

## IMPROVEMENT AXONS FOR ARDAS CULTURAL FESTIVAL IN EVROS, GREECE, BASED ON ATTENDEES PERCEPTIONS

Irene Kamenidou<sup>11</sup>, Spyridon Mamalis<sup>22</sup>, George Kokkinis<sup>33</sup>, Christina Intze<sup>44</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Technological Educational Institute of Kavala, Greece, [rkam@teikav.edu.gr](mailto:rkam@teikav.edu.gr)

<sup>2</sup>Technological Educational Institute of Kavala, Greece, [mamalis@econ.auth.gr](mailto:mamalis@econ.auth.gr)

<sup>3</sup>Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece, [kokkinis@mkt.teithe.gr](mailto:kokkinis@mkt.teithe.gr)

<sup>4</sup>Technological Educational Institute of Kavala, Greece

**Abstract:** Festivals provide not only the hosting community but the wider destination area as well, with many benefits. In consequence they have gained increasing attention in the prism of tourism growth. The most popular festival in Evros prefecture in the Thrace region (Northern Greece) is Ardas festival which takes place annually near the banks of the Ardas River and is known as “Festival Arda: youth gathering”. In the highly competitive tourism market, festival organizers need to keep their customers satisfied in order to maintain and increase their market share. To accomplish this task, festival organizers must understand the visitors’ behaviour and intentions and formulate their strategy accordingly. In this context, this study aims to examine the current status of Ardas Festival based on attendees perceptions and, secondly to propose a segmentation of the attendees market, based on their overall visiting experience as well as the degree of their satisfaction.

A quantitative research study was conducted on the premises of Ardas festival. The questionnaire developed specifically for this purpose. It includes the following areas of improvement which were generated based on a prior qualitative study. The quantitative research obtained a sample of 410 visitors attending the festival. Statistical analysis included classical descriptive analysis, cluster analysis, and cross-tabulation tests. Results showed that all statements were considered important for attendees of the festival ( $MS > 3.51$ ), with cleanness being the most important ( $MS = 4.53$ ) and the increase of the number of Balkan countries bands the least ( $MS = 3.62$ ). Three clusters ( $n_1 = 116$ ;  $n_2 = 146$ ;  $n_3 = 140$ ) were produced based on the points of development as well as visitors’ satisfaction and impression. Results also showed that clusters were statistically significantly different regarding gender, marital status, education, occupation, and net individual monthly income. Results of the research can be a valuable input for the Ardas festival organizers. The findings can contribute to the success of the festival by satisfying the visitors and consequently increasing retention rate and loyalty.

**Keywords:** Festival, tourism, destination marketing, improvement axons, consumer’s behaviour, marketing, Greece

**JEL Classification Codes:** M31

---

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor of Marketing

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor of Marketing,

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor of Marketing

<sup>4</sup> BSc in Business Administration

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Festivals are important elements of the destination's attractions and above all in the rural and unknown tourist areas. Up to date literature accredits that festivals are a worldwide tourism phenomenon and uprising tourism businesses (Lee et al., 2004) which play a considerable role in communities' lives. Festival tourism in its different aspects (music, food, wine, etc festivals) is emerging worldwide since it brings various benefits to the attendees as well as to the hosting communities and the wider hosting area. For both cases there are an abundant number of studies that document very well these benefits.

Results from motivational studies for festival visitation suggest that festivals benefit attendees by providing them unique experiences (Wamwara-Mbugua & Cornwell, 2009); socialization (Li et al., 2009; Yolal et al., 2009; Zyl & Botha, 2004), feeling free, escape, excitement and novelty (Li et al., 2009; Yolal et al., 2009), cultural exploration (McDowall, 2010; Wamwara-Mbugua & Cornwell, 2009), and family togetherness (Foster a& Robinson, 2010; Li et al., 2009; Yolal et al., 2009; Park et al., 2008). Moreover, attendees benefit by relaxing (Kruger et al., 2010; Backman et al., 1995), coming close to nature (Luo & Deng, 2008); and feeling better (Packer & Ballantyne, 2010, Lee et al., 2010). Lastly, attending festivals raise the emotions of nostalgia and patriotism (Li et al., 2009).

On the other hand, the hosting community and the wider area also benefit from festivals. Festivals are means for tourism development and through it, money flows towards the hosting community and local society. Significant benefits include economic ones (e.g. Kim et al., 2010; Gibson et al., 2010; Liang et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2005) and benefits on employment (Jackson, 2008; Dwyer et al., 2005). They boost cultural tourism (McKercher et al., 2006); and conserve culture and tradition (Xie *et al.*, 2004; Bescoulidis et al., 2002). Moreover, they develop recreational and pleasure opportunities (Gursoy et al., 2004), promote community/ social cohesion (Yolal et al., 2009; Rao, 2001) and enhance local community's image (Yuan & Chong, 2007; Gurson et al., 2004). Also festivals build community's pride (Dweyer et al., 2005; Mill & Morrison, 2002) and lastly they promote political support (Karlsen & Stenbacka Nordström, 2009; Arcodia & Whitford, 2007; Mossberg & Getz, 2006).

For the abovementioned multidimensional benefits that festivals have, communities hold a high interest in actively developing festivals and promoting them to local and non local potential tourists. Boosted competition among festivals led local organizers to perceive the necessity to take into account attendees needs in order to maintain or increase their market share, and continuously develop loyal customers. In this context it is crucial and of main interest, festival organizers to cognize the weaknesses of the festival event and to proceed quickly to the required actions for correction.

There is rich literature review regarding festivals. Previous research on festivals has focused on different aspects of festival tourism, such as motivation and /or satisfaction/ benefits (e.g. Yoon et al., 2010; McDowall, 2010; Wamwara-Mbugua & Cornwell, 2009; Yolal et al., 2009), branding (e.g. Huang et al., 2010; Esu & Arrey, 2009; Mossberg & Getz, 2006); and the link between festival attributes and satisfaction and or intention to revisit/ loyalty (e.g. Kim & Severit, 2011; McDowell, 2010; Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Lee et al., 2009; Leenders 2010; Lee et al., 2007).

While all the above mentioned studies are very significant in the area of festival research, little work was found that reported weaknesses or points of improvement of an attended festival, as perceived by visitors: Kruger et al., 2010; Crotts et al., 2008 and Silva et al., 2010.

Kruger et al., (2010) investigated among others, the festival evaluation of the 2009 South Africa's Klein Karoo National Arts (sample consisted 555 usable visitors' questionnaires).

For festival evaluation, factor analysis produced 3 factors: festival management (4 variables: ABSA KKNK is well organized; information about the festival is available; layout of the festival area is good; parking is well organized) service and prices (4 items: Service/prices at restaurants are good; ticket prices are reasonable; price of accommodation is reasonable; adequate entertainment for children); and productions (3 variables: Front-of-house service at productions is effective; ticket sales are accessible; the quality of shows is excellent). *Festival management* received the highest mean value (3.93) of all the evaluation items; *Productions* had the second highest mean value of 3.90, *Service and prices* received the lowest mean value (3.53).

Kim et al. (2008) explored the operational procedures -factors that contribute in the success for the Hampyeong Butterfly Festival. They also indicated problems that the festival experienced. As success factors supporters of the festival are reported, such as the county's mayor, butterfly collectors, the local community and volunteers. Reported problems of the festival were: overlapping butterfly business plans using butterflies, poor infrastructure, lack of hotel accommodations and seasonality.

Crotts et al., (2008) explored 310 visitors of the 2006 Charleston Food and Wine Festival, liked and disliked service attributes, and identified the delighted and highly satisfied guests as measured by their overall satisfaction and intent repeat visit. The likes and dislikes were two open-ended questions were adopted from Pritchard & Havitz (2005, 2006 in Crotz et al., 2008). They found that visitors' dislikes were: Lack of seating, too crowded, price/expensive/hidden charges, difficulty purchasing tickets on the website, not enough food samples, bathroom availability, chef demos too pricey/hard to hear/learn, lack of signage, and parking limitations.

Silva et al., (2010) measured visitor satisfaction with different primal features of the 2008 and 2009 American Folk Festival on a sample of 478 attendees. They found that the quality of the music performances at the Festival plays the leading role in attracting the Festival onlookers; potential weaknesses reported by responding visitors, included the quality/value of food, the quality/value of arts and crafts available, and the authentic traditional arts.

Weaknesses of a festival attended by its visitors is considered a highly valued information, because it allows the festival authorities to capture the points that the festivals need to improve and the performance rated by customers

### **1.1.Ardas Festival-aim and objectives of the study**

In Greece, the most popular festival in the prefecture of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace is the Ardas Festival "Youth Gathering, Ardas", which has a 15 year history, taking place at the banks of the Ardas River. The festival is organised by the municipality of Vissa and the local body of Kastanies in collaboration with the General Secretariat of New Generation and the prefecture of Evros. The festival is multidimensional with music concerts, parallel events and activities. For the starting years from 1995 to 1997, no published data exists as regards number of attendees. From 1998-2000, Ardas festival had more than 70000 visitors, while from 2001 the number of visitors were under 50000 showing a decline in visitation and revenues.

Also, it is noted that festivals that present the same theme (music, events and activities), with combination the natural landscape in Evros, are the following: The Festival of Youth of Municipality Tichero; the Dance Festival in Samothraki; the Thrace Ethnic Festival; and the Red River Festival ([www.nomervou.gr](http://www.nomervou.gr)).

Against the above framework, this study has as an aim to identify the weaknesses that visitors recognized attending Ardas festival, while the objectives of this research are to:

1. Identify the total impression that attendees hold from their visitation to Ardas festival
2. To explore attendees total satisfaction
3. To determine the visitors segments based on recognized weaknesses, impression and satisfaction.
4. To test if the derived segments differ in socioeconomic status.

This research consists of the first attempt to recognize the weaknesses of Ardas River Festival as perceived by its customers. This research is considered of great importance for Greek and local authorities as well as the bodies of tourism planning policy, since the Ardas festival is essential for the economy of the area.

The paper is structured as follows. First, the research methodology is presented and the findings displayed followed by the discussion. Continuously, the conclusions and recommendations are presented, followed by the limitations of the research which give recommendations for further research.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted by means of questionnaire in the 14<sup>th</sup> Youth Gathering, Ardas at the Ardas River Cultural Festival in the summer of 2008 (30<sup>th</sup> of July to 3<sup>rd</sup> of August). The section of the questionnaire presented in this paper was constructed based on the results of a qualitative research conducted by the researchers, during the 13<sup>th</sup> Ardas festival (25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> of July, 2007). The questionnaire included open questions (days of stay, times visited, age of first visit), multiple choice answers, as well as Likert (points of improvement) and Likert type scales (impression and total satisfaction from visitation). Sample consisted of 410 visitors/attendees, via mall intercept personal interview technique (Malhotra, 2007) at the festival's premises, sample size considered to be satisfactory for the purposes of the research as well as the main statistical analysis utilized (Hair et al., 1995). The data was analyzed using the SPSS ver.17 program. Analysis included descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages and means), reliability, K-means cluster analysis and chi-square tests (cross tabulation).

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Consumers' profile**

Data analysis revealed that there was an even distribution of men and women. The great majority of respondents were young people less than 35 years old (85%), and with about the half of the sample in the age class of 18-25 years old. The sample was mainly single (66%), with secondary or postsecondary education (54%). Most participants were students in higher education (55%) and employees (federal or private) and had an individual monthly income up to 1500 Euros (81%).

### **3.2 Visitation at the Ardas River Festival**

The majority of the attendees (53%) which participated in the research mentioned that they had visited the Ardas Festival (including this festival) 2-5 times; 22% visited it 6-10 times; 9% had attended the festival more than 10 times; and lastly 16% of the sample, were first-time

visitors. Age of first time visitation at the Ardas festival was under 18 years old (22.2%); 59.3% between 18-25 years old, and 18.5% over 25 years of age. Considering the length of stay (the festival lasts 5 days), 18.5% stayed one day; 22.2% two days; 18.5% three days; 14.9% four days; and 25.9% five days. Finally, 81.5% visited the festival with their friends, 14.9% with family, and only one visited the festival alone (0.6%).

### 3.3 Features for improvement of the Ardas Cultural festival

Participants were given 8 statements that displayed the weaknesses and simultaneously the characteristics for improvement of Ardas Cultural Festival, as reported by visitors during the qualitative research that was previously realized. Participants were asked to provide for each statement their degree of agreement or disagreement on a five point Likert Scale (5= completely agree down to 1= completely disagree).

Primary weaknesses of the festival and *ad interim* point that should be improved by organizers is the cleanness of the area (MS=4.53), which is considered as the main weakness of the festival, followed facilities (MS=4.49) that should be improved for visitors as well as for campers. Safety of visitors and campers also arouse as a problem which the organizers should solve (MS=4.48), along with organizers and staff's attitude which should be more responsible and helpful (MS=4.45).

These findings support the findings of McDowall (2010) who found that cleanness of the facility and waste management received the lowest satisfaction rate, and were referred to most commonly as visitor's bad experience from visitors attending the Tenth-Month Merit-Making Festival. Also, Lee (2009) in her study of two strawberry festivals and one wine festival in Texas, found that cleanness and safe and well-maintained equipment and facilities are strong predictors of a visitor's emotions when attending a festival. In addition, Lee et al., (2008) in examining the links between festivalscapes emotions, satisfaction and loyalty of the Andong Mask dance festival found that the facility quality dimension (among them were the items: facilities of festival site and cleanness of festival site) had a significant negative effect on negative emotion, a positive and significant effect on satisfaction, and a significant indirect positive relationship with continuance loyalty. Moreover, Lee et al., (2007) in their study found that perceived quality attributes related to generic features (i.e., visual appearance, live entertainment, and feeling of safety) and comfort amenities (i.e., cleanliness of the portable restrooms and availability of restrooms) had strong relationships with overall quality. Lastly, Ozdemir & Culha (2009) found that the festival area factor (i.e. the facilities of festival site are sufficient, atmosphere of the festival site is good, there are several events within the festival, the festival area is clean, the festival program is well organized, resting areas are adequate) has a direct positive effect on satisfaction and loyalty.

Secondary weakness that should be improved is considered the music programs which should be enriched, prices should be kept at low levels, events and activities should be enhanced. The feature with the lowest rate was "the bands from the Balkan area should be increased", where the sample tends to neither agree/disagree towards agree (Table 1).

Regarding prices, findings are consistent to Leender's findings (2010) where analysis resulted that ticket price of the festival plays some role but is less important than festival brand components. On the other hand van Zyl (2008) found that festival brands and entertainment or festival activities were the two most important attributes for a success of an art festival, while transport and ticket price were less important. This is consistent with the Yoon et al., (2010) study, who found that the quality dimension referring to the festival program was positively and strongly related to the festival value, which consequently improved festival satisfaction

and loyalty. Also, Silva et al., (2010) found that the quality of the music performances plays the leading role in attracting the Festival onlookers.

Ardas Festival participants have multiple motives for attending the festival, and for so the organizers must develop a portfolio of different and new events and activities in order to attract different interests. This finding is of great importance, since it shows that the festival and its activities bring excitement and pleasure to visitors who revisit the destination (Kaplanidou, 2007).

**Table 1. Features for improvement of Ardas Cultural Festival (%)**

Statements	Completely agree	Agree	Neither agree/disagree	Disagree	Completely disagree	Mean score (St.D)
Cleanness of area and amenities should be maintained by organizers	68.6	21.11	7.4	1.0	8.3	4.53 (0.83)
Facilities for visitors and campers should be improved	60.8	29.4	7.8	2.0	0.0	4.49 (0.73)
The area where the festival is conducted should be guarded, in order for people to feel secure and safe	62.1	27.6	7.9	1.0	1.5	4.48 (0.80)
Organizer's and staff's attitude should be responsible and helpful	63.1	25.1	8.4	1.0	2.5	4.45 (0.88)
Music programs should be enriched	44.6	44.6	8.3	1.0	1.5	4.30 (0.78)
Price should be kept at low levels	45.9	39.0	8.8	5.4	1.0	4.23 (0.89)
Events and activities should be enhanced	34.8	42.6	20.6	1.5	0.5	4.10 (0.80)
The number of bands from the Balkan countries should be increased	30.2	24.4	30.7	6.3	8.3	3.62 (1.212)

### **3.4 Impression, satisfaction, re-visitation and recommendation of Ardas Cultural Festival**

Total impression from the Ardas festival for the 42.0% of the participants was “like I expected it to be”; “better than I expected it” for 31.7%; “much better than I expected it” for the 15.1% of the sample; “worse than I expected it” for 10.2% and “much worse than I expected it” for the 1.0% of the sample (Mean Score=3.50; St.D=0.90). Referring to total satisfaction, 48.3% was satisfied; 32.2% neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied; 12.7% was very satisfied; 4.9% dissatisfied and 1.5% very dissatisfied (Mean Score=3.66; St.D=0.81). Regarding intention to revisit Ardas area in the next 5 years, 47.8% stated very likely; 32.7% likely; 4.7% neither likely/unlikely; 3.4% unlikely; 4.4% very unlikely (Mean Score=4.16; St.D=1.0). Lastly, as to if participants would recommend Ardas area to others, 51.7% stated very likely; 32.7% likely; 9.3% neither likely/unlikely; 3.9% unlikely; 2.4% very unlikely (Mean Score=4.27; St.D=0.95).

### 3.5 Cluster analysis – Attendees segments

Cluster analysis was utilized in order to classify participants into mutually exclusive groups with the same perceptions and behavior. Two variables were added in the cluster analysis process: total impression and total satisfaction from attending the festival. The analysis resulted in a three cluster solution. Multivariate statistic results, indicated statistical significant difference between the three clusters and the results of ANOVA tests also revealed that all variables contributed to differentiate the three cluster solution (in all cases  $p=0.00$ ). The Final Cluster Centres (FCC) regarding each cluster, as well as the sample size is presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Cluster analysis based on improvement points as perceived by visitors combined with total impression and satisfaction**

Variables	1 <sup>st</sup> cluster, n=116	2 <sup>nd</sup> cluster, n=146	3 <sup>rd</sup> cluster, n=140	Statistics
Price should be kept at low levels	4.07	4.07	4.33	F=3.539 (p=0.000)
Music programs should be enriched	3.84	4.29	4.66	F=40.803 (p=0.000)
Events and activities should be enhanced	3.59	4.00	4.61	F=71.311 (p=0.000)
The area where the festival is conducted should be guarded, in order for people to feel secure and safe	3.59	4.83	4.90	F=197.302 (p=0.000)
Cleanness of area and amenities should be maintained by organizers	3.66	4.92	4.84	F=159.376 p=(0.000)
The number of bands from the Balkan countries should be increased	3.19	2.86	4.83	F=238.380 (p=0.000)
Organizer's and staffs attitude should be responsible and helpful	3.47	4.81	4.89	F=204.791 (p=0.000)
Facilities for visitors and campers should be improved	3.76	4.78	4.77	F=134.345 (p=0.000)
Total impression	3.16	3.37	3.79	F=10.380 (p=0.000)
Total satisfaction	3.47	3.60	3.89	F=9.424 (p=0.000)

The analysis produced 3 segments with a different segment profile. Chi-square tests and crosstabs revealed that clusters were statistically significantly different regarding gender ( $\chi^2_2=28.169$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2_6=17.476$ ,  $p=0.006$ ), education ( $\chi^2_{10}=59.792$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), occupation ( $\chi^2_6=20.942$ ,  $p=0.002$ ), and net individual monthly income ( $\chi^2_{10}=22.302$ ,  $p=0.014$ ). More specifically the profile of each segment is the following:

**Segment n.1: Music goers.** This segment consists of 116 participants. Visitors belonging in this segment attend the festival because they can see and listen to live bands at low prices. As such, they are mainly interested that the festival's prices stay at low levels, and music programs should be enriched. They tend to be indifferent of improving the other weaknesses of the festival. They hold the lowest impression of all three groups, probably because they considered that the money that they paid did not meet their music expectations. They also tend to be neither satisfied nor unsatisfied.

This cluster consists mainly of men (67.2%), age 18-25 (53.4%) and 26-35 years old (31.0%), single 60.3% and 5.2% widowed (100% of the widowed belong in this segment) with

secondary (29.3%) and postsecondary (22.4%) education, while 5.2% that had not finished elementary school (100% of the total belong in this segment). This cluster is consisted mainly of students (55.2%) and 6.9% is dependent from others (in this cluster belongs the 80% of the total dependent sample), while net individual monthly income is up to 1000.00 Euros for the 42.8% of the cluster.

**Segment n.2: *Demanding, fairly impressed, fairly satisfied.*** This segment consists of 116 participants. The members of this segment consider that all except one festival attributes-service should be improved (FCC ranging from 4.00-4.92). The only statement that has low FCC is “the number of bands from the Balkan countries should be increased”, with FCC =2.86. They have the highest FCC for the items referring to cleanness and safety (FCC=4.92 and 4.83 respectively). This cluster’s total impression tends to be as expected; and tends to be overall fairly satisfied. This segment demands its value for money and is austere in its judgment.

This segment consists mainly of women (65.8%), age ranging between 18-35 years of age (86.3%). Also 40.0% of the participants with age between 36-45 years belong in this segment (12.3% of the cluster); single 71.2% with secondary education (43.8%) and a bachelor degree (34.2%). This cluster is consisted mainly of students (53.4%) and salaried (35.6%), while no dependent from other exist in this cluster, with net individual monthly income is up to 600 Euros (31.4%) and 1000.00 -1500.00 Euros for the 38.6% of the cluster.

**Segment n.3: *Demanding, impressed, satisfied.*** This segment consists of 140 attendees. This segment considers all given statements (attributes-services) regarding weakness and simultaneously points of the Ardas festival improvement, as significant to be improved by the festival’s organizers (FCC ranging from 4.33-4.90). The only statement that has a low FCC is “prices should be kept at low levels” implying that they are not price sensitive. This cluster stresses as most important points of improvement safety/ security and organizers and staffs attitude as to being responsible and helpful. This cluster’s total impression tends to be better than expected; and tends to be overall satisfied. While this segment is the most demanding of all, it is the one that holds the highest impression and satisfaction from all three segments. This segment is the most tolerant one as regards its value for money. It probably considers that the price that they pay is equal to the benefits that they gain.

This cluster has an equal distribution of men and women (48.6% and 51.4% respectively). Age distribution falls mainly in the 26-35 years old (45.7%), while 50% of the participants older than 46 years old fall in this segment (4.3% of the cluster). Visitors consisting of this segment are single 70.0% and 26.0% married. 38.6% of this cluster holds a bachelor and an MSc or PhD (8.6%). This segment consists of the highest educated visitors compared to the other segments, with 47.2% of the cluster holding a bachelor and an MSc or PhD degree. This cluster is consists 54.7% of students, 24.3% of salaried visitors and 19.6% of free lancers, with net individual monthly income 1000.00 -1500.00 Euros for the 34.8% and 16.0% with income 1500.00 -2500.00 Euros.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS

The current paper extends knowledge in the festival success area, by examining the features that should be improved as perceived by attendees and continuously segmenting visitors based on their perceptions of feature improvement and total impression and satisfaction. Descriptive analysis revealed that of main interest that need immediate action is the cleanness of the area, improvement of facilities and increase of guards so attendees could

feel safer. For this to be achieved some actions could be taken. First of all, in order to improve facilities, the festival organizers need to raise money which can be achieved by sponsors of the festival. Secondly, the Ardas festival area has a competitive advantage, being located in impressive natural scenery. This scenery must be cherished and must be kept clean and safe for revisitation to occur. In order to increase cleanness and safety, they could either hire staff or increase volunteers which undoubtedly should be trained.

Cluster analysis revealed three segments with different profile: the music goers who care about the music programs and ticket prices, the demanding, fairly impressed, and fairly satisfied, who care mainly for cleanness and safety, and the demanding, impressed and satisfied who care mainly for safety and staffs attitude. It is also noted that the two last segments have in common that they consider that all features except one (more Balkan bands) should be improved. Huang et al., (2010) report that community-led festivals benefit from repeat visitors, while Shone and Perry (2004 in van Zyl, 2008) state that if the motivations, expectations and needs of the contributors and visitors are not met, a festival and event will fail. Thus, the festival providers should give focus on at least this issue: they should listen to people's opinions in order to make the best of what they want. This could be done after each Ardas festival by conducting an online research.

## 5. LIMITATIONS –DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is to our knowledge, the first one focusing on the weaknesses of a festival in Greece and used as a case study the Ardas Cultural Festival “Youth Gathering”. This study has few unavoidable limitations. First the research was exploratory and for so the findings cannot be generalized. Also, it employed a non-probability sampling method; the sample was adequate for its purposes and allowed reasonable conclusions to be drawn; however, it cannot be considered representative of all visitors. The findings are limited by the sample and measures used. Larger empirical studies using quantitative measures should be done to replicate and expand these results. Also, there might be more items referring to the weaknesses of the festival, but in this research, the statements used were derived from qualitative research. Another research could validate the results of the study.

Regardless of the current limitations, the present study brought to light some findings which may assist festival organizers and marketers in developing a more appealing and successful to visitors' festival. Furthermore, the findings of this study could be a basis for future research on the topic in Greece and internationally.

## REFERENCES

1. Arcodia, C., and Whitford, M. 2007. Festival Attendance and the Development of Social Capital. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, Vol. 8, No.2, pp. 1-18.
2. Backman K.F., Backman S.J., Uysal, M, and Sunshine K.M., 1995. Event tourism: an Examination of Motivations and Activities. *Festival Management & Event Tourism*, Vol. 3, No.1, pp. 15–24.
3. Besculides, A., Lee, M.E. and McCormic, P.J., 2002. Residents' Perceptions of the Cultural Benefits of Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.29, No.2, pp.303-319.
4. Cole S.T. and Chancellor H.C., 2009. Examining the Festival Attributes that Impact Visitor Experience, Satisfaction and Re-visit intention. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol.15, No.4, pp. 323-333.
5. Crotts J.C., Pan, B., and Raschid, A.E., 2008. A Survey Method for Identifying Key Drivers of Guest Delight. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol.20,

- No.4, pp.462-470.
6. Dwyer, L., Forsyth, P. and Spurr, R., 2005. Estimating the Impacts of Special Events on an Economy. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol.43, No.4, pp.351-359.
  7. Esu, B.B. and Arrey, V.M.-E., 2009. Branding Cultural Festival as a Destination Attraction: A Case Study of Calabar Carnival Festival. *International Business Research*, Vol.2, No.3, pp. 182-192.
  8. Foster, K., and Robinson, P., 2010. A Critical Analysis of the Motivational Factors that Influence Event Attendance in Family Groups. *Event Management*, Vol.14, No.2, pp.107-125
  9. Gibson, C., Waitt, G., Walmsley, J., and Connell, J. 2010. Cultural Festivals and Economic Development in Nonmetropolitan Australia. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 280–293.
  10. Gursoy, D., Kim K., and Uysal M., 2004. Perceived Impacts of Festivals and Special Events by Organizers: An Extension and Validation. *Tourism Management*, Vol.25, No.2, pp.171–181.
  11. Hair J., Anderson, R., Taham, R., and Black, W., 1995. *Multivariate Data Analysis with Readings*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Prentice-Hall International.
  12. <http://www.nomevrou.gr/ecportal.asp?id=230&nt=18&lang=1>, accessed 12/12/08
  13. Huang, J.Z., Li, M., and Cai, L.A., 2010. A Model of Community-based festival image. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. 29, No.2 pp.254–260.
  14. Jackson, J., Houton, M., Russel, R., Triandos, P., 2005. Innovations in Measuring Economic Impacts of Regional Festivals: A do-it-yourself kit. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 43, May, pp. 360-367.
  15. Jackson, L., 2008. Residents' Perceptions of the Impacts of Special Event Tourism. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol.1, No.3, pp.240-55.
  16. Kaplanidou, K., 2007. Affective Event and Destination image: Their influence on Olympic travelers' behavioral intentions. *Event Management*, Vol. 10, No.2, pp.159-173.
  17. Karlsen, S. and Stenbacka Nordström, C., 2009. Festivals in the Barents Region: Exploring Festival-stakeholder Cooperation. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 9, No. 273, pp. 130-145.
  18. Kim Y.G., Suh, B.W. and Eves, A., 2010. The Relationships Between Food-related Personality Traits, Satisfaction, and Loyalty among Visitors Attending Food Events and festivals. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol.29, No.2, pp.216–226.
  19. Kim, K., and Severt, D.E., 2011. Satisfaction or Quality Comes First: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 81 - 96
  20. Kim, Y., Kim, S.S., and Agrusa, J., 2008. An Investigation into the Procedures Involved in Creating the Hampyeong Butterfly Festival as an Ecotourism Resource, Successful Factors, and Evaluation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol.13, No. 4, pp.357- 377.
  21. Kruger, M., Saayman, M., and Ellis, S.M., 2010. Does Loyalty Pay? First-time versus Repeat Visitors at a National Arts Festival. *Southern African Business Review*, Vol.14, No.1, pp. 79-104.
  22. Lee S.Y., Petrick J.F., and Crompton J., 2007. The Roles of Quality and Intermediary Constructs in Determining Festival Attendees' Behavioral Intention. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol.45, No.4, pp. 402-412.
  23. Lee, C-K., Lee, Y-K., and Wicks, B.E., 2004. Segmentation of Festival Motivation by Nationality and Satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, Vol.25, No.1, pp. 61-70.
  24. Lee, J.-S. , Lee, C.-K., and Yoon, Y., 2009. Investigating Differences in Antecedents to Value Between First-time and Repeat Festival-goers. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 26, No.7, pp. 688-702.

25. Lee, J.-S., Lee, C.-K., and Choi Y., 2010. Examining the Role of Emotional and Functional Values in Festival Evaluation. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol.26, No.7, pp.688-702.
26. Lee, J.Y., 2009. *Investigating the Effect of Festival visitors' Emotional Experiences on Satisfaction, Psychological Commitment, and Loyalty*. PhD Dissertation, Texas A&M University
27. Lee, Y.-K., Lee, C.-K., Lee, S.-K., Babin B.J., 2008. Festivalscapes and Patrons' Emotions, Satisfaction, and Loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 61, No.1, pp. 56-64
28. Leenders, M.A.A.M., 2010. The Relative Importance of the Brand of Music Festivals: a Customer Equity Perspective. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol.18, No.4, pp. 291-301.
29. Li, M., Huang, Z., and Cai, L.A., 2009. Benefit Segmentation of Visitors to a Rural Community-based Festival. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol.26, No.5, pp.585-598.
30. Liang, Y., Illum, S.F., and Cole S.T., 2008. Benefits Received and Behavioural Intentions of Festival Visitors in Relation to Distance Travelled and their Origins. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, Vol.4, No.1, pp. 12-23.
31. Luo, Y., and Deng, J., 2008. The New Environmental Paradigm and Nature-Based Tourism Motivation. *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 46, May, pp. 392-402.
32. Malhotra N.K., 2007. *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pearson Prentice Hall
33. McDowall S., 2010. A Comparison between Thai Residents and Non-residents in their Motivations, Performance Evaluations, and Overall Satisfaction with a Domestic Festival. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol.16, No.3, pp. 217-233.
34. McKercher, B., Mei, W., and Tse, T., 2006. Are Short Duration Festivals Tourist Attractions? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol.14, No.1, pp.55-66.
35. Mill, R. C., and Morrison, A.M., 2002. *The Tourism System*. 4th Ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
36. Mossberg, L., and Getz, D., 2006. Stakeholder Influences on the Ownership and Management of Festival Brands. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 6, No.4, pp. 308-326.
37. Ozdemir G., and Culha, O., 2009. Satisfaction and Loyalty of Festival Visitors. *An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol.20, No.2, pp.359-373.
38. Packer, J., and Ballantyne, J., 2010. The Impact of Music Festival Attendance on Young People's Psychological and Social Well-being. *Psychology of Music*, Vol.39, No.2, pp. 164-181
39. Park, K.-S., Reisinger Y., and Kang, H.-J., 2008. Visitors' Motivation for Attending the South Beach Wine and Food Festival, Miami Beach, Florida. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, Vol.25, No.2, pp.161-181
40. Pritchard, M., and Havitz, M., 2005. Ratios of tourist experience: it was the best of times it was the worst of times, *Tourism Analysis*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 1-6. In Crofts J.C., Pan, B., and Raschid, A.E., 2008. A Survey Method for Identifying Key Drivers of Guest Delight. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol.20, No.4, pp.462-470.
41. Pritchard, M.P., and Havitz, M.E., 2006. Destination Appraisal: An Analysis of Critical Incidents. *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.33, No.1, pp.25-46. In Crofts J.C., Pan, B., and Raschid, A.E., 2008. A Survey Method for Identifying Key Drivers of Guest Delight. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol.20, No.4, pp.462-470.
42. Rao, V., 2001. Celebrations as Social Investments: Festival Expenditures, Unit Price Variation and Social Status in Rural India. *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol.38, No.1, pp.71-97.
43. Shone, A. & Perry, B. 2004. *Successful Event Management*. Australia: Thomson. In Van Zyl, C. 2008. A Conjoint Analysis of Festival Attributes for Successful Positioning of Selected

- Arts Festivals in South Africa. *Southern African Business Review*, Vol.12, No.3, pp.129-155.
44. Silva, B., Mann, M., Daniel H. (2010). Final Report 2009 American Folk Festival - Summary of Onsite and Online Festival Questionnaires - Center for Tourism Research and Outreach – CentRO. April.
45. Van Zyl C., and Botha, C., 2004. Motivational Factors of Local Residents to Attend the Aardklop National Arts Festival. *Event Management*, Vol.8, No.4, pp.213-222.
46. Van Zyl, C. 2008. A Conjoint Analysis of Festival Attributes for Successful Positioning of Selected Arts Festivals in South Africa. *Southern African Business Review*, Vol.12, No.3, pp.129-155.
47. Wamwara-Mbugua, L.W., and Cornwell, T. B., 2009. Visitor Motivation to Attending International Festivals. *Event Management*, Vol. 13, No.4, pp. 277-286.
48. Xie, P.F., 2003. Visitors' Perceptions of Authenticity at a Rural Heritage Festival: A Case Study. *Event Management*, Vol. 8, No.3, pp.151–160.
49. Yang, J., Gu, Y., and Cen, J., 2011. Festival Tourists' Emotion, Perceived Value, and Behavioral Intentions: A Test of the Moderating Effect of Festivalscape. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, Vol.12, No.1, pp.25-44.
50. Yolal, M., Çetinel, F., and Uysal, M., 2009. An Examination of Festival Motivation and Perceived Benefits Relationship: Eskişehir International Festival. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*. Vol. 10, No.4, pp. 276- 291.
51. Yoon, Y-S., Lee, J-S, Lee, C.-K., 2010. Measuring Festival Quality and Value Affecting Visitors' Satisfaction and Loyalty using a Structural Approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol.29, No.2, pp.335-342.
52. Yuan, L., and Chong, C., 2007. The effects of Festivals and Special Events on City Image Design Front. *Archit. Civ. Eng. China*, Vol.1, No.2, pp. 255–259.