

EXPLORING SPECIAL EVENTS' POTENTIAL TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: A STUDY OF SALIENT FACTORS IN A LOCAL
FESTIVAL DURING COVID-19

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Master of Science

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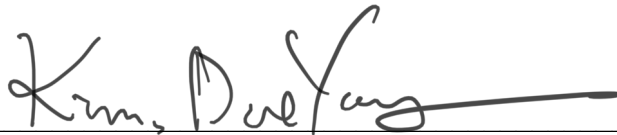
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EXPLORING SPECIAL EVENTS' POTENTIAL TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: A STUDY OF SALIENT FACTORS IN A LOCAL
FESTIVAL DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Special events have gained popularity due to their ability to contribute to the sustainability of a destination by promoting the destination image, attracting tourism, driving economic growth, and building cultural capacity. However, in 2020, the world was forced to confront a conundrum, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic not only caused high levels of disruption across the hospitality and tourism sectors but also catalyzed major social upheaval. With the rise in xenophobia and racism during the pandemic, the function of special events in society is even more essential. While existing research has examined the social impacts of events, the impacts of attendee perceptions and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) outcomes have not been addressed. In an effort to address this gap, this study explores special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion experience through a study of a local festival during COVID-19. Through a series of statistical analyses, attendees' perception of the festival was identified to be the most salient in predicting personal DEI experience, particularly festival DEI practices and the trust of other festival attendees. Moreover, there were significant variations in attendee festival perception between high and low levels of festival pride and perceived risk of COVID-19. Overall, the findings of this study support the idea that special events, such as festivals, promote diversity, equity, and inclusion which can contribute to the enhancement of socially sustainable event planning and management practices.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic in which the number of cases outside of China had increased 13-fold (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). Preceding this declaration, close human interaction and large public gatherings were highly discouraged, and the tourism industry enforced safety measures such as restricting travel mobility to encourage social distancing. Subsequently, the once-thriving travel and tourism sector suffered a global economic loss of almost \$4.5 trillion from 2019 to reach \$4.7 trillion in 2020, making it one of the hardest-hit sectors as a result of the pandemic (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). This drastic GDP decline reveals the ongoing impact the spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic has had on societal economic and travel activity.

Along with the global travel freeze, there was a surge in the cancellation or postponement of festivals that were either voluntary or government mandated. Popular festivals that were canceled or scheduled to postpone in 2020-2021 include the Cannes Film Festival, Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, Primavera Sound Festival, Essence Festival of Culture, Edinburgh Summer Festivals, and etc. (Vulture Editors, 2021). Given the nature of festivals, they were viewed as “super spreader events” (SEEs), in which infected individuals transmit the virus to many other attendees at disproportionately high rates (Majra et al., 2021). This posed a large threat to the sustainability of festivals and events, as many people avoided attending such events out of fear of contracting and spreading the virus.

The COVID-19 pandemic fueled anti-immigrant, white supremacist, anti-semitic, ultra-nationalist, and xenophobic conspiracy theories (Human Rights Watch, 2020). On March 11, 2021, a news article titled, “COVID-19 eroding social cohesion and triggering rise in civil unrest in crisis-affected countries,” was released by the United Nations Development Programme. In this article, it explains how the pandemic has taken the largest toll on marginalized groups and has surfaced deeply rooted social inequalities (UNDP, 2021). Elias et al. (2020) argues similar implications, suggesting that COVID-19 has exacerbated already existing patterns of discrimination and widened gaps of racial, ethnic, and gender related health disparities. A study conducted by Pew Research (2020) found that 58% of Asian Americans and 45% of African Americans believed that they were victims of racism and xenophobia as a result of the pandemic. STOP AAPI HATE reported almost 1,500 reports of incidents of racism, hate speech, discrimination, and physical attacks against people of Asian descent in April of 2020 (Human Rights Watch, 2020). President Donald Trump was heavily criticized for referring to coronavirus as the “Chinese Virus” and “Kung Flu”, which further contributed to the increase in racist and xenophobic attacks against Asian communities (Vazquez, 2020).

As researched, there is positive correlation between racism and xenophobia and the rise of the COVID-19 which has negatively impacted intercultural relations worldwide. This uptick in overtly discriminatory behavior can be explained by the justification-suppression model (JSM). This theory suggests that already prejudiced individuals felt emboldened to act upon their prejudiced beliefs by justifying their prejudices on external pressures, like COVID-19 or disruptive protests (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). In line with Crandall and Eshleman’s research, the mental and

emotional strain attributable to COVID-19 and the weak social norms created by the socio-political climate led people to falsely believe that their prejudiced behavior would be socially acceptable. To counter this, John Sifton, Asia advocacy director, urges governments and leaders to, “expand public outreach, promote tolerance, and counter hate speech while aggressively investigating and prosecuting hate crimes.” In response to this overwhelming discrimination, activism in 2020 was proliferated. This is most notably illustrated by the Black Lives Matter Movement and Stop AAPI Hate campaign.

As illustrated above, the social sustainability of communities, and society in large, was threatened by rising social upheaval. Existing literature often assumes sustainability equates to economic and environmental aspects, overlooking the potential of social sustainability as part of the sustainability model (Mair & Smith, 2021). Social sustainability refers to the aspect of sustainability that relates to people and the “soft” infrastructure needed to support social and cultural life. Pernecky and Lück (2013) argue the importance of sustainable festival event management and ensuring that people and destinations are not over-exploited in the economic pursuit of industry growth. It is suggested that festivals and events are constructed by humans for humans, and therefore sustainable responsibility cannot be isolated from humans. The objective of sustainability is not to reach an endpoint in which all facets of events are wholly sustainable. Instead, Armbrrecht et al. (2019) suggests that sustainability should be viewed not as an outcome, but rather an ongoing initiative which is reassessed and redirected to enhance the livability, equity, and viability of the host community, group, or society.

Although events are typically held with good intent, Pernecky et al. (2013) reminds us that events are not righteous in themselves and that events have been

employed as a way to provoke fear and manipulate and alienate groups of people.

Considering this, an examination of the function of events in society is essential to avoid counterproductivity in the sustainability initiative. According to Pernecky and Lück, events have the potential to “promote equality, cultural diversity, inclusion, good community relations, and human rights,” (Pernecky et al., 2013). This proposition is the central tenet to which the current study was constructed upon. With the rise in xenophobia and racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of special events in sustaining understanding among people is even more essential.

Most of the literature on festivals and events agree that they invite collaboration and provide diverse groups of people with the opportunity to establish common ground and develop community (Quinn et al., 2020). However, there is an inconsistency in extant research regarding the function of festivals in achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives. In a study of how cities incorporate cultural inclusion policies through festivals, Quinn et al. found that festivals staged in public spaces can enhance social sustainability and foster inclusion. Another qualitative study found that festival organizers had the potential to promote social inclusion through consumption, production, political engagement, and social interaction (Laing & Mair, 2014). On the contrary, a study conducted by Wilks in 2010 found that festivals were not conducive environments for social and cultural policy objectives (Wilks, 2010). Even more interesting, a study on local festivals and the accrual of social capital found that festivals may exacerbate existing inequalities or give the temporary illusion of equality and social cohesion. The silver lining can be found in that festivals can function to increase tolerance of diversity, increase cultural awareness, and catalyze social cohesion, but can

be spaces of exclusion and alienation if not planned and managed intentionally (Hassanli et al., 2020 and Duffy et al., 2019). The paradoxical nature of events given by current research prompts this research endeavor.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, hence, the scarcity of research covering this topic area. In an attempt to bridge this research gap, this study investigates the impact of coronavirus on the event tourism industry, narrowing its focus on festival events. Further, this study aims to explore salient factors influencing special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through a study of a local festival during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Problem Statement

What are the salient factors that influence attendees' perception of a festival event and how do those perceptions shape attendees' festival diversity, equity, and inclusion experience, giving consideration to the challenges brought on by COVID-19?

1.3 Research Purpose and Objectives

1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

Given the importance of the function of festival events in maintaining and developing social sustainability, this study takes this assumption a step further and aims to explore the diversity, equity, and inclusion component of social sustainability. Giving consideration to the potential impacts of COVID-19, the current study intends to:

- 1) Explore the antecedental factors of attendees' festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience on attendees' perception of a festival.

- 2) Examine differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience in regard to attendees' perception of a festival.
- 3) Explore the salient factors of a festival event experience and examine the influence on attendees' perception of a festival.
- 4) Explore the salient factors that impact attendees' perception of a festival and examine the influence on attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include the following:

- 1) To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of festival attendees.
- 2) To identify geographical locations of festival attendees.
- 3) To determine COVID-19 vaccination status and prior COVID-19 transmission rate of festival attendees.
- 4) To describe the antecedental factors of festival attendees' pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience.
- 5) To describe attendees' festival perception variables, as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 6) To describe the personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience of festival attendees.
- 7) To evaluate the differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience.

- 8) To identify the salient factors that impact attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.
- 9) To evaluate the influence of attendees' perception of a festival on attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

1.4 Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

The hypotheses were developed as a result of reviewing previous studies regarding festivals and the festival experience, theories of social capital and generative interactions, and the path from diversity to equity to inclusion. In order to investigate the salient factors in a festival setting as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion, this study employs personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience as the dependent variable and festival diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, and interaction opportunities as the independent variables. The following four hypotheses were evaluated:

H1. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees' perceptions between high and low festival pride.

H1-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of festival DEI practices between high and low festival pride.

H1-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *relationships* between high and low festival pride.

H1-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *shared purpose* between high and low festival pride.

H1-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *trust* between high and low festival pride.

H1-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *education opportunities* between high and low festival pride.

H1-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *interaction opportunities* between high and low festival pride.

H2. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees' perceptions between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *festival DEI practices* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *relationships* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *shared purpose* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *trust* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *education opportunities* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H2-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *interaction opportunities* between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19.

H3. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees' perceptions between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *festival DEI practices* between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *relationships* between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *shared purpose* between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *trust* between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *education opportunities* between high and low prior festival experience.

H3-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of *interaction opportunities* between high and low prior festival experience.

H4. Attendees' perceptions of the festival will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-a. *Festival DEI practice* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-b. *Perceived relationships* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-c. *Shared purpose* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-d. *Trust* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-e. *Education opportunities* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

H4-f. *Interaction opportunities* will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience

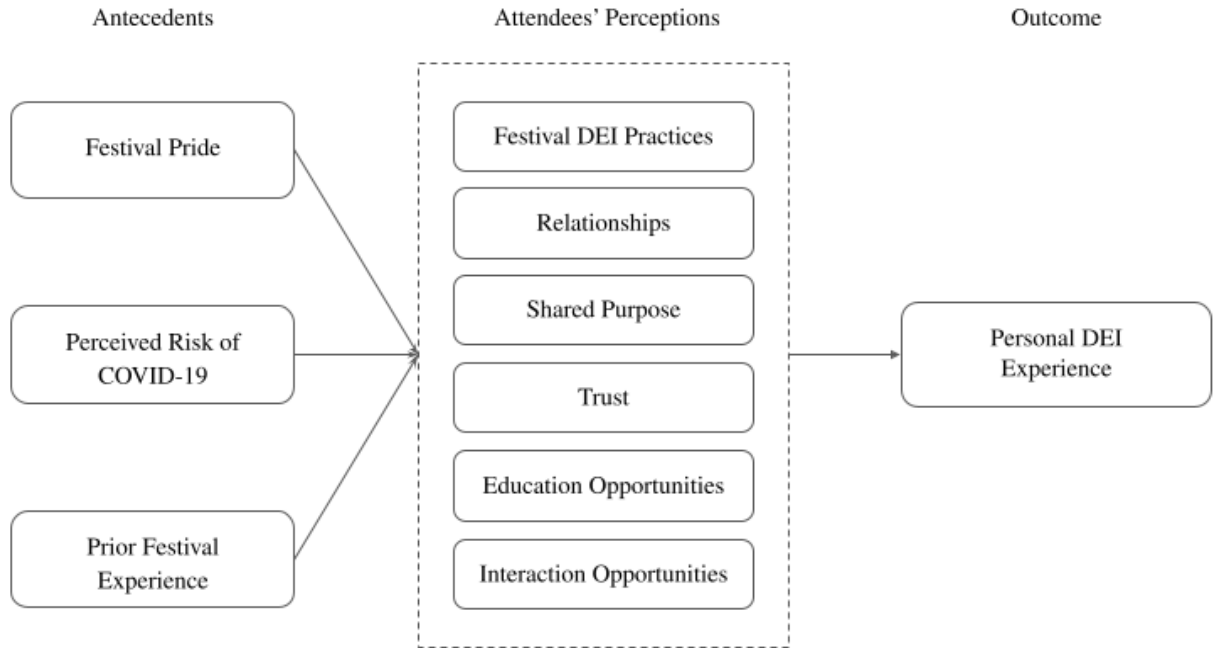


Figure 1. *The Conceptual Framework of the Study*

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of the current research study will have both industry and academic contributions. The implications of this study will be especially beneficial to the hospitality and tourism industry, more specifically within the special events sector. A substantial amount of research has focused on the economic, political, and environmental impacts of special events, with fewer studies directing attention to the social influence of special events. Nevertheless, extant research has evidenced that special events, such as festivals, have functioned to contribute to the social sustainability initiatives (Quinn, et al., 2020; Laing & Mair, 2014; Wilks, 2010; Hassanli, et al., 2020; Small, 2007). Induced by the rise in xenophobia and racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, the world witnessed major social upheaval beginning in 2020. With the realization of the necessity

of hosting special events, as a means to connect communities, research should be developed to focus on the potential of special events to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, with the recency of the global COVID-19 pandemic, there is a need for research on the social ramifications of special events in the context of COVID-19.

The present study attempts to contribute to the limited research and studies that evaluate attendees' perceptions in the context of special events, rather than attendees' economic contributions or environmental impressions. The Theory of Generative Interactions, which addresses the path from diversity, to inclusion, to equity, and Social Capital Theory, which contends that social relationships accumulate human capital, will be used to explain the phenomena at hand. In line with these theories, attendees' perception of the interactions, norms, and practices within an event are significant determinants of successful social agendas. This study identifies specific diversity, equity, and inclusion related attendee perceptions for special events and provides antecedents that may influence those perceptions.

The findings of this research study will enrich current hospitality and tourism literature by increasing the research area to incorporate COVID-19 and social sustainability studies. This study is unique in the sense that it explores the diversity, equity, and inclusion facet of social sustainability and applies it to the study of special events. Therefore, the insights provided by this study hold implications for industry practitioners and urges them to contribute to the enhancement of socially sustainable event planning and management practices.

1.6 Outline of Subsequent Chapters

The following chapters include the literature review, methodology, results, and discussion of the findings. In Chapter 2, the literature review explores and provides an extensive review of previous studies and extant literature on event tourism, factors affecting festival perception, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the theoretical framework of this study. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used to collect and evaluate data throughout the research process. The results are revealed in Chapter 4, along with a discussion of the data analysis. Lastly, Chapter 5 will provide a brief summary of the research findings and results, followed by managerial and academic implications, limitations of the current study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As set forth in Chapter 1, festival events are the primary focus of this thesis. Research has indicated that festival events have an important social impact within local and festival communities (Mair et al., 2020; Small, 2007; Winkle & Woosnam, 2013; Pernecky & Lück, 2013). Chapter 2 will review current research and relevant literature essential for the development of this thesis. Topics this chapter will discuss include the event tourism industry, social sustainability, COVID-19, and the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) potential of festival events. Additionally, it will give special consideration to the Theory of Generative Interactions and the Social Capital Theory as it contributes to the theoretical framework of the study. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the thesis under consideration and contribute to the understanding of the objectives.

This chapter is divided into four main sections:

- 1) Event Tourism Industry
 - a) Event Tourism
 - b) Special Events
 - c) Festivals
- 2) Relevant Theories
 - a) Theory of Generative Interactions
 - b) Social Capital Theory
- 3) Attendees' Perceptions of Festival

- a) Antecedents
 - b) Factors Influencing Festival Perception
- 4) Measuring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Potential
- a) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - b) Measuring Personal DEI Experience

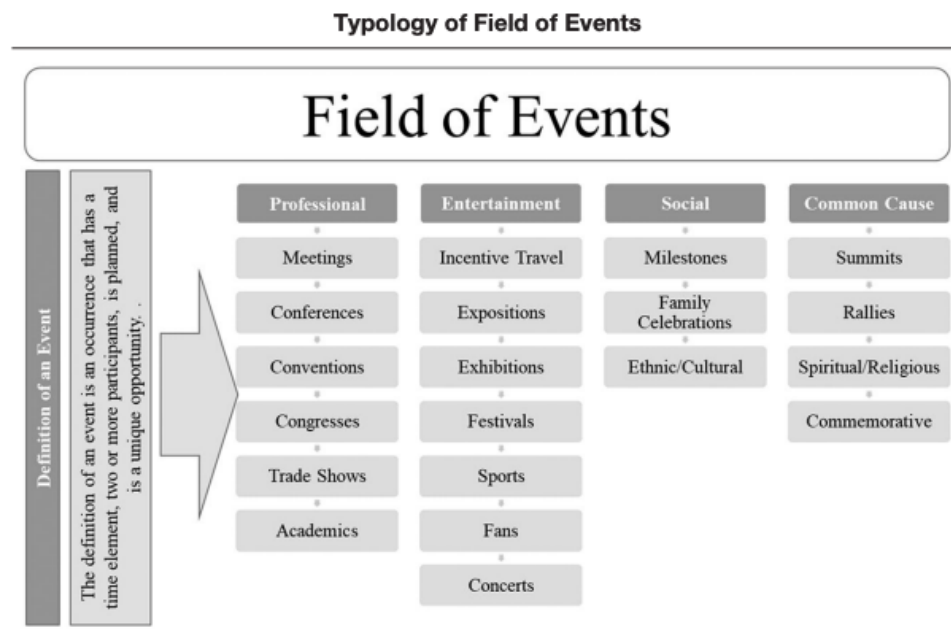
The proposed research framework is then presented in the following section. The hypotheses and research framework were developed as a result of the review of the literature, consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic, and current socio-political trends affecting the industry. More specifically, the hypotheses were based upon the salient factors influencing festival attendees' perceptions of their personal experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion within the festival.

2.2 Event Tourism Industry

2.2.1 Event Tourism

When considering the study of event tourism, it is important to define events and tourism separately. Defining the field of events is a massive undertaking, especially given the extent of research and definitions published, so this study will present two definitions with the most relevance. Getz (2008) defines planned events as “spatial–temporal phenomenon, and each is unique because of interactions among the setting, people, and management systems—including design elements and the program.” From his perspective, the appeal of attending events is the fear of missing out on the full experience, which includes the social interactions and the immersive event production. Through a systematic review of over 95 articles, Dolansinski et al. (2020) provide us with

a comprehensive definition of events, that is, “an occurrence that has a time element, two or more participants, is planned, and is a unique opportunity.” Given the various types of events, production scale, and number of participants, Dolansinski et al. (2020) distinguished 20 types of events and categorized them into four groups. These primary event categories are professional, entertainment, social, and common cause, which are shown in Figure 2 and will be further examined in the next section.



Note: Reprinted from *Defining the Field of Events* (Dolansinski et al., 2020)

Figure 2. *Typology of Field of Events*

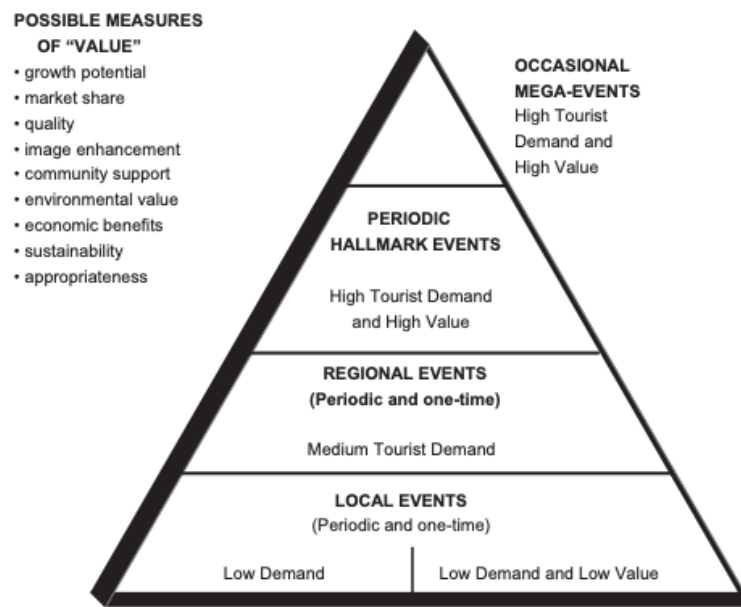
Events are revered as an important motivator for tourism, hence the creation of the term ‘event(s) tourism’. In fact, the term ‘event tourism’ was seldom used prior to 1987 and was enlivened by The New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department in a report that claimed “event tourism is an important and rapidly growing segment in

international tourism...” (Getz, 2008). Mohanety et al. (2020) explains that this may be attributable to the large number of event attendees contributing to the promotion of a destination, cultural awareness, employment opportunities, and economic growth of destinations. Milohnic et al. (2016) suggests that event tourism generates multiplier effects for the destination by increasing tourism traffic, spending, and destination identity.

With the growing popularity of event tourism also came the rise of event studies from the hospitality and tourism academic fields, which placed an emphasis on applying theoretical and managerial practices to the field. In a study that asked respondents to list what they perceived to be the important research themes for future event studies, Mair and Whitford (2013) found that the link between ‘events’ and ‘tourism’ to be of second-highest priority, behind ‘event impacts and outcomes’. Getz (2008) suggests that event tourism is not a separate field of study, instead, he describes it to occur at the nexus of tourism and event management studies. As a result of event tourism being anchored by tourism and event studies, studies can leverage this to further advance the marketing and development of events to support tourism and economic development (Getz, 2008).

The immense growth of event tourism, in both the events and tourism industry and in academia, has spurred the commercialization of events of all numbers and sizes (Armbrecht et al., 2019). In the perspective of Mogollon et al. (2014), event tourism is a strategy used to attract tourists and investments to generate economic profit. In an attempt to further exploit events as an economic resource, Getz (2005) takes a comprehensive, value-based, portfolio management approach to event tourism strategies, as modeled in Figure 3. This pyramid model presents levels of events and specifies their function, value,

and tourist demand. The portfolio approach emphasizes producing an array of periodic or one-time events in accordance with the aims of stakeholders or beneficiaries of event tourism. By taking this approach, event tourism portfolios allow stakeholders to measure a number of quantifiable and qualitative values assigned to events and also the return on investment of events within the portfolio (Ziakas et al., 2021). However, this approach has been criticized for having an adverse effect on the sustainability initiative and may be problematic from a social and cultural point of view (Getz, 2008; Ziakas et al., 2021).



Note: Reprinted from *Event Management & Event Tourism* (2nd ed.) (Getz, 2005)

Figure 3. *Portfolio approach to event tourism strategy-making and evaluation*

As events build their reputation as a viable and profitable tourism and marketing strategy, they have increasingly become integrated into the destination product and global tourism industry (WTTC, 2022; Milohnic et al, 2016). The World Travel & Tourism (WTTC), which represents the travel and tourism sector worldwide, produces annual

insight reports based on research gained from 185 countries/economies and 25 economic regions in the world. The WTTC insight reports present the data of the travel and tourism sector over the last decade, including recent data showing how the sector was affected by COVID-19. Between the years 2014 and 2019, the travel and tourism sector were a large driving force of employment opportunities worldwide, accounting for 1 in 4 new net jobs, and supporting approximately 334 million jobs in 2019 alone. The sector also contributed 10.4% or \$9.2 trillion dollars to the global GDP prior to the pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, it was reported that the sector suffered a global economic loss of almost \$4.5 trillion, or 49.1%, to reach \$4.7 trillion in 2020. Additionally, it left over 62 million people across the sector unemployed, which is equivalent to a 18.5% decrease in travel and tourism jobs. Although the sector suffered a large loss during COVID-19, the United States continued to rank as the largest and least affected regional economy in the world. The WTTC expects this sector to make a full recovery with the support of government job retention schemes, flexible working hours, and resumption of international travel.

2.2.2 Special Events

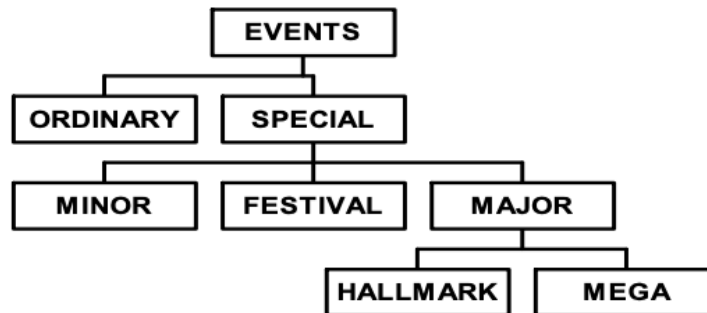
First introduced to academic research by Hawkins and Goldblatt in 1995 to describe events at Disneyland that were outside the norm of park happenings, the study of ‘special events’ was initiated (Dolasinski et al., 2020; Jago, 1997). Jago (1997) argues that staging special events as a destination product was most likely popularized by the Olympic Games and World Masters Games, which received extensive publicity and media coverage. As the production of special events gained popularity, the field of study received more academic attention in order to professionalize the sector. Jago and Shaw

(1998) observe that although special events have been legitimized by research and its outcomes are frequently discussed, there is still no agreed upon definition that researchers use. Therefore, Arcodia and Robb (2000) encourage researchers to focus on what makes an event 'special' to produce a unified terminology that can be used to negotiate the value of special events. A special event is defined by Matthews (2016) as "a gathering of human beings, generally lasting from a few hours to a few days, and designed to celebrate, honor, sell, teach about, or observe human endeavors." A broader definition is provided by Goldblatt (2002), who describes special events to be "a unique moment in time celebrated with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs." (Goldblatt, 2002 as cited in Matthew, 2016).

Getz has offered several definitions of special events, emphasizing the need for different perspectives to the definition. From an event organizers perspective, a special event is a "one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body," but from a customer point of view, it is "an opportunity for a leisure, social, or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience" (Getz, 1997). According to Getz (1997), an event that can be described as 'special' has the characteristics of uniqueness, quality, festive spirit, authenticity, tradition, theming, and symbolism. All the definitions listed above are equally valid, yet slightly vary from each other. They all hold similar underlying criteria that specify the distinctness of special events, namely, the uniqueness and temporal constraint of an event.

Confusion in the definition of special events led to professionals using the terms 'event', 'special event', 'hallmark event', and 'major events' interchangeably to describe

types of events and sizes (Jago, 1997). Even then, researchers categorize events differently which further contributes to the confusion. Arcodia and Alastair (2000) label events (mega-events, hallmark events, special events), festivals (community celebrations, multicultural celebrations, seasonal events, religious celebrations), and M.I.C.E (meetings, incentive travel, conferences and conventions, and exhibitions) as distinct, thus placing them in their own categories. Other researchers, however, make distinctions between events, special events, and major events, but categorize festivals under special events (Jago, 1997; Damster et al., 2005; Getz, 1989; Matthews, 2016). For the purposes of this study, we will follow Getz and Wicks' (1993) logic that “while all festivals are special events, not all special events are festivals,” in addition to categorizing special events as separate from ordinary events. Figure 4, taken from Jago (1997), offers a visual representation of the event schema used to classify events in this study.



Note: Reprinted from *Special Events and Tourism Behavior: A Conceptualization and An Empirical Analysis From A Values Perspective* (Jago, 1997)

Figure 4. *Jago's (1997) Event Framework*

As proposed in the event framework in Figure 4, Jago (1997) offers definitions to the categories above, based upon an extensive review of literature, which will be presented in this study for context. A special event, as opposed to an ordinary event, is defined as “a one time or infrequently occurring event of limited duration that provides the consumer with a leisure and social opportunity beyond everyday experience. Such events, which attract, or have the potential to attract tourists, are often held to raise the profile, image, or awareness of a region.” In contrast to a minor event, Jago defines a major event as, “a large-scale special event that is high in status or prestige and attracts a large crowd and wide media attention.” Major events have a higher production budget, leave behind legacies or urban renewal, and are usually based upon tradition or significant symbolism. A hallmark event is defined as, “an infrequently occurring major event that is tied to a specific place whereby the destination and the event become synonymous.” Jago denotes that hallmark events are most likely to happen at a national or international scale but can occur at a regional scale. Major special events that happen at an international scale are considered mega-events.

Getz (1989) and Jago (1997) identify several attributes and criteria of special events in which this study is based upon. The criteria given by Getz (1989) states that (1) special events are open to the public; (2) their main purpose is celebration or display of some theme; (3) they occur once a year or less frequently; (4) there are predetermined opening and closing dates; (5) permanent structures are not owned by the event; (6) the program consists of one or more separate activities; and (7) all activities take place in the same community or tourist region. Moreover, Jago (1997) finds that special event attributes include (1) attracting tourists or tourism development, (2) being of limited

duration, (3) being a one-off or infrequent occurrence, (4) raising the awareness, image, or profile of a region, (5) attracting media attention, (6) having a large economic impact, and (7) being out of the ordinary or unique. According to the attributes and criteria given above, examples of special events include, but are not limited to, sporting events, political events and rallies, parades, award ceremonies, concerts, fairs, and festivals.

2.2.3 Festivals

Festivals can be seen as the embodiment of the experience economy, a notion set forward by Pine and Gilmore (1999) that describes a stage in which economic value is derived from experiences (Jepson & Clarke, 2013 and Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The etymology associated with the term ‘festival’ traces back to the merging of two originally Latin terms *festum*, or public joy, merriment, and revelry, and *feria*, meaning “abstinence from work to honor the gods” (Falassi, 1989). Drawing from various disciplines, Falassi (1989) defines festivals as “a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and a series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degrees, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a world view.” He continues to explain that festivals are a social phenomenon that occurs in most, if not all, cultures but are manifested in different ways. A more contemporary definition suggests that festivals are a “public, freely accessed, and themed celebration which involves a variety of media such as arts and craft, performances and demonstrations,” which also exposes the attendee to an experience that is broader than everyday life (Getz, 1997; Goldblatt, 1997; Arcodia &

Robb, 2000). Along with its public and celebratory nature, festivals are crafted by the community for the community, which distinguishes festivals from other types of events.

As specified in the special event section, festivals are considered a subset of special events that attract tourism to a given destination. Festivals can be regarded as an attractive cultural offering for a destination that motivates tourists to travel (Davies, 2020 and Mohanty et al., 2020). They also play a role in driving economic growth, building cultural capacity in local communities, and enhancing a destination's image (Getz, 2008). Festivals can stage in a combination of ways and in various locations to suit the aims of the event planners and stakeholders. According to Davies (2020), festivals can be held indoors, outdoors, and as more recently popularized, in virtual spaces. Festivals range in typology, from food and drink festivals, to theater and entertainment, to religion, to music, or a blend of various art forms within a festival experience. Festival events typically occur annually at one location and can attract a wide number of attendees, ranging from small, local community festivals gathering fewer than a thousand attendees to large-scale festivals gathering hundreds of thousands of attendees. Getz (2013) suggests that festivals can be broadly categorized as themed, public celebrations.

In the United Kingdom, music festivals contribute £17.6 billion to the economy and further studies reveal that 57% of music festival attendees would rather spend their leisure time at a music festival than on a European holiday (Mintel, 2019 as cited by Davies, 2020). Burgan (2018) found that South Australian festivals alone attracted over 4.5 million people in 2017 and generated nearly \$81.3 million for the Australian economy (Rentschler & Lee, 2021). As demonstrated, festivals contribute largely to both the development of the tourism industry and the economy of the festival destination.

Festivals have been studied and theoretical lenses draw from many disciplines, including management innovation and creativity, diversity management, team building and performance, group dynamics, volunteerism, and resource constraints (Laing, 2018). Laing (2018) indicates that current literature on festival events is sparse, with most research centering around operational issues, management, and economic impacts. Social elements have recently been called into question, opening research directions to concerns of inclusivity, accessibility, and marginalization within festival settings (Laing & Mair, 2015 and Davies, 2020).

In the age of COVID-19, more research concerning the impacts of COVID-19 and the potential future shifts in the festival event industry post-COVID-19 have emerged (Mohanty, et. al, 2020; Rentschler and Lee, 2021; Davies, 2020). Festival tourism, in particular, suffers an innate disadvantage due to its vulnerability to internal and external environmental disturbances, its propensity to be a super spreader event (Majra et al, 2021), and potential for irreparable monetary losses (Mohanty, et al., 2020). Other notable direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19 on festivals include cancellations and postponements, restricted travel mobility, social distancing, stricter sanitation and safety measures, the shift to virtual and hybrid events, and vaccine card or negative COVID-19 test requirements (Mohanty et al., 2020, Cruwys, et. al, 2021). Although the festival event industry is devising tactics to combat the spread of COVID-19 to make a sustainable recovery, research supporting those strategies are delayed. More specifically, research on festival-goer behavior and perceptions during COVID-19 is highly underdeveloped.

2.3 Relevant Theories

2.3.1 Theory of Generative Interactions

The theory of generative interaction is a practice-based theory developed by Bernstein et al. (2017) that addresses organizations and their stakeholders. It is founded at the intersection of sociology, social psychology, organizational studies, and communication and draws on these fields to develop criteria and conditions that can be applied to successfully sustain organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion. Central to this theory is the concept of generative interactions, which can be explained as the compounding of diverse interactions that foster social connectivity and deeper understanding necessary for the advancement of equitable organizational practices. Bernstein et al. (2017) suggests that exclusionary dynamics, such as self-segregation, communication apprehension, stereotyping, and stigmatization, must be relinquished in order to move from diversity, to inclusion, to equity. Exclusionary dynamics can be overcome through adaptive contact, which is segmented into two processes: adaptive cognitive processing and skill development. Adaptive cognitive processing can be defined as the ability to adapt to differences in experiences, values, and beliefs. Interactions across diversity can lead to the development of skills, such as cultural humility, cultural competency, and bias awareness, that can be used to overcome apprehension. It is important to note that adaptive contact can occur if the individual is willing and able to engage in continuing, high-frequency positive interactions and if the organization has created a climate conducive to facilitating diverse and meaningful contact.

The following criteria, set forth by Bernstein et al. (2017), provide organizational and interpersonal practices of generative interactions that increase the outcomes of representational diversity, leading to inclusion and equity. The six generative interaction practices are presented in Table 1. This study draws from the practices this theory presents to develop question items to measure diversity, equity, and inclusion. More specifically, the perception variables of festival DEI practices, interaction opportunities, and shared purpose were constructed based on these generative practices.

Table 1

Organizational Generative Interaction Practices

Generative Interaction Practices	
a.	Pursing an important organizational purpose supported by leaders and shared among members; preferably, the purpose will be perceived by organizational members as other than diversity
b.	Mixing repeatedly using intentional community building activities. This may include, as necessary, physical and virtual space design that enables interaction across diversity
c.	Repeating interaction opportunities with high frequency and over extended time
d.	Giving diverse members equal standing in decision making processes and insider status in contributing to organizational success
e.	Being collaborative, with member interdependence and valuing of an individual member's uniqueness and belonging;
f.	Feeling interpersonal comfort and self-efficacy

Note: Adopted from *Diversity to Inclusion to Equity: A Theory of Generative Interactions* (Bernstein et al., 2017)

2.3.2 Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory posits that social relationships are resources that can be used to bolster development and accumulation of human capital (Machalek & Martin, 2015). The concept of social capital is defined by Bourdieu (1997) as, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to... membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word” (Bourdieu, 1997 as cited in Stevenson, 2016). Putnam defines social capital as the “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefits” (Putnam, 1995). There are a variety of definitions of social capital, but the overarching concept focuses on the productive benefits of social relations. Hean et al. (2013) argues that the multidimensional nature of social capital has caused it to be poorly defined and conceptualized. In other words, there is no commonly agreed upon set of dimensions or framework used to assess social capital due to its diversity of application. In this study, social capital is used as an explanatory medium and as a vehicle to acquire benefits, rather than being used as an outcome itself.

Putnam (1995) identifies two types of social capital: bridging and bonding. The formation of bridging social capital derives from new and enduring social relations, with an emphasis on creating links between different groups of people, or strangers. Bridging social capital is closely associated with reciprocity and trust. Bonding, on the other hand, is capital developed through homogeneous groups, such as family and friends, with a relatively high degree of network closure. Bonding social capital is closely associated

with strong social norms and trusts, which has positive and negative implications for out-group members and social exclusion. The notion of linking capital was identified by Woolcock, which suggests that social capital is formed vertically, through connections between people or groups in different levels of authority (Woolcock, 2001).

As mentioned above, social capital is multidimensional, and the social capital theory does not have a commonly agreed upon set of dimensions used by researchers. Narayan and Cassidy (2001) identify social capital dimensions to include group characteristics, generalized norms, togetherness, everyday sociability, neighborhood connections, volunteerism, and trust. Similarly, Arcodia and Whitford (2006) identify information, norms, trust, relationships, networks, values, obligations, and engagement to be dimensions of social capital. Woolcock (1998) only provides four dimensions for social capital, namely communitarian, network, institutional, and synergy. Inspired by Putnam's work, Pamela Paxton (1999) identifies social capital dimensions to include social trust, institutional trust, and satisfaction with relationships.

Putnam (1995) suggests that social capital is compatible with social equity and that inequality found in society is due to the limited access to social capital. A number of studies have applied social capital to their research on diversity, equity, and inclusion and have found that the dimensions of trust and relationships to be the most prevalent in forming social capital (Wilks, 2010; Ahn 2021; Quinn, 2013). Therefore, the dimensions of trust and relationships will be applied to this study as factors that facilitate the development of diversity, equity, and inclusion experiences.

2.4 Attendees' Perceptions of Festival

2.4.1 Antecedents

Pride refers to the positive feelings of attachment and emotional bonding members experience as it relates to their satisfaction with the community in which they belong to (Pookaiyudom, 2015). In a case study conducted by Pookaiyudom regarding community pride and sustainable tourism development in Thailand, community pride is reported to be a prominent determinant and reinforcing factor of participation.

Communities, such as Bradford Districts in West Yorkshire, have used pride as a strategy to form positive, socially inclusive environments as well as a tool for economic revival (Ousley, 2001). In this review, the Bradford Council makes a case for promoting a sense of pride to (1) reduce division among diverse groups, (2) remove fears of repercussions, crime, and victimization, (3) increase cultural interaction and commitment, and (4) offer a single common identity to their diverse population. This initiative was created to dismantle the phenomenon of “othering” which polarizes groups of people by assigning negative attributes to entire groups. Thus, the pride is used as an antecedent influencing individuals' and their capacity to perceive the festival event.

The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are an emergent research topic within the event industry. With the ongoing pandemic, people have perceived the subjective safety of traveling as too risky and associate festivals with being super spreader events. Super spreader events (SSEs) are characterized as public crowded events in which the confined spaces increase the possibility of transmission and risk takers, “may willfully disregard instructions to quarantine or intention to harm others,” (Jha et

al., 2020). An individual's perceived risk of contracting COVID-19 during a festival or event can be attributed to factors such as vaccination status, coronavirus variants, event COVID-19 guidelines, risk of transmission from others, and relative amounts of high-risk behavior (Cruwys, et. al, 2021 and Neuburger & Egger, 2020). Risk perception is also influenced by individual characteristics and demographic factors (Neuburger & Egger, 2020; Attema, et al., 2021). Alexander et al. (2014) found that greater levels of participation lead to greater overall satisfaction and future behavioral intentions. With this understanding, it is important to consider how COVID-19 may stifle participation which may negatively impact attendees' overall perception of the event. Boo & Kim (2022) studied event revisit intention in the context of COVID-19 and found that perceived risk mediates the relationship between trust and revisit intention and that social trust and confidence in events can reduce perceived risk. It is important for festival organizers and event planners to be sensitive to the stigmatization of super spreader events and mitigate potential safety risks to prevent the spread of infection and restore prior attendance and festival experiences. Therefore, perceived risk of COVID-19, both prior to the festival and during the festival, is used as an antecedent for festival perception.

According to Lehto, Kim, and Morrison (2012), tourists' previous trip experience works as a moderating role between one's attitudes and travel intentions. In a study involving consumer involvement theory, prior experience influenced one's destination activity participation (Lehto et al., 2004). Kim et al. (2019) tested prior experience as a moderating factor between festival attendance and social media usage and found that experienced consumers were more likely to positively perceive ease of use, enjoyment,

and usefulness versus inexperienced users. Likewise, festival attendees without prior experience might prioritize different factors compared to those who have previous experience. Factors that may motivate an individuals' perceived satisfaction of a festival include music, food, activities, friends, and family (Lee et al., 2014). These findings help support the variations in attendees' perception, since quality and previous knowledge of a prior experience can alter one's ability to appraise an experience, thereby impacting their overall experience.

2.4.2 Factors Influencing Festival Perception

Upon reviewing the literature there are six notable factors that influence attendees' perception of a festival event. The first influencing factor is how attendees' view a festival's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, at an organizational level. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted existing racial and socioeconomic disparities, and as a result, more businesses and organizations are advancing their diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. In the context of healthcare, Sherman et al. (2020) encourages employers to create goals to achieve greater equity which will, in turn, lead to better business success. Lyman et al. (2022) also suggests that leaders create a psychologically safe environment by valuing diversity, encouraging interpersonal, yet professional relationships, promoting a culture where error reporting is normalized, and stimulating constructive conversations. In doing so, management teams can be well-equipped to implement those DEI practices in their service or experience. Additionally, when organizations provide a properly structured environment for generative interactions, Bernstein et al. (2019) argues that it can build ethical value from within and create equity

for individuals and groups in and outside of the organization. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how attendees' view festival diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, at an organizational level, in order to measure its influence on attendees' festival experience.

Interpersonal relationships among festival attendees are the second influencing factor that will be studied. The relationships and friendships created within a festival setting can otherwise be referred to as *communitas* (Turner, 1982 as cited in Kim & Jamal, 2007), which can be described as an “authentic playfulness that is not governed by institutionalized norms, values, or preprogrammed rules” (Kim & Jamal, 2007). These relationships generate bonding, intimacy, care, and love which aids in maintaining the social bonding of attendees which can extend into everyday life outside of the festival (Kim & Jamal, 2007). Relationships not only enable the formation of friendships among attendees, but also build support systems. Tourism and leisure studies have found that social support among family, friends, and peers have a positive impact on engagement and the enhancement of tourism experiences (Gu et al., 2019). In reference to the Social Capital Theory, Putnam found that reinforcing already existing relationships is an essential part of ones' experience within a festival (Wilks, 2010). Thus, relationships will be used as a perception factor to study attendees' diversity, equity, and inclusion experiences.

An essential condition for generative interactions is a shared organizational purpose. Therefore, the third perception factor that this study will be measuring is shared purpose throughout the festival. According to the Theory of Generative Interactions, the third organizational practice of generative interactions is, “pursuing an important organizational purpose supported by leaders and shared among members; preferably, the

purpose will be perceived by organizational members as other than diversity” (Bernstein et al., 2019). Meaning, when organizations have a guiding shared purpose, through their mission statement or organizational vision, these values help to guide more diverse, equitable, and inclusive interactions. In a study conducted regarding volunteer motivations in local events, attendees motivated by altruistic values were more likely to act in congruence with other volunteers and stakeholders (Lee et al., 2013). This research supports the idea that shared purpose acts as a subjective norm, or informal standard of behavior for festival attendees. Furthermore, when a festival attendee is committed to an overarching purpose while engaging in diverse interactions, attendees’ perceptions of the festival are likely to be more positive due to increased comfortability and skill development (Bernstein et al., 2019). Therefore, attendees’ perception of shared purpose throughout the festival will be used to as an indicator for ones’ personal DEI festival experience.

The fourth perception measured is the trust of other attendees. Researchers at the University of Minnesota Extension identified that communities can build trust in four ways (Hoelting, 2017). First, through contractual trust, meaning expectations are clear and commitments between individuals or groups are followed through. Second, through communication trust, in which updates are frequent and gossip is not tolerated. Third, through competency trust, which praises people for their skills and provides people with valuable resources. Fourth, through caring trust, in which individuals can experience repeated interactions of authenticity and kindness. Two studies using the theoretical perspective of social capital found that trust shows great potential in facilitating festival participation, inter-connections, and subjective well-being in attendees (Ahn, 2020 and

Quinn, 2013). Therefore, this study will use trust in other attendees to measure the influence it has on attendees' festival experience.

Opportunities for education have the potential to contribute to social inclusion (Mair, 2015), therefore, education opportunities will be measured as an influential perception factor. Mair (2015) conducted a study aiming to examine festivals as spaces of inclusivity and found positive relationships between learning new skills and improved access to education and social inclusion. Mair emphasized that people consume more than just music and art at festivals, and that learning new skills and access to education is a large portion of the experience. Educational opportunities include workshops on social justice-related themes, a showcase of diverse music, art, and speakers, sharing of new ideas among participants, and opportunities for hands-on or participatory activities. Through opportunities for education, the festival community is more empowered to practice diversity, equity, and inclusion and engage in generative interactions. Therefore, attendees' perception of education opportunities at a festival will be measured.

In line with the Theory of Generative Interactions, interaction opportunities are an essential component of enabling generative interactions, which leads to inclusion and equity. Therefore, interaction opportunities are the sixth perception factor measured in this study. Interaction opportunities refers to diverse interactions among individual attendees and festival groups, which allows for collaboration, deeper connections, and prejudice reduction. Bernstein et al. (2019) advises against superficial interactions that are surface-level and instead encourages more fruitful interactions in which conversations are meaningful and empathetic. When an attendee has more opportunities for meaningful interactions, there is a higher chance that these experiences will work to counter

exclusionary phenomena. Drawing from this idea, attendees' perception of interaction opportunities at a festival will be examined.

2.5 Measuring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Potential

2.5.1 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

It is important to define diversity, equity, and inclusion separately, and the usage of the three terms used together, or DEI. Diversity, or representational diversity, is defined as the characteristics that sets one individual apart from another, including the differences in ideas, affiliations, backgrounds, and opinions (Boden, 2020). Bernstein et al. (2019) differentiate inclusion from diversity by stating that inclusion is the experience of being incorporated into organizational processes and cultures. Boden (2020) refers to inclusion as belonging, in which members are treated like a full member of a given community and are valued by the people within the community. Equity calls for the reversal of systemic and structural injustices and places significance on organizations or systems, instead of individuals or groups, to provide disadvantaged individuals equal access to opportunities (Bernstein et al., 2019). It is crucial to acknowledge that equity is different from equality. Not everyone has the same needs and experiences, thus equity strives to provide individuals with different support to put them on equal footing. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), is used together to describe the processes and policies that promote representational diversity, enable inclusive environments, and promote equitable treatment.

2.5.2 Measuring Personal DEI Experience

In line with the Theory of Generative Interactions, studying generative interactions at the interpersonal level is essential for measuring diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes. Attendees' perceptions of a festival or event will provide insight on their willingness and ability to engage in generative interactions (Bernstein et al., 2019). If an individual lacks the motivation, or willingness and ability to engage in generative interactions, their interactions with people that are dissimilar from them will be infrequent and uncomfortable. In order to address the gap in theories referencing diversity, equity, and inclusion-related interpersonal theories, Dali et al. (2021) conducted a study regarding the processes of learning and change through diversity, equity, and inclusion and identified five types of personal development (PD) events. These five PD events are listed as, cognitive learning and change (awareness), behavioral learning and change (action), personal learning and change (self-awareness and improvement), social learning and change (interaction), and lastly, affective learning and change (emotional learning) (Dali et al., 2021). These personal development events, facilitated through ones' personal experience at a festival or event, are crucial to measure the diversity, equity, and inclusion potential of special events.

2.6 Research Framework

The following proposed research framework (Figure 2) was developed as a result of the hypotheses development and review of literature. The main factors influencing attendees' perceptions are identified as festival diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, and interaction

opportunities. These factors act as the independent variable and are evaluated in subsequent analyses to generate a greater understanding of the function of festivals in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Moreover, festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience are designated as antecedent variables, with attendee perception factors acting as independent variables, and personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience as the dependent variable. The research framework will answer the question of what are the salient factors that influence attendees' perception of a festival event and how those perceptions shape attendees' festival experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion, giving consideration to the impact of COVID-19.

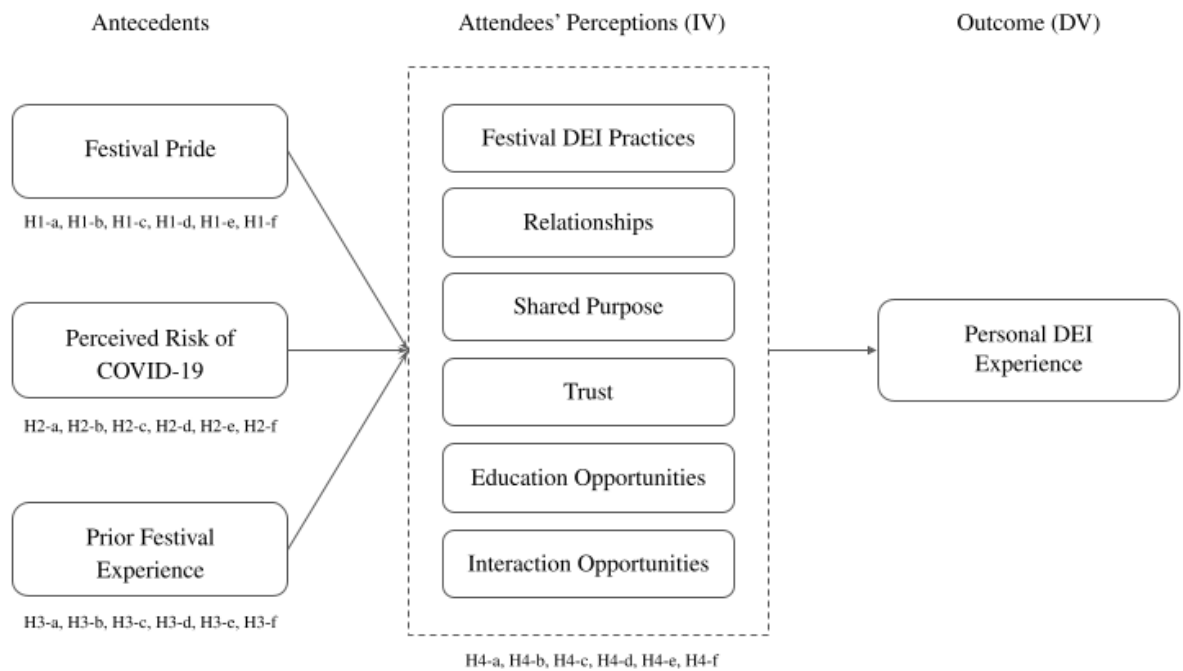


Figure 2. *Proposed Research Framework*

2.7 Summary

This chapter provides a review of the literature covering event tourism and social sustainability while offering significant factors influencing festival perception, which ultimately have the potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within festival settings. The antecedents of attendee festival perception, along with relevant theories underpinning the research framework were also discussed.

This chapter was divided into four main sections:

- 5) Event Tourism Industry
 - a) Event Tourism
 - b) Special Events
 - c) Festivals
- 6) Relevant Theories
 - a) Theory of Generative Interactions
 - b) Social Capital Theory
- 7) Attendees' Perceptions of Festival
 - a) Antecedents
 - b) Factors Influencing Festival Perception
- 8) Measuring Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Potential
 - a) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - b) Measuring Personal DEI Experience

The proposed research framework was then presented in the following section respective to the previous hypotheses development and review of literature. As a result of the findings of the literature review, festival diversity, equity, and inclusion practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, and interaction opportunities

are the main variables evaluated in an attempt to create a greater understanding of the function of festivals in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. More specifically, festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience were assigned the antecedent variables, with attendee perception factors acting as independent variables, and personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience as the dependent variable.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed to conduct research for this study. The purpose of this study will be reviewed again in the second section of this chapter. The third section introduces the research design used to investigate the research questions. The following section discusses the population and sampling procedures along with the review process required by the Institutional Review Board in section five. The description, measurement, and validity of the study found in section six, will reference the instrumentation used to collect and measure data. Section seven will discuss data collection procedures. The last section of this chapter, section eight, will disclose the statistical procedures adopted for data analysis.

3.2 Purpose of Study

The purposes of the current study are as follows:

- 1) Explore the antecedental factors of attendees' festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience on attendees' perception of a festival.
- 2) Examine differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience in regard to attendees' perception of a festival.
- 3) Explore the salient factors of a festival event experience and examine the influence on attendees' perception of a festival.

- 4) Explore the significant variables that impact attendees' perception of a festival and examine the influence on attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

3.3 Research Design

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the salient festival factors that influence attendees' perception of a festival to ultimately impact attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. The descriptive research design was implemented to provide a primary analysis of the profile of festival attendees. This type of research design is used to provide a summary of the characteristics of the population.

Along with a descriptive research design, a relational research design will be applied to this study to explore the relationships that exist between the variables. Specifically, a relational research design will inspect the relationships between the antecedents that influence attendee perception and the attendee perceptions that shape attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. The correlation between variables will be determined by a series of statistical analyses.

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Population

The True/False Film Fest is a weekend-long documentary film festival that occurs annually in Columbia, Missouri. The festival started on Thursday, March 3, 2022 and ended on Sunday, March 6, 2022. Film screenings occur throughout the day and night at multiple locations in downtown Columbia, Missouri. These venues include Ragtag

Cinema, Jesse Hall, Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts, The Picturehouse, The Blue Note, the Rhynsburger Theatre, and the Tiger Hotel. The True/False Film Fest is a program of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, Ragtag Film Society. True/False was founded by Paul Sturtz and David Wilson in February 2004, with their largest year being 2019, selling over 54,000 film festival tickets. With thousands of film submissions, from local and international filmmakers every year, the festival claims to be ‘topic agnostic’, meaning, the festival strives to screen a diverse range of films that exhibit all sides of a given topic. According to a 2018 demographic profile of the festival provided by True/False Film Fest, 72% of attendees were from Missouri and 28% were from out of state, reaching regions in Asia and Europe. One in twelve Columbians participate in the festival and 79% of all attendees return to the festival. Regarding the age demographics of attendees, the largest percentage of attendees are 35-59 years old (49%), 30% are 20-24 years old, and 24% are 60-74 years old. This festival has doubled its economic impact since 2011 to \$2,194,090, with an \$643 average spend per visitor.

Prior research has indicated that attending to attendees’ opinions, attitudes, and experiences of a festival can help identify how they perceive the festival as it relates to their own identity and sense of inclusion (Dewilde, et al., 2021). As a result of the aforementioned attributes of the True/False Film Fest, the research deemed attendees of this festival event to be the appropriate target population to explore personal experiences of diversity, equity, and inclusion within a festival setting. The target population will include festival attendees, volunteers, and management.

3.4.2 Sample

An online questionnaire was administered to collect data for this study. The sample frame consisted of individuals that attended True/False Film Festival in 2022 and were over the age of 18. Due to time and financial constraints, participants were non randomly selected through a convenience sampling approach. The sample was dependent on the following characteristics: the researcher's accessibility to the festival attendees, and attendees who were willing to participate in the study. The advantage of adopting this sampling approach included increased response rates and the avoidance of high investigation costs.

The target sample size, or desired number of participants needed to derive the most accurate insights about the population, should be about 10% of the total population in the hospitality management industry (Causin, 2007). According to festival organizers in 2021, the festival anticipated a minimum of approximately 2,000 attendees in 2021 due to COVID-19 (Falcon, 2022). Based upon this estimate and considering the ongoing pandemic in 2022, the targeted sample sized was determined to be 200 people.

3.5 Institutional Review Board

In accordance with the University of Missouri and federal regulations regarding research involving human participants, an application was submitted to the University of Missouri IRB. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an administrative body formally designated to review and monitor research to protect the welfare, rights, and privacy of human subjects. The IRB application was reviewed and accepted prior to the start of sampling and data collection. The approval letter can be found in Appendix A.

3.6 Instrumentation

3.6.1 Description

A self-administered online questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics survey software. The first section assessed credentials through screening questions used to determine if the survey participant was over the age of 18 and had attended True/False Film Fest in 2022. The second section was divided into subsections, namely prior festival experience, pride assessment, and COVID-19 risk assessment. The following section asked a series of questions involving attendees' perception of the festival. The fourth section addressed attendees' personal experiences at the festival in regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Lastly, the fifth section consisted of demographic questions, including gender, race, age, income, education, and employment status.

Development of attendee perception items were adopted from the Sense of Community Index Revised (SCI-2) developed by Chavis, Lee, and Acosta (2008) and the Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale (FSIAS) developed by Delamere et al. (2001). Current research does not explicate a widely used measurement for organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion, so festival diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices question items were adopted mainly from the Community Equity and Inclusion survey developed by the National Research Center at Polco (2020). Table 2 presents the question items deployed and modified for the purposes of this study, the relevant application to the study, and the source of the existing measurement scale.

Development of the festival pride items were adopted from the Group Identity Scale (GIS) developed by Heere et al., (2011) and the Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale (FSIAS) developed by Delamere et al. (2001). Festival pride question development

is presented in Table 3. Personal DEI experience question items were adopted from a sample diversity, equity, and inclusion survey created by Custom Insight (2020) and were guided by determinants DEI in the Theory of Generative Interactions. Question development for personal DEI experience is presented in Table 4.

Table 2

Attendee Perception Question Development

Question Item	Attendee Perception Category	Source
I can generally trust other people attending this festival.	Trust	SCI-2
Attendees of this festival care about each other.	Relationships	SCI-2
Friendships are strengthened through participation in the festival.	Relationships	SCI-2
I enjoy being around other festival attendees.	Relationships	SCI-2
The festival has symbols and expressions of membership such as clothes, signs, logos, landmarks, and flags that people can recognize.	Shared purpose	SCI-2
Other attendees and I value similar things.	Shared purpose	SCI-2
The festival contributes to a sense of togetherness.	Shared purpose	FSIAS
This festival provides opportunities for people to learn new things.	Education Opportunities	FSIAS
This festival provides opportunities for people to experience new activities.	Education Opportunities	FSIAS
This festival provides opportunities to meet new people.	Interaction Opportunities	FSIAS
This festival provides opportunities for people to collaborate and interact.	Interaction Opportunities	FSIAS
This festival allows for the sharing of ideas among participants.	Interaction Opportunities	FSIAS
This festival acts as a showcase for new ideas.	Education Opportunities	FSIAS
I am exposed to a variety of socio-cultural experiences through this festival.	Education Opportunities	FSIAS
Making all attendees feel welcome	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Helping new attendees feel connected and integrated	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Attracting attendees from diverse backgrounds	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Valuing individuals from diverse backgrounds	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Demonstrating respect for different cultures and belief systems	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Treating all attendees fairly	Festival DEI Practices	NRC

Providing a safe and secure environment for individuals of all backgrounds	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
How welcoming, if at all, do you think T/F Film Fest is for:		
Women	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
Men	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People with disabilities	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other non-straight sexual identities	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who identify as transgender	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are Arabic or Middle Eastern	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are Asian, or Pacific Islander	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are Black or African American	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are Hispanic	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are White	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People whose first language is not English	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are more liberal	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are more conservative	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are of lower income	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are older	Festival DEI Practices	NRC
People who are younger	Festival DEI Practices	NRC

Note: SCI-2(Sense of Community Index Revised), FSIAS(Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale, NRC(National Research Center at Polco’s Community Equity and Inclusion survey)

Table 3

Festival Pride Question Development

Question Item	Pride Category	Source
I feel a personal sense of pride and recognition through participating in the festival.	Personal	FSIAS
I am proud to tell others about my experience at this festival.	Personal	-
I believe that the festival enhances the image of the CoMo.	Community	FSIAS
I think this festival supports local businesses, venues, and restaurants.	Community	FSIAS
I believe this festival helps show others why CoMo is unique and special.	Community	FSIAS
Overall, I think this festival is viewed positively by others.	Community	GIS

Note: FSIAS(Festival Social Impact Attitude Scale), GIS (Group Identity Scale)

Table 4

Personal DEI Experience Question Development

Question Item	Source
My experience with T/F Film Fest has left me with a more positive perception of festival attendees and/or participants.	CI
How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place at T/F Film Fest because of your personal characteristics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation)?	CI
How often do you feel pressured to hide or change things about yourself in order to fit in with the True/False Film Fest community?	CI
Do you feel that your unique attributes, traits, characteristics, skills, experience, and background are valued in the True/False community?	CI
Become more comfortable talking about my own background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with other people.	TGI
Become more understanding of people with different backgrounds from my own.	TGI
Become more willing and able to engage with people with different backgrounds from my own.	TGI
Reduce my own biases of people with different backgrounds than my own.	TGI
Open up conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion in my personal life.	TGI
Broaden my cultural awareness.	TGI
Feel more empowered as an ally.	TGI

Note: CI(Custom Insights), TGI(Theory of Generative Interactions)

3.6.2 Measurement

Depending on the nature of the question items, varying measurement strategies were applied. Most questions utilized a 5-point Likert scale, a psychometric response scale used to specify an individual's agreement with a given statement. The point value assigned to the answer options range from 1 to 5. Participation in the 2022 True/False Film Fest was measured on a "yes" or "no" response to the question, "Did you attend and/or participate in True/False Film Fest in 2022?"

Prior True/False Film Fest experience was measured through the question, "how many times (years) have you attended T/F Film Fest?" which allowed for a numeric open-ended response. The responses were later categorized into a 5-point scale depending on frequency of True/False Film Fest attendance. The scale ranged from "1 = 0 times, 2 = 1 to 5 times, 3 = 6 to 10 times, 4 = 11 to 15 times, 5 = 16-19 times." Prior (other) festival

experience was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = never to 5 = very frequently”. A sample question addressing prior (other) festival experience includes, “How often do you attend other festival(s) besides T/F Film Fest? (Festivals can refer to celebrations of music, art, cultural, culinary, religious, etc.)”

Perceived risk of COVID-19 was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = none at all to 5 = a great deal”. An example of a question used to measure perceived risk of COVID-19 includes, “To what extent did COVID-19 affect your decision to attend T/F Film Fest?”

Festival pride and attendees’ perceptions, including shared purpose, festival DEI practices, relationships, trust, education, and interaction, were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree”. A sample question addressing festival pride includes, “ I feel a personal sense of pride and recognition through participating in the festival.” Sample questions addressing attendees’ perceptions include, “I can generally trust other people attending this festival,” and “This festival allows for the sharing of ideas among participants.”

Personal DEI experience and festival DEI practices, a subfactor of attendees’ perceptions, was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = terrible to 5 = excellent”. An example of a question used to measure personal DEI experience includes, “My experiences at T/F Film Fest have led me to become more willing and able to engage with people with different backgrounds from my own.” A sample question addressing perceived festival DEI includes, “Please rate the T/F Film Fest on attracting attendees from diverse backgrounds.”

Several personal DEI experience questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = never to 5 = always” and “1 = definitely not to 5 = definitely yes”. A sample question of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = never to 5 = always” includes, “How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place at T/F Film Fest because of your personal characteristics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation)?” A question utilizing the Likert scale “1 = definitely not to 5 = definitely yes” includes, “Do you feel that your unique attributes, traits, characteristics, skills, experience, and background are valued in the True/False community?”

3.6.3 Validity

To establish validity in the questionnaire, multiple scholars and the executive team of True/False Film Fest were consulted to evaluate the questionnaire. To ensure content validity and face validity, the consultants were chosen due to their background knowledge of the hospitality and tourism industry, event planning and management, statistical analysis, and the festival itself. The experts reviewed the questionnaire to determine the clarity of question content and concepts, assess questionnaire flow and structure, and verify the overall understanding of the scope of research. In addition, graduate students in the Hospitality Management program at the University of Missouri were asked to critique the questionnaire. The feedback and recommendations given by the forementioned consultants and reviewers were applied to increase the validity of the questionnaire. Following the revisions, the research team developed a final version of the questionnaire to be launched on the festival start date.

3.7 Data Collection

A sample of festival attendees who participated in True/False Film Fest in 2022 were asked to complete the 10-to-15-minute questionnaire. The weekend-long festival began Thursday, March 3, 2022, and ended March 6th, 2022. The questionnaire opened on March 4th, giving participants at least one day to experience the festival before submitting responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire remained open for a total of three weeks, ending on March 25, 2022. Since the majority of the questions required participants to recall their experiences and state their perceptions towards particular festival aspects, it was critical that the questionnaire was open for a shorter time frame to avoid the diminishing value of responses.

Attendees were made aware of the questionnaire through three different marketing avenues. First, printed flyers were created with information regarding the nature of the survey, the benefits of participating, participant qualifications, and QR code (a two-dimensional version of a barcode) and website link that directed the participant to the Qualtrics questionnaire. Printed flyers were posted throughout downtown Columbia, Missouri two days prior to the festival at various coffee shops, restaurant and retail windows, and community bulletin boards. The weekend of the festival event, film screening venues were given printed flyers to make available for festival attendees. With permission granted from True/False Film Fest management, the research team distributed an additional 100 flyers a day (400 total) to festival attendees, in various downtown locations, throughout the four-day festival period. A convenience sampling approach was adopted in this study which involves drawing part of the population that is close to hand, which means some of the population has a zero chance of being selected.

The other questionnaire marketing avenues included posting on social media and through MU Info, University of Missouri's weekly list of announcements published by the Division of IT and Digital Service and sent out to all faculty, staff, and students. A social media infographic was created and posted on True/False Film Fest related Facebook pages, groups, and discussion topics. The social media posts included a brief description of the research study, the benefits of participating, participant qualifications, and included a website link to direct the participants to the survey. An email announcement calling for research participants was made through MU Info on the third week of the open survey period, which drew in more participants from the local Columbia area.

Participants were allowed to take the questionnaire one time to avoid repeat submissions. Once participants began the survey, participants were given up to 72 hours to complete the survey before it was considered incomplete. Anonymity was upheld through the elimination of location tracking, identification codes, and collection of IP addresses. Additionally, participants were not asked any personally identifiable information such as name, date of birth, email, or place of work. Survey answers were stored initially in the Qualtrics database in a password-protected electronic format. The data was then downloaded and kept on a secure server, with password access only available to the research team. The questionnaires were kept anonymous to increase response rate and encourage honest and candid responses, especially with topics covering diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To encourage further participation, the research team partnered with True/False Film Fest to increase credibility of the study and demonstrate appreciation for the

participant's time and effort to complete the questionnaire. True/False Film Fest donated two Ragtag Cinema Couch Club Membership passes to use for the prize draw. In addition to the cinema memberships, the prize draw also included five \$20 Amazon eGiftcards that were given to randomly selected winners that signed up to be in the prize draw. To sign up for the prize draw, the participants had to reach the end of the survey before being directed to a separate survey to enter into the raffle. Respondents were informed that their responses would still remain anonymous and that their responses could not be linked back to the initial survey.

3.8 Data Analysis

To complete the statistical analyses, the data was coded into RStudio 2022.02.1+461 "Prairie Trillium" Release to complete the tasks. The data analysis began after the initial data screening. The data screening consisted of eliminating questionnaire responses if the responses were careless or if the questionnaire was incomplete. Any responses that were not 100% completed were treated as a defective survey and pulled from the data. Of the 31 uncompleted responses, 9 responses had 50% or more of the questionnaire completed, while 22 responses had less than 50% completed. After pulling the 31 uncompleted responses, the number of the sample size decreased from 177 to 144 people. A screening of the data ensured that the data was representative of the sample and did not contain any outliers that could skew the data.

As mentioned above, the total number of participants who volunteered to participate in this study was 177. To narrow the target audience to only adult festival attendees, each potential research participant was asked if they were over the age of 18

and had participated in the True/False Film Festival in 2022. 4.60% of respondents, or 8 participants, answered “no” which prompted the questionnaire to automatically end the survey and mark their answer as incomplete, notifying the researchers of a defective survey. The remaining 95.40% of respondents, or 166 participants, that answered “yes” were permitted to begin the questionnaire. Of those 166 participants that began the questionnaire, 13.25% or 22 respondents dropped out of the survey prior to completion.

The valid, or non-defective responses, 81.36% of the sample size, (n=144) were then used as the data set for all subsequent data analyses. These analyses included a descriptive statistics analysis to summarize the mean, median, frequencies, and standard deviations. The first three hypotheses were tested using a series of t-tests to determine significant differences between the antecedents and perception variables. The fourth hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analyses to identify the relationships between the independent and dependent variable and assess the strength of such relationships. To examine the strength of the fourth hypothesis even further, a hierarchical linear regression analysis was performed to detect if additional variables improved the research model’s ability to predict the outcome, that is the personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience in a festival context.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the research methodology utilized to conduct research for this study. The purpose of this study was reviewed again in the second section of this chapter to allow for a greater understanding of the research strategy designed to support the research aims. The following section discussed the population and sampling

procedures along with the review process required by the Institutional Review Board in section five. The instrumentation was discussed in section six and the data collection procedures can be found in section seven. The last section of this chapter presented the statistical analysis procedures followed by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the statistical analysis of data. In the first section, a summary of the festival is given, along with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The subsequent section introduces the variables, along with a descriptive summary of the variables, including mean, median, and standard deviations. The third section tests the hypotheses according to the following steps. First, a correlation matrix will be constructed. Second, the respondents will be segmented into two groups according to high and low levels of influential antecedent variables, namely, festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience. Third, a comparison of the two independent samples is analyzed using Welch's two sample t-test to identify differences between high and low antecedent groups and attendee festival perception. Lastly, a simple regression analysis and two multiple regression analysis is performed to detect the relationships between attendees' festival perception and personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Research objectives 1 and 2 were proposed to describe the socio-demographic characteristics (gender, age, race, household income, education, and employment status) of festival attendees as well as to identify the geographical location of festival attendees. Table 5 displays the geographic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. Upon conducting a descriptive analysis of the sample, the results indicated that 84.17%

(n=117) of the respondents currently reside in Missouri, while 15.83% (n=22) of respondents reside outside of Missouri. Interestingly, a respondent reported their current residence to be located in Dublin, Ireland 0.72% (n=1).

The demographic profile of the participants was as follows. Of the respondents, 78.42% (n=109) were female, 16.55% (n=23) were male, 2.88% (n=4) were non-binary or a third gender, and less than 2.16% (n=3) participants prefer to self-describe or prefer not the answer the question. The gender gap generally reflects the 2018 demographic report provided by True/False Film Fest, where 64% of participants were female, 35% were male, and less than 1% were non-binary. Regarding race of the participants, 89.52% (n=124) were White, 6.21% (n=9) were Asian, 4.14% (n=6) were Black or African American, 1.38% (n=2) were American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.38% (n=2) were Hispanic, and 1.38% (n=2) responded with other. With respect to age, 33.81% (n=47) were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, 15.83% (n=22) were between the ages of thirty and forty, 15.11% (n=21) were between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-nine, 13.67% (n=19) were between the ages of fifty-one and sixty, 10.79% (n=15) were between the ages of forty-one to fifty, and 10.79% (n=15) were over the age of sixty.

Regarding income, 22.30% (n=30) reported an annual household income less than \$25,000, followed by 17.99% (n=25) who reported an annual household income of \$100,000 to \$149,999, 17.27% (n=24) who reported an annual household income of \$50,000 to \$74,999, 12.23% (n=17) who reported an annual household income of \$150,000 or more, 11.51% (n=16) who reported an annual household income of \$75,000 to \$99,000. The number of respondents, 9.35% (n=13), who reported an annual household income of \$35,000 to \$49,999 was equal to the respondents who reported an

annual household income of \$25,000 to \$34,999. With respect to the highest level of education held by respondents, 33.09% (n=46) held a Master's degree, 28.06% (n=39) held a Bachelor's degree, 20.86% (n=29) attended some college but did not hold a degree, 7.19% (n=10) held a Doctoral degree, 4.32% (n=6) held a Professional degree, 3.60% (n=5) held an Associate degree, 2.16% held a high school degree or equivalent, and 0.72% held less than a high school degree. In terms of employment status, the majority of participants, 56.12% (n=78) were employed full-time, followed by 25.90% (n=36) who were students. The research assumes that the number of self-reported students accounted for a large portion of participants reporting a household income of less than \$25,000. Of the other respondents, 8.63% (n=12) were employed part-time, 5.76% (n=8) were retired, 2.16% preferred not to disclose their employment status, and 1.44% (n=2) were unemployed.

Table 5

Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	%	Mode
Current Residence (n=139)			Missouri
Missouri	117	84.17	
Outside of Missouri	22	15.83	
Gender (n=139)			Female
Male	23	16.55	
Female	109	78.42	
Non-binary/third gender	4	2.88	
Prefer to self-describe	1	0.72	
Prefer not to answer	2	1.44	
Race (n=145)			White
White	124	89.52	
Black or African American	6	4.14	

American Indian or Alaska Native	2	1.38	
Asian	9	6.21	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.00	
Hispanic	2	1.38	
Other	2	1.38	
Age (n=139)			18-24
18-24	47	33.81	
25-29	21	15.11	
30-40	22	15.83	
41-50	15	10.79	
51-60	19	13.67	
60+	15	10.79	
Annual Household Income (n=139)			Less than \$25,00
Less than \$25,000	31	22.30	
\$25,000 to \$34,999	13	9.35	
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13	9.35	
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24	17.27	
\$75,000 to \$99,000	16	11.51	
\$100,000 to \$149,999	25	17.99	
\$150,000 or more	17	12.23	
Education (n=139)			Master's degree
Less than high school degree	1	0.72	
High school graduate	3	2.16	
Some college but no degree	29	20.86	
Associate degree	5	3.60	
Bachelor's degree	39	28.06	
Master's degree	46	33.09	
Doctoral degree	10	7.19	
Professional degree	6	4.32	
Employment Status (n=139)			Full-time
Full-time	78	56.12	
Part-time	12	8.63	
Unemployed	2	1.44	
Student	36	25.90	
Retired	8	5.76	
Prefer not to say	3	2.16	

Table 6 reports the festival participation characteristics of participants. The number of years (times), including this 2022, that respondents had previously participated in True/False Film Fest was 29.56% (n=47) one previous year, 11.95% (n=19), two previous years, 10.06% (n=16) three previous years, 5.03% (n=8), four previous years,

8.81% (n=14) five previous years, 3.14% (n=5) six previous years, 5.66% (n=9) seven previous years, 5.66% (n=9) eight previous years, 2.52% (n=4) nine previous years, 5.03% (n=8) ten previous years, 1.89% (n=3) eleven previous years, 1.26% (n=2) twelve previous years, 1.89% (n=3) thirteen previous years, 0.63% (n=1) fourteen previous years, 3.77% (n=6) fifteen previous years, 0.63% (n=1) sixteen previous years, 1.26% (n=2) seventeen previous years, with one respondent attending a total of nineteen years, 0.63% (n=1).

Regarding the frequency of attendance at other festivals, 9.76% (n=15) of respondents never attended other festivals, 31.71% (n=52) rarely attended other festivals, 48.78% (n=80) sometimes attended other festivals, 9.15% (n=15) often attended other festivals, and only 0.61% (n=1) very frequently attended other festivals. Of the respondents, almost half were festival passholders, 44.12% (n=75). The festival access status of other respondents are as follows. 23.53% (n=40) were non-passholders (purchased individual tickets), 29.41% (n=50) were volunteers or staff, 0.59% (n=1) were media or press, and 2.35% reported as other. In regard to pass level, 27.44% (n=45) held a volunteer pass, 23.78% (n=39) held a Simple Pass (\$105), 22.10% (n=36) held individual tickets, 20.73% (n=33) held a Lux Pass (\$235), 1.83% (n=3) held a Silver Circle Pass (\$595), and 0.61% (n=1) held a Super Circle Pass (\$995).

Table 6 also includes insights about the vaccination status, transmission rate, and other influential factors concerning COVID-19, which satisfies the third research objective. The extent to which COVID-19 affected a respondent's decision to attend the festival was 43.67% (n=69) none at all, 35.44% (n=56) a little, 14.56% (n=23) a moderate amount, 4.43% (n=7) a lot, and 1.90% (n=3) a great deal. The extent to which

COVID-19 affected a respondent's experience of the festival was 24.05% (n=38) none at all, 54.43% (n=86) a little, 17.09% (n=27) a moderate amount, 3.80% (n=6) a lot, and 0.63% (n=1) a great deal. Of the respondents, 47.48% (n=66) had been diagnosed with, tested for, or suspected of having COVID-19, 48.92% (n=68) had not been diagnosed with, tested for, or suspected of having COVID-19, and 3.60% (n=5) preferred not to answer. The COVID-19 vaccination status of respondents was, 87.77% (n=122) received two doses and a booster shot, 9.35% (n=13) received two doses, 1.44% (n=2) received one dose, 0.72% (n=1) was not vaccinated, and 0.72% (n=1) preferred not to answer.

Table 6

Festival Participation Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	%	Mode
Number of Years Attending T/F Film Festival (n=159)			1
1	47	29.56	
2	19	11.95	
3	16	10.06	
4	8	5.03	
5	14	8.81	
6	5	3.14	
7	9	5.66	
8	9	5.66	
9	4	2.52	
10	8	5.03	
11	3	1.89	
12	2	1.26	
13	3	1.89	
14	1	0.63	
15	6	3.77	
16	1	0.63	
17	2	1.26	
18	0	0.00	
19	1	0.63	
Frequency of Attendance at Other Festivals (n=164)			Sometimes
Never	15	9.76	
Rarely	52	31.71	
Sometimes	80	48.78	
Often	15	9.15	
Very Frequently	1	0.61	
Festival Access Status (n=170)			Passholder
Passholder	75	44.12	
Non-Passholder	40	23.53	
Volunteer/Staff	50	29.41	
Filmmaker/Artist	0	0.00	
Media/Press	1	0.59	
Other	4	2.35	
Festival Pass Level (n=164)			Volunteer Pass
Super Circle Pass	1	0.61	
Silver Circle Pass	3	1.83	
Lux Pass	33	20.73	
Simple Pass	39	23.78	
Stay Up Late Wristband	0	0.00	

Individual Tickets	36	22.10	
Volunteer Pass	45	27.44	
Other	6	3.66	
Extent COVID-19 Affected Decision To Attend (n=158)			None at all
None at all	69	43.67	
A little	56	35.44	
A moderate amount	23	14.56	
A lot	7	4.43	
A great deal	3	1.90	
Extent COVID-19 Affected Festival Experience (n=158)			A Little
None at all	38	24.05	
A little	86	54.43	
A moderate amount	27	17.09	
A lot	6	3.80	
A great deal	1	0.63	
Has Previously Contracted COVID-19 (n=139)			No
Yes	66	47.48	
No	68	48.92	
Prefer not to answer	5	3.60	
COVID-19 Vaccination Status (n=139)			Received
Received one dose	2	1.44	two doses
Received two doses	13	9.35	+ booster
Received two doses + booster	122	87.77	
Not vaccinated	1	0.72	
Prefer not to answer	1	0.72	

4.3 Descriptive Summary of the Variables

The fourth research objective, to describe the antecedental factors of festival attendees' pride, perceived risk of COVID-19 is achieved through descriptive analysis. The antecedental variables are summarized in Table 7 and presents the median, mean, standard deviation, and rank order of the antecedental variables. A sample size of 144 was used to determine the descriptive values. Festival pride was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree". Perceived risk of COVID-19 was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = none at all to 5 = a

great deal”. Prior other festival experience was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = never to 5 = very frequently”. Prior True/False Film Fest experience was measured on a 5-point scale, which was converted from an open-ended numeric response type. The scale ranged from “1 = 0 times, 2 = 1 to 5 times, 3 = 6 to 10 times, 4 = 11 to 15 times, 5 = 16-19 times.” The following antecedental variable items are presented in descending order with the first being Prior Festival Experience (Mdn=4.75, M=4.56, S.D.=0.71), followed by Festival Pride (Mdn=4.75, M=4.56, S.D.=0.71), with Perceived Risk of COVID-19 (Mdn=4.75, M=4.56, S.D.=0.71) ranking third.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Antecedental Variables

Variable	Mdn	M	S.D.	Rank
Prior Festival Experience	2.50	2.55	0.63	1
Festival Pride	4.75	4.56	0.71	2
Perceived Risk of COVID-19	2.00	1.92	0.72	3

Note: Mdn(median), M(mean), S.D.(standard deviation), Rank(rank order)

The fifth research objective, to describe attendees’ festival perception variables, as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion, is accomplished through descriptive analysis shown in Table 8. Attendees’ festival perception is summarized through the given median, mean, and standard deviation values. The table also included a rank order of all perception values. A sample size of 144 was used to determine the descriptive values. Attendees’ perception variable items were measured on two 5-point Likert scales ranging from “1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree” and “1 = terrible to 5 =

excellent”. The following attendee perception variable items are presented in descending order starting with Relationships (Mdn=4.67, M=4.37, S.D.=0.68), Shared Purpose (Mdn=4.67, M=4.39, S.D.=0.70), Festival DEI Practices (Mdn=4.29, M=4.15, S.D.=0.76), Education Opportunities (Mdn=4.75, M=4.51, S.D.=0.82), and ending with Interaction Opportunities (Mdn=4.33, M=4.25, S.D.=0.92) ranking sixth.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Attendees’ Perception Variables

Variable	Mdn	M	S.D.	Rank
Relationships	4.67	4.37	0.68	1
Shared Purpose	4.67	4.39	0.70	2
Festival DEI Practices	4.29	4.15	0.76	3
Education Opportunities	4.75	4.51	0.82	4
Trust	4.50	4.33	0.84	5
Interaction Opportunities	4.33	4.25	0.92	6

Note: Mdn(median), M(mean), S.D.(standard deviation), Rank(rank order)

A description of the personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience of festival attendees were the sixth research objective. This objective was accomplished through descriptive analysis shown in Table 9. A sample size of 144 was used to determine the descriptive values of the personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience variable. personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience items were measured on several 5-point Likert scales. Measurements ranged from “1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree”, “1 = never to 5 = always”, “1 = definitely not to 5 =

definitely yes”. The mean value (3.56) indicates that respondents perceived their personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience at the festival to be relatively positive.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Personal DEI Experience

Variable	N	M	S.D.	Evaluation
Personal DEI Experience	144	3.56	0.77	Positive

Note: N(sample size), M(mean), S.D.(standard deviation)

4.4 Testing the Hypotheses

Chapter 1 presented eight objectives of the study, six of which have been addressed in previous sections. In this section, research objectives seven, eight, and nine will be addressed. Research objective seven sought to evaluate the differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience. Research objective eight sought to identify the salient factors that impact attendees’ personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. Research objective nine sought to evaluate the influence of attendees’ perception of a festival on attendees’ personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. These hypotheses will be tested through a correlation analysis, a series of t-tests, simple and multiple regression analyses, and lastly, a hierarchical regression analysis.

A correlation analysis was utilized to evaluate the direction and strength of the linear correlation between the variables in the data set. The data set consisted of three antecedent variables (festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, prior festival

experience), six independent variables, notated as attendee perception variables (festival DEI practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, interaction opportunities), and one dependent variable (personal DEI experience). Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to indicate the correlation between personal DEI experience and the other nine variables listed above. Table 10 presents the correlation matrix constructed to summarize the correlational data. The correlation between overall personal DEI experience and the nine factors was positive and significant at a 0.05 level. Correlation between personal DEI experience and interaction opportunities was highest with a value of 0.80. Next, the correlation between personal DEI experience and shared purpose was 0.75. The correlation between personal DEI experience and festival DEI experience was 0.64. The correlation between personal DEI experience and trust was 0.60. The correlation between personal DEI experience and education opportunities was 0.56. The lowest value correlations were between personal DEI experience and perceived risk of COVID-19 at 0.19, personal DEI experience and prior festival experience at 0.07, and personal DEI experience and festival pride at -0.20.

Table 10

Correlation Matrix Results

Variable	P	PCR	PFE	R	SP	T	EO	IO	FDP	DEI
P	1									
PCR	-0.20*	1								
PFE	0.02	0.19*	1							
R	0.65**	-0.18*	0.07	1						
SP	0.66**	-0.07	0.02	0.75**	1					
T	0.59**	-0.18*	0.11	0.72**	0.60**	1				
EO	0.59**	-0.1	-0.09	0.61**	0.63**	0.56**	1			
IO	0.51**	-0.15	-0.08	0.66**	0.60**	0.56**	0.80**	1		
FDP	0.50**	-0.25**	-0.08	0.50**	0.51**	0.46**	0.71**	0.64**	1	
DEI	0.28**	-0.12	0.07	0.34**	0.33**	0.43**	0.54**	0.49**	0.57**	1

Note: P(festival pride), PCR(perceived risk of COVID-19), PFE(prior festival experience), R(relationships), SP(shared purpose), T(trust), EO(education opportunities), IO(interaction opportunities), FDP(festival DEI practices), and DEI(personal DEI experience)

*p<0.05, ** p<0.01

In accordance with objective seven, to evaluate the differences between high and low levels of the antecedents, festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience, Table 11, 12, and 13 depict the results from a series of independent samples t-test. Festival pride is first evaluated to determine where significant differences occur between high and low levels of festival pride in regard to attendee perception factors. The results of Welch’s two sample t-test, which does not assume equal variances, are shown in Table 11. Significant differences occurred in all the attendee perception factors, with shared purpose having the greatest confidence $t(69.18) = -6.57, p < .01$, followed by relationships $t(78.61) = -5.84, p < .01$, then festival DEI practices $t(74.79) =$

-5.51, $p < .01$, then trust $t(89.92) = -4.95$, $p < .01$, then education opportunities $t(68.25) = -4.30$, $p < .01$, and then interaction opportunities $t(123.24) = 2.79$, $p < .01$.

Table 11

Differences Between High and Low Levels of Festival Pride on Attendee's Festival Perception

Attendee Perception	Low	High	Welch's Two Sample t-test				
	M	M	df	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Festival DEI Practices	3.71	4.43	74.79	-5.51	0.00**	-0.98	-0.46
Relationships	3.97	4.63	78.61	-5.84	0.00**	-0.89	-0.44
Shared Purpose	3.93	4.69	69.18	-6.57	0.00**	-1.00	-0.53
Trust	3.91	4.61	89.92	-4.95	0.00**	-0.98	-0.42
Education Opportunities	4.11	4.76	68.25	-4.30	0.00**	-0.95	-0.35
Interaction Opportunities	4.47	4.06	123.24	2.79	0.01**	0.12	0.70

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

^aT-test, two-tailed independent sample test

^b5-point Likert scale

Perceived risk of COVID-19 was then evaluated to determine where significant differences occur between high and low levels of perceived risk of COVID-19 in regard to attendee perception factors. The results of Welch's two sample t-test, which does not assume equal variances, are shown in Table 12. Significant differences were found in the four out of six attendee perception factors, with interaction opportunities having the greatest confidence $t(86.80) = -4.93$, $p < .01$, followed by festival DEI practices $t(125.74) = 3.39$, $p < .01$, then education opportunities $t(117.81) = 2.50$, $p < .05$, and then trust $t(141.24) = 2.11$, $p < .05$. No significant differences occurred between high and low

levels of perceived risk of COVID-19 and attendees' perception of relationships and shared purpose.

Table 12

Differences Between High and Low Levels of Perceived Risk of COVID-19 on Attendee's Festival Perception

Attendee Perception	Low	High	Welch's Two Sample t-test				
	M	M	df	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Festival DEI Practices	4.36	3.95	125.74	3.39	0.00**	0.17	0.64
Relationships	4.48	4.27	132.66	1.91	0.06	-0.01	0.43
Shared Purpose	4.46	4.33	136.51	1.16	0.25	-0.09	0.36
Trust	4.49	4.20	141.24	2.11	0.04*	0.02	0.56
Education Opportunities	4.68	4.35	117.81	2.50	0.01*	0.07	0.59
Interaction Opportunities	3.78	4.56	86.80	-4.93	0.00**	-1.08	-0.46

*p<0.05,** p<0.01

^aT-test, two-tailed independent sample test

^b5-point Likert scale

Last to be evaluated in the series of t-tests was prior festival experience to determine significant differences between high and low levels of prior festival experience in regard to attendee perception factors. The results of Welch's two sample t-test, which does not assume equal variances, are shown in Table 13. No significant differences occurred between high and low levels of prior festival experience and attendees' perception of festival DEI experience, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, or interaction opportunities.

Table 13

Differences Between High and Low Levels of Prior Festival Experience on Attendee’s Festival Perception

Attendee Perception	Low	High	Welch’s Two Sample t-test				
	M	M	df	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Festival DEI Practices	4.28	4.07	125.40	1.71	0.09	-0.03	0.45
Relationships	4.33	4.39	100.05	-0.56	0.58	-0.30	0.17
Shared Purpose	4.41	4.38	121.95	0.23	0.82	-0.20	0.25
Trust	4.20	4.40	85.83	-1.28	0.21	-0.50	0.11
Education Opportunities	4.64	4.44	141.00	1.69	0.09	-0.03	0.43
Interaction Opportunities	4.41	4.17	140.73	1.83	0.07	-0.02	0.52

*p<0.05,** p<0.01

^aT-test, two-tailed independent sample test

^b5-point Likert scale

Objective eight, to identify the salient factors that impact attendees’ personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience, is addressed in two steps: First, a simple regression analysis will be conducted to pinpoint which factors, given by both antecedent and perception variables, are significant. For the next step, a multiple regression analysis is utilized to predict the most salient of those factors.

A simple linear regression is used to estimate the relationship between a single explanatory variable or predictor, and the dependent variable, personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. Results of the findings are depicted in Table 14. Seven out of the nine explanatory variables were significant in predicting personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. The only non-significant predictors that were found in the simple regression analysis summary were perceived risk of COVID-19 and prior festival experience. The other predictors were significant at the 99% or $p < .01$ confidence level.

Table 14

Simple Regression Analysis Summary for Predicting Personal DEI Experience

Predictor	b	SE	t	p
Festival Pride	0.30	0.09	3.41	0.00**
Perceived Risk of COVID-19	-0.13	0.09	-1.43	0.15
Prior Festival Experience	0.09	0.10	0.89	0.37
Festival DEI Practices	0.58	0.07	8.349	0.00**
Relationships	0.39	0.09	4.28	0.00**
Shared Purpose	0.37	0.09	4.16	0.00**
Trust	0.40	0.07	5.635	0.00**
Education Opportunities	0.51	0.07	7.72	0.00**
Interaction Opportunities	0.41	0.06	6.71	0.00**

Dependent variable: personal DEI outcome

*p<0.05,** p<0.01

A multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the relationship between personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience and six independent variables, categorized under attendee perception. Results of the findings are depicted in Table 15. Of the six explanatory variables, two were significant predictors and four were non-significant predictors. It was found that festival DEI practices were the highest predictor of personal DEI experience ($b = .37, p < .01$), followed by trust ($b = .22, p < .05$). The results of the multiple regression indicated attendee perception factors explained 39.91% of the variance and that the model was significant, $F(6,137) = 15.16, p < .001$.

Table 15

Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Predicting Personal DEI Experience

Predictor	b	SE	t	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	0.99	0.38	2.62	0.01**	0.24	1.73
Festival DEI Practices	0.37	0.10	3.77	0.00**	0.17	0.56
Relationships	-0.17	0.14	-1.22	0.22	-0.45	0.10
Shared Purpose	-0.10	0.12	-0.83	0.41	-0.33	0.14
Trust	0.22	0.09	2.44	0.02*	0.04	0.40
Education Opportunities	0.20	0.12	1.72	0.09	-0.03	0.44
Interaction Opportunities	0.09	0.10	0.86	0.39	-0.11	0.28

Dependent variable: personal DEI outcome. Residual standard error: 0.6135 on 137 degrees of freedom. R²: 0.3991, F-statistic: 15.16 on 6 and 137 DF, p-value: 2.88e-13

*p<0.05,** p<0.01

In order to satisfy the last research objective, objective nine, which aims to evaluate the influence of attendees' perception of a festival on attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed. A two-stage hierarchical regression is used to illustrate the relationships between factors that contribute to personal DEI experience through controlling variables added to the model. This is performed to identify whether adding variables significantly improves the model's ability to predict the outcome, that is, personal DEI experience. Model 1 consisted of antecedent variables, given by festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience, and was entered at stage one of the regression. Model 2 consisted of both antecedent variables and attendees' festival perceptions, given by festival DEI practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education, and interaction, and was entered at stage two of the regression. Attendees' festival perceptions were

entered in step two as it seemed chronologically plausible given the literature review on factors influencing festival experiences. Intercorrelations between the hierarchical regression variables are reported in Table 16 and the regression statistics are given in Table 17.

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that in stage one, shown by Model 1, Antecedent variables contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(3,140) = 4.18, p < .001$ and accounted for 8% of the variation in personal DEI experience. More specifically, festival pride was the largest and most significant predictor of personal DEI experience ($t\text{-value} = 0.43, p < .001$) in Model 1. Introducing Attendee Perception variables explained an additional 42.66% of the variation in personal DEI experience and this change in R^2 was significant, $F(9,134) = 11.08, p < .001$. When all nine independent variables were included in stage two of the analysis, festival pride was no longer a significant predictor of personal DEI experience and prior festival experience became significant ($t\text{-value} = 0.25, p < .05$). Of the variables added to the model, festival DEI practices ($t\text{-value} = 0.41, p < .001$) and trust ($t\text{-value} = 0.20, p < .05$) were the most significant predictors of personal DEI experience. The most important predictor of personal DEI experience was Attendees' Perceptions, which uniquely explained 39% of the variation in personal DEI experience. Together, the nine independent variables accounted for 43% of the variance in personal DEI experience. After controlling for Antecedent and Attendee Perception variables, $F\Delta(6, 134) = 13.41, p < .0001$, therefore the variables added in Model 2 significantly improved the prediction.

Table 16

The Result of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Antecedents		
Intercept	2.72***	0.39
Festival Pride	0.43**	0.01
Perceived Risk of COVID-19	-0.02	0.06
Prior Festival Experience	0.13	0.24*
Attendees' Perceptions		
Festival DEI Practices		0.41***
Relationships		-0.18
Shared Purpose		-0.11
Trust		0.20*
Education Opportunities		0.19
Interaction Opportunities		0.12
R^2	0.08	0.43
Adjusted R^2	0.06	0.39
F	4.18	11.08
F Δ	4.18	13.41***
Degrees of freedom	3	9

* p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 17

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Comparison of Regression Model 1 and Model 2

	<i>Res. Df</i>	<i>RSS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model 1	140	78.74				
Model 2	134	49.20	6	29.55	13.41	0.00***

Note: Res.Df(residual degrees of freedom), RSS(residual sum of squares), Df(degrees of freedom)

*p<0.05,** p<0.01, ***p<0.001

4.5 Summary

This chapter addressed the statistical analysis of the data collected. The first section addressed the socio-demographic profile and festival participation characteristics of the True/False Film Fest participants. The third section tested hypotheses seven, eight, and nine according to the following steps. First, a correlation matrix was constructed to show relationships between variables. Second, the respondents were segmented into two groups according to high and low levels of influential antecedent variables. Third, a comparison of the two independent samples was analyzed using Welch's two samples t-test to identify differences between high and low antecedent groups and attendee festival perception. Lastly, multiple regression analyses were performed to detect the relationships between attendees' festival perception and personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter includes a discussion of the findings of the study, implications, suggestions for future research, and limitations of the study. The first section will provide a brief summary of the study. Section two will address the findings of the study and the discussion regarding festival perception and the diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. The implications to the industry and academia are revealed as a result of the findings and discussion in the third section. Section four will provide recommendations for future study. Lastly, the fifth section will present the limitations of the current study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was multifold. As a reminder, the following are the four purposes presented in Chapter 1. First, to explore the antecedental factors of attendees' festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience on attendees' perception of a festival. Second, to examine differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience in regard to attendees' perception of a festival. Third, to explore the salient factors of a festival event experience and examine the influence on attendees' perception of a festival. Lastly, to explore the salient factors that impact attendees' perception of a festival and examine the influence on attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

The antecedental factors of attendees' festival perception were identified as festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience. A descriptive

statistical analysis was performed to describe the antecedents. The independent variables in this study were attendees' perceptions of festival DEI practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, and interaction opportunities. A descriptive statistical analysis was performed to describe the independent variables categorized under attendee perceptions. The dependent variable in this study is attendees' personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience as an outcome of the festival experience.

One hundred and seventy-seven questionnaire responses were collected for this study and of those, one hundred and forty-four were valid, and therefore, able to be utilized for statistical analysis. Regarding the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, a descriptive statistical analysis reports that the typical respondent is a white female, between the ages of 18 and 24, resides in Missouri, earns an income of less than \$25,000, holds a master's degree, and is employed full-time. Regarding the festival participation characteristics of the respondents, a descriptive statistical analysis reports that the typical respondent has attended the True/False Film Fest once, sometimes participates in festivals outside of True/False Film Fest and is a passholder and/or volunteer. COVID-19 did not affect the average respondent's decision to attend the festival and COVID-19 only affected their festival experience a little. The typical respondent has not contracted COVID-19 in the past and has received two doses and a booster of the COVID-19 vaccine.

A summary of the results is provided below.

- Through the descriptive analysis of data, the findings of the study revealed that the mean value of the respondents' personal DEI experience was 3.56, which indicates a relatively positive, diverse, equitable, and inclusive festival

experience. This suggests that festival management and the DEI climate within the festival promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion, as perceived by festival attendees.

- The study initially assumed differences between high and low levels of festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, and prior festival experience as it relates to attendees' perceptions. Through a series of t-tests, the findings report that significant differences were found between high and low levels of festival pride and perceived risk of COVID-19, but not between high and low levels of prior festival experience. This finding suggests that event planners and management should increase pride in participating in the festival prior, during, and after the festival.
- Based on the examination of current literature, researchers initially assumed prior festival experience to be an influential antecedent of attendee perceptions, but the results of a correlation matrix indicate that an insignificant correlation between the two. The most salient antecedental variable was festival pride, followed by perceived risk of COVID-19.
- The results of a simple regression analysis indicate that variables of festival pride, festival DEI practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, and interaction opportunities were significant predictors of personal DEI experience. Perceived risk of COVID-19 and prior festival experience were found to be insignificant predictors of personal DEI experience. This suggests that perceived risk of COVID-19 influences attendees' perceptions of the festival, but not necessarily the diversity, equity, and inclusion experience.

- The results of a multiple regression analysis indicate that most salient explanatory factors of personal DEI experience were festival DEI practices and trust. This suggests that organizational DEI policies and attendees’ trust of other attendees are critical in shaping attendees’ personal DEI experience.
- The results of a hierarchical regression analysis indicate that after controlling for antecedent and perception variables, the most important predictor of attendees’ DEI experience were their perceptions of the festival experience.

5.3 Findings of the Study and Discussion

Table 18

Summary of Hypotheses Test

Hypotheses	Supported
H1. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees’ perceptions between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of festival DEI practices between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of relationships between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of shared purpose between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of trust between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of education opportunities between high and low festival pride	YES
H1-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees’ perception of interaction opportunities between high and low festival pride	YES
H2. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees’ perceptions between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	YES

H2-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of festival DEI practices between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	YES
H2-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of relationships between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	NO
H2-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of shared purpose between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	NO
H2-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of trust between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	YES
H2-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of education opportunities between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	YES
H2-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of interaction opportunities between high and low perceived risk of COVID-19	YES
H3. There will be statistically significant differences in attendees' perceptions between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-a. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of festival DEI practices between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-b. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of relationships between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-c. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of shared purpose between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-d. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of trust between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-e. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of education opportunities between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H3-f. There will be a statistically significant difference in attendees' perception of interaction opportunities between high and low prior festival experience	NO
H4. Attendees' perceptions of the festival will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES
H4-a. Festival DEI practice will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES

H4-b. Perceived relationships will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES
H4-c. Shared purpose will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES
H4-d. Trust will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES
H4-e. Education opportunities will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES
H4-f. Interaction opportunities will positively influence attendees' personal DEI experience	YES

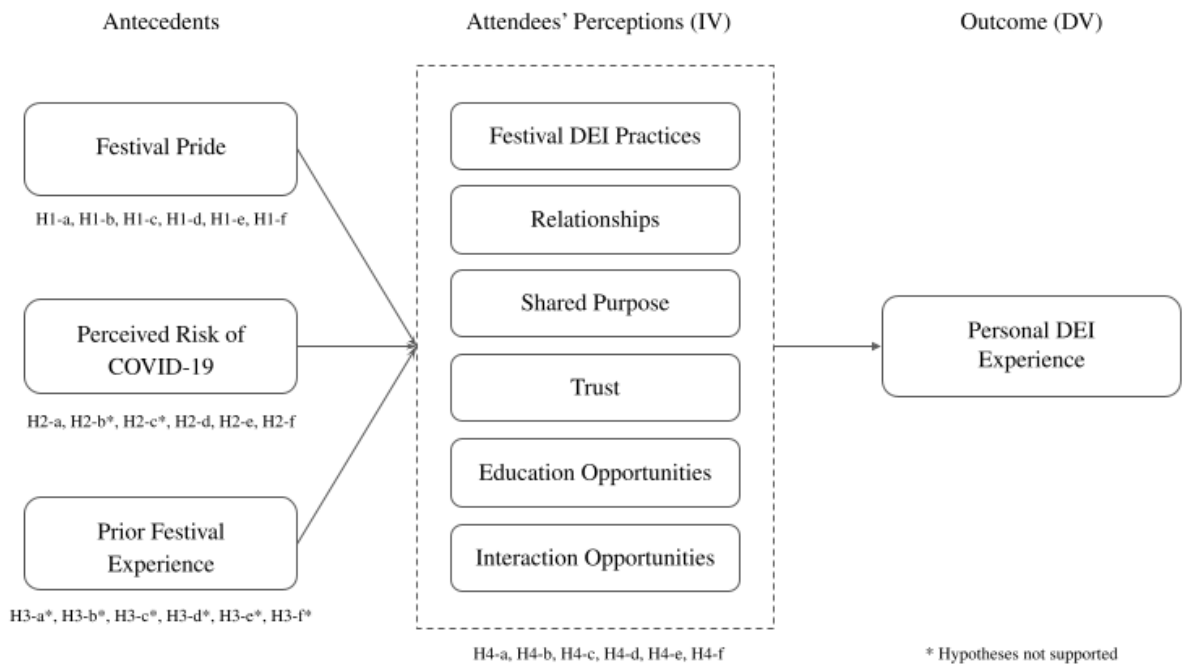


Figure 6. *Research Framework: Hypothesis Testing*

5.4 Academic and Practical Implications

The goal of this study was to investigate the salient factors affecting special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Understanding the benefits

of studying diversity, equity, and inclusion is the first step to enhancing the social sustainability of events. This section will provide academic and practical insights needed to develop successful diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and climates in which social capital and generative interactions can thrive. Identifying the most salient factors has substantial implications to the refinement of festival organizers' attempts to bolster diversity, equity, and inclusion. By drawing on the insights given by event attendees themselves, festival and event organizers can successfully curate experiences and develop effective practices that increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. This ultimately amplifies both the economic and social success of a special event by attracting larger crowds, improving the event image, encouraging diverse interactions, and building cultural competencies in large proportions of individuals in a relatively short period of time.

The result of this study has several academic implications. This study is one the first endeavors which sought to identify relationships between antecedents (festival pride, perceived risk of COVID-19, prior festival experience), attendee festival perceptions (festival DEI practices, relationships, shared purpose, trust, education opportunities, interaction opportunities), and the personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experiences of attendees. The findings in this study support the notion that special events, such as festivals, have the potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. The beauty of this study is found in the methodology of the data collection. By intercepting local festival attendees to gauge their perceptions of various elements of the festival, this study was able to derive valuable, first-hand evaluations of their experience at the festival.

This study extends the realm of festival and events research and advances hospitality and tourism literature by incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Moreover, this study contributes to the already limited literature on COVID-19, in particular, the social implications of COVID-19 in the context of festivals and events. The two foundational theories, the Theory of Generative Interactions and Social Capital Theory, were applied to the study of special events within the hospitality and tourism field, which expands the application and understanding of the existing theories. By postulating the enhancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strategic approach to event tourism, this study hopes to be a stepping stone for future research.

Several practical and managerial implications can be expounded from this study. An attendee's perceptions of a festival can serve as a reliable means to predict their personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. Although all of the perception variables were significant predictors of personal DEI experience, the most salient of those predictors were the attendees' perception of festival DEI practices and trust of other attendees. It can be inferred from this finding that special event organizers, event planners, and stakeholders, should focus on formulating and implementing robust diverse, equitable, and inclusionary practices to enable a safe and inclusive environment in which attendees feel comfortable actively participating in the festival and engaging with others. To improve organizational DEI practices, the researcher suggests the following practices:

- Make diversity, equity, and inclusion an organizational priority and secure commitment from event management and key stakeholders
- Increase representational diversity on leadership teams, giving diverse individuals equal standing in decision making processes

- Implement diversity, equity, and inclusion training for leadership, staff, and volunteers
- Set measurable targets for boosting diversity in audiences and artists, while being cognizant that quotas do not automatically create inclusive climates
- Identify barriers to event attendance and resolve those barriers through appropriate solutions
- Build in more activities that allow for collaboration and diverse interactions at special events
- Publicize and reinforce zero tolerance policies for hateful and discriminatory actions or discourse
- Encourage a culture of allyship and willingness to engage in meaningful and constructive conversations

The second finding suggests that attendees perceive their trust in other attendees to play a large role in defining their personal diversity, equity, and inclusion experience. From a managerial standpoint, building interpersonal trust between attendees requires establishing a strong climate of acceptance, communication, commitment, and reciprocity. As mentioned in the review of literature, trust can be promoted through an organizational commitment to contractual trust, communication trust, competence trust, and caring trust (Hoelting, 2017). When festival organizers and event planners set positive precedent for trust, attendees are more inclined to behave within those social norms.

Drawing from the review of current literature, the researchers initially assumed prior festival experience influenced attendee perception, but the findings indicate that

there was no significant correlation between the two. Therefore, the practical implication in this finding suggests that festival pride and perceived risk of COVID-19 should be regulated. Festival organizers and event management should increase festival pride prior, during, and after the festival through the following recommendations given by the researcher:

- Share information about the festival's unique attributes and attractions
- Public recognition of the achievements and performance of the festival
- Obtain sponsors that align with the values and mission of the festival
- Produce festival-specific merchandise, signs, and flags that serve as community symbols and are recognizable to others
- Encourage attendees to share their positive experiences or recommendations through digital media, print media, or word of mouth

According to the findings, lowering perceived risk of COVID-19 prior and during the festival may increase an attendees' perception of the festival. Therefore, it is recommended that festivals and events prioritize sanitation and hygiene to minimize COVID-19 transmission risk. This can be achieved through festival organizers re-enforcing government COVID-19 guidelines, announcing COVID-19 protocols prior to the event, mandating vaccinations, or negative testing, implementing mask requirements, and placing sanitation stations around the festival event.

In sum, the analysis of the salient factors in special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion provides critical insights for socially sustainable event planning and management practices. The key takeaway is that organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and policies have direct consequences to diversity, equity,

and inclusion outcomes within special event settings. In other words, festival attendees are attuned to the agendas of event organizers and stakeholders and when diversity, equity, and inclusion is prioritized by management, festival attendees will reap great benefits. An understanding of the implications of this study is immensely advantageous to not only the growing festival and event industry, but society as a whole through the mending of social connectivity to reduce prejudices.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Study

Given the aims and constraints of the current study, a sample of 177 festival attendees were recruited to collect insights and analyze data from. Future studies may seek to increase the sample size in an attempt to increase the representativeness of the population being investigated. This study should not only be replicated with a broader sample size but should also be tested using a random sampling method. Given that this study was conducted at a local Missouri festival in the United States, it is recommended that future studies conduct research on other festivals and special events in various settings, controlling for geographical locations, sizes, and cultures to further generalize the findings from this study. Due to the range of special event types and contexts in which they are constructed, some events may not yield the same results if diversity is not accessible or if inclusion and equity are not valued by organizers and management. This study was conducted to account for the impacts of COVID-19. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, future research may choose to omit perceived risk of COVID-19 from the model. Lastly, it is recommended to examine other variables such as

motivation, satisfaction, and perception to potentially improve the model for predicting personal diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes.

5.6 Limitations

This study made contributions to the hospitality and tourism industry, specifically findings relevant to special events, diversity, equity and inclusion, and COVID-19. However, there are three main limitations to this study. First, the researcher adopted a convenience sampling method to collect data for this study. Using a nonprobability sampling approach limits access to the entire population. Although the attendees were made aware of the festival through several marketing schemes, including social media marketing, bulletin board postings, and flyer distribution, the research cannot control respondents' willingness to take the questionnaire. Another limitation is that the study was conducted at the True/False Film festival in Columbia, Missouri, so the findings may not be generalizable for other special events. Celebratory events are inherently unique, with culture, norms, locales, and circumstances governing variances. The third limitation is the temporal and varying nature of COVID-19. Perceived risk of COVID-19 may vary depending on the emergence of new virus variants, changes in COVID-19 safety protocols, and personal experiences with the virus. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, the influence of COVID-19 may not be as prominent in future studies.



**DID YOU ATTEND
T/F FILM FEST IN
2022?**

**LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.
TAKE OUR SURVEY!**

We're exploring special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Take our 10-15 min survey for a chance to win a FREE **RAGTAG CINEMA membership (\$100+ value) or \$20 Amazon gift card!**

Scan the QR code or go to:
https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ewFiAkV6F0efQQ6

Must be 18+ to participate in this research study. To enter the prize draw to win a Ragtag Cinema "The Couch Club" membership or \$20 Amazon gift card, complete survey by 3/20/22 at 5PM CST. For more information, please contact Amy at ahc7t3@umsystem.edu.

True/False Film Fest DEI Survey

INFORMED CONSENT

...

We are a research team from the University of Missouri. You are invited to participate in a study that seeks to explore special events' potential to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through a study of the True/False Film Fest during COVID-19. The questions in this survey are designed to ascertain your perception and attitude on various aspects of the True/False Film Fest. Some questions will be related to diversity, equity, inclusion and COVID-19. If you attended the True/False Film Fest in 2022 and are over the age of 18, we invite you to take this survey.

Research participants will have a chance to win a Ragtag Cinema "The Couch Club" Membership (free admission to a screening of your choice each month plus member-only benefits; \$100+ value) or a \$20 Amazon gift card. To be eligible to win, you must complete the entire survey by March 20, 2022 at 5pm CST.

In order for the results to truly represent the social impacts of True/False Film Fest, your participation is very crucial for the success of this study. We want your voice be heard by completing the questionnaire. However, since your participation in this study is critical and yet voluntary, you will be able to withdraw at any point of the survey.

Your participation and opinion in this survey will contribute to the enhancement of socially sustainable communities through diverse, equitable, and inclusive event planning and management practices. The data that are collected from you will be held in strictest confidence. No personal identifiable information will be used to link back to you or shared with a third party. The findings of this study will be reported to the Missouri Division of Social Sciences in aggregate form so to ensure that your privacy will be protected.

It may take you around 10-15 minutes to complete. Please read the questions carefully and answer all the questions as accurately as possible. Your prompt response and comments are important and will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for your participation! If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Amy Coleman, Project Coordinator, University of Missouri at ahc7t3@umsystem.edu or Dr. Dae-Young Kim, Principle Investigator, University of Missouri at kimdae@missouri.edu.



University of Missouri

Did you attend and/or participate in True/False Film Fest in 2022?

Yes

No



How many times (including this year) have you attended T/F Film Fest?

Number of year(s)

Please indicate your festival access status for T/F Film Fest in 2022.

Passholder

Non-Passholder (purchased individual tickets)

Volunteer/Staff

Filmmaker/Artist

Media/Press

Other

Please indicate your 2022 T/F Film Fest pass level.

Super Circle Pass (\$995)

Silver Circle Pass (\$595)

Lux Pass (\$235)

Simple Pass (\$105)

Stay Up Late Wristband (\$50)

Individual Tickets (no pass)

Volunteer Pass

Other

How often do you attend other festival(s) besides T/F Film Fest?

(Festivals can refer to celebrations of music, art, cultural, culinary, religious, etc.)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very Frequently

To what extent did COVID-19 affect your decision to attend T/F Film Fest?

- None at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

To what extent did COVID-19 affect your experience during T/F Film Fest?

- None at all
- A little
- A moderate amount
- A lot
- A great deal

My experience with T/F Film Fest has left me with a more positive perception of the festival.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

My experience with T/F Film Fest has left me with a more positive perception of festival attendees and/or participants.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

Upon attending T/F Film Fest, what is your level of agreement with the following statements?

CoMo = Columbia, Missouri

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel a personal sense of pride and recognition through participating in the festival.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to tell others about my experience at this festival.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that the festival enhances the image of the CoMo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think this festival supports local businesses, venues, and restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe this festival helps show others why CoMo is unique and special.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I think this festival is viewed positively by others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Now we are asking you about your experience as a festival-goer within T/F Film Fest community. How well do each of the following statements represent how you feel about the T/F Film Fest?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The festival contributes to a sense of togetherness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The festival has been successful in getting the needs of its attendees met.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The festival has symbols and expressions of membership such as clothes, signs, logos, landmarks, and flags that people can recognize.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other attendees and I value similar things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attendees of this festival care about each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendships are strengthened through participation in the festival.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can generally trust other people attending this festival.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy being around other festival attendees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect to be a part of this festival in the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How well do each of the following statements represent how you feel about T/F Film Fest?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
This festival provides opportunities for people to learn new things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This festival provides opportunities for people to experience new activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This festival provides opportunities to meet new people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This festival provides opportunities for people to collaborate and interact.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This festival acts as a showcase for new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This festival allows for the sharing of ideas among participants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am exposed to a variety of socio-cultural experiences through this festival.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place at T/F Film Fest because of your personal characteristics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation)?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Very often

Always

How often do you feel pressured to hide or change things about yourself in order to fit in with the True/False community?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Very Often

Always

S

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have led me to become more comfortable talking my own background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with other people.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have led me to become more understanding of people with different backgrounds from my own.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have led me to become more willing and able to engage with people with different backgrounds from my own.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have led me to reduce my own biases of people with different backgrounds than my own.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have opened up conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion in my personal life.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

My experiences at T/F Film Fest have broadened my cultural awareness and helped me feel more empowered as an ally.

Strongly disagree

Somewhat disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat agree

Strongly agree

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

What is your employment status?

Full-time

Student

Part-time

Retired

Unemployed

Prefer not to say

Are you a resident of Columbia, MO? If no, please tell us your current city of residence.

Yes

No

What is your gender/to which gender(s) do you identify with?

Male

Female

Non-binary/third gender

Prefer to self-describe

Prefer not to answer

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

What is your age group?

<input type="radio"/> 18-24	<input type="radio"/> 30-40	<input type="radio"/> 51-60
<input type="radio"/> 25-29	<input type="radio"/> 41-50	<input type="radio"/> 60 +

Have you ever been diagnosed with, tested for, or suspected of having COVID-19?

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

Please indicate your COVID-19 vaccination status.

Received one dose

Received two doses

Received two doses + booster

Not vaccinated

Prefer not to answer

What is your approximate annual household income?

Less than \$25,000

\$75,000 to \$99,000

\$25,000 to \$34,999

\$100,000 to \$149,999

\$35,000 to \$49,999

\$150,000 or more

\$50,000 to \$74,999



Institutional Review Board
University of Missouri-Columbia
 FWA Number: 00002876
 IRB Registration Numbers: 00000731, 00009014

310 Jesse Hall
 Columbia, MO 65211
 573-882-3181
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February 28, 2022

Principal Investigator: Amy H. Coleman (MU-Student)
 Department: Food & Hospitality Systems-MS

Your IRB Application to project entitled EXPLORING SPECIAL EVENTS' POTENTIAL TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION: A STUDY OF TRUE/FALSE FILM FESTIVAL DURING COVID-19 was reviewed and approved by the MU Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number	2089762
IRB Review Number	373299
Initial Application Approval Date	February 28, 2022
IRB Expiration Date	February 28, 2023
Level of Review	Exempt
Project Status	Active - Exempt
Exempt Categories (Revised Common Rule)	45 CFR 46.104d(2)(i)
Risk Level	Minimal Risk
HIPAA Category	No HIPAA
	Consent (Exempt Studies Only): #584011
	Instruments (i.e. surveys): #584023
Approved Documents	Recruitment Ad: #584125
	Recruitment Flyer: #584126

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

- No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
- All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation utilizing the Exempt Amendment Form.
- Major noncompliance deviations must be reported to the MU IRB on the Event Report within 5 business days of the research team becoming aware of the deviation. Major deviations result when research activities may affected the research subject's rights, safety, and/or welfare, or may have had the potential to impact even if no actual harm occurred. Please refer to the MU IRB Noncompliance policy for additional details.
- The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date to keep the study active or to close it.
- Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

If you are offering subject payments and would like more information about research participant payments, please click here to view the MU Business Policy and Procedure: http://bppm.missouri.edu/chapter2/2_250.html

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