

A TREND STUDY ON SEGMENTING FESTIVAL PATRONS

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Abstract

For the past two decades, festivals have been one of the vibrant sectors for local economic and tourism development. Understanding people's motivations to attend a festival is a critical issue for event sponsors in order to retain and increase the visitation rate. However, motivations for attending festivals might change over time. This study is designed to observe the changes in participation patterns over a two-year span and identify trends in programming at a local festival. Therefore, the purpose of this trend study is two-fold: first, to identify and profile specific festival patron groups on the basis of their motivations for a local art festival in 2012, and, second, to compare festival participants' motivations over a two-year period. Later, various statistical techniques are employed to cluster participants based on their motivations for attending festivals, including factor analysis, reliability analysis, k-mean and hierarchal cluster analyses, and discriminant analysis. A total of 156 and 249 valid questionnaires were collected in 2010 and 2012 respectively. Exploration, novelty seeking, and family togetherness are common motivations for attending this art festival, but two new motivations out of five factors (i.e., event feature and community involvement) were extracted in the 2012 study. The findings in this trend study indicate that people have shifting motivations for attending festivals. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

1.0 Introduction

Studying festival patrons has been a prominent research area since festivals have been a dynamic sector in the tourism industry for the past two decades (Getz, 2008). From a planning perspective, festivals, which serve as attractions, may be included in promotion strategies for destination marketing. Practically, festivals are utilized as economic engines as well as visitors' spending outlets to increase incomes for the local community (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Spurr, 2006; Uysal & Gitelson, 1994). Due to the economic significance of festivals to destinations, it is an essential step in understanding participants' experiences and behaviors to examine *why* people decide to attend festivals (e.g., Crompton & McKay, 1997; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004). There is an abundance of theoretical and empirical literature on the motivational factors associated with festival attendance.

Delineating motives, which are latent forces behind consumers' behaviors, contributes to event sponsors' acumen for festival programming so that they can boost and retain visitation rates (Chang, 2006; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Dewar, Meyer, & Wen, 2001). Murray (1964) indicated that motivation serves as a mechanism to initiate, direct, and arouse human behaviors, and that it is an appropriate lens through which to examine how behaviors are generated. Further, as suggested by Crompton and McKay (1997), understanding tourists' motivations helps tourism officials to design more appropriate products and services, to enhance satisfaction, and to understand tourists' decision processes. Various theories have been developed to elucidate motivations for festival attendance, including the seeking and escaping theory (Iso-Ahola, 1980), the push-pull theory (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979), and the travel career theory (Pearce, 2005). However, it is not possible to use a universal motivation theory to depict all motivations. Most festival motivation researchers typically utilize a pool of 19 to 34 items, generating about four to six dimensions after various factor analyses (Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008; Yolal, Woo, Cetinel, & Uysal, 2009).

For the data analysis, factor analysis is employed to identify possible latent motivation variables. Then these extracted factors will serve as a foundation for later analyses including segmentation analysis to classify the various participants' groups with homogenous preferences (Formica & Uysal, 1996; 1998; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004). The five most common motivations include socialization (e.g., Formica & Uysal, 1996; Li, Huang, & Cai, 2009), family gathering (e.g., McDowall, 2011; Prentice & Anderson, 2003), escape (e.g., Prentice & Anderson, 2003; Schneider & Backman, 1996), novelty seeking (e.g., Crompton & McKay, 1997; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993), and cultural exploration (e.g., Formica & Uysal, 1998; Lee, 2000). In addition to these five most common motivations, various other motivations for attending festivals have been identified in different studies, including natural appreciation (Scott, 1996) and community pride seeking (Zyl & Botha, 2004).

2.0 Methods

The purpose of this study was two-fold: first, to identify and profile specific festival patron groups on the basis of their motivations for attending a local art festival in 2012, and second, to compare these results with a similar study conducted in 2010. It is a trend study as the same research was conducted twice at the same festival setting – the Lemonade Concert and Art Fair (LCAF). This summer festival is one of the most important special events in Central Minnesota, drawing in about 10,000 people each year according to the festival director. It features children's crafting areas, live music concerts and performances, a wide variety of arts and crafts, as well as traditional fair foods such as lemonade, popcorn, and hot dogs. During the 2010 and 2012 LCAF, when the studies were conducted, over 200 artists and craftsmen set up a village of crafts and clothing on the university campus. Specifically, this festival not only offers an in-depth window into the folk arts of Minnesota but also strengthens cohesion between the university and its local community.

The questionnaire consists of two sections. In the first section, a motivation scale with 24 items was developed based on Crompton and McKay's (1997) work. Appropriate wordings were adopted in order to fit the LCAF context. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on

each motivation statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The second section included socio-demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, education level, etc.), and festival participation behavior (e.g., information source, travel partner, etc.). Convenience sampling with the on-site intercept procedure was utilized to collect information from visitors. Two interview booths were set up in the crafts section and food stop area from 11 am to 5 pm to recruit potential participants; people tended to have more time to be interviewed while they were perusing the art and craft booths or sitting down to eat food. A total of 156 (in 2010) and 249 (in 2012) valid questionnaires were collected by the end of the festival and the non-response rates were 33% and 37%, respectively.

Several statistical techniques were performed to fulfil the purposes of this study. First, an exploratory factor analysis (Maximum likelihood with Varimax rotation) and Cronbach's alpha tests were used to identify the visitors' motivations. Second, the extracted motivations served as a base to segment visitors into groups based on shared motivational features. Third, the cluster result was validated using a discriminant analysis. Finally, Chi-square test, ANOVA, and multiple responses crosstab were utilized to compare cluster groups and identify participants' characteristics in each cluster.

3.0 Results

The majority of the participants were female, 63.5% vs. 76.7% in 2010 and 2012 (see Table 1), respectively. More participants in 2012 had a college or higher degree (73 %) than their counterparts in 2010 (55.2%). Most informants lived within a 10 miles radius from the festival (75.7%) both in 2010 and 2012 studies.

Table 1
A Comparison of Participants in 2010 and 2012

	2010 Study	2012 Study
Gender	63.5% Female	76.7% Female
Age (mean)	41.9	38.5
Education	55.2% (College Degree and more)	73.0% (College Degree and more)
Residency (Ten-mile Radius)	75.7%	70.4%
Income (mean)	\$62,479 (SD = 33,280)	\$52,838 (SD = 41,650)
Previous Visit Times	6 (SD = 6)	8 (SD = 7.1)
Festival Information	Newspaper: 43% Friend: 34%	Other sources: 37% Friend: 21%
Sample Size	156	249

On average, the participants were 41.9 years old and had more annual household income (\$62,479) in 2010. However, they were younger (38.5 years old) in 2012 with less annual income (\$52,838). Also, in the 2012 study, participants had a higher rate of previous visitations

(8 on average) and tended to obtain festival information from other sources and friends compared to their 2010 counterparts who had had fewer previous visitations (6 on average) and received festival information from newspapers and friends.

For factor analysis, both five-factor solutions were identified in 2010 and 2012 studies with 55% and 56% of explained variance, respectively. However, the extracted factors in the two studies were different based on loaded items (See Table 2). ‘Exploration’ and ‘family gathering’ were two factors found in both the 2010 and 2012 study. ‘Novelty’ and ‘recover equilibrium’ were separately loaded into two factors in the 2010 study but they were loaded together in 2012. ‘Festival features’ and ‘community’ were two new factors in the 2012 study based on Crompton and Mckay’s study (1997), while ‘socialization’ is one of the factors in 2010. Specifically, in 2010, participants concurred that they were motivated to attend the LCAF because of its ‘novelty’ (m=3.96), followed by ‘recover equilibrium’ and ‘socialization’ (means of both factors are 3.22), and ‘family gathering’ (m=3.12). However, results indicated that ‘festival features’ (m=3.94) was the most important motivation while a factor-combined ‘novelty’ and ‘recover equilibrium’ (m=3.70) ranked second.

Table 2

A Comparison of Extracted Factors in 2010 and 2012 studies

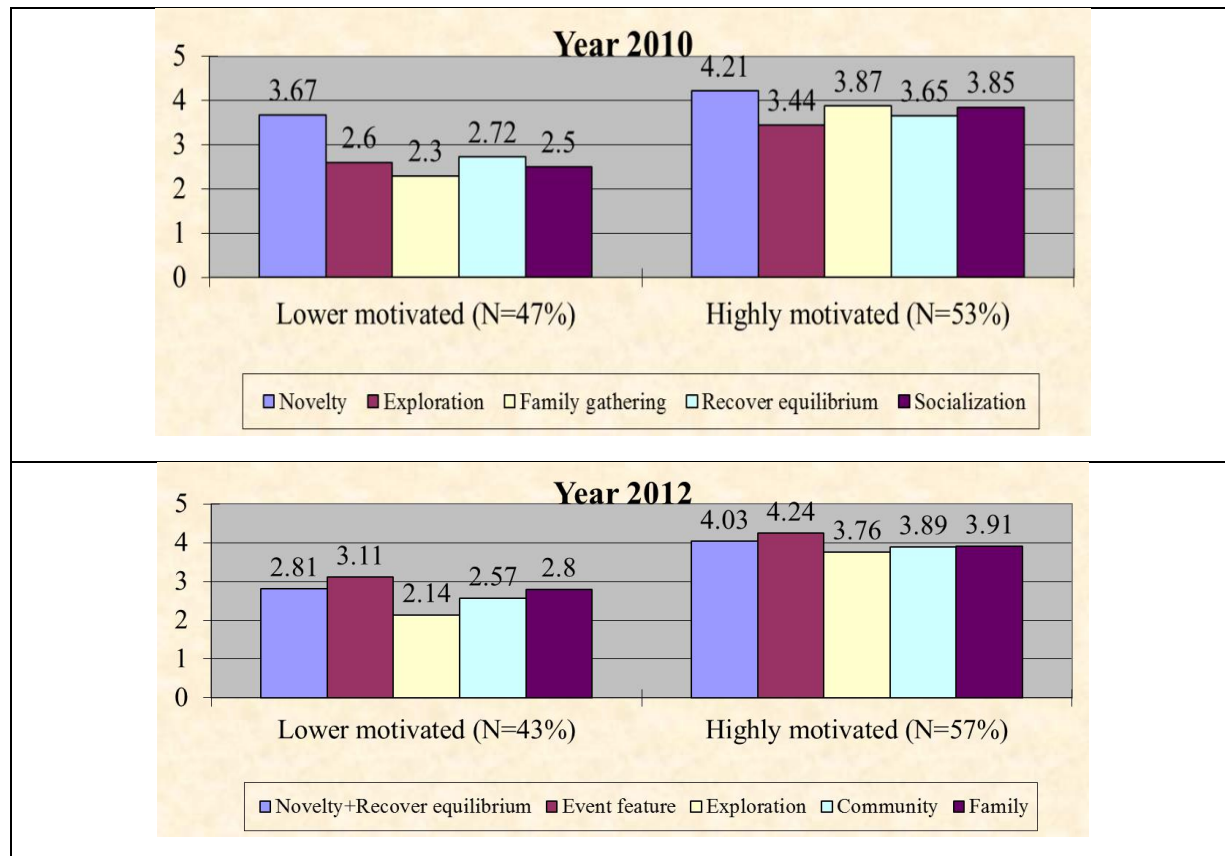
	2010 Study	Mean	2012 Study	Mean
Factor 1	<u>Novelty</u> (4 Items; Cronbach α =.76)	3.96	<u>Novelty +Recover Equilibrium</u> (6 Items; Cronbach α =.84)	3.70
Factor 2	<u>Recover Equilibrium</u> (3 Items; Cronbach α =.72)	3.22		
			<u>Festival Feature</u> (3 Items; Cronbach α =.80)	3.94
Factor 3	<u>Exploration</u> (4 Items; Cronbach α =.78)	3.05	<u>Exploration</u> (3 Items, Cronbach α =.90)	3.29
Factor 4	<u>Family Gathering</u> (2 Items; Cronbach α =.72)	3.12	<u>Family Gathering</u> (2 Items; Cronbach α =.83)	3.62
Factor 5	<u>Socialization</u> (2 Items; Cronbach α =.64)	3.22	<u>Community</u> (2 Items; Cronbach α =.76)	3.52

Comparisons of the mean differences across motivation factors are presented in Figure 1. These findings illustrate the fact that ‘festival features’ and ‘community sense’ are new motivations for people attending LCAF. For identifying different types of participant, a two-step cluster method was conducted, with the findings suggesting that the two-cluster solution was fine. Later, a K-means cluster analysis was performed using the two cluster solution.

Two-cluster solutions were confirmed by examining their agglomeration schedules for both the 2010 and 2012 study. They were classified into *high motivated* and *low motivated* groups in these two studies. However, these groups were slightly different in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds even though they had the same group names, high- and low-motivated.

In the 2010 study, the high-motivated group had a higher annual household income than its counterparts (\$69,350 vs. \$53,317) and participants in the high-motivated group were less likely to attend the LCAF alone. For obtaining information about the LCAF, slightly more than one third of the highly motivated cluster received relevant information from friends (35.5%), followed by newspapers (32.3%), radio (21%), and posters (19.4%). The other cluster, however, tended to get festival information from newspapers (50%) and, to a lesser extent, from friends (29.3%). In the 2012 study, the findings indicated that the high-motivated group was more likely to have lower income than the low-motivated group (\$46,509 vs. \$65,604). Moreover, the high-motivated group had more Asians and other minorities while the low-motivated group consisted of more Caucasians. As for spending at the LCAF, there was not a significant difference between the 2010 and 2012 groups, but the low-motivated group tended to spend more than its counterparts (\$47 vs. \$35). One more difference between these two groups was whether or not they were students. In 2010, the highly motivated group had an equal number of student and non-student participants whereas the lower motivation group had fewer students; in 2012, however, there was not a significant difference between the two groups in terms of student status.

Figure 1. A Comparison of Segmented Participants' Clusters in 2010 and 2012 studies



4.0 Conclusion and implications

The first objective of this study was to identify specific festival patron groups on the basis of their motivations for attending a local art festival in 2012. Findings revealed that participants'

motivations for attending the LCAF were similar to those in the framework proposed by Crompton and McKay (1997). Two new motivations out of five factors (i.e., festival features and community involvement) were extracted in the 2012 study which suggests that patrons' motivations have been changing. Over the two year period, exploration, novelty seeking, and family togetherness are common and vigorous motives for attending this art festival, which is congruent with previous studies (Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Li, Hung, & Cai, 2009). The findings also suggest that participants have developed different views on this local festival as 'festival features' replaced 'novelty seeking' as a major motivating factor for attending the LCAF, which is incongruent with reviews on festival literature by Uysal and Li (2008) where they concluded that socialization and family togetherness are the two most important reasons for attending festivals cited in most festival motivation studies. As for comparing segmented clusters, the findings demonstrate that the two-cluster solution mostly fits in both studies (2010 and 2012), but participants have different socio-demographic backgrounds and distinguishing characteristics. The same festival attracted different groups over this two-year span, with more females and younger participants, for example, attending the LCAF two years later in 2012. More studies are needed to further understand trends in participation at this local festival.

From an academic perspective, this trend study not only contributes to the body of knowledge regarding motivations to attend a community-based festival but also illustrates the importance of observing changes in motivation variables during a given time frame. Event sponsors should consider delivering a range of festival programs and marketing strategies targeted at participants in proactive and average groups. Specifically, attention should be paid to furnishing festival features and a sense of community, two critical themes for a successful community-based festival.

5.0 References

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