Critical factors influencing visitor attendance at a literary arts festival in Stellenbosch

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Abstract

The Stellenbosch University Word Festival (SUWF) is the largest literary arts festival in South Africa. At the Festival, the word in context is celebrated in as many art forms as possible. Since its establishment in 2000 it has shown a significant increase in popularity and visitor attendance, but thus far, little is known about the key factors affecting visitor attendance. This paper seeks to identify the factors that motivate festival visitors to attend SUWF. Initial analysis identified six constructs for studying the interrelationships among different variables. The constructs that had the most effect on visitors' experience included: 1) basic festival attributes such as value for money, venue spacing and adequate infrastructure; 2) the internal festival experience, such as variety in programme content, convenient event setting and adequate safety and security; and 3) the external festival experience, including sufficient support services and amenities, excellent customer service, and the experience of appropriate advertising media to attract visitors. The constructs which most influenced visitor satisfaction and reflected the level of service at the festival were 4) details of infrastructure, convenience of access, and food and beverage services; 5) the internal festival experience, including technology (electronic ticketing and payment), the experience of culture and arts, and designated smoking areas; 6) the external festival experience, which extended to general ambiance, hygiene and traffic. The above factors appear to be those that ensure sustainability, give SUWF a competitive advantage over other arts festivals in South Africa and globally, and encourage the development of similar festivals.

Key words: Stellenbosch University Word Festival, literary arts festivals, critical success factor analysis

Introduction

Festivals are of increasing importance to the South African tourism sector, with more than 400 festivals hosted annually across South Africa (Viviers & Slabbert, 2014:2). Literary arts festivals in particular create a powerful demand for tourism (Yeoman, Robertson & Smith, 2012:6) as socio-economic spin-offs are created by these events (Viviers, Botha & Perl, 2013:211). Literary arts festivals are perceived to have profound meaning for the individual festival visitor (Shone & Parry, 2013:3; Page & Connell, 2015:250), so notice should be taken of changes in visitors' needs and requirements (Allen, 2009:4; Van Zyl, 2005:3). The aim is to preserve cultural traditions (Pissoort, 2007:3), generate repeat visitors (Yeoman et al., 2012:17) and increase the growth of literary arts festivals (Page & Connell, 2015:251).

Festival organisers face fierce competition as a result of the number of festivals hosted in South Africa (Cudny, Korec & Rouba, 2012:710) and struggle to produce sustainable arts festivals, having to compete aggressively for visitors' leisure time. This research seeks to examine the key factors that motivate, influence and affect visitors' experience of and satisfaction with attending literary arts festivals (Kruger, Saayman & Erasmus, 2012:6; Yu & Yen, 2013:215). This necessarily includes the identification of festival attributes that play a critical role in visitor motivation and satisfaction (Kruger et al., 2012:148; Lötter, 2012:4; Van Zyl, 2012:11).

It is imperative for festival organisers to examine why festival visitors attend literary arts festivals and what factors affect visitor attendance (Viviers et al., 2013:211). They need support in this endeavour, as research is limited and little is known about the significance of specific festival attributes for literary arts festival visitors.

Literature review

Literary arts festivals

Arts festivals can be grouped into different types, such as contemporary arts festivals, visual art fairs, commercial arts festivals and literary arts festivals (Ali-Knight, Carlsen & Robertson, 2007:3-11; Cudny et al., 2012:709-710). Literary arts festivals have their roots in religious celebrations, but have over the years evolved in such a way that today they offer a festival visitor an enjoyable and uplifting way of spending their leisure time (Douglas, Douglas & Derret, 2001:356-357; Andersson, Getz & Mykletun, 2012:32).

Literary arts festivals have emerged globally in the last five decades, incorporating numerous topics of interest to society and the community (Stewart, 2009:3). The event management industry has become accustomed to promoting literary arts festivals as a cultural phenomenon (Todd, 2011:22) that illustrates a society or community's cultural background through showcasing their heritage, traditions and ethnic behaviour (McKercher, Sze Mei & Tse, 2008:55-66; Getz, 2008:403-428; Kruger et al., 2012:151).

Literary arts festivals feature a large variety of events essentially surrounding a gathering of readers and writers in a particular community or town. They are also known as writers' or book festivals (*World heritage encyclopedia*, 2018). Vibrant contemporary topics are staged, exhibited and discussed over a set period of days (Van Zyl, 2013), celebrating literature in a number of art forms, such as book readings, book presentations, book discussions, poetry, theatre productions, drama, music and debates (Klopper, 2017). The challenge is to ensure that festival visitors gain value for money and become more enthusiastic about 'cultural consumption' (Antrobus & Snowball, 2009:329).

The Stellenbosch University Wordfest (SUWF)

Established in 2000, the SUWF is an example of a literary arts festival where the word in context is celebrated in as many art forms as possible (Van Zyl, 2013). The SUWF was launched by the University of Stellenbosch and focuses on the Afrikaans language in the written, visual and performing arts. This festival offers a ten-day period of festivities (Lotter, 2012:1-16) and attracts approximately 120 000 visitors. Currently, the SUWF is deemed to be the largest literary arts festival in South Africa (Van Zyl, 2013; Klopper, 2017). It was initially inspired by the cultural continuity of Afrikaans with the Netherlands, a country with the highest percentage of readers world-wide (Van Zyl, 2011:1-3) and a place where writers are feted and promoted at festivals. Comparable initiatives resulted in literary arts festivals such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and the Adelaide Fringe Festival in Australia (Prentice & Anderson, 2003:7-30; Caust & Glow, 2011:1-6). Such festivals encouraged the spread of similar literary arts festivals globally, including in South Africa (Van Zyl, 2013).

The concept of the SUWF originated in 1994 when the first discussion of a writer's festival occurred (Van Zyl, 2011:1-3). Professor Dorothea Van Zyl (founder of the SUWF and festival director) and Mrs Grietjie van den Berg (Secretary of the Netherlands Language Union) initiated a meeting in 1996 between Poetry International and the organiser of "An Author's Rendezvous," involving prominent Afrikaans, Dutch and English authors. In 1999, the previous rector of the University of Stellenbosch requested that larger projects should be embarked upon and Professor

Van Zyl contemplated whether it would be possible to host a writer's festival in South Africa, even though the circumstances at the time were less than encouraging.

In 2000, Professor Van Zyl established the SUWF organisation and launched the first SUWF, which attracted more than 1000 visitors, many more than anticipated (Van Zyl & Rosentrauch, 2013). The festival was supposed to be hosted for one day only, but it went on through the night until the next day. The SUWF organisation realised that they had created a product of enormous interest to South African citizens. In 2001, more associates, colleagues, and partners came on board and organised a dynamic festival programme with an interesting variety of activities (Klopper, 2017).

The festival offered enjoyable education through quality productions, performances and art exhibitions. The result was a culture-rich experience that showcased, in an inclusive rather than exclusive way, the Afrikaans language and the arts it serves (Klopper, 2017). In that year, the SUWF attracted 4735 visitors, rising in 2008 to 29 100 visitors. In 2013, the SUWF attracted 101 406 visitors and in 2017 more than 120 000 visitors. The SUWF has thus become the largest literary arts festival in South Africa, and Stellenbosch University is unique in hosting its own literary festival, organised by academics, associates, colleagues, alumni, partners and sponsors (Van Zyl & Rosentrauch, 2013).

Methodology

A factor analysis was used to identify six constructs to study the interrelationships of different variables. The constructs that mostly affected visitors' experiences were looked at and the objective in this study is to determine the key factors that motivates festival visitors to attend the SUWF (Lotter, 2012:2-18). Festival visitors do have unfulfilled needs when attending arts festivals and for this reason, it is imperative to understand the motivations of festival visitors for attending these festivals.

Motivation

Research on people's reasons for attending literary arts festivals remains sparse (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016). While each individual's motives are in a sense unique to them, it is presumably the promise of a positive experience that attracts them and that motivates them to make decisions, to experience, to visit or to purchase a tourism product (Hattingh & Swart, 2016:2-5; Todd, 2011:36). Attributes specific to the festival are seemingly what attracts visitors, and the festival organisers can respond to visitors needs and desires by arranging events accordingly. The right mix should lead to an increase in visitor attendance, as more visitors enjoy the benefits offered by the festival (Maeng, Hyeong & Li, 2016:15-17; Hattingh & Swart, 2016:2-5; Yuan, Cai, Morrison & Linton, 2005:41-58). Shone and Parry (2013:202-203) identify two different types of motivation that influence the decision-making process, the first being a sense of social cohesion or identity and the second the entertainment available at the festival. These key factors will determine whether the festival will be successful and repeated by the host destination. The key factors can be broken down into more specific motivations, as Williams and Saayman (2013:191) do in relation to a jazz festival. They identify the principal ones as socialising, exploration, escape, quest for excitement and jazz enjoyment.

One purpose a festival has is to make festival visitors return by providing a satisfactory experience. Perceptions shape the meaning and outcomes of experiences (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2012:387-388; Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2011:275; Anwar & Sohail, 2004:161-170) and are critical to festival organisers. The festival visitor is constantly selecting, organising and interpreting stimuli into a significant, logical and rational

picture. Shiffman, Kanuk and Wisenblit (2010:173-175) elaborate on perception by observing that while individuals can be exposed to the same stimuli in the same situation, surroundings or circumstances, how each individual distinguishes, organises and interprets the stimuli, is a series of highly individual decisions based on each visitor's ideas, needs, satisfaction, values and expectations.

But while the perceptions of festival visitors may vary (Gursoy, Kim & Uysal, 2004:171-181), the unique features of the festival must be identified to determine the competitive advantage that the festival should have over other festivals (Tassiopoulos, 2010:258). Williams and Saayman (2013:184) emphasize that early exposure to literary arts festivals encourages cultural development and future participation and affects previous experiences, perceptions and motivations.

Research was conducted by Noman (2012:9) on consumer decision making and its effect on festival attendance. The decision to attend a festival depends on a great number of critical factors such as the availability of friends and family with whom to attend the festival, the levels of enjoyment experienced, whilst the ticket price and the environment also affected the decision-making process. Key factors help festival organisers to understand visitors' needs, so as to stage a sustainable festival that encourages the further development of literary arts festivals. These critical factors are action-orientated festival attributes.

Critical Success Factors

Morgan (2005:1-17) conducted research on the Sidmouth Folk Festival in the small resort of Sidmouth in South Devon, England, and found that the level of enjoyment contributed to the success of the event. The needs and requirements of festival visitors should be identified to ensure a successful festival. The external event management elements of festival design and operation need to be linked with the internal benefits and meanings that festival visitors can access (Morgan, 2005:4).

Time and effort is invested by festival visitors when they decide to attend an arts festival (Kruger et al., 2012:147), and festival organisers need to know what critical factors influence this decision and contribute to the sustainability of the festival. The decision to attend depends on factors such as 1) festival programme content; 2) festival environment and event setting; 3) good service levels; 4) proper infrastructure; 5) acceptable safety and security; 6) good quality entertainment and accommodation facilities; 7) clear communication; 8) sufficient parking; 9) value for money and 10) good media coverage. The availability of friends and family with whom to attend a festival, the level of enjoyment and the ticket price also influence the decision-making process. These factors are part of the external and internal festival attributes which proceed from the design, layout and operation of the festival and affect the experiences and satisfaction of the visitor. They influence the festival visitor's decision to return to the festival or not, and guide the festival organiser to manage and stage a successful literary arts festival.

This cross-sectional study is a descriptive study within the quantitative research design paradigm. A factor analysis was used to identify six constructs for studying the interrelationships among different variables. The constructs that mostly affected visitors' experiences were examined so as to determine the key factors motivating festival visitors to attend the SUWF (Lotter, 2012:2-18). The target population was obtained through consecutive sampling as this method of sampling ensured that each element in the population was given the same chance of selection (Taylor et al., 2015; Cresswell, 2013; Kumar, 2011: 203). The target population for this study included all festival visitors from the age 18 and above and included first time visitors and also repeat visitors. In terms of data collection, 400 self-administered questionnaires were distributed over the 10 days of the SUWF between 3 -12 March 2017 at an assortment of main festival venues and staged locations in and around Stellenbosch where the SUWF took place. A total of

400 questionnaires were completed for analysis which indicated a 100% response rate and the responses were analysed using the statistical programme SPSS version 25.0.

Results and discussion

Motivation

Motivation is the element that arouses, integrates and directs a festival visitor's behaviour, launching their decision-making process. Having some awareness of it is thus essential for the organisers in designing satisfactory festival offerings for visitors (Yolal, Woo, Centinel & Uysal, 2012:67). Klopper (2017) notes that the SUWF comprises day visitors (visitors traveling daily to and from the festival) and overnight visitors (visitors who reside in Stellenbosch during the festival), but that his organisation perceives the day visitors to be their most valuable visitors. The reason for this is that day visitors spend much more on festival offerings, productions and shows than overnight visitors, as the latter have already spent a lot on accommodation and transport, perhaps leaving less to spend on entertainment such as visiting productions, shows and art exhibitions. Kruger, Saayman and Ellis (2010:97) conducted a study on first time visitors versus repeat visitors at a national arts festival and found that repeat visitors are more loyal in the sense that they spend a significant amount on productions and shows and tend to stay longer at the festival (Bowdin et al., 2012:386-389; Allen et al., 2011:272-279). For this reason, determining visitor motivation for attending the SUWF is crucial as loyal visitors need to be retained because they play an integral part in the sustainability of the festival (Klopper, 2017).

Festival visitors who attended the SUWF in 2017 were asked why they were attending the festival, and figure 1 indicates that the majority of the responses suggest that the artist performances and productions (16%) were the core reasons for attendance. To socialise with friends and family (14%) was the second most popular factor that motivated festival visitors which was followed by the ambiance/atmosphere (13%) of the festival. The two factors that motivated visitors the least was the recommendation of friends and family (10%) and sufficient leisure time at hand (10%). The latter indicates that these two factors had little influence on motivating festival visitors to attend the SUWF.
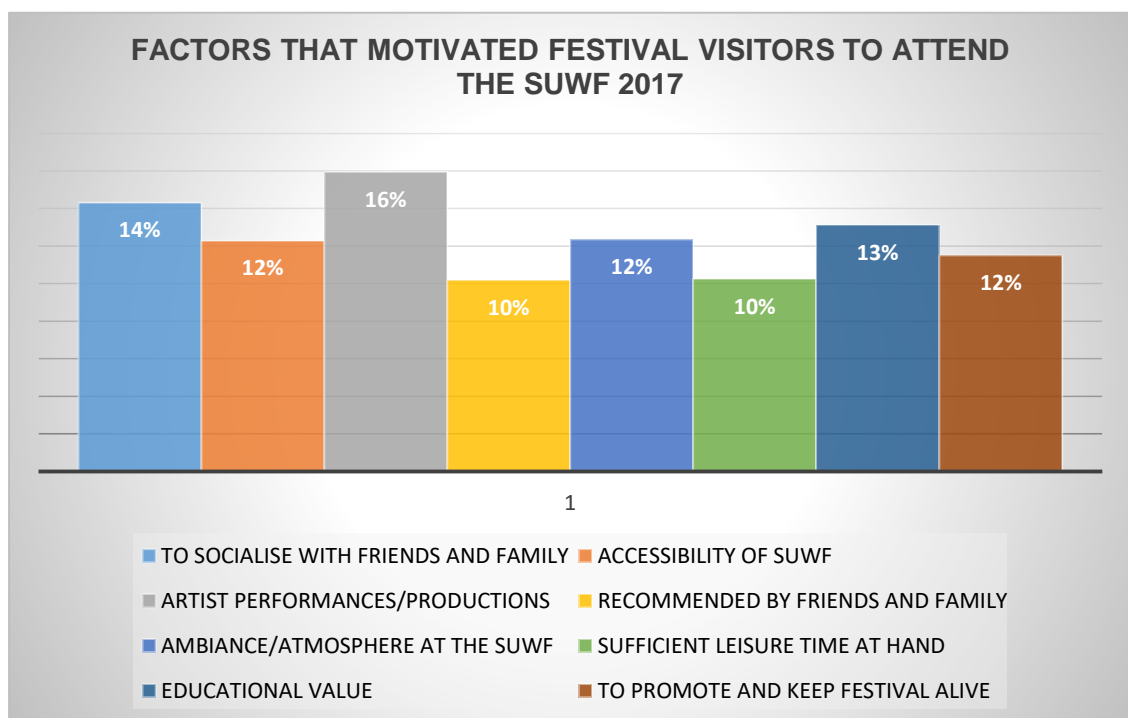

Figure 1: Responses from festival visitors indicating why they attend the SUWF

The factors that motivated festival visitors to attend the SUWF were summarised in two columns. The first column illustrates the percentage of festival visitors whose attendance was greatly influenced by the factor mentioned in the question. The second column illustrates the percentage of festival visitors whose attendance was not influenced at all by the factor in the question asked.

Table 1: Factors that motivated festival visitors to attend the SUWF which influenced and not influenced their attendance:

Factors which motivated festival visitors to attend the SUWF	% of festival visitors who were influenced to attend the SUWF by this factor	% of festival visitors who were not influenced to attend the SUWF by this factor
Socialising with friends and family	54.8%	27.3%
Accessibility of the SUWF	47.0%	28.0%
Artists performance and productions	61.0%	19.0%
Recommendations by friends and family	39.0%	35.3%
Ambiance/Atmosphere at festival	47.3%	25.0%
Sufficient leisure time at hand	39.3%	32.3%
Educational value of the festival	50.3%	22.3%
To promote and keep festival alive	44.0%	26.0%

Ranking the factors influencing visitors to attend the SUWF in order of importance produces the following result:

Table 2: Factors (ranked in order of popularity) that motivated festival visitors to attend the SUWF

Position ranked:	Factors that motivated festival visitors to attend the SUWF	% of festival visitors whose attendance was influenced (ranked in order of popularity)
1.	Artists' performance and productions	61.0%
2.	Socialising with friends and family	54.8%
3.	Educational value of the festival	50.3%
4.	Ambiance/Atmosphere at festival	47.3%
5.	Accessibility of the SUWF	47.0%
6.	To promote and keep the festival alive	44.0%
7.	Sufficient leisure time at hand	39.3%
8.	Recommendations by friends and family	39.0%

The previous experience of the festival visitor obviously plays an integral part in establishing these attitudes and motivations.

The Festival Experience

The visitors who attended the SUWF were also posed an open-ended question as to what they enjoyed most and least about the SUWF 2017. The majority of participants (61.5%) most enjoyed the art, performances, shows and programme on offer, whilst 11% most enjoyed the atmosphere, ambiance and location of the festival. A further 9% claimed to have most enjoyed the cultural experience and educational value of the festival; 6% enjoyed "everything" about the festival; 5% especially enjoyed the interaction with celebrities and artists, whilst 2.4% of particularly liked the accessibility of the festival. The remaining participants indicated that they most liked the variety (3.8%) on offer and the food, drinks and entertainment on offer (1.3%).

According to Hattingh and Swart (2016), factors at an arts festival that contribute to the total experience of the festival visitor are various but include: 1) the variety of entertainment and shows; 2) food and beverages; 3) attractions; 4) socialising; and 5) experiencing culture in a different way (Saayman & Rossouw, 2011; Marais & Saayman, 2010:95). In contrast with this, according to Klopper (2017), loyal festival-goers at the SUWF mainly come for their chosen

performances and do not pay much attention to the entertainment, food and beverage areas and attractions at the SUWF.

As Anwar and Sohail (2004:161-170) point out, one of the objectives of a festival is to encourage festival visitors to return by providing a satisfactory experience, since visitors' experience shapes their attitudes. In this regard, the factor that most annoyed visitors who attended the SUWF 2017 (39%) were the parking and transportation problems at the festival, whilst 26% of the respondents did not approve of the spacing of the venues, and they were too far apart to allow them enough time to get from one to the other between performances. The parking added to the frustration, making festival visitors late for shows. A further 11% of the respondents indicated that the festival programme contained too many choices, making the logistics and selection of shows and performances a frustrating challenge. Another 9% did not approve of the layout and design of venues: for instance, some venues were too small for the audience attending, sound amplification was not available where it was required, visibility was impaired and the infrastructure did not suit the type of show hosted in specific venues.

A section of 6% of the participants said that the festival tickets were too expensive and a further 5% indicated that some of the productions and performances were offensive, obliging them to walk out of the venue. The remaining participants felt that the schedule of the programme was not to their liking (3%), while 1% felt that communication at the festival was poor as festival visitors got lost and service personnel did not have much knowledge of shows being staged or the whereabouts of venues.

The experience of these festival visitors will generate new expectations for future arts festivals. Several authors have identified the benefits of providing a satisfactory experience for festival-goers (George, 2014; Bowdin et al., 2012; Allen et al., 2011; Li, Huang & Chi, 2009:345; March & Wilkinson, 2009:455-462; Getz, O'Neil & Carlsen, 2001:38-44 and O' Neil & Palmer, 2003:418-430):

- Positive word-of-mouth marketing (one of the most powerful marketing methods);
- An intention to re-visit;
- Make future purchases;
- Ensuring long-term festival visitor and brand loyalty;
- Market success;
- Direct sales of art to festival visitors;
- Sustainability; and
- Long-term profitability.

Perceptions

Perceptions are crucial to the festival visitor's experience. Not only do they enable festival visitors to distinguish arts festivals from other events but they also motivate them to attend other arts festivals, helping festival organisers to enrich festival visitors' experiences and ensure continuous sustainability (Hattingh & Swart, 2016:2-5; Maeng et al., 2016:14-17; Axelsen, 2006:4). Past impact studies conducted at the SUWF have shown that visitors' perceptions of previous SUWFs are extremely positive, and the organisers aim to keep things that way by adjusting the festival programme to meet visitors' changing needs (Van Zyl, 2013; Klopper, 2017). The SUWF provides quality content and adds value to tickets purchased by allowing visitors to see a number of free items between productions. Klopper (2017) claims that whatever programme content is offered, the SUWF organisers can build forward on it to increase attendance figures. Furthermore, the organisers are constantly searching for ways to retain loyal visitors' trust by delivering on the promise of a quality festival programme and a worthwhile experience.

In sum, the SUWF organisers discern a clear relationship between the visitor's perception of previous SUWFs and the decision to attend the SUWF on an annual basis (Van Zyl, 2013; Klopper, 2017). Klopper (2017) notes that some festival visitors attend the SUWF as part of a nostalgic tour, whilst others are in search of innovation and fresh ideas to take home with them. For whatever reason, festival-goers who attended the SUWF 2017 indicated that they had received value for money and quality programme content.

According to the SUWF organisers, the SUWF has proved over the 17 years of its existence that motivation to attend the SUWF has increased due to the dynamic character of a festival created around authors, writers, books, arts and culture (Van Zyl, 2013; Botha, 2009). As a result, literary tradition has been enhanced, a healthy reading culture has been established and critical debates in a congenial environment have been stimulated, whilst at the same time the Afrikaans language and its variants have been promoted in an inclusive way (Klopper, 2017; Van Zyl, 2013; Lotter, 2012).

It seems likely that the SUWF attracts more visitors than other festivals because of the broad spectrum it covers in respect of productions, performances and shows (Van Zyl, 2013). This is the case to ensure a sustainable festival for the various target groups. The festival audience of the SUWF should never be underestimated when it comes to prevalent tastes and sensitive issues in the new South Africa (Van Zyl, 2013; Lotter, 2012). According to Klopper (2017) and Van Zyl (2013), the SUWF offers variety, a mix of seriousness and escapism, and value for money, apparently an ideal package for modern consumer society. Festival visitors in 2017 responded to open-ended questions by saying: "the SUWF is brilliant and exceeds my expectations each year", and "the festival is better than any other arts festival and I would attend the SUWF definitely every year to come". Some festival visitors claimed that the SUWF, had motivated them to attend other cultural and art gatherings throughout the year (Klopper, 2017), though others observed that no festival should be in competition with another, but should rather exist in an interactive and synergistic relationship.

Critical success factors (CSFs)

CSFs need to be identified to ensure the sustainability and further development of the SUWF. A CSF that relates to the sustainability of the festival is the whole question of consumer behaviour. The consumer decision-making process determines festival attendance depends on a great number of factors, such as the availability of companion festival-goers, the level of enjoyment experienced at previous SUWFs, the ticket prices, perceived value for money, festival management and the surrounding environment. Also included in the CSFs are external event management elements such as the event or festival design, layout and operation, which need to be linked with the internal benefits derived, and the personal meaning made of their experience by festival visitors.

CSFs were identified and analysed in order to determine how they affected festival visitors and their perceptions of the SUWF. The process should help to explain why festival visitors are attracted to literary arts festivals, and thereby assist the organisers and management of national arts festivals in South Africa. The framework for the CSFs identified by the researcher included two 5-point Likert scale questions.

Likert scale questions are often used to obtain information that relates to attitudes, opinions, emotions and descriptive responses, as the researcher attempts to quantify constructs that are not directly or scientifically measurable. Likert scale questions contain a set of statements to which the respondent replies via an indication, by degrees, of agreement or disagreement. In this study, respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of factors influencing their decision to attend the festival. The respondents also had to rate the importance of various festival attributes and services affecting visitors' satisfaction.

Influencing factors which affected festival visitors' experience

The first Likert scale question was a two-part question to obtain viewpoints regarding key factors motivating visitors to attend the SUWF. Festival visitors had first to rate the importance of factors influencing the festival visitor's experience, and secondly to rate their own experience of each of these factors.

The importance of factors was scaled as 1 = not important at all, 2 = not that important, 3 = not sure, 4 = important, 5 = extremely important.

Their own experience was scaled as 1 = extremely poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = exceptionally good.

Visitors were then required to rate 12 factors that influenced their experience. These factors were:
- Variety in the festival offering and programme content
- Convenient festival environment and event setting (venues, sound, seating)
- Adequate facilities and infrastructure (parking, transport, toilets, water.) on site
- Adequate safety and security
- Clear communication and information systems on-site (signage and way-finding)
- Accessibility to quality entertainment
- Sufficient supporting services or amenities (accommodation and food and beverages)
- Excellent visitor service (staff, electronic applications for information, ticketing, ushering, stalls)
- Value for money
- Excellent marketing (effective communication and information dissemination off-site access to programme and ticketing information)
- Technology – an electronic application for ticketing, programme and shows
- Venue spacing (location of and distances between venues)

The service level of festival attributes affecting the festival visitors' satisfaction

The second Likert scale question was also a two-part question, this time to obtain viewpoints regarding key festival attributes that influence visitor satisfaction. First, festival visitors were asked to rate the importance of festival attributes that affected visitor satisfaction, and secondly, they were asked to rate their own personal experience of each festival attribute.

The importance of factors was scaled as 1=not important at all, 2=not that important, 3=not sure, 4=important, 5= extremely important.

The visitor's own experience of each factor was scaled as 1=extremely poor, 2=poor, 3=average, 4=good, 5= exceptionally good.

In this question, visitors rated 6 'internal' physical attributes of the SUWF and 12 'external 'festival attributes'. These were:

Physical (internal) festival attributes:
- Seating area (comfortable, event venue overcrowding)
- Acoustics and sound
- Lighting and sightlines
- Temperature
- Traffic
- Designated smoking areas

External festival attributes:
- Infrastructure (road, sign posts, festival area, accessibility of venues, venue spacing, benches, parking)
- Service personnel (ticketing, parking, security, ushers)
- Atmosphere / ambience
- Value for money (food and beverage, ticket prices)
- Food and beverage services
- Culture and art (programme content, exhibitions, quality of musical performances)
- Safety and security
- Hygiene (clean areas, clean restrooms, well-trained medical personnel)
- Socialising and concessions
- Higher level of customer service (VIP access, special menus)
- Scheduling of programme
- Convenience

The data was processed and placed within an analytical framework for the study of the interrelationships among different variables.

Factor Analysis

Three constructs were identified as **influencing factors that affected festival visitors' experience** (see Table 3) which were (1) the importance of festival attributes containing nine items; (2) experiences of internal festival attributes containing six items; and (3) experiences of external festival attributes containing five items. If one item is brilliantly executed, the remaining items will automatically have a positive effect on the influencing factors that affect the festival visitors' experiences.

Three further constructs were identified as **the service level of festival attributes affecting the festival visitors' satisfaction** (see Table 3)**,** which were (4) the importance of the service level of festival attributes containing twelve items; (5) the experience of internal service level attributes, containing nine items; and (6) the experience of external service level attributes containing two items.

The researcher investigated the results of the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the constructs below (Table 3), and found that the Cronbach's alpha value increased as the items increased. Table 3 also shows that the Cronbach's *a* values for each item ranged between 0.780 and 0.962, which indicates a high level of correlation.

Table 3: Factor analysis results of the preconceived dimensions

Factor Name	Cronbach's Alpha	No Items
Influencing factors that affected festival visitors' experience 1)Importance of influencing factors affecting SUWF visitor experience	0.931	9
2)Internal festival visitor experience	0.863	6
3)External festival visitor experience	0.877	5
The service level of festival attributes affecting the festival visitors' satisfaction 4)Importance of the service level of festival attributes affecting SUWF visitor satisfaction	0.962	12
5)Internal festival attributes affecting visitor satisfaction	0.934	9

Factor Name	Cronbach's Alpha	No Items
6)External festival attributes affecting visitor satisfaction	0.780	2

Table 3 illustrates the constructs containing a list of factors thought to influence the festival visitor's experience. The factor analysis in this study resulted in a six-factor solution comprising 24 items explaining 70% of the variance (Uys, 2018). A clean factor structure was produced which contained higher loadings as the Cronbach's α values for each item was greater than 0.7. Cronbach's α values for each item ranged from 0.623 to 0.872. All items within these constructs shows a high correlation and the correlations influence each other. To put Table 3 into perspective, Table 4 offers a holistic overview of key success factors and their effect on visitors.

Table 4: The importance of factors affecting visitor attendance and service level factors affecting the experience of visitors at the SUWF 2017

Factors of influence	% visitors viewing the IMPORTANCE of influencing factors		% visitors rating their EXPERIENCE	
	Extremely important	_Not important at all_	_Exceptionaly good_	_Extremely poor_
Variety of programme content	27%	73%	44%	56%
Festival environment and event setting (venues, sound, seating)	29%	71%	48%	52%
Adequate facilities and infrastructure (parking, transport, toilets, water)	36%	64%	54%	46%
Adequate safety and security	30%	70%	49%	51%
Clear communication and information systems (signage and way-finding	30%	70%	52%	48%
Accessibility to quality entertainment	28%	72%	48%	52%
Sufficient support services (accommodation and food & beverage)	34%	66%	54%	46%
Excellent visitor service (staff, electronic applications for information, ticketing)	35%	67%	53%	47%
Value for money	32%	68%	52%	48%
Excellent marketing (effective communication and information dissemination)	29%	71%		48%
Technology (electronic application for ticketing, programme and shows)	33%	67%	53%	47%
Venue spacing	35%	65%	55%	45%

The following Table 5 shows the means of all the constructs and indicates a high correlation based on the internal consistency of all the items in each construct (Uys, 2018). This demonstrates significant reliability. The value calculation of the first three constructs **(influencing factors which affected festival visitors' experience)** shows that the standard deviation is above three, which indicates that the average is 'good'. The standard deviations of the three constructs are 4.46, 4.16 and 3.99, respectively.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of means

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q6F1 Q6 Importance	400	1	5	4.46	.753
Q6F2 Q6 Experience – internal	400	1	5	4.16	.832
Q6F3 Q6 Experience External	400	1	5	3.99	.980

Q10F1 Q10 Importance	400	1	5	4.54	.737
Q10F2 Q10 Experience Festival	400	1	5	4.09	.939
Q10F3 Q10 Experience External	400	1	5	3.62	1.321
Valid N (list wise)	400				

Furthermore, the value calculation of the first three constructs (see Table 5) for **the service level of festival attributes that affected the festival visitors** shows a standard deviation for the three constructs as 4.45, 4.09 and 3.62. A standard deviation above three shows that the average is 'good'.

The festival visitors were asked an additional open-ended question regarding the elements that contributed most to the respondents' satisfaction. The responses included great customer service and friendly staff (42%), good organisation and a well-planned and executed festival (27%). The remainder of the participants enjoyed great variety in the festival programme (18%), 8% of them enjoyed everything about the festival, while 5% indicated that the accessibility of the festival appealed most to them.

The remainder of the participants were dissatisfied with the infrastructure of the town (venue spacing, parking, traffic and road congestions), while 19% complained about a lack of communication at the festival as festival visitors got lost and assistance was not visible. As much as 11% of the respondents felt that the advertising of shows, productions and performances at the festival was misleading, and thought the ticket and food and beverage prices were too high.

Explanation for unexpected results

Certain unexpected results emerged from this study, including the following:

In the questionnaire, festival visitors were granted the opportunity to provide additional comments on the SUWF that might assist with the sustainability of the festival. The majority of the responses indicated that the infrastructure of Stellenbosch was not sufficient to support the festival. Festival visitors felt that, because of the festival's growth, the town was now too small to host the SUWF. As a result of this, logistics were problematic and impacted on the festival visitor experience, as access to and from the venues was affected. Infrastructure problems included parking facilities, toilet facilities, movement and accessibility through the town, venue capacities and insufficient food and beverage supplies.

Another unexpected result that surfaced was that festival visitors were extremely dissatisfied with the location of venues and the scheduling of productions and shows. The consensus was that the venues were too widely spread, and respondents felt that no consideration was given to this when the festival programme was drawn up. Visitors needed time to get from one venue to the next. Some of them were obliged to forfeit their attendance because of insufficient time. The infrastructure was partly to blame, because of limited or no parking near the venue.

The last unexpected result that emerged was that all shows and productions were advertised and tickets were sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to the inadequate tracking of sold tickets and the venue size and capacity in relation to the number of tickets sold, many festival visitors could not attend shows for which they had paid. Free tickets and additional productions and shows were offered to the festival visitor to compensate for the inconvenience caused. Unfortunately, in some instances, this form of compensation was not acceptable, bearing in mind that this is the largest literary festival in South Africa and that international guests travel abroad to experience its offerings.

This study has succeeded in highlighting critical success factors for literary arts festivals in the future. These mutually interactive CSFs must be in place to ensure the sustainability of literary arts festivals.

Recommendations and conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this study was to examine critical success factors that motivated festival visitors to attend a literary arts festival in Stellenbosch. The next section offers a summary of the conclusions reached and makes recommendations in order to identify further possible research areas.

Future trends in the event and festival management profession are keenly anticipated by students pursuing careers and employees seeking new opportunities within tourism, hospitality, sports and leisure events and business communications. Research can assist these students and professionals to make wise career choices and to identify new opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills within the profession.

Research regarding critical success factors needs to be conducted annually at the SUWF. It is imperative that festival organisers know how to keep the SUWF competitive. Research also needs to be conducted from the demand side. It is important to know what festival visitors value and perceive to be important. Appropriate research can supply them with event products that will satisfy their needs so that they will return each year to the SUWF. The needs of festival visitors are ever-changing and regular research will ensure that festival organisers stay abreast of developments, amending and revising event offerings and service delivery accordingly. In this way, the SUWF can remain competitive.

Research could be conducted at other literary arts festivals at an international level, so as to compare results with the Edinburgh literary arts festivals in Edinburgh and the Adelaide festival fringe in Adelaide, for example. More immediate research might embrace the Franschhoek literary festival in Franschhoek and the Cape Town literary festival in Cape Town, comparing strategies structures for the strategic planning and staging of literary arts festivals. This will be of great help to festival organisers, helping them to discern the various needs, wants and requirements of festival visitors attending literary arts festivals in this and other countries.

This study has shown that an interest in attending the SUWF, as well as its survival and sustainability, are determined by critical success factors as perceived by festival visitors. Festival programme content, venue space, parking and the overall infrastructure of Stellenbosch were key festival attributes that had a persuasive effect on festival visitors.

Limitations of study

Due to two days of rain, this sample is not representative of the entire population of festival visitors attending on all the days of the SUWF. Furthermore, the probability might exist that questionnaires were hastily completed as participants rushed in order to get to the next venue in time for a production or a show.

Conclusion

Literary arts festivals are of increasing importance to the South African tourism sector and create a powerful demand for tourism. In this study, attention was paid to changes in visitors' needs and requirements, with the aim of generating repeat visitors and increasing the growth and sustainability of literary arts festivals. The capable and responsive hosting of festivals is a pivotal foundation for the continuation of new and existing literary arts festivals within the tourism sector in South Africa.

Through gathering information about festival visitors' needs and desires, significant festival attributes were identified as playing a critical role in visitor motivation and satisfaction. Critical success factors motivate festival visitors to attend literary arts festivals and affect visitor attendance levels. The findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations in this study offer support to the organisers of the SUWF, and may help them to gain a competitive advantage over other literary arts festivals in South Africa. At the same time, the study indirectly stands to benefit all together literary arts festivals as well.

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