

**KEYWORDS**

*Motivation; Perceived Impacts of Festival; Eskisehir.*

# **AN EXAMINATION OF FESTIVAL MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED BENEFITS: ESKISEHIR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Festivals and events are essential part of the cultural production and consumption of tourism activities in cities and urban settings. Such events are usually considered as part of the cultural portfolio of destinations. Festivals and events also present the cultural wealth of the places where these events and ceremonies are organized and shared with local and outside visitors. The study has two objectives. The first objective is to understand the underlying dimensions of motivation for attending the city festival. The second objective is to ascertain the degree to which festival attendees perceive the importance of festival in terms of its perceived socio-economic benefits. The paper ends with both practical implications for the festival organizers and city officials and some theoretical contribution to the growing research of event attendee behavior.*

## INTRODUCTION

Festivals and events are essential part of the cultural production and consumption of tourism activities in cities and urban settings. Such events are usually considered as part of the cultural portfolio of destinations. Festivals and events also present the cultural wealth of the places where these events and ceremonies are organized and shared with local and outside visitors. Festivals and events, which attract tourists, can be particularly beneficial both economically and culturally. Another important contribution of these festivals, which eventually become traditions after long years of contribution to social life, is that they create an appropriate atmosphere for people to come together and have fun; thus, improve the quality of life of residents.

Destinations as host cities constantly strive to reposition and reinvent themselves by making use of their existing tangible and intangible cultural assets. Small towns and cities across Turkey are increasingly being encouraged to develop and organize festivals and events to improve their images, stimulate urban development, foster economic, cultural and social life, and attract visitors and investment. In order to keep the rich Anatolian culture in Turkey alive and thriving, in every province, district and even in some villages there are various traditional festivals and gatherings. Today, annually more than 1350 festivals and events are held in Turkey. Some festivals aim to present a product that may have a strong economic element, while others may aim to focus on culture and heritage alone. Most of these festivals are organized by municipalities and governorships of the provinces (www.kultur.gov.tr, 2009).

Over the past decades, festivals and events substantially increased in number, size, and frequency of staging in both rural and urban areas (Park, Reisingen and Kang, 2008). Festival organizers are likely to contend that their primary goal is to provide high quality, satisfying experiences that visitors perceive to be good value in order to increase the probability that the visitors will return in the future and/or recommend the festival to others in their social circle (Lee, Petrick and Crompton, 2007). Since competition among festivals and destinations is increasing, the need for information on festivals, specifically analysis of motivations for attending festivals and events (Getz, 1993), has become crucial. In this vein, this study is an example of a city festival that takes place on a regular basis in

Eskişehir, Turkey. The study has two objectives. The first objective is to understand the underlying dimensions of motivation for attending the festival. The second objective is to ascertain the degree to which festival attendees perceive the importance of festival in terms of its perceived socio-economic benefits.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is the starting point that initiates the decision process in individuals. Middleton (1994:51) defined motivation as “the internal, psychological influences affecting individuals’ choices.” Motivation is composed of psychological/biological needs and wants that arouse, direct, and integrate a person’s behavior and activity (Dann, 1981; Iso-Ahola, 1980). Therefore, understanding consumers’ motives is a key prerequisite to designing and tailoring offerings to particular markets (Park et al., 2008).

A considerable number of studies have focused on visitors’ psychological constructs (Kim, Borges and Chon, 2006). Festival motivation studies commonly identified four to six dimensions of motivation derived from 19-34 motivational items (Uysal, Backman, Backman and Potts 1991). These dimensions appeared to be similar (Park et al., 2008). In one of the earliest studies on the festival attendees’ motivation, Uysal and associates (1993) identified five motivation domains: ‘escape’, ‘excitement/thrills’, ‘event novelty’, ‘socialization’, and ‘family togetherness’. Scott (1996) compared visitors’ motivation with respect to three festivals (Bug Fest, The Holiday Lights Festival and The Maple Sugaring Festival). Twenty-five motivational items were factor analyzed to six dimensions: ‘nature appreciation’, ‘event excitement’, ‘sociability’, ‘family togetherness’, ‘curiosity’ and ‘escape from routine’. Formica and Uysal (1998) also explored festival motivations for attending the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Twenty-three motivation items were factor analyzed and six factor groupings emerged: ‘socialization/entertainment’, ‘event attraction/excitement’, ‘group togetherness’, ‘cultural/historical’, ‘family togetherness’ and ‘site novelty’. Significant differences existed between ‘enthusiasts’ and ‘moderates’ with respect to age, income and marital status.

Crompton and McKay (1997) employed the escape-seeking dichotomy and the push-pull factors conceptual frameworks in order to

identify festival motivations for attending a Fiesta in San Antonio, TX. Twenty-eight motivation items were factor analyzed and six dimensions of motivation emerged: 'cultural exploration', 'novelty/regression', 'recover equilibrium', 'known-group socialization', 'external interaction/socialization' and 'gregariousness'. Findings imply that different types of events tended to satisfy the same need, albeit to different degree. Lee (2000) made a comparison of event motivation between Caucasian (Americans and Europeans) and Asian (Koreans and Japanese) visitors in the Kyongju World Cultural Expo, and found significant differences between Caucasians and Asians. In this study, seven dimensions were found as: 'cultural exploration', 'family togetherness', 'escape', 'novelty', 'external group socialization', 'event attractions' and 'known-group socialization'.

Research has also showed that the type of the festival may alter the motivations of attendees. For example, Yuan, Cai, Morrison and Linton (2005) analyzed wine festival attendees' motivations in Vintage Indiana Wine and Food Festival. Their findings have showed that attendees were motivated by a variety of factors which were associated with the focus on the different elements incorporated in the theme of the festival. The factor analysis yielded four dimensions: 'festival and escape', 'wine', 'socialization', and 'family togetherness'. Similarly, Park et al. (2008) studied attendee motivations for the South Beach Wine and Food Festival. Forty-four motivational items were factor analyzed and seven dimensions of motivation emerged: 'taste', 'enjoyment', 'social status', 'change', 'meeting people', 'family' and 'meeting experts'. Nicholson and Pearce (2001) investigated attendee motivations to four different events in New Zealand: an air show, award ceremony, wild food festival, and a wine, food and music festival. In all cases, the dominant reason for attending was related directly to the theme of the event and to the specific activities or attractions on offer. Social reasons constitute a second set of reasons given, although variations occur from event to event. A novelty or curiosity element also comes through across the four events, although the nature of this again varied from event to event.

Literature on festivals and events has repeatedly noted that they have several advantages for the host destination and the community. First, they generate revenue for the city and civic projects. Second,

festivals and events often leave the city with other tangible and intangible by-products (Smith, 2005). These include infrastructure improvements such as new facilities and venues. Festivals and events also help to build an image into the minds of tourists who have never visited the place through media coverage. Further they help to create a sense of community pride and involvement. Furthermore, the staging of a festival or event can impact the social life and structure of a community by either enhancing or detracting from the social environment of the region (Arcodia and Whitford, 2006).

On the other hand, the very nature of an event may create negative social, cultural and environmental impacts, through crowding, crime, traffic congestion, community displacement and commodification of culture (Presbury and Edwards, 2005). Such impacts may result in visitor and community dissatisfaction. Hence, it is important for local governments, policymakers, and organizers to appreciate the level of community support toward the proposed event, and to understand the basis of both support and opposition (Gursoy and Kendall, 2006). Carlsen, Ali-Knight and Robertson (2007) stressed the festivals' negative cultural impacts by the import of foreign culture through the programming of foreign plays, shows, movies and concerts. They concluded that unless the festival is primarily targeted at foreign visitors, local culture and arts should feature just as prominently as foreign. Small (2007) investigated social impact perceptions of local resident population in two Australian community-based festivals in Western Australia and Victoria using a scale comprised of 45 impact statements which was subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis identified six factors. Three of these factors were related to positive perceptions: 'community identity and cohesion' was related to a sense of identity and connectedness; 'entertainment and socialization opportunities' identified the opportunities that residents gained; and 'community growth and development' summarizes skill development and other opportunities provided to community. The negative impacts were: 'inconvenience' represented the issues related to the hosting of a festival that inconvenience members of the community such as traffic congestion, having roads closed, and having the streets and facilities crowded; 'personal frustration' meant frustration felt by residents resulting from having more visitors; and finally 'behavioural consequences' recognised the behavioural consequences that residents perceived to result from the hosting of the festival, and the

variables were underage drinking, delinquent behaviour and vandalism. Jurowski, Uysal and Williams (1997) investigated the community's attitude toward tourism, and found that residents perceived economic impacts significantly positive but the environmental impacts as a negative social cost. However, festival management strategies that include consultation and participation of host communities appears to assist in avoiding many of the negative socio-cultural impacts associated with festivals (Arcoida and Whitford, 2006).

## METHODS

### Site and the festival

Eskişehir is located in the central Anatolia and over the years, the city has become a livable and lively college town with amenities and cultural activities. Eskişehir holds one of the largest international arts festivals in the country. The event, first organized in 1995 by Zeytinoglu Foundation, attracts a significant number of people to its approximately 30 events over a period of nine days in mid-autumn every year. The mission of the festival is to enliven and enrich cultural as well as business life in Eskişehir. The festival highlights regional, national, and international performers and presents a program of classical, jazz, blues, rock and world music, theatre, ballet and dance in seven major stages ([www.eskifest.org](http://www.eskifest.org), 2009). Ticket prices are kept "relatively low" so that the events and performances of the festival are accessible and affordable.

Each year, a specific country is spotlighted within the Festival's 'Guest Country Program' in order to enable both 'host' and 'guest' countries to use the festival in a targeted way appropriate to enhancing their relationship.

### Data Collection

The data collection instrument was developed in Turkish and had three sections. The first section had a motivation scale and the second section had a scale of perceived socioeconomic benefits of festivals and events. The current study adopted the motivation scale from Uysal, Gahan, Martin (1993) and benefits scale from Kim and Uysal (2003). The properties of the scales were widely tested and confirmed in the literature (Schneider and Backman 1996, Scott

1996, Formica and Uysal 1998, and Gursoy, Kim and Uysal, 2004). The last section of the questionnaire included such demographic variables as age, gender, education level, occupation and monthly income in USD (Turkish Lira converted to USD).

Data were collected by way of a self-administered questionnaire with the study sample comprising attendees to three events in Eskişehir International Festival, over a two-day period on November 14-15, 2008. These events are 'Cellistanbul Concert', Silent Movie 'Die Austernprinzessin' and Rock-Jazz Concert 'Yabankedileri'. Two trained research assistants were hired to administer the questionnaire. The questionnaires were randomly handed out at the entrances of the event venues to the potential respondents, and were immediately collected upon their completion before the event had started. Of the 354 local attendees who responded, 12 questionnaires were incomplete and thus eliminated from further data analysis. As a result, 342 usable questionnaires were retained in the analysis.

### Analysis

The analysis of the study consisted of two distinct steps. The first step was to conduct descriptive analysis of the data for normality and distributions of study variables. The second step was to delineate the existing underlying structure of both motivation and perceived benefits of the festival and factor analysis was employed for this purpose.

### Results

The descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of local visitors is presented in Table 1. In general, the demographic composition of the visitor profile reflects the nature of the town itself, being a major college town with two large universities, housing a significant number of educators, professionals, artists and the like. The gender distribution of festival visitors was quite uneven, with 38.3% male and 61.7% female. Eskişehir festival visitors are more likely to have college education (83.0%), relatively younger under 30 years of age (73.4%). Slightly over 53 % of visitors are students and the remaining 47% represents the categories of professionals (19.0%), educators (12.0%) and 'other' (15.8%). Slightly over 65 %

reported monthly income of less than 1000 USD. Almost 35% reported monthly income of over 1000 USD. A significant number of respondents (n=172) did not answer the income question (Table 1).

TABLE 1.

**Demographic Profile of Eskişehir Festival Visitors (N=342)**

| Variable                                       | n   | %    |
|--|-----|------|
| <b>Gender</b>                                  |     |      |
| Male   | 131 | 38.3 |
| Female   | 211 | 61.7 |
| <b>Age</b>                                     |     |      |
| Less than 23 years old                         | 157 | 45.9 |
| 23 – 30 years old                              | 94  | 27.5 |
| 31 years and older                             | 91  | 26.6 |
| <b>Education</b>                               |     |      |
| Less than college (including 2 years)          | 58  | 17.0 |
| College education                              | 207 | 60.5 |
| Post-graduate (Ms and doctoral degrees)        | 77  | 22.5 |
| <b>Occupation</b>                              |     |      |
| Student  | 182 | 53.2 |
| Educators (academician and teacher)            | 41  | 12.0 |
| Professionals (engineer, doctor, artists, etc) | 65  | 19.0 |
| Other (worker, retired, business owner)        | 54  | 15.8 |
| <b>Monthly Income (USD)</b>                    |     |      |
| 100 USD to 600 USD                             | 57  | 33.5 |
| 601 USD to 1000 USD                            | 54  | 31.8 |
| 1001 to and higher                             | 59  | 34.7 |
| Did not answer                                 | 172 | -    |

The exploratory factor analysis of 18 items of motivation resulted in four factors; socialization, escape and excitement, family togetherness, and event novelty and explained almost 58 % of the variance in motivation. None of the individual loading was less than 0.51 and the reliability coefficients of the delineated factors ranged from 0.678 for event novelty to 0.799 for socialization (Table 2).

TABLE 2.  
**Factor Analysis of Festival Motivation**

| Motivation item  | Factor Loading | Eigen Value | Variance Explained | Reliability Coefficient |
|--|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Socialization</b>                                       |                |             |                    |                         |
| To observe the other people attending the festival         | .763           | 5.780       | 32.112             | .799                    |
| For a chance to be with people who are enjoying themselves | .731           |             |                    |                         |
| To be with people of similar interest                      | .677           |             |                    |                         |
| To be with people who enjoy the same things I do           | .673           |             |                    |                         |
| Because I enjoy the festival crowds                        | .639           |             |                    |                         |
| To experience the festival myself                          | .524           |             |                    |                         |
| So I could be with my friends                              | .458           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Escape and Excitement</b>                               |                |             |                    |                         |
| For a change of pace from my everyday life                 | .802           | 2.112       | 11.735             | .748                    |
| To have a change from my daily routine                     | .770           |             |                    |                         |
| To experience new and different things                     | .563           |             |                    |                         |
| Because I was curious                                      | .529           |             |                    |                         |
| To get away from the demands of life                       | .524           |             |                    |                         |
| Because it is stimulating and exciting                     | .492           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Family Togetherness</b>                                 |                |             |                    |                         |
| Because I thought the entire family would enjoy it         | .753           | 1.419       | 7.885              | .843                    |
| So the family could do something together                  | .732           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Event Novelty</b>                                       |                |             |                    |                         |
| Because I enjoy special events                             | .801           | 1.120       | 6.222              | .678                    |
| Because I like the variety of things to see and do         | .772           |             |                    |                         |
| Because festivals are unique                               | .621           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Total variance explained</b>                            |                |             | 57.953             |                         |

The perceived socioeconomic importance of festival resulted in three factors - community cohesiveness and social benefits, economic (and intangible) benefits, and social costs explained 53% of the variance. One item, 'offer family – based recreational activities', which was removed from further analysis, had a loading value of less than 0.45. The reliability coefficients for the three factors were 0.797 for community cohesion and social benefits, 0.813 for economic (and intangible) benefits, and 0.755 for social costs (Table 3). Unlike previous studies (Kim and Uysal 2003; Gursoy, Kim and Uysal 2004), that used the impact scale, this study resulted in three factor groupings, not four but the items of community cohesion and social benefits loaded on the same factor, thus resulting in three factors. Nevertheless, these findings still show consistencies and similarities with previous findings as reported by Uysal, Gahan, and Martin (1993), Formica and Uysal (1996), Schneider and Backman (1996) and Gursoy, Kim and Uysal (2004), suggesting that the scales are relatively stable and robust.

TABLE 3.  
**Factor Analysis of Socioeconomic Impacts of Festival**

| Impact Item   | Factor Loading | Eigen Value | Variance Explained | Reliability Coefficient |
|---|----------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Community Cohesion and Social Benefits</b>                                       |                | 5.587       | 32.867             | .797                    |
| Help create cohesion in the community   | .798           |             |                    |                         |
| Help preserve the local culture   | .730           |             |                    |                         |
| Help foster the relationship between residents and visitors                         | .633           |             |                    |                         |
| Increase standard of living   | .632           |             |                    |                         |
| Increase employment opportunities   | .544           |             |                    |                         |
| Increase opportunities for shopping   | .541           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Economic (and intangible) Benefits</b>   |                | 2.253       | 13.253             | .813                    |
| Enhance community image to outsiders  | .769           |             |                    |                         |
| Provide more recreational opportunities   | .735           |             |                    |                         |
| Generate revenues for civic projects  | .601           |             |                    |                         |
| Encourage locals to develop new facilities  | .563           |             |                    |                         |
| Help developmental of cultural life in the city                                     | .545           |             |                    |                         |
| Build community pride   | .535           |             |                    |                         |
| Educational – make people aware   | .518           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Social Costs</b>   |                | 1.419       | 7.885              | .843                    |
| Put pressure on local services such as police and fire protection, utilities, roads | .852           |             |                    |                         |
| Increase traffic congestion   | .831           |             |                    |                         |
| Increase the crime rate   | .685           |             |                    |                         |
| <b>Total variance explained</b>   |                |             | 53.280             |                         |

Note: 1) Since the item of 'Offer family-based recreation activities' had a factor loading of less than .45, it was not included in the table. 2) The following items – 'Encourage locals to develop new facilities (.491)', 'Build community pride' (.479), and 'Educational – make people aware (.456)' were also loaded on the factor grouping of 'Community Cohesion and Social Benefits

## CONCLUSION

This study was the first attempt to understand the motivation for and the perceived socioeconomic benefits of Eskişehir International Festival. Knowing the motivation of visitors allows tourism agents to intercede more successfully at various points in the visitor's decision-making process, resulting in the attraction of more visitors, getting them to stay longer, increasing their enjoyment, changing anti-social behaviour, and much more (Dewar, Meyer and Li, 2001). The findings present both practical implications for the festival organizers and city officials and some theoretical contribution to the growing research of event attendee behavior.

It is important that city officials and organizers of the events are aware that community cohesion and benefits sought from the festival and its different events and different reasons for attending the events are all connected and related to each other. Knowing the extent of the relationship that exist between attending events and their perceived benefits and costs help city officials to develop appropriate policies and platforms to further build community cohesion and gain support from locals for future program and event development projects.

Sustained and regular studies are also needed to monitor behavioral and structural changes in the community as the city continues to hold and expand festivals and events. Cities and towns that hold festivals and events should also conduct research to understand the relationship that may exist between benefits attending a festival or event and socioeconomic importance of holding such events. Such information would be of great help in understanding the extent to which local support could be obtained and demand for festivals and events could be measured and monitored.

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