

Experiencing the destination brand: behavioral intentions of arts festival tourists

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the brand experiences and travel patterns of arts festival tourists with a focus on gender-based differences. The researchers administrated a questionnaire based survey at the Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival in Taiwan and analyzed the findings using two forms of factor analysis - EFA & CFA. The results indicate that respondents' future behavioral intentions are best explained by two factors: (1) emotional experience and (2) behavioral experience. In seeking to strengthen destination competitiveness and prompt positive post-purchase behaviors, it is suggested that festival managers should focus on enhancing the brand experiences of visitors. The study findings can inform the cultural tourism sector about consumer preferences and developing appropriate marketing strategies, thereby providing visitors with opportunities to experience the brand attributes that characterize arts and culture festivals within the wider destination context.

KEYWORDS:

Brand experience; gender differences; arts festival visitors. Exploratory Factor Analysis; Confirmatory Factor Analysis

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2016), the tourism industry contributed 9.8% of global GDP in 2016. Tourism contributes substantially to employment and to wellbeing across the globe. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP may amount to as much as three times its direct contribution. The tourism outlook for the coming decade is positive with an expected annual growth rate of 4%. Tourism demand is impacted by economic circumstances and lifestyle changes, with a greater emphasis on the visitor experience. Tourism has increased particularly rapidly with Asia and has provided the emerging middle classes with opportunities to enhance social relationships through relaxation and recreation. Within the broader context of leisure travel, Jafari (1992) and Calinao & Lin (2016) have reported that culture and arts related activities occupy a growing market share. This trend provides destinations generally and cities in particular with an opportunity to attract tourists by capitalizing on their cultural distinction.

Many cities and larger towns in Taiwan have developed festivals that manage to convey a sense of locality, notably by incorporating culinary and related components. Such festivals make potential contributions to destination brand building, consistent with the symbiotic relationship between festivals and destinations. The focus of the current study is Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival (KSAF), a notable initiative which projects a cosmopolitan and innovative image for Taiwan's second city. Featuring performing artists from Taiwan and overseas, the festival producers set out to create memorable and touching experiences and a unique atmosphere (Department of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Government, 2016). In its five years of operation, KSAF has become the most noteworthy festival for delivering the Kaohsiung brand. Similar approaches have been adopted across Taiwan, thereby expanding overall destination appeal, enhancing the island's tourism market positioning, delivering economic benefits, creating jobs and extending the tourist season.

KSAF is a successful regional arts and cultural festival in the Asian context. Held annually between February and July, it attracts in excess of 30 domestic and international performing arts events in locations across the city involving diverse forms and styles. The performances draw from diverse sources ranging from contemporary Hong Kong (*Last Supper*), *The Ugly Duckling* from the USA, "*To Sleep To Dream*" and "*The Little Match Girl*" (UK) and *La Rue des Reves perdus!* (France). Such variety is indicative of the capacity of the performing arts to extend beyond the interests of individual countries and territories and to overcome language barriers through multilingual delivery. The Festival's mix of local and cosmopolitan elements makes it particularly worthy of examination. Festivals offer the potential to enhance destination viability and Connell & Meyer (2015) observed that they offer relatively more opportunities than other tourist attractions to stimulate off-peak demand. Festivals enhance urban amenity for both residents and visitors through their role in destination marketing and by incorporating new design technologies which enhance the visitor experience (Kotler, 2002). In the wider context of destination brand development, DeChernatony & McWilliam (1989) have advocated a focus on quality and value to provide prospective visitors with assurance. The connection with the visitor experience is critical. The brands which are most distinguishable from alternatives are those that offer a connection with the self-image of participants. In this context, branding can support product differentiation and hence strengthen destination

competitiveness (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Gardner & Levy, 1955; Keller, 1993). The preceding section suggests that festivals are directly associated with destination brands and that visitor experiences are central to this connection.

Zarantonello & Schmitt (2010) have shown that brand experiences evoke inner responses and behavioral responses amongst visitors through the course of the travel consumption process. Payne, Storbacka, Frow, & Knox (2009) also noted that providing functional benefits minimizes consumer dissatisfaction and that brand building should consequently focus on delivering experiences. The delivery of outstanding brand experiences allows providers to differentiate their offerings from those of competitors (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Foguet, 2011). Positive brand experiences lead progressively to consumer brand loyalty, and to profit enhancing brand recommendations (Chiou & Shen, 2006). In emphasizing the importance of word of mouth communications, Barnes, Mattsson & Sorensen (2014) have argued that brand experiences are critical determinants of the prospects of re-visitation. Their assertions about the importance of brand experiences in tourism draw support from both scholars and practitioners.

Various scholars have identified the role of gender in influencing patterns of tourist information gathering and decision making (Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). Research by Ford (1991) and by Gibson (1996) concluded that men and women have different leisure motivations and preferred holiday experiences. This suggests that gender-based perspectives offer further prospects for an enhanced understanding of tourist attitudes and behaviors. As a defining and life-long element of human identity, gender impacts on traveler characteristics such as values, cultures, beliefs and behaviors. Meng & Uysal (2008), for example, revealed that tourists' choice of destination differ between genders. The central role of women in travel decision-making has been widely noted. Women are more involved in everyday spending decisions than their male counterparts, and may account for 80% of purchase decisions including travel (Jucan & Jucan, 2013). In Carr's (1999) survey of women travelers 58% of the respondents participated in trips with a historic and/or cultural dimension. Despite such diverse insights, tourism researchers have given minimal attention to the impact of gender on brand experiences. Such potential are worthy of investigation in light of the growing number of tourists who travel in single gender groupings (Leontidou, 1994). In the present study the authors have approached gender as a demographic variable for market segmentation purposes based on the sex of the respondent and have not undertaken a wider exploration of gender as a sociological construct within the social sciences context. The contribution of the present research may be considered as more aligned to the business and marketing of tourism.

The present investigation addresses the knowledge gap about the relationship between gender, tourism brands and the arts by exploring how men and women react to brand experiences with particular reference to arts and culture festivals. The findings offer potential marketing and management insights by examining various dimensions of the brand experience in the destination context. In addressing these issues, the study aims to: (1) analyze the key elements of the tourist brand experience in the case of Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival (KSAF) and (2) examine

the influence of gender on tourist brand experiences and behavioral intentions. Understanding brand related experiences in the context of Asia's growing arts and festivals market can potentially contribute to more effective and integrated destination management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arts and culture festivals

Getz (1991) characterized festivals as a one-off or non-recurring special activity, formed by a combination of organizational planning and financial sponsorship in addition to more general and routine activities. Shone & Parry (2004) argued that festive activities are non-routine and are different from the characteristics of daily life, including recreational, cultural, personal and organizational objectives. Tourism related festivity has been growing in Taiwan. According to the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (2016) statistics, the introduction of a five-day working week tourism policy stimulated a new industry trend of weekend breaks. This initiative stimulated the prospect of additional festival patronage. Adding to the evidence of an active relationship between festivals and destinations, Grappi & Montanari (2011) identified the former as an effective marketing tool or medium to generate economic, social and cultural benefits for host areas. The multifaceted nature of the phenomenon makes it worthwhile to investigate the interconnections between festivals, destinations and brands. Salzburg Festival in Austria and Avignon Art Festival in France are internationally renowned events that research has shown to produce community benefits, develop local identities, attract publicity, maintain traditional cultures, and generate tourism revenues (Huang, Lin, Li & Guo, 2015). The broad category of arts and cultural tourism extends to museums, galleries, arts festivals, buildings, historic sites, literature and art performances, and folk culture (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). Based on the strong relationship that has been established between cultural events and local identities, festival visitors have an opportunity to acquire local insights. Edinburgh in Scotland exemplifies the preceding phenomena. As a well-established destination where 15 or more national and international festivals are held annually, Edinburgh has acquired the designation "City of Festivals". The Edinburgh International Festival is particularly noteworthy. Previous researchers have shown that the festival supports enhanced quality of life for Edinburgh residents and contributes to culture, society, and the economy.

A growing number of cities in Taiwan have been involved in the staging of festivals, a symptom of the growth of arts related leisure across Asia. The developments are consistent with the international phenomenon of nations and cities building their reputations and favorable image by staging a spectrum festivals that range from sport, culture, arts, religion and cuisine to business (Aitken & Campelo, 2011 ; Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012 ; Dickinson & Shipway, 2007; Donaldson & Ferreira, 2009). The current study of Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival (KSAF), has a focus on tourist participation. As the largest such festival in Southern Taiwan, KSAF was developed, hosted, and marketed to stimulate the provision of amenities in Kaohsiung City. KSAF has established itself as a credible international arts festival that supplements local patronage with increased international visitation. Since its establishment in 2010, KSAF has hosted many well-known performing arts groups, with programming extending to art, music, theater, dance and traditional opera (Department of Cultural Affairs Kaohsiung City Government,

2016). Its goal is to enhance Kaohsiung as a cultural centre and to establish the city as a cultural and creative hub (Jiang, 2016).

The festival brand experience

In exploring how brand experiences influence travel decisions researchers have concluded that tourists' brand experiences are significant determinants of satisfaction, decision making and future behaviors (Chiou & Shen, 2006; Morrison & Crane, 2007). Pine & Gilmore (1998) characterized consumer experiences as entering a new phase of economic offerings and service provision. In contributing to the emerging economy, enterprises create experiences by surrounding consumers with "service as a stage" and with products as props which produce memorable activities. The tourism industry has progressively embraced the concept of deploying arts and cultural festivals to create experiences that will be valued by customers. By offering stimulating activities, tourism providers seek to evoke future behavioral intentions amongst tourists by prompting their inner psychologies in a sensitive, emotional and cognitive manner (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Chattopadhyay & Laborie (2005) indicated that the brand experience combines successive phases that connect the consumer with the product or service brand. Brakus et al. (2009) defined a brand experience as the stimulation that the brand evokes and conceived the brand concept as comprising several components - design, cognitive elements, packaging, communication and environment. The brand is subjective and evokes consumers' inner and behavioral responses (Şahin, Zehir, & Kitapci, 2011). It has been shown that when brands produce loyal customers, they generate positive word of mouth recommendations, thereby influencing behaviours (Chiou & Shen, 2006 ; Morrison & Crane, 2007).

Brand experiences describe the conversion of strategically developed brands with a customer orientation (Chattopadhyay & Laborie, 2005 ; Brakus et al., 2009 ; Sahin et al., 2011 ; Barnes et al., 2014). Brakus et al. (2009) characterized the brand experience as involving four dimensions - sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioral. It encompasses design, packaging and communication dimensions, and environmental and stimuli that are induced by tourists' behavioral and subjective internal responses (sensory, emotional, cognitive). The brand experience concept provides a vehicle to understand the meaning of brand trust and loyalty and this can be presented as a scale (Brakus et al, 2009). Studies by Zarantonello & Schmitt (2000) and by Ha & Perks (2005) concluded that brand experiences impact positively on consumer satisfaction, loyalty and trust.

The brand experience offers a mechanism for differentiation, including dimensions of uniqueness, brand attribution and brand participation (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2000). Various authors have shown how brand experiences are perceived and have characterized the tourism brand experience as the values that tourists experience. In the case of an arts and cultural festival, subjective responses are evoked by a combination of design, packaging, communication and environment related elements (Brakus et al., 2009; Barnes, Mattsson & Srensen, 2014). This may in turn produce emotions or attachments towards the wider destination brand. It is widely accepted that an understanding of the delivery of brand experiences to tourists can allow marketers and researchers to develop more effective strategies involving longer lasting and more sustainable industry relationships.

METHODS

Research instrument and data collection

As a means of acquiring insights into how festival visitors experience the destination brand, the authors sought to capture the opinions of visitors to the Kaohsiung Spring Art Festival. A questionnaire based survey was administered to willing respondents at three venues which were able to capture a cross section of visitors to the overall event; the Dadong Culture and Arts Center, Tte Pier-2 Art Center and the Cultural Center of Kaohsiung. Of the initial 218 respondents, 17 were excluded as a result of missing ratings, leading to a final sample of 201 who completed both the initial and the follow up questionnaires. The researchers used both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to extract the brand experience dimensions and to understand the factors underlying the brand experience. The researchers drew upon previous research findings to construct a brand experience model that is applicable to arts and culture festivals. The proposed model aims to provide insights into the destination brand experience and how it creates value for tourists. A multi-item scale was used to explore the dimensions of the tourist experience. Twenty-four questions were formulated to determine the importance of each value attribute. Respondents were asked to specify the brand experience of each feature for various tourist value variables that were included in the questionnaire, using a five point Likert scale (from 1 = not important to 5 = very important). The scale drew upon the relevant brand experience literature, adapted to the needs of arts and cultural festivals. Schmitt (1999) suggested five brand experiences: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The sense experience includes aesthetics and sensory qualities and the feel experience includes moods and emotions. The brand experience has a behavioral impact; it affects consumer satisfaction and loyalty directly and indirectly through brand personality (Brakus et al., 2009). Brand experiences are evident in various circumstances such as product brands, service brands, corporate brands, and place brands (Skinner 2008). The positive brand experiences that occur result in repeated interactions with a place and positive word of mouth associations (Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou, 2011). Consistent with previous research, the chosen brand experience measurement items drew upon tourism related studies by Brakus et al., (2009) ; Sahin et al., (2011) ; and Barnes et al., (2014). The first section of the questionnaire concerned the tourism brand experience scale applicable to arts and cultural festivals and the second part consisted of demographic data.

As a broad guideline for future researchers, Comrey (1973) proposed 200 respondents as an acceptable sample size for a questionnaire based survey. In the present research a pre-test survey using convenience sampling was conducted (n=60) to confirm the validity and reliability of the instrument and to identify any inconsistencies or other associated problems. The pilot study validated the main survey. The ultimate sample size for purposes of statistical analysis was N=201. The final questionnaire was administered to KSAF attendees between February and July, 2016. The qualifying questions required the respondent to have participated in KSAF on at least one occasion. The researchers used both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to extract the brand experience dimensions and to understand the factors underlying the brand experience. ANOVA and t test analyses were subsequently employed to explore any gender based differences.

RESULTS

Respondent profiles

The respondent demographic profiles are presented in Table 1. Of the 201 respondents, 63.2% were female and 36.8% were male. Most respondents were in the 21-40 years age group (57.7%), followed by those <20 years old (30.3%). The smallest proportion were aged 61 or above. As for educational backgrounds, 68.2% of the respondents had completed a Bachelor degree. Regarding personal monthly income, the respondents in the category of less than 20,000 NTD comprised 52.2% of the sample, followed by the category of 20,001-30,000 NTD (25.9%). Most of the respondents (57.7%) were first-time visitors to KSAF. Respondents who reported attending events twice or more comprised 42.3% of the sample.

Table 1: Respondent demographic characteristics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Men	74	36.8
Women	127	63.2
Age (years)		
<20	51	30.3
21~40	116	57.7
41~60	21	10.4
61 and over	3	1.5
Education		
High school or less	53	26.4
Bachelor	137	68.2
Masters and above	11	5.5
Frequency of attendance		
once	116	57.7
2-3 times	51	25.4
More than 3 times	34	16.9
Income (NTD)		
Less than 20,000	105	52.2
20,001-30,000	52	25.9
30,001-40,000	23	11.4
More than 40,001	21	10.5
合計	201	100.00

Source: Author's data analysis 2016. N = 201

Factor analysis

The survey data were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation in order to classify the dimensions of key constructs of the conceptual model. The expectations of factor analysis were conducted using the Bartlett test of sphericity and the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). Items with factor loadings of 0.4 or higher were considered as appropriate variables to measure hypotheses (Tinsley & Kass, 1979; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Table 2 summarizes the results of the factor analysis of the statements and the reliability analysis of each factor. The KMO score of sampling adequacy was 0.924, while the Bartlett test of sphericity had a value of 1232.959, df of 66 (p value = 0.00). Both evaluations indicated that the factor analysis was a good fit for the purposes of the study. It was concluded that the data matrix was suited to conducting factor analysis. This method appears to offer an improved understanding of key subordinate dimensions toward brand experience that may provide a more precise description of the interdependency of the 24 items used to measure tourist brand experiences. Brakus et al. (2009) proposed that the brand experience combines various elements - sensory,

affective, intellectual and behavioral – and forms a basis for measuring the visitor destination experience. In the current investigation the researchers revised and adapted previous questionnaires by Brakus et al. (2009); Sahin et al. (2011) and Barnes et al. (2014).

Based on an assessment of the factor loading scores, the following labels are proposed: (1) Emotional Experience (eigenvalue =6.16, explained variance =51.332%) and (2) Behavioral Experience (eigenvalue =1.28, explained variance =10.670%). The two factors with eigenvalues which exceeded one were extracted and it was found that these explained 62.002% of the overall variance that was associated with tourist brand experiences. The findings were consistent with the research by Brakus et al. (2009) ; Sahin et al.(2011) and Barnes et al.(2014). Of the two factors, the results show that emotional experience generated the higher mean score, with a factor mean of 3.866. The behavioral experience recorded a marginally lower mean score (3.537).

Table 2: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of brand experience

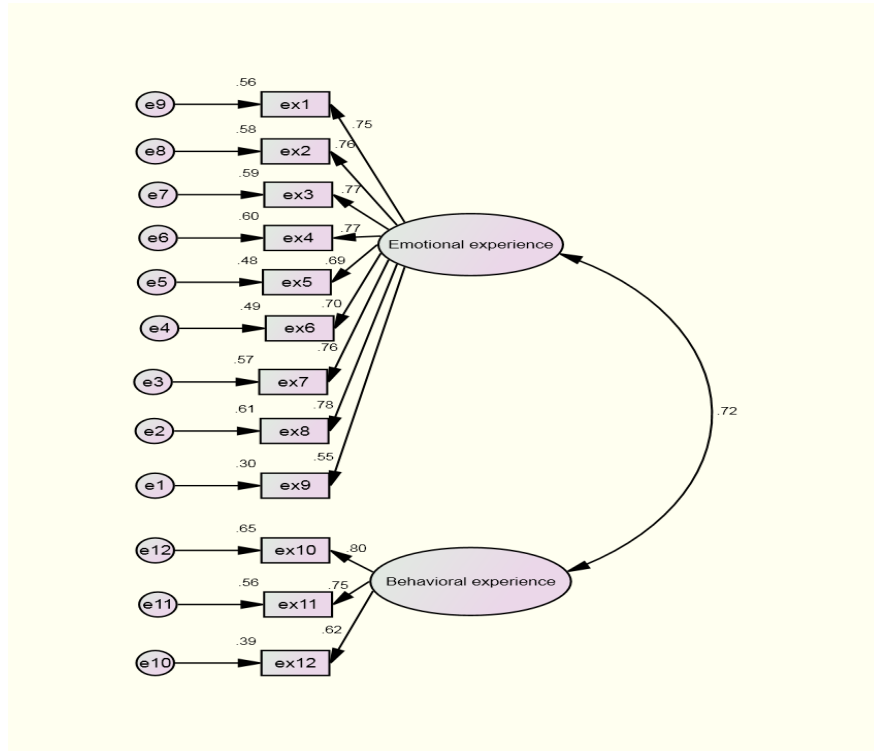
Dimensions of the brand experience		
	Emotional Experience	Behavioral Experience
KSAF gives me a spiritual experience	0.809	
I would like to participate in KSAF related performances	0.787	
I find KSAF interesting in a sensory way	0.779	
KSAF induces feelings and sentiments	0.775	
KSAF makes a strong impression on my senses	0.773	
The overall festival design makes me feel relaxed and comfortable	0.762	
KSAF is a touching brand	0.712	
KSAF represents local hospitality	0.711	
The experience of KSAF has increased my motivation to travel	0.655	
I will collect further information about KSAF		0.818
Experiencing the KSAF makes me want to travel to Kaohsiung		0.809
It needed time to search for information prior to participating in KSAF		0.720
Factor and overall mean	3.866	3.537
Eigen-value	6.16	1.28
% of variance explained (Total=62.002%)	51.332	10.670
Reliability Cronbach's α	0.730	0.739

Source: Author's data analysis 2016.

Cronbach's alpha was employed to assess the reliability of the measurement scale. The analysis revealed that the Cronbach's α values applicable to the two dimensions ranged between 0.730 to 0.739. A reliability analysis concluded that items in this scale are internally steady. Given that Nunnally (1978) and Nunnally & Bernstein (1994) determined the acceptability of α values exceeding 0.5, all the dimensions proposed in this study were considered to reach appropriate levels of reliability. The researchers then proceeded to undertake an EFA analysis to examine the salient elements of the tourist brand experience. The dimensions of the key constructs within the conceptual model are identified in Table 2. Items with factor loadings of 0.4 or higher were considered as acceptable variables to measure constructs (Tinsley & Kass, 1979). The factors with Eigenvalues that exceeded 1.0 were considered significant. Based on the factor loading scores, emotional experience and behavioral

experience were identified as the main factors leading tourists to participate in arts and cultural festivals.

Figure 1: Structure Equation results – the festival brand acceptance model



Source: Author's data analysis 2016.

Confirmatory factor analysis

The reliability and factor analysis formed a basis for developing a hypothesized model that is presented as Figure 1. The model proposes two components of brand experience: (1) the emotional experience and (2) the behavioral experience. Each has a direct relationship with the overall brand experience. The model was tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The SEM method allows the simultaneous assessment of relationships between observed and latent variables and has gained acceptance in tourism and the social sciences because of its capacity to combine confirmatory factor analysis and regression analysis and thereby to identify relationships within a data set. Several recent tourism applications of SEM have included festivals, thereby confirming the utility and effectiveness of the method (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Sparks, 2007; Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

This is the first study to examine the factor structure of the tourist brand experience in the context of arts and cultural festivals in a Taiwan context. The assessment results of confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 18.0 are provided in Table 3. For data analysis purposes and based on Bagozzi & Yi's (1988) recommendation, the authors used confirmatory factor analysis with Amos 18.0 and the maximum likelihood (ML) method. The goodness of fit was evaluated using four criteria: chi-square goodness-of-fit; the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjust goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA). The goodness of fit of the proposed model of confirmatory factor analysis explains the proportion of variance and covariance (Kline, 1998).

The chi square (χ^2) value is reflective of the inconsistency between model-implied covariance and observed sample covariance. The value of χ^2 may be affected by the size of the sample. A large sample size can render this test insufficient (Hu & Bentler, 1995). Other statistics such as the normed fit index (NFI) and comparative fit index (CFI) are more practical and effective measures of model fit and are more highly regarded than the χ^2 test (Hu & Bentler, 1995). Researchers have suggested that the value of AGFI should be examined in order to assess the goodness of fit of a model. These various indices should exceed 0.90 to determine the adequacy of the model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Chi-square and fit indices were employed to examine the overall fit of the model and the results are shown in Table 3. The chi-square goodness of fit statistic for 112.229; degrees of freedom was 53, $p = 0.00$. The significance of the chi-square indicates that the model reflected the pattern of covariance confined within the raw data. The CFA analysis of the overall pattern and GFI value of 0.909, AGFI value of 0.867 which is close to the criteria of 0.9 as recommended by Arbuckle and Wothke (1999) and RMR value of 0.029 (< 0.1) designate good fit.

Additionally, fit indices NFI reaching 0.911 and CFI reaching 0.951 as well as χ^2/df reaching 2.118 as (1~5) is also indicative of a good fit. The RMR was 0.029, which is slightly below the 0.05 criterion that was recommended by Browne and Cudeck (1993). The RMSEA was 0.075, which is slightly less than the 0.08 criterion as recommended by Browne and Cudeck (1993). Convergent validity was evaluated with reference to average variance extracted (AVE). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE scores above 0.50 show an acceptable ratio of total variance. The AVE scores for each factor ranged from 0.55 to 0.80, which provides evidence of the scale's convergent validity. As is shown in Table 3, the CFA results established that the hypothesized model (Fig. 1) fits the data and that the overall fit indices are fairly applicable.

Table 3: the structural model fit of the data

	Criteria	indices
1. χ^2	0	112.229
2. χ^2/df	1~5	2.118
3. GFI	$\geq .90$	0.909
4. AGFI	$\geq .90$	0.867
5. NFI	0~1	0.911
6. RMR	$< .08$	0.029
7. RMSEA	$\leq .10$	0.075
8. p	> 0.05	0.00

Source: Author's data analysis 2016.

The average mean score of 3.81 indicates that the respondents had a moderately satisfactory impression of the festival brand experience. Specific responses to each of the attributes are presented in Table 4. These demonstrate that respondents perceived the KSAF experience as interesting, relaxed and comfortable and as being representative of local hospitality. Overall perceptions were positive. It was found that some of the feelings and sentiments of KSAF attendees towards design and display aspects were quite profound. The highest scoring attributes were local hospitality (mean=4.01) and interesting (mean=4.00) and the overall design makes me feel relaxed and comfortable (mean=3.98).

Table 4: Respondent perceptions of the brand experience

Ranking	Brand Experiences Attributes	Mean	SD
1	KSAF represents local hospitality	4.01	.731
2	I find KSAF interesting in a sensory way	4.00	.714
3	The overall design makes me relaxed and comfortable	3.98	.693
4	Experiencing the KSAF makes me want to travel to Kaohsiung	3.90	.721
5	I would like to participate in KSAF related performances activities	3.90	.777
6	KSAF makes a strong impression on my senses	3.87	.716
7	KSAF induces feelings and sentiments	3.85	.805
8	KSAF offers me a spiritual experience	3.81	.809
9	The KSAF brand is touching	3.80	.788
10	KSAF will increase my motivation to travel	3.65	.824
11	Searching for information prior to visiting KSAF was time-consuming	3.51	.843
12	I will gather further information about KSAF	3.49	.855
Average mean score		3.81	-

Source: Author's data analysis 2016.

To test whether there were any significant gender-related differences in the brand experience of respondents as the independent variable between two groups, a t-test was undertaken with two-tailed significance to compare each factor mean. Table 5 shows that female respondents were more concerned about the emotional experience of the destination than their male counterparts ($t=-3.452$, $p<0.001$). According to the results, those planning future festivals should note that female tourists have relatively higher expectations of the Festival than their male counterparts.

Table 5: Tourist brand experiences: statistical differences

	Determinant attributes of the brand experience	Total Sample Mean	Male & Female	Mean	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Emotional Experience	3.866	Male	3.7252	-3.452	0.001***
			Female	4.0061		
2	Behavioral Experience	3.537	Male	3.4910	-.899	0.370
			Female	3.5827		

Source: Author's data analysis 2016. Remarks: *p < 0.05.

Table 6 shows that there were significant differences between respondents by age, education level, and occupation within the underlying factors in the one-way ANOVA test. Various age groups are significantly different on factor 1 (p =0.001). Respondents in the 41-46 age group were more concerned about destination emotional experiences than those aged 21-40 and under 20. Respondents aged 21-40 and under 20 paid more attention to destination emotional experiences than those above 60.

Table 6: Independent t-tests and one-way ANOVAs on mean differences of the 2 factors by demographics

Demographic profiles	Factor 1 Emotional Experience	Factor 2 Behavioral Experience
Gender	t =-3.452	t =-0.899 No significant Difference
Age group	F = 0.001 <20<21-40 (3.67 < 3.98)* 21-40 <41-46 (3.98 < 4.12)*	F = 0.044 No significant difference
Highest education	F=0.502 No significant difference	F=0.793 No significant difference
Occupation	F=0.011 No significant difference	F=0.072 No significant difference

Source: Author's data analysis 2016. Note: N = 201

Table 7: Travel patterns by gender (N =201)

Gender	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Carmer's V
Frequency of participation				0.000**
1	50.4	49.6	100	
2	13.3	86.7	100	
>3	13.8	86.2	100	
Festival travel party				0.001**
Myself	66.7	33.3	100	
Family	31.1	68.9	100	
Classmate	28.1	71.9	100	
Friends	29.4	70.6	100	
Colleague	80	20	100	
others	33.3	66.7	100	
Where you found KSAF information				0.448
Friends, colleagues, classmates	36.7	63.3	100	
Internet	42.2	57.8	100	
Newspaper	20	80	100	
Travel agency	0	100	100	
Government	42.9	57.1	100	
others	20	80	100	
Main transportation				0.331
Walk	42.9	57.1	100	
Bicycle	80	20	100	
Riding a motorcycle	37.7	62.3	100	
Driving a car	32.6	67.4	100	
Public transportation	34.8	65.2	100	

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 7 demonstrates that female respondents (86.2%) participate more frequently in KSAF than males (13.8%). This study revealed that males (66.7%) often participate solo in the festival, whereas females (33.3%) are less likely to participate alone. Nearly 70% of female respondents would like to join the festival with friends, family or classmates. Driving a car was the main form of transport for females (67.4% vs males 32.6%). This was followed by public transportation (females 65.2% vs males 34.8%). However, males are more likely than females

to ride a bicycle (80% vs 20%) .

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has explored key aspects of the tourist brand experience drawing using the example of the Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival. The main factors associated with the brand experience and which influence tourists' behavioral intentions were identified as: (1) emotional experience and (2) behavioral experience. It has been found that enhancing visitors' emotional and behavioral experiences strengthens the likelihood of positive destination evaluations and increase the willingness to revisit and recommend, leading progressively to destination loyalty. This is an extension of Morrison & Crane (2007) who concluded that the brand experience can enhance consumer loyalty, strengthen brand advocacy and promote positive word-of-mouth communications. In particular, the present study has examined the relationships between gender and tourist brand experience. The researchers have explained the sensory, emotional, cognitive and behavioral connotations aspects of the brand experience (Brakus et al., 2009 ; Sahin et al., 2011 ; Barnes et al., 2014). They have confirmed previous research that managers and researchers can benefit from understanding brand experiences as a key to creating loyalty and developing useful brand strategies (Brakus et al., 2009; Ismail et al, 2011; Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet, 2011).

This study has applied two approaches - EFA and CFA – to confirm factor validity and the determined factor structure. The authors have identified that the emotional and behavioral components of the brand experience were significant for participants in an arts and cultural festival. Of the two components the emotional experience was relatively more important. It was found that the study respondents prioritized the design and presentation of the activities and that their satisfaction, intentions to revisit and willingness to recommend could be further enhanced by a more creative approach to such concerns on the part of the festival organizers. The researchers concluded that intentions to re-visit were strengthened as a result of both emotional and behavioral experiences. The effectiveness of the relevant festival marketing should be enhanced by providing more customized information about the available activities in the festival destination area. Some important gender related differences were identified. The study has found that males and females have different expectations, with greater susceptibility to emotional experiences on the part of female respondents. Previous research on travel patterns has shown that females are more frequent festival participants than males. The current study has extended the social context of gender based perceptions by concluding that nearly 70% of female respondents wishing to join the festival with friends family or classmates, whereas males have a stronger preference for going alone. From a theoretical perspective, the results align broadly with Chang's (2006) finding that females are more interested in festival and cultural experiences, thereby confirming the importance of gender related trends to tourism destinations.

The researchers have identified gender related differences which shape brand experiences in the case of arts and cultural festivals thus providing a basis for developing targeted marketing that can enhance visitor experiences and satisfaction. The findings can inform festival organizers and destination managers about developing targeted marketing campaigns that offer visitors the true brand experience of arts and culture festivals. The study findings

have confirmed the value of the tourist brand experience that was evident in the literature including Woodruff's (1997) finding that consumer experiences affect their perceptions of value and satisfaction. The research makes a potentially significant contribution to understanding arts festivals and how these are experienced by visitors in the wider destination context. The effectiveness of festival marketing can be enhanced by providing more customized information about the available activities in the festival destination area supporting city development by diversifying visitor target markets and reducing seasonality. It has been shown that provision of a comfortable environment, convenient facilities and friendly service by the tourism industry can facilitate the creation of sought-after brand experiences. This will deliver memorable visitor experiences which can form a basis for tourism planning. Accordingly, it is suggested that there should be increased provision of personalized facilities and use of more diverse communication channels with a view to enhancing education, interactivity, and services and thereby enhancing the quality of the festival experience. As a contribution of the paper to theory and practice it has been shown that visitor emotional experiences generate feelings of local hospitality. The study has made it evident that hosting festival events such as KSAF can raise awareness about the retention of cultural traditions through the assembly of diverse cultural elements and their presentation to visitors and local residents. On this basis, manifestations of the relationship between cultural events and local identities provide festival visitors with more emotionally resonant local experiences. The case shows how festival events in Asian regional settings can enhance quality of life and contribute to localities through economic, social and cultural impacts.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Some research limitations should be noted. Firstly the results may have limited capacity for generalization to festivals in other locations since time and budget limitations may have affected the representativeness of the KSAF visitor respondents. Though KSAF is a valuable exemplar of some wider Asian festival trends, it is only a starting point. The choice of gender as an issue of concern is also worthy of note. The predominance of female respondents in the study. Since females may be more receptive to being intercepted for interview than their male counterparts, the adoption of this approach may have introduced an element of bias to the sample. In the methods section of the paper it was also noted that the authors have adopted a particular approach to gender for segmentation purposes, thereby giving minimal consideration to gender as a social construct. It is suggested that future researchers can undertake experimental studies using qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews with visitors and opinion leaders to extend and deepen the range of perspectives, including the gendered nature of the festival experience. Finally, if festival destinations proceed to take greater account of gender and other differences through the adoption of more flexible approaches to meeting diverse tourist expectations, it would be timely to conduct an ongoing programme of research on the effectiveness of such implementation.

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