing your transcripts – likely by the end of November 2020). Once you receive the transcription of your interview, you will have one week to withdraw your responses from the study. After this time your responses will be included in the study.

Questions

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Manitoba's Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board. If any questions come up during or after the study, please contact the principal investigator: Courtney Gabrielle at gabrielc@myumanitoba.ca. For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The University of Manitoba, Fort Garry Campus Human Ethics Board at humanethics@umanitoba.ca.
A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Consent Signatures

1. I have read all pages of the consent form.
2. I have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of my questions.
3. I understand that by signing this consent form, I have not waived any of my legal rights as a participant in this study.
4. I understand that my records, which may include identifying information, may be reviewed by the people or groups mentioned in the confidentiality section of this document.
5. I understand that I may stop participating in this study at any time and my data may be

withdrawn within one week of reviewing transcripts.
6.I understand I that I'm provided with a copy of the consent form for my records.
7.I agree to participate in the study.

Participant's name and signature:
_____

Principal Investigator's name and signature:
_____

Date: _____

Appendix G: Interview Guide

[Rapport building before interview so participant is comfortable]
[Go over informed consent and collect the complete form]

Overview of information
Thank you again for participating in my study. There are some housekeeping things I want to go over before we start. I really appreciate you taking the time to speak with me and discuss how your BIA uses events and social media to engage with customers. I just want to let you know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions you will be asked so please feel free to voice your honest opinion and knowledge about how your BIA engages (or not) with customers. As we have already gone through in the informed consent form you understand that the information you share will remain confidential. This means that I will not share any identifying information about you from this interview to anyone. Since I am audio recording this interview to is important you speak clearly. Before we get started do you have any questions or concerns?

1. **Initial questions** (build rapport, identification of who the participant works for, what their roles is with the BIA and information on the BIA they work for):
    a. What is your role at the BIA organization you work for?
    b. How long have you been with the BIA organization?
    c. How many employees and/or board members are apart of the BIA?
    d. What is the area that your BIA represents?
    e. What are the BIA goals and objectives?
    f. How many events a year does the BIA host?

2. **Main questions** (The event production):
    a. What is the main purpose for hosting event? Describe some of your main events (who is the target audience, how long is it and how often)
    b. Tell be about XYZ event? How many attendees, how long has it been running, what stakeholders are involved, how many staff volunteers, what activities happen during this event?
    c. What is the main purpose of this event? How do you achieve this? How successful do you feel the event has been in achieving this?
    d. How does the BIA interact with visitors before, during and after the event?
    e. Is being active on SM important and important part of this event? Is Twitter used before during and after this event and if so how?
    f. Do you think SM use and activity can benefit the events hosted by the BIA?

3. **Main questions** (gaining the participant's perspectives on how Twitter is used during the production of events hosted by their BIA):
    a. Who is in charge of running the BIA's SM accounts?
    b. When did the BIA start using SM and why?
    c. What is the main purpose for using each of the SM platforms you use?
    d. How often are Tweets posted on the Twitter account?
    e. Is being active on SM important to the BIA during promotion or production or

      recap of events?
- f. How does the BIA interact with visitors on SM platforms?
- g. Do you think SM use and activity can benefit the events hosted by the BIA?

4. **Probing questions** (further information from main question on the Twitter activity during events):
- a. How important are events for the BIA to reach their goals and objectives as an organization?
- b. Is SM important factor for the BIA to reach their goals and objectives?
- c. Do you think your visitors interact with the BIA on SM platforms effectively?
- d. Could there be improvements to the SM platforms the BIA is currently using?
- e. Is Twitter an effective SM handle for the BIA to use to engage with their consumers?

5. **Additional questions** (overall impressions, anything missed):
- a. Are there other ways the BIA can use SM?
- b. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding SM and the engagement with visitors?
- c. Has your organization been affected with the recent pandemic in regards to conducting events?
- d. Has the pandemic affected how your organization engages with customers and plan events?
- e. Has your organization used SM to communicate with customers regarding how the pandemic has affected events or your organization in general