**EFFECTS OF FESTIVAL MOTIVATION ON ATTITUDINAL LOYALTY: FOCUSING ON THE ST. PETERSBURG SAND SCULPTURE FESTIVAL**

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# ***INTRODUCTION***

Festivals are considered to have a major impact on the cultural tourism of host communities (Raj, 2003). Studies on festival motivations, visitor types according to motivations, festival motivation by nationality, and effects of motivation on attendance and satisfaction are of high interest for researchers. Regarding The theory of attendance motivation Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, push-pull theory, and seeking- escaping dichotomy are particularly useful in understanding the motivation of festival attendees.

Regarding on festival satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty, researchers have considered the motivations of visitors from different aspects, but most studies on festival motivations were based on a two-dimensional (2-D) tourist motivation framework using the pull-push theory and the seeking-escaping dichotomy (Backman, Backman, Uysal, & Sunshine, 1995; Formica & Uysal, 1996; Mohr, Backman, Gahan, & Backman, 1993; Ralston & Crompton, 1988; Uysal, Backman, Backman, & Potts, 1991; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993).

# ***AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECTS***

The present study focuses on the Sand Sculpture Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. This festival is attended by visitors all over the world and has become an annual event in the city.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between festival motivations and attitudinal loyalty using the Sand Sculpture Festival as the focal object.

The study attempts to expand the scientific knowledge on festival motivations and their influence on the intent of a visitor to revisit the festival and to recommend the festival to others as indicative of attitudinal loyalty.

# ***METHODOLOGY***

***Research Model of the Study***

The model used in previous studies was selected to test the effects of festival motivations on attitudinal loyalty (Fig. 1). the present study investigated how every higher (seeking or escaping motivation) and lower dimension of seeking-escape factors influence the attitudinal loyalty of visitors, specifically the intention of a visitor to revisit the festival and to recommend the festival to others. The model of the present study is shown in the figure below.

Figure 1. Research Model of the Study

Seeking

Motivations

Cultural and historical

interest

Festival

excitement & uniqueness

Socialization

Escape

Motivations

Escape from

daily routine

Festival novelty

Escape from

problems and difficulties

Attitudinal

Loyalty

Festival revisit

Festival recommendation

Festival recommendation

Festival recommendation

Festival recommendation

***Hypotheses***

Following hypotheses were used in the present study:

**Hypothesis I:**

**Seeking motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty.**

H1: Cultural and historical interest as a seeking motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H2: Socialization as a seeking motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H3: Festival uniqueness and excitement as a seeking motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H4: Cultural and historical interest as a seeking motivation significantly influences recommendation intention.

H5: Socialization as a seeking motivation significantly influences recommendation intention.

H6: Festival uniqueness and excitement as a seeking motivation significantly influences recommendation intention.

**Hypothesis II:**

**Escape motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty.**

H7: Escape from daily routine as an escape motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H8: Festival novelty as an escape motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H9: Escape from problems and difficulties as an escape motivation significantly influences revisit intention.

H10: Escape from daily routine as an escape motivation significantly influences recommendation intention.

H11: Festival novelty as an escape motivation significantly influences recommendation intention.

***RESULTS***

***Analysis***

A total of 241 usable (48.2% response rate) questionnaires were collected. Respondents were female at 66.8% against 33.2% of male. Almost all respondents were from Russia (96.3%). Most of the respondents attended the festival for the first time (69.3%). The age distributions were quite even, with the age groups under 20 years (22.8%), 20 to 29 years (29.9%), and 30 to 39 years (19.9) equaling to a total of 72.6% of all respondents.

***Reliability analysis***

The internal consistency identified after the analysis appeared to be acceptable, with the Cronbach’s Alpha equal to 0.724 for seeking motivations and 0.819 for escape motivations. The correlation analysis for the two items showed a correlation of .391 at a significance level of .001, which falls within the optimal range of .2 and .4, as suggested by Briggs and Cheek (1986). Thus, the attitudinal loyalty scale was also found to be acceptable.

***Seeking motivations construct***

The *a-priori* three-factor measurement model for seeking motivations tested by CFA consisted of 10 observed variables out of the 12 original variables (2 were eliminated after reliability analysis) and 3 latent constructs selected from previous studies. All variables showed a high significance level for regression weight and can, therefore, be used in future studies.

Table 1 CFA for Seeking Motivations

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Seeking | Item | Estimate | S. E. | C. R. | P value |
| Cultural and historical interest | - Interest in festival as a cultural event- Visiting favorite cultural place- Presentation of Greek culture at the festival- Enjoying sculptures at the festival | 1.000.6711.357.532 | -.139.193.088 | -4.8177.0156.058 | -.000.000.000 |
| Festival excitement and uniqueness | - Festival uniqueness- Festival excitement- Curiosity about the festival- The festival seemed fun | 1.000.913.416.409 | -.070.070.070 | -13.0645.9405.252 | -.000.000.000 |
| Socialization | - Doing something with people close to me- Meeting new people | 1.000.899 | -.419 | -2.145 | -.032 |

Table 2 Goodness-of-fit Summary for Seeking Motivations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fit Indices | Fit Index Coefficient |
| GFI | .946 |
| AGFI | .914 |
| NFI | .911 |
| RMR | .054 |
| Chi-square  | 149.059 |
| Degrees of freedom | 32 |
| Probability level | .000 |

***Escape motivations construct***

The *a-priori* three-factor measurement model for escape motivations tested by CFA consisted of 11 observed variables out of the 12 original variables (1 was eliminated after reliability analysis) and 3 latent constructs selected from previous studies. All variables showed a high significance level for regression weight.

Table 3 CFA for Escape Motivations

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Escape | Item | Estimate | S. E. | C. R. | P value |
| Escape from daily routine | - Making the day different- Getting away from the demands of everyday life- Visiting any event- Spending time outdoors | 1.000.891.858.839 | -.090.095.105 | -9.8919.0407.983 | -.000.000.000 |
| Festival novelty | - Spending the weekend in a different way- Experiencing new things- Spending weekend outdoors | 1.000.385.993 | -.059.097 | -6.54110.263 | -.000.000 |
| Escape from troubles and difficulties | - Forgetting troubles and worries- Becoming part of the joyful festival - Be invigorated from the festival- Relaxing after a long week | 1.0001.2191.2131.158 | -.171.167.174 | -7.1277.2436.651 | -.000.000.000 |

Table 4 Goodness-of-fit Summary for Escape Motivations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fit Indices | Fit Index Coefficient |
| GFI | .956 |
| AGFI | .943 |
| NFI | .937 |
| RMR | .037 |
| Chi-square  | 259.025 |
| Degrees of freedom | 41 |
| Probability level | .000 |

***Structural Equation Modeling***

Table 5 Results of SEM for Seeking and Escape Motivations on Attitudinal Loyalty

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Motivations | Unstand.Estimate | S. E. | C. R. | P |
| ***Cultural and historical interest -> Attitudinal loyalty*** | .286 | .134 | 2.138 | .032 |
| ***Festival excitement and uniqueness -> Attitudinal loyalty*** | .113 | .056 | 2.017 | .044 |
| ***Escape from daily routine -> Attitudinal loyalty*** | -.149 | .051 | -2.904 | .004 |
| Festival novelty -> Attitudinal loyalty | .409 | .143 | 2.868 | .004 |
| ***Escape from problems and difficulties -> Attitudinal loyalty*** | .222 | .069 | 3.208 | .001 |

Table 6 Goodness-of-fit Summary for Revised Measurement Model

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fit Indices | Fit Index Coefficient |
| GFI | .914 |
| AGFI | .880 |
| Parsimony Goodness-of-fit Index (PGFI) | .653 |
| NFI | .904 |
| Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) | .610 |
| Comparative Fit Index (CFI) | .893 |
| RMR | .051 |
| Chi-square  | 623.448 |
| Degrees of freedom | 99 |
| Probability level | .000 |

***Results of Hypotheses Verification***

The results from hypotheses verification are as follows:

**Hypothesis I: Seeking motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty.**

1) Hypotheses 1 and 4 stated, “Cultural and historical interest as a seeking motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. The relationship between cultural and historical interest and attitudinal loyalty had a standardized coefficient equal to .179 and a p-value of 0.032. Therefore, these values support both hypotheses.

2) Hypotheses 2 and 5 stated, “Festival excitement and uniqueness as a seeking motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. The relationship between festival excitement and uniqueness and attitudinal loyalty had a standardized coefficient of .177 and a p-value of 0.044. Thus, these values support both hypotheses.

3) Hypotheses 3 and 6 stated, “Socialization as a seeking motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. However, the socialization factor had to be eliminated to achieve better model fit indices. Therefore, either the items in the questionnaire were not appropriate for the present study or the data were not conclusive. These hypotheses were neither supported nor rejected.

All hypotheses were supported based on the relationships between two seeking motivation constructs and attitudinal loyalty. Thus, Hypothesis I (“Seeking motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty”) was also fully supported.

**Hypothesis II: Escape motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty.**

1) Hypotheses 7 and 10 stated, “Escape from daily routine as an escape motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. The standardized coefficient of this relationship was -.259 and the p-value was 0.004. Both hypotheses were supported, and “escape from daily routine’ was revealed to affect revisit and recommendation intentions negatively.

2) Hypotheses 8 and 11 stated, “Festival novelty as an escape motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. This relationship had a standardized coefficient equal to .463 and a p-value of 0.004. Thus, both hypotheses were supported.

3) Hypotheses 9 and 12 stated, “Escape from problems and difficulties as an escape motivation significantly affects revisit intention and recommendation intention,” respectively. This relationship had a standardized coefficient equal to .263 and a p-value of 0.001. These values supported both hypotheses.

The result from the analysis of escape motivation constructs supported all stated hypotheses. Consequently, Hypothesis II (“Escape motivational factors significantly influence festival attitudinal loyalty”) was also fully supported.

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