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### **Journal of Vacation Marketing**

#### **Research Paper: Influence of Festival Attribute Qualities on Slow Food Tourists' Experience, Satisfaction Level and Revisit Intention: The Case of the Mold Food and Drink Festival**

Timothy Jung\*<sup>a</sup>, Elizabeth M. Ineson<sup>a</sup>, Mincheol Kim<sup>b</sup>, Matthew H. T. Yap<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Food and Tourism Management, Manchester Metropolitan University, Righton Building, Cavendish Street, Manchester M15 6BG, UK

<sup>b</sup> Department of Management Information Systems, Jeju National University, Jeju City, South Korea

<sup>c</sup> Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau, Avenida da Universidade, Taipa, Macau, China

#### **ABSTRACT:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of Slow Food festival attributes on visitors' overall experience, their satisfaction level and revisit intention. A total of 209 useable questionnaires were collected from visitors at Mold Slow Food Festival and Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted using AMOS 19.0. A theoretical model representing the relationships among festival attribute qualities, experience quality, satisfaction level and revisit intention is examined using path analysis. With the addition of new paths from programmes to satisfaction and food and other amenities to satisfaction, a revised theoretical model emerged. It indicated that all three festival attribute qualities (programmes, food and other amenities and entertainment) have direct impacts on the visitors' overall experience and satisfaction; however only the quality of food and other amenities contributed directly to revisit intention of the Slow Food festival.

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# **Influence of Festival Attribute Qualities on Slow Food Tourists' Experience, Satisfaction Level and Revisit Intention: The Case of the Mold Food and Drink Festival**

## **Introduction**

The Slow Food movement began in Italy in 1986 and aimed to promote local farming and the utilisation of local products and ingredients to produce local traditional and regional cuisine (Miele and Murdoch, 2002; [http://sloweb.slowfood.com/sloweb/welcome\\_eng.lasso](http://sloweb.slowfood.com/sloweb/welcome_eng.lasso)). In this way not only is the local culture and ecosystem preserved but also the local economy and employment are boosted (Sims, 2009). More recently, the Slow City movement (Cittaslow) has evolved in which the town or city promotes a high-quality environment based on healthy eating of locally grown and prepared food. Cittaslow has expanded globally and emerged as a niche market which attracted many visitors who would like to experience local foods and culture (See [http://www.cittaslow.org.uk/images/Download/cittaslow\\_charter.pdf](http://www.cittaslow.org.uk/images/Download/cittaslow_charter.pdf)). As the Slow Food and Slow City movements are considered as alternative approaches to sustainable tourism development (Mayer and Knox, 2006), local destination marketing organisations (DMOs) and their involved partners are making efforts to promote their towns or cities as Slow Food tourism destinations through food festivals (Robinson, Heitmann, and Dieke, 2011; Blichfeldt and Halkier, 2013). Mold, a historical market town in North Wales, is the first Slow City in Wales and the only Welsh representative. Mold held its first Food Festival in September 2006 in order to promote Mold as a Slow

Food and Cittaslow destination (<http://www.moldfoodfestival.co.uk/>; [http://moldtowncouncil.org.uk/moldtc/index.php?Tourism: Mold\\_Food\\_Town](http://moldtowncouncil.org.uk/moldtc/index.php?Tourism:Mold_Food_Town)). As pointed out by Mason and Paggairo (2012) in the context of “Friuli Doc”, North-East of Italy, and Blichfeldt and Halkier (2013) in relation to the Mussel Festival in rural North Jutland, Denmark, it is imperative for food festival organisers to design a unique experience which will encourage people to revisit food festivals. Therefore, it is particularly important for festival organisers to understand the key aspects of a food festival, which have a strong impact on the positive experience of visitors, their satisfaction level and revisit intention. Cole and Chancellor (2009) revealed three festival attribute categories (programmes, amenities and entertainment ) that had direct impacts on visitors’ overall experience of a downtown festival in a mid-western city in USA, but only entertainment quality contributed directly to visitor satisfaction and revisit intention. Moreover, their model has not been validated in any other context. Hence, the need to determine the impact of programmes, amenities and entertainment on visitors’ behavioural intentions of various food festivals has surfaced. Despite the importance of festival attributes’ quality, no academic research has been carried out to determine the influence of festival attributes on visitors’ quality of experience, satisfaction and their revisit intention within the context of Slow Food festival. Therefore, this present paper aims to examine the impacts of festival attributes

(programmes, amenities and entertainment quality) on the visitors' overall experience, their level of satisfaction and the intention to revisit Mold Slow Food Festival.

## **Literature review**

### ***Food Festivals***

Food festivals are gaining popularity nationally and internationally to stimulate economy through tourism (Lee and Arcodia, 2011). These events are prompted by the exchange which occurs when food is consumed for sustenance, an epicurean adventure or a local cultural experience (Long, 2004; McKercher and du Cross, 2002; Mintz and Du Bois, 2002) often affects visitors in a positive way. All gastronomic cues are powerful destination image formation agents (Hall and Mitchell, 2005; Silkes, Cai, and Lehto, 2013) which, in turn, promote repeat visits. Food is an “imperative contributor in destination tourism due to its capability in influencing tourists’ perceived image and food satisfaction” (Chi et al., 2013: 99). Globally, the number of food festivals is increasing (Einarsen and Mykletun, 2009) with visitors being attracted by unique experiences that provide activities and work for local communities and enhance destination images, hence place identity (De Bres and Davis, 2001). However, a food festival is not simply a festival where food is available but one which promotes regional and/or local food specialties or features food-themed and/or food-based activities and programmes to attract attendees (Everett and Aitchison, 2007). As such, the

involvement of the local community is essential because it adds to local identity, promotes local pride and markets authenticity to external visitors (Hall and Mitchell, 2001; Blichfeldt and Halkier, 2013). However, the locality needs to be large enough to mobilise resources and enable such development. Aldskogius (1993) remarked that, in small places, there is relatively more local community involvement to attract visitors. Food festivals appeal extends to both internal (local) and external visitors, which are imperative if rural areas wish to improve the local economy and foster development (Blichfeldt and Halkier, 2013).

The behavioural intentions of food festivals visitors are complex. An earlier study of national and international visitors' motives to attend festivals in Texas, USA, found, using quantitative data, food event visitors were more motivated by novelty than non-food event visitors, due to their needs to seek new and different experiences to relieve boredom (Crompton and McKay, 1997). However, the accuracy of the structural representation in this study has been questioned as the total variance generated by factor analysis is less than 50 per cent (Beavers et al., 2013). A more recent food festival study in Macau found, using qualitative data, that attendees' satisfaction and loyalty were affected by location and accessibility, food, venue facility, environment, service, festival size, entertainment and timing (Wan and Chan, 2013). However, this study is exploratory in nature and the emergent themes need to be tested further using statistical methods. Research on the behavioural intentions of diverse food festivals (for example

slow food festivals) attendees is scarce. The following subsections discuss and justify the need to study behavioural intentions of slow food festivals' attendees.

### *Slow food festivals*

Although the Slow Food movement supports sustainable agriculture and fair trade through eco-gastronomy and virtuous globalisation (Petrini, 2007), it has been criticised for emphasising social inequality through lavish gastronomic cuisines and culinary tourism (Laudan, 2004). Some events use Slow Food as a primary theme whilst others communicate the Slow Food dimension through “allied concepts such as ‘fair trade’, organic food and ‘food miles’” (Laing and Frost, 2010: 262). Slow Food festival organisers in Australia, New Zealand and Italy should use the concept of Slow Food and its aims to communicate and market Slow Food to potential attendees as opposed to using authentic, artisanal and high-status (Frost and Laing, 2013). However, Mason and Paggiaro (2010) praise Slow Food festivals for promoting Italian regions through culinary tourism opportunities (cf. Ilbery and Saxena, 2009; Sims, 2009), and creating loyalty to local food products. Along this vein, culinary tourism is explained as a “cultural interaction between tourists and residents through the sharing of gastronomic interactions and experiences” (Silkes et al., 2013:336) whereby tourists can become an integral part, and take ownership, of a destination (Bessiere, 2001; McKercher and du Cross, 2002). Such interactions and experiences are clearly evident through the Mold

Slow Food Festival. For the purpose of this study, the following sections discuss critically general festival attributes including quality of amenities, quality of programmes and quality of entertainment, all of which can impact attendees' satisfaction level.

### ***Festival Attributes: Amenities, Programmes and Entertainment***

Previous studies (for example Cole and Illum, 2006; Cole and Chancellor, 2009) researching on festival attributes concluded that quality of amenities, quality of programmes and quality of entertainment influence, directly and indirectly, festival attendees' level of satisfaction, experience and revisit intentions. Entertainment broadly encompasses (live) music and amusement activities like games, depending on the type of festival. This element had a direct influence on visitors' satisfaction and revisit intention of a periodical festival in a mid-western city in America (Cole and Chancellor, 2009). Programmes, incorporating on-site signage, business and organisation booths, printed materials and free gifts, are under the control of the festival organisers (Cole and Illum, 2006; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). Hence, festival organisers can manipulate the quality of the programmes to enhance attendees' experience. According to Cole and Chancellor (2009), festival amenities comprise the availability of restrooms, accessibility for those with special needs, cleanliness, places available to sit and eat, and food and beverage. Cole and Chancellor (2009) categorise (hygienic and quality) food

and beverage as amenities to provide a broader explanation of the factor as desirable (sustenance) features that can enhance comfort of the visitors through relieving their thirst and hunger, as is the interpretation in the present study. In particular, attendees of the Punggi Ginseng festival in South Korea determine the availability of restrooms and cleanliness of such facilities indirectly impacts their revisit intentions (Yoon, Lee and Lee, 2010). Then, Mason and Nassivera (2013) concluded that within the food festival context attributes relating to perceived service quality, including accessibility and cleanliness of amenities, have the strongest effect on visitors' satisfaction level. However, the extent to which quality of amenities, quality of programme and quality of entertainment impact on Slow Food festival attendees' level of satisfaction, experience and revisit intentions is unclear.

### ***Attributes, Experience, Visitor Satisfaction and Behavioural Intentions***

#### ***Attributes, Experience and Visitor Satisfaction***

Visitor or consumer experience evolves from the traditional product-centred concept towards the experientialist consumer-centred awareness whereby consumers' or visitors' enjoyment or pleasure of consuming products or services are emphasised in the processes of both defining and creating value in the marketing contexts (Tsai, 2005). As such, participants determine their level of satisfaction with the festivals they have attended by using their perceptions to assess the style and physical aspect of the festival



environment (festivalscape), and the functional and affective attributes of the festival (Darden and Babin, 1994). As visitors' experiences of festivals are positively related to their overall level of satisfaction of the festivals, the quality of the three broad categories of festival attributes (entertainment, amenities and programme) influences the overall visitor experience and satisfaction rate (Cole and Chancellor, 2009). In fact, Cole and Chancellor (2009) concluded that entertainment is considered the most important attribute in order to enhance visitors' experiences and ensure a high satisfaction rate. Examining a food and wine festival in Sauris, Italy, Mason and Nassivera (2013) determined that attendees' overall satisfaction was related to the food product and the total consumer experience of quality service, product, organisation and information (such as the services offered and price). Mohr, Backman, Gahan, and Backman (1993), researching a festival in Greenville, South Carolina, USA, claimed that repeat visitors were more satisfied than first-timers, regardless of demographic characteristics which did not affect satisfaction. More recently, Mason and Paggiaro (2012) demonstrated positive direct effects of: (i) Festivalscape (food, comfort and fun) on emotional experience (product and event) and overall (evaluative and behavioural) satisfaction; (ii) emotional experience on satisfaction; and in turn, satisfaction on behavioural intention, which included revisiting and recommendation to others. Robinson and Clifford (2012) provide evidence of festival tourists' satisfaction at an Australian medieval festival in relation to perceived authenticity, and the food service,

sanitation factors and revisit intention. They noted that the servicescape (physical environment and artefacts), a term coined by Booms and Bitner (1981), is the provider of entertainment, enjoyment and visitor comfort. These complex relationships between the visitors' experiences of, and satisfaction with, a Slow Food festival are examined in the present study.

### *Behavioural intentions*

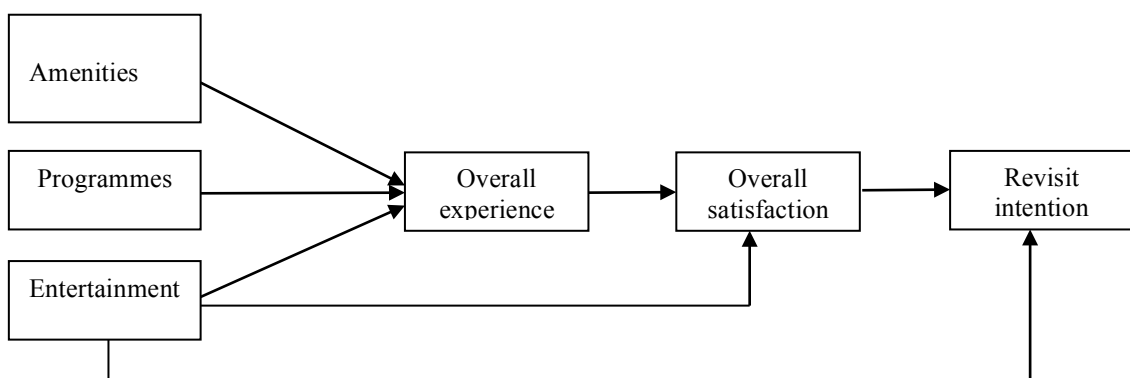
Existing literature reveals empirical evidence to support inter-relationships between service quality, satisfaction and revisit intention (for example, Baker and Crompton, 2000; Thrane, 2002; Petrick, 2004; Lee and Beeler, 2007, Liang, Illum, and Cole, 2008). Liang et al. (2008) examined the behavioural intentions of festival visitors and identified that enjoyment, socialisation and history appreciation all influence the intention to attend festivals; they identified differences among local visitors, focusing on socialisation, and out-of-town visitors, who are more concerned with enjoyment. Cole and Chancellor (2009) furthermore revealed that the quality of programmes, entertainment and amenities influence visitors' overall experience, which affects satisfaction and ultimately the behavioural intention to revisit a festival. Chi et al. (2013) surveyed visitors as they departed from Malaysia and found their satisfaction with the food experience (a positive, mental culinary image) led to tourist satisfaction, which in turn affected their behavioural intentions, including revisit intentions; while Mason and Nassivera, (2103) reported that quality of, and satisfaction with, a food

festival can affect behavioural intentions. However, they found inconsistencies with regard to their model and prior research into the interactions between quality and satisfaction; it was not clear to them how these constructs influenced behavioural intention. Although they confirmed the theoretical approach that quality precedes satisfaction, they deduced the following sequence: “evaluation → emotional response → reiteration, thus supporting the connection between perceived quality (evaluative construct), satisfaction (emotional response) and behavioural intention (reiteration)” (p.176).

### ***Conceptual Framework***

Despite the tremendous research effort that has been focused on how to improve festivals' service performance to provide visitors with satisfactory experiences, only a few studies have included the concept of visitor experience and empirically examined the visitor experience in relation to service quality, satisfaction and behavioural intention (Tian-Cole et al., 2002; Cole and Scott, 2004; Cole and Illum, 2006; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). These studies suggest that service quality only contributes indirectly to satisfaction and behavioural intentions through experience quality. Subsequently, a conceptual framework that models the festival's service attributes as separate endogenous variables instead of treating them as indicators of the latent variable 'service quality' was developed (Tian-Cole et al., 2002; Cole and Scott, 2004; Cole and

Illum, 2006; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). It was designed to examine staging attributes of festival services in order to induce desired experiences in the context of festivals and events. This framework examines the impact of each festival attribute (programmes, amenities and entertainment) on the visitors' experience, satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Cole and Chancellor, 2009) and the assumptions of the framework are that the visitor experience is a function of the quality of those staged festival attributes, and that positive experience will lead to visitors reaching a higher overall satisfaction level, which translates into a repeat visit (Cole and Chancellor, 2009). Therefore, the initial research model for the present study (See Figure 1), based on Cole and Chancellor's study (2009), was proposed in order to examine the impacts of all three festival attributes (programmes, amenities and entertainment quality) on the visitors' overall experience, their level of satisfaction and revisit intentions of the Slow Food festival in Mold, Wales.



**Figure 1. Initial Model**

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted at the Mold Food and Drink Festival in Mold, Wales, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2011. The festival was organised by Mold Food Festival Organization Committee to stimulate businesses in Mold area. Over 100 exhibitors and stands from the food and drink sectors, primarily from the Mold area resulted in a record of 12,500 local and foreign visitors to the event (<http://www.moldfoodfestival.co.uk/news/visitors-in-for-a-real-buzz-at-food-and-drink-festival>). The researchers chose to employ a single case study research strategy (cf. Yin, 2009) to explore visitors' experience, satisfaction level and revisit intentions based on the programme, amenities and entertainment attributes of a real Slow Food festival based in Mold. Due to the fact that programme, amenities and entertainment were previously tested and validated by Cole and Iltis (2006) and Cole and Chancellor (2009), this study employs a positivistic philosophy to construct a quantitative research design (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Based on the number of visitors and a conservative five per cent margin of error, the suggested sample size is 370 (Saunders et al., 2012). Quota sampling was employed as it was not feasible to employ probability sampling due to time and costs constraints (Barnett, 2002). The sample was stratified by gender, which has been shown to influence consumption judgments (Dubé and Morgan 1996).

Following in the footsteps of previous studies (for example Cole and Chancellor, 2009; Yuan and Jang, 2008), a structured questionnaire was preferred to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire comprised five sections, namely, festival attributes including food offerings, overall experience, overall satisfaction, revisit intention and demographic questions. Each of the five constructs within this research was assessed by a number of measurement items, ranging from one measurement item for overall experience to 20 for attribute quality. All the measured items were based on previous studies (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Cole and Chancellor, 2009; Crompton and Love, 1995; Lee, Lee, Lee, and Babin 2008; Özdemir and Culha, 2009; Yuan and Jang, 2008) and re-formulated to suit the context of the Mold Slow Food Festival. Festival attributes were measured using a scale adapted from Crompton and Love's (1995) study and Cole and Chancellor's (2009) study. Participants were asked to rate the measurement items on a 5-point-Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". The final part of the questionnaire aimed to gather demographic information including age, gender, marital status, level of education and occupation as well as level of income. In order to enhance the reliability and validity, the developed questionnaire was pilot tested with a few previous food festival attendees (Saunders et al., 2012). Then, the interviewer, with 60 per cent and 40 per cent respective females and males gender mix in mind approached visitors and asked if they were willing to participate in the survey; once they agreed to participate, visitors were asked to complete the questionnaire. The

gender strata were based on attendee profiles from previous studies (for example Crompton and McKay, 1997; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). The questionnaires were distributed to festival attendees at the Food Festival ([www.moldfoodfestival.co.uk](http://www.moldfoodfestival.co.uk)) on two consecutive days. Although the target was 370, in the two days' festival duration only 209 usable questionnaires were completed, achieving a response rate of 56 per cent of the target. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using AMOS 19.0 in order to examine the dimensionality of the construct measured by the 15 items and Cronbach's alpha was calculated in order to examine the reliability of data. A theoretical model representing the inter-relationships between festival attribute qualities, experience quality, satisfaction and revisit intention was examined using path analysis.

### **Analysis of Results**

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. With regard to the demographic profiles of the 209 respondents, 86 (41.1%) were male, and 123 (58.9%) were female so the sample was in line with previous research (for example, Crompton and McKay, 1997; Cole and Chancellor, 2009). The modal age categories were 30-39 years (24.9%) and 40-49 years (24.4%). With reference to marital status, 60.3 per cent (n=126) of the respondents were married/with partner and 22 per cent (n= 46) were single. Subdividing by occupation, 44 per cent of the respondents were full-time employees and 46 per cent were part-time employees; 10 per cent were unemployed.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=209)**

Categories	Items	N	%
Gender	Male	86	41.1
	Female	123	58.9
Age	Under 19	9	4.3
	19 – 29	34	16.3
	30 – 39	52	24.9
	40 – 49	51	24.4
	50– 59	47	22.5
	60 and above	16	7.6
Education Level	Senior High School	47	22.5
	Diploma	80	38.3
	Bachelor or Degree	57	27.3
	Postgraduate Diploma	15	7.2
	Above Master Degree	8	3.8
	Missing Values	2	1.0
Total household income (£)	Less than 10,000	31	14.8
	10,000 to 19,999	64	30.6
	20,000 to 29,999	62	29.7
	30,000 to 39,999	26	12.4
	40,000 and more	24	11.5
	Missing Values	2	1.0
Marital Status	Single	46	22.0
	Married	126	60.3
	Divorced	17	8.1
	Widowed	13	6.2
	Separated	7	3.4
Occupation	Student	18	8.6
	Full-time Employee	92	44.0
	Part-time Employee	46	22.0
	Home-maker	9	4.3
	Self-employed	11	5.3
	Unemployed	6	2.9
	Retired	23	11.0
	Missing Values	4	1.9

EFA was conducted to examine the validity and reliability of the independent and the dependent variables employed in the present study (See Table 2). The results of the



EFA show that there are five factors, the main three of which (food and other amenities, programmes, and entertainment) map onto those factors identified in Cole and Chancellor's study (2009). The first factor named 'Food and Other Amenities' contained seven items related to the quality of the festival's amenities, and food and beverages and the second factor named 'Programmes' contained five items which were concerned with the programmes of the festival. The third factor named 'Entertainment' had three items related to the quality of the festival's entertainment. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the three attribute scales to examine the internal consistencies; the scales of all three factors were above 0.7 which shows good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Table 1 records the communality value (factor loading above 0.4) of all variables.

**Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of Festival Quality, Overall Satisfaction and Revisit Intention**

Items	Communality value (Factor loading)	Factor	Cumulative explanation (Cronbach's alpha)
Quality of food and beverage	.68 (.80)	Food and Other Amenities	31.70 (.90)
Availability of locally produced Slow Food and drink	.75 (.77)		
Friendliness of people running the stalls	.71 (.77)		
Number of places to sit and rest	.66 (.75)		
Cleanliness of festival site	.62 (.75)		
Local food producers and local organisations exhibits	.56 (.70)		
Interactive foodie activities, workshops and tasting sessions for all the family	.55 (.59)		
Printed programmes and schedules	.76 (.78)	Programmes	50.91 (.84)
Street maps on the site giving direction	.64 (.67)		
Accessibility for those with special needs	.68 (.64)		
Information booths giving site direction and performance information	.66 (.64)		
Children's activities	.62 (.59)	Entertainment	65.91 (.73)
The variety of gifts at the stalls	.79 (.86)		
Arts and craft exhibits	.78 (.87)		
Live music at the food festival	.42 (.50)	Overall Satisfaction	84.03 (.91)
I am as satisfied with this food festival as I expected to be	.87 (.93)		
I am satisfied with the food and beverage provided at this festival	.87 (.93)		
Overall, I am satisfied with my visit to this food festival	.79 (.88)	Revisit Intention	97.22 (.97)
I would like to revisit this food festival next year	.97 (.98)		
I will recommend other to attend this festival	.97 (.98)		

\* 'overall experience' variable is single item in the research model.

Path analysis was conducted to test the proposed theoretical model in Figure 1 and Table 3 provides the summarised test results for fitness level within the initial model and the revised models. The estimation based on the initial theoretical model revealed that there were statistically significant relationships among the variables. However, the initial theoretical model did not show a good fit with  $\chi^2 = 105.92$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ,  $GFI = 0.89$ ,  $AGFI = 0.70$ ,  $RMR = 0.10$ ,  $CFI = 0.84$ . This result indicated that the theoretical model which was used in Cole and Chancellor's study (2009) may not be appropriate in the context of the Mold Slow Food festival. This result confirmed that there may be a possibility that the fit between the adopted model and the collected data could be improved substantially. Thus, direct paths from 'Programme' to both 'Satisfaction' and 'Revisit intention' were added and the revised model 1 was re-estimated. The chi-square difference test for the initial and revised model 1 was significant ( $\chi^2 = 104.59$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ,  $GFI = 0.89$ ,  $AGFI = 0.70$ ,  $RMR = 0.10$ ,  $CFI = 0.84$ ), indicating that the revised model provided a slightly better fit to the data and suggesting that this models' fit could potentially still be improved substantially. Therefore, revised model 2 was re-estimated with the added paths from 'Food and Other Amenities' to 'Satisfaction' and 'Revisit intention'. Goodness of fit indices showed that the revised model 2 provided a good fit with the data. The Chi-square difference test of the revised model 1 and the revised model 2 was significant ( $\chi^2 = 36.72$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ,  $GFI = 0.95$ ,  $AGFI = 0.87$ ,  $RMR = 0.06$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ ), indicating that the revised

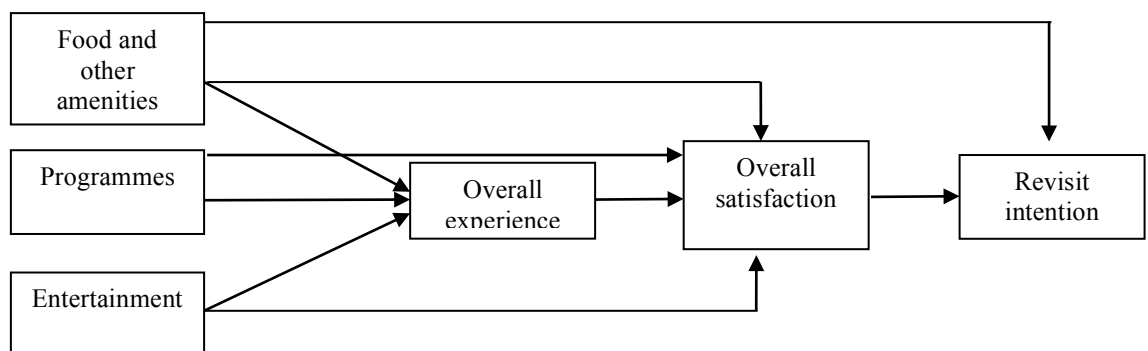
model 2 provided a significantly better fit to the data. Therefore, the revised model 2 can be accepted as the appropriate model.

**Table 3. Test Results of Fitness Level among the Initial Model, and the Revised Models**

Model	$\chi^2$ (p-value)	df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMR
Initial model (New paths: Entertainment -> Satisfaction; Entertainment -> Revisit intention)	105.92 (.00)	8	.89	.70	.84	.10
Revised model 1 (New paths: Programmes -> Satisfaction; Programmes -> Revisit intention)	104.59 (.00)	8	.89	.70	.84	.10
Revised model 2 (New paths: Food and Other Amenities -> Satisfaction; Food and Other Amenities -> Revisit intention)	36.72 (.00)	8	.95	.87	.95	.06
Revised model 3 (New paths under revised model 2: Entertainment -> Satisfaction; Programmes -> Satisfaction)	10.29 (.11)	6	.98	.95	.99	.02

Again, all the path coefficients were significant; however, the significant Chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 36.72$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.00$ ) combined with the value of AGFI of 0.87 indicated the model's fit could potentially still be improved substantially. Thus, new paths from 'Entertainment' to 'Satisfaction' and from 'Programmes' to 'Satisfaction' were added in

the revised model 2 and the revised model 3 was re-estimated. The Chi-square difference test of the revised model 2 and the revised model 3 was statistically significant at 1 per cent level ( $\chi^2 = 10.29$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $GFI = 0.98$ ,  $AGFI = 0.95$ ,  $RMR = 0.02$ ,  $CFI = 0.99$ ). Therefore, revised model 3 was accepted as the final theoretical model (See Figure 2). All three festival attributes had significant direct impacts on the visitors' experience quality (Food and Other Amenities: 0.4, Programmes: 0.24, Entertainment: 0.17) and overall satisfaction (Food and Other Amenities: 0.5, Programmes: 0.19, Entertainment: 0.12). The impact from experience quality to overall satisfaction was high (0.50) and the strongest impact was from overall satisfaction to revisit intention (0.71). It was found that only amenities' quality contributed directly to revisit intention (0.16).



**Figure 2 Final Model**

Further, direct, indirect and total effects of the attribute categories were calculated in order to examine the strength of the impact of each festival attribute on experience, satisfaction and revisit intention (See Table 4). It was found that: all three festival attributes had significant direct effects on experience quality with ‘Food and Other Amenities’ being the highest (0.44); and all three festival attributes had significant direct effects on overall satisfaction, again with ‘Food and Other Amenities’ being the highest (0.50). While all attribute categories had indirect effects on ‘Revisit intention’, only ‘Food and Other Amenities’ had direct effects on ‘Revisit intention’ (0.16) and also the total effect of ‘Food and Other Amenities’ on ‘Revisit intention’ (0.65) was more than triple the effect of either ‘Programmes’ (0.21) or ‘Entertainment’ (0.14). This result showed that the most important festival quality that impacted on ‘Revisit intention’ through mediation factors (overall experience quality and overall satisfaction) was ‘food and other amenities’ quality (total effect: 0.65).

**Table 4. Direct, Indirect and Total Effects of Festival Quality on Visitor Experience Quality, Satisfaction and Revisit intention**

Festival quality	Overall experience quality			Overall satisfaction			Revisit intention		
	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total
Food and Other Amenities	.435	-	.435	.495	.217	.712	.155	.497	.652
Programmes	.235	-	.235	.186	.117	.303	-	.211	.211
Entertainment	.165	-	.165	.124	.082	.206	-	.144	.144

## **Discussion, Conclusions and Limitations**

The present study was conducted in response to the call for research by Cole and Chancellor (2009) who suggested the inclusion of other attributes (amenities and programmes), in addition to entertainment, as a predictor of visitor experience, satisfaction and revisit intention in future research. Hence, the aim of the present study was to examine the impacts of festival attributes on the quality of visitors' overall experience, their level of satisfaction and their intentions to revisit the Mold Slow Food Festival. However, Cole and Chancellor's (2009) findings were not replicated but further developed. While Cole and Chancellor (2009) identified entertainment as most significantly influencing visitors' experience, satisfaction and revisit intention, the present study indicated that all of the attributes proposed in the final model had significant impacts on the quality of the visitors' experiences, satisfaction and revisit intentions to the Mold Slow Food festival. Further, the present study revealed that the quality of food and other amenities has overall the strongest influence on visitors' intention to revisit the Mold Slow Food Festival. This finding concurred with the food festival case study in Macau (Wan and Chan, 2013). Therefore, at present, the model (Figure 3) developed in this study is unique to the Mold Slow Food Festival. In contrast to Cole and Chancellor (2009), the quality of food and other amenities (0.652) at Mold Slow Food Festival had the strongest total effect on visitors' intention to revisit; while Mold Slow Food Festival's entertainment had the lowest total effect (0.144) on visitors'

experience, satisfaction and revisit intention. Although the case being studied is a festival with the Slow Food theme, basic hygienic quality foods and beverages for sustenance purposes to address attendees' thirst and hunger is significant in the eyes of the visitors to the Mold Slow Food Festival. In conclusion, the present study determined the importance of the quality of food and other amenities at the Mold Slow Food Festival versus the importance of entertainment of downtown festivals (cf. Cole and Chancellor, 2009). Considering, that the studied downtown festival included "street bands, local artists' exhibits and demonstrations, a concert series, and children's activities", the high importance of entertainment within Cole and Chancellors' (2009, p. 325) research setting becomes apparent. However, within the Mold Slow Food Festival context, our findings suggest that a focus on high quality food and other amenities secondly programmes and only lastly entertainment can be considered the key to a successful retention of visitors for following years.

Whilst all three festival attributes studied had significant impacts on the visitors' experience quality, overall satisfaction and revisit intentions, the impact of food and other amenities' quality was much stronger than the other two attribute qualities (programmes and entertainment) in each instance. It is confirmed that food and other amenities' quality was the key to the success of the Mold Slow Food Festival, when using revisit intention as an indicator of the festival's success. This finding concurred



with Mason and Nassivera (2013). Theoretically, the present study confirmed that Cole and Chancellor's model is not an appropriate one in the context of the Mold Slow Food Festival. The result shows the importance of studying the research model in different festival contexts; while within the Slow Food context the quality and availability of locally sourced and produced food has been of highest importance for visitors satisfaction, the research by Cole and Chancellor (2009) revealed that festivals with a focus on music have to focus on the overall quality of entertainment to ensure that visitors are willing to return to future events.

The strong influence of amenities such as the quality of food and beverages, availability of locally produced Slow Food and drinks, friendliness of people running the stalls or number of places to sit and rest onto the revisit intention has been the most remarkable finding within the present study with consequent theoretical implications. First of all, this research presented and tested a revised theoretical model in the context of a Slow Food festival and revealed that the quality of food and other amenities is most important for visitors' experience, satisfaction and revisit intentions. In addition, the findings suggest that the importance of quality attributes is dependent on the nature and type of event under study. Different event visitors' perceive different attributes to influence strongly their revisit intentions. Also the present study contributes to the development of a best fit model for Slow Food festivals by adding new paths from programmes to satisfaction and from food and other amenities to satisfaction. In order to improve the

representativeness of the present study, future research should ensure proportional representation from locals and tourists.

Given the entirely different outcome from Cole and Chancellor (2009), future researchers are encouraged to examine further market segmentation within the context of Slow Food destinations. In addition, it would be interesting to look at possible moderators such as geographical (locals vs. visitors), demographic (gender, age), psychographic (motivation) and behavioural factors (Internet usage etc.) and their effects on the relationships among festival attributes, experience, satisfaction and revisit intention of a festival. Future research could also explore the difference between first-time and repeat visitors with respect to revisit intentions to the festival. Furthermore, the validity of the model developed here could be tested in a different cultural context as the present study focused solely on a United Kingdom (UK) food festival; further research could test its application in another European, American or Asian context. In order to contribute to the pool of academic knowledge it would be interesting to conduct similar studies at other food and non-food festivals within and outside the UK to test further the validity of the new model. Further research could use a larger sample size to determine the generalisability of the findings. Since the present study was conducted in a one-off cross-sectional fashion so taking just a snapshot of the situation under study, future researchers might conduct longitudinal studies.

In terms of practical implications, this study suggests the organisers of Mold Slow Food Festival to use the positive findings (overall level of satisfaction and revisit intentions) of this study to attract potential attendees, sponsors, food promoters and advertisers for subsequent events. Next, organisers should focus more on encouraging participation from and promoting amenities-related features such as quality of food and beverage, availability of locally produced food and drink, local food producers, local organisations' exhibits and interactive foodie activities during the food festival as these attributes were perceived by respondents to be crucial for their overall experience, satisfaction and revisit intention. In particular, interactive foodie activities can include live demonstration of cooking regional cuisines using locally produced food and/or allowing visitors to use locally produced food and beverages to cook their favourite dishes (cf. Abarca, 2004). The interactive foodie activities can be linked to historical and/or cultural contexts (Robinson and Clifford, 2012). In addition, interactive terminals and simulators can be available onsite to aid visitors' understanding of how local raw food materials were produced using sustainable methods. Quality service provision cannot be separated from food and beverages as it can enhance revisit intentions of festival visitors due to their positive experiences (Robinson and Clifford, 2012). As such, this study recommends Slow Food Festival organisers to provide, as part of food and other amenities, quality food and beverage service (including sensory experience) to visitors. In order to attract more visitors who are working full-time, festival organisers

should consider i) prolonging the opening times of the events, ii) including more weekends within the duration of the events. Further, it is suggested that stakeholder collaboration and partnership among DMOs, local government, tourism associations and food producers in Mold are essential for the continued success of the Slow Food festival by increasing the amenities' quality. Festival organisers are advised to ensure that all parties involved within the planning and execution of the Mold Slow Food Festival are aware of the importance of high quality and locally sourced products, a high level of friendliness, sufficient places to sit and rest, the overall cleanliness of facilities as well as interactive food activities and workshops. Raising such awareness, together with the collaboration of the community, local business owners and festival organisers can ensure satisfied visitors and even more successful future festival operations.

The present study has a few limitations worth noting. The fact that a single case is used and the small sample size of this study is likely to impact on the external validity of the findings. Hence, future researchers are recommended to collect data from a representative sample size calculated based on the size of the target population with at least five per cent margin of error (Saunders et al., 2012). Another debatable issue is the extent to which previous visits had coloured the expectations and experiences of repeat visitors; the majority of the sample (60%) had previously visited the Mold Slow Food Festival. However, a similar phenomenon was found in Cole and Chancellors' (2009) research in which almost 90 per cent were repeat visitors. As such, future research

should take into consideration repeat visits to a slow food festival as a testing variable. Although the present study has developed a model appropriate to the Mold Slow Food Festival using entirely quantitative data, it lacks the qualitative depth to understand the visitors' intentions and reasons behind their responses. Future researchers should interview festival attendees to collect qualitative data to determine their behavioural intentions based on the festival attributes.

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