

Visitor Motivations and Barriers for Sustainable Music Festival Tourism: The Case of Street Mode & Reworks Festivals

Vasiliki Georgoula

Agricultural University of Athens, Athens, Greece

Despina Chrisidou

Marketing & Business Development Professional, Athens, Greece

Spyridoula Dimitra Souki

Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece

During the last decade, music festivals are increasingly used as an important motivator to attract visitors, giving rise to a more sustainable tourism growth in hand with cultural stimulation for the cities. This research paper aims to address the motives and barriers of music festival visitors travelling to attend two music events in the second largest Greek city of Thessaloniki in Northern Greece. The main objective of the research paper is to determine the visitors' motivation for choosing to attend each festival and thereafter the challenges they face during their visit in the city. This exploratory research study focuses on two distinct and popular music festivals namely Reworks Festival and Street Mode Festival. Both events share three main characteristics: (1) They host both international & Greek professional artists; (2) they are primarily privately funded; and (3) they have achieved a consecutive 10 years of successful presence in the city attracting thousands of visitors each year. The research methodology is based on the collection of qualitative data by conducting one to one interviews with festival visitors. Findings of the analysis of the two festivals direct at identifying the commonalities & differences in tourists' drives and obstacles in regards to their festival attendance and visit in the city of Thessaloniki. In both cases, it is inferred that both festivals have a lot of further untapped potential, as unique city branding tools, adding value to the destinations and extending the tourism season. Conclusions can contribute to building more concise and sustainable destination tourism strategies and, therefore, more successful and sustainable events, with long-term benefits, ranging from local to national levels.

Keywords: cultural tourism, music festivals, destination marketing, sustainability, Thessaloniki (Greece)

Introduction

Cultural industries and art festivals have been one of the most fascinating and fastest growing sectors of the leisure and business industry since the 1980s (Richards, 2018; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). The socio-political importance of a music festival is multi-layered as it has a number of impacts ranging from social to economical (Gibson & Connell, 2012).

Vasiliki Georgoula, Ph.D., Academic Fellow, School of Applied Economics and Social Sciences, Agricultural University of Athens, Athens, Greece.

Despina Chrisidou, MSc, Researcher, Marketing & Business Development Professional, Athens, Greece.

Spyridoula Dimitra Souki, Master in Tourism Business Administration, Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece.

That is why arts festivals are multiplying worldwide and have become a growing and vibrant sector of the tourism industry eliciting significant economic and socio-cultural impacts on the destination area and on host groups (Georgoula & Terkenli, 2018). These festivals' growing visibility and cultural prominence are increasingly leading national governments and local authorities to employ cultural festivals and special events as key elements within regional development strategies, since they provide opportunities for tourism promotion, increased revenues and investment in host regions (Haigh, 2020; Getz, 2007; Van de Wagen, 2005). These events help recreate the image of a place and contribute to the extension of the tourism season (Huang, Li, & Cai, 2010; Boo & Busser, 2006; Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993; Mehmetoglu & Ellingsen, 2005).

Furthermore, regional support for the operation of festivals and unique events is thought to make an important difference in peripheral regions and small communities. Festivals and special events are being encouraged by public sector bodies, as a positive form of local development, and, thus, the need for a deeper understanding of the contribution of events to regional development, place marketing, and place-identity has consequently emerged (O'Sullivan, Pickernell, & Senyard, 2009). Additionally, festival organizers are likely to contend that their primary goal is to provide high quality, satisfying experiences that increase the probability that visitors will return or that they will recommend the festival to others (Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2007). Therefore, since competition among festivals and destinations is increasing, the need for more in-depth knowledge on festivals and specifically the analysis of motivations for attending festivals and events has become imperative.

The research paper focuses on the cases of two successful and privately organized music festivals namely Reworks Festival and Street Mode Festival in the second largest city of Greece, Thessaloniki. Both events share three main characteristics: (1) They host international and Greek professional artists; (2) they are primarily privately funded; and (3) they have achieved at least a consecutive 10 years of successful presence, attracting thousands of visitors each year in the city. Particular focus was placed on addressing the following research objectives: (a) identify the visitors' profile characteristics, (b) determine the major factors that motivate visitors to attend the two festivals, (c) single out the barriers that hinder visiting and further engaging in the city during the tourists' stay, and finally (d) identify the extend of availability and dissemination of relevant and timely information about the festivals and the city as tourist destination.

The paper firstly provides an overview of the relevant background literature on music festivals and their visitors' profile characteristics and motivations. Next, the case studies of Reworks Festival and Street Mode Festival are presented. Thereafter, the article focuses on the qualitative primary research, conducted by one-to-one in-depth interviews with festival visitors so as to capture real life experiences and audit the actual festivals' audience voice. Finally, the paper closes with an analysis and concluding remarks, along with identification of areas for future research.

Literature Review

As the need for more information concerning cultural consumption is increasing, the analysis of the visitors' motivations requires additional consideration. In addition to frequently targeted topics, such as economic or social impact and festival management, there is a growing stream of empirical research focusing on the motivations of cultural consumers (Chen & Rahmam, 2018; Duran & Hamarat, 2014; Kruger & Saayman, 2009; Slater, 2006; Swanson, Davis, & Yushan, 2008). By understanding the underlying psychological factors that arouse and direct a person's decision to participate in cultural activities, event organizers will be able to increase the attendance of their performances (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001).

Travelling to attend festivals and cultural events has been gaining popularity in the last two decades, prompting researchers to examine further this form of tourism (Liu, Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2019). Additionally, understanding the motivation factors that lead to visitors' decisions to attend a festival is necessary, in order to build more effective marketing strategies, create relevant cultural touristic products, and reinforce the destination's position against competitive ones. Discussions of cultural tourism also developed a division between "general" and "specific" cultural tourists, with the former consuming culture as part of a general holiday experience, and the latter travelling purposefully to engage in some aspect of the culture of the destination (Richards, 2018).

According to Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, and Ranchhod (2009), motivation refers to the internal, psychological influences affecting individuals' choices and it is composed of both psychological and biological needs. A motive is an internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person's behaviour (Iso-Ahola, 1982). A motive is also often the main indicator of the action to be taken in order to satisfy a need (Kreitner, 1989). There are three well-known theories of tourism motivation aiming to explain tourist behavior. These are Maslow's needs hierarchy (1943), Dann (1977; 1981) and Crompton's (1979) pull and push factors, and Iso-Ahola's (1982) escape-seeking dichotomy. Pull factors are external forces that are aroused by the product or destination and induce people to visit a destination, stay in a hotel, or attend an event; push factors are internal forces that are psychological in nature and create the desire to travel (Scott, 1996). According to the Iso-Ahola model (1982), the two major motivation forces proposed as influencing tourist behaviour are escapism or the need to get away from the daily routine and novelty seeking or the desire to obtain psychological rewards, via experiencing new commodities, places, tastes, etc.

The realisation of a need that has to be satisfied can be seen as the action that motivates visitors to attend a festival (Du Cros & McKercher, 2014; Saayman, 2011). According to Sayman's extensive theoretical research on travel motives (2011), it is widely accepted that more in-depth knowledge in this field may aid event managers in responding to the following: (a) changing needs and trends in the festival market (Pulido-Fernandez & Sanchez-Rivero, 2010; Ferrell, Hartline, & Lucas, 2002), (b) more effective planning and promotion of festivals (Kim, Uysal, & Chen, 2001; Kruger, Saayman, & Ellis, 2010), (c) the identification of different markets (Kruger, 2009), (d) the prediction of visitor travel patterns (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2010; Cha, McKeary, & Uysal, 1995), (e) positioning the festival (Scott, 1996), (f) ways to increase visitor satisfaction and build loyalty (Dewar, Meyer, & Wen, 2001), (g) the adaptation of festival programs based on specific needs (Marais, 2010), and (h) the achievement of clarity and greater insight into visitors' decision-making processes (Crompton & McKay, 1997).

Therefore, once local and tourism authorities gain more insight into what motivates visitors to select a particular festival and a destination, they may implement more sustainable and successful strategies towards influencing visitors' decision-making process, resulting in the attraction of longer visitor stays and increased enjoyment of the event (Georgoula & Terkenli, 2018).

Methodology

The research methodology was formed based on the above-mentioned theories that understanding consumers' motives as well as barriers is the key prerequisite to designing and tailoring more concise and successful tourism and cultural strategies. In consequence, the main objective of the research design was to

determine the visitors' motivation for choosing to attend each festival and thereafter the challenges they face during their visit in the city. The qualitative type of methodology was chosen as it can address into a more in-depth perspective and it can explore in detail the respondent's own perceptions and accounts (Dwyer, Gill, & Seetaram, 2012). Therefore, the qualitative method was used to gain an in depth understanding of respondents' festival experiences, opinions, attitudes, and behavior in order to determine their motives and barriers during their visit to the city of Thessaloniki for attending the two festivals. For the purpose of the research, primary data were collected, by conducting 27 one to one interviews during January 2020 including attendees of both festivals.

The intent of our research was publicly advertised on social media related to the two festivals and festival attendees who read the posts volunteered to take part in 30-minute interviews. In total 14 Reworks Festival attendees and 13 Street Mode Festival attendees accepted to participate in our research offering us in depth interviews. All attendees had attended the festivals from 2013 onwards. The interview questions were designed based on the bibliographical review of theoretical and empirical research findings regarding music festivals' profile characteristic and attendance motives around Europe. Most importantly, the main focus was to convey and address coherently our four main research objectives in order to gain complete and rich feedback from the respondents. On that account, the five main categories of the interview questions focused on (a) respondents demographic characteristics, (b) factors that motivated or hindered respondents to attend the festivals and the city, (c) their city related information searches before and during the festival visit, and (d) festival related information sources before and during the festival visit. Subsequently, the researchers used the interview transcripts to aggregate findings and to look for common themes that lead to findings linked to the research goals.

Case Study: Reworks Festival and Street Mode Festival

Street Mode is an annual music, art, and sports festival held in Thessaloniki since 2009. The event is characterized as one of the biggest street culture festivals in Greece, attracting annually thousands of visitors. A number of popular Greek and international bands have performed representing the genre of hip-hop, punk rock, heavy rock, ska, and reggae music. The most internationally acclaimed acts include well known bands such as Ska-P, New Model Army, Turbonegro, Phil Campbell, Max Romeo, Pussy Riot, Looptroop Rockers, and Dubioza Kolektiv. The uniqueness of Street Mode festival lies in the element of interactivity as its audience is given the opportunity to showcase their skills in activities that are linked to street culture, such as graffiti, break dance, skateboarding, and parkour as more than 15 parallel street events also take place. The event is privately organized and is additionally sponsored by local and national companies.

Reworks Festival debuted in 2013 aiming to present a wide range of electronic music, experimental sounds, and contemporary electronic music, through the work of Greek and foreign artists. Reworks Festival is held for five days in different large or small venues across the city. The audience has the opportunity to attend music streams, concerts, workshops, lectures as well as free events turning Thessaloniki into a meeting place for music and culture lovers from all over Europe and the Balkans. Reworks Festival is a member of the "We are Europe" program which connects eight major European festivals, in order to promote, create, and produce innovative cultural practices characterized by creative diversity and exchange. The event is privately organized but it is also supported by sponsors, local and European Union funds.

Research Findings

Street Mode & Reworks Festivals Visitors Profile Characteristics

Young people constitute the core target group of both festivals with Street Mode attracting age groups ranging from 16 to 25 years old while Reworks attracts slightly older ages, estimated to be between 20-35+ years old. Similarly, in our research Street Mode respondents were between 18-25 years old while Reworks attendees were between the ages of 19-27 years old, when they attended the relevant festivals. The majority of the respondents permanently live-in neighboring cities of Northern Greece such as Kavala, Alexandroupoli, or Serres while some of them also live in Athens. Generally, the majority of the respondents are informed about the festivals through their friends and social circles and they all agree that particular music genre each festival represents is very important to them. A number of similarities in their profile characteristics were revealed implying further the interconnected drivers & motivations regarding the relationship of the destination and the event.

Therefore, three common types of visitor “types” were identified (Figure 1) and the following typology is suggested:

Table 1

Street Mode & Reworks Visitors Profiles Typology

The fun lovers (Core age range 18-27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aim to establish a unique and differentiated profile among peers by attending the “hot” bands & being exposed to new music types. • seek to “feel” more than “listen” to the music. • regard “the sharing” of common experiences with friends and new socialization opportunities during the event as a unique source of excitement. • appreciate the highly enjoying “hype” of the experience along with a group of friends.
The fun clubbers (Core age range 19-27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • belong to an audience which follows their favorite artists regardless the location of the concert. • belong to a loyal audience that doesn’t consider repetitive attendance as a barrier of attending the same artists again. • belong to a demanding audience in regards to the quality of the venue and infrastructure (e.g., quality of sound, health & safety considerations). • are willing to compromise in the budget they allocate for their stay in the festival destination, such as limiting food and drink consumption, for the sake of paying for their ticket pass to listen to their favorite bands or artist.
The music tourists (Core age range 27-35+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enjoy both the “fun” aspect of the event as well as the multilayered experience of the destination and they tend to become repeat and mature festival visitors. • gain excitement by exploring new destinations and different types of music events, seeking to livelike locals or discover new “hidden corners”. • belong to a niche group of audience looking for unconventional experiences, hence they aim to be exposed to innovative types of music and events.

Festival Attendance Motivation Factors

In regards to the attendance motivation drivers of Street Mode and Reworks Music Festivals, two main categories can be distinguished namely aspirational or rational drivers and six main factors are identified as fundamental during the visitors’ decision-making process. Concerning the aspirational drivers, respondents stated that firstly (a) the festivals’ content (i.e., the music genre, the performers’ lineup, international artists participation and parallel events) is the most important, followed by (b) the festive atmosphere (i.e., the strong “sense of community” enhanced by the feeling of empowerment through music and celebration) and finally (c) the sense of escapism (i.e., the feeling of sharing experiences with peers out of their home-base environment).

Indicatively, respondents' expressed views as follows: "The hottest European bands and music artists perform at this festival", "I love this festival because everyone gathers together for the same reason and we all have fun", "We all love the same genre of music", "Travelling with my friends to visit the festival is great fun".

Additionally, with regard to the rational drivers, respondents replied that the most important factor is (a) the cost of attending the festival (i.e., the program's artistic value is the strongest motivation to overcome the potential high cost of the travelling decision), (b) the time of year the festival takes place (i.e., festival should not coincide with work or college obligations), and finally (c) peer influence (i.e., the opportunity to travel with other friends or peers and feel accepted or valued by sharing the same passion for music). Some of the most representative phrases respondents used were: "Tickets were quite pricey so during my stay I tried to spend less on food or transport", "September is a great month for the festivals to take place as it not too cold or too hot", "My friends told me that Street Mode Festival is best festival in Greece and persuaded me to visit".

Nevertheless, there are always some basic criteria, apart from the value of the artistic program, that formulate the overall respondents' perception of their experience as a whole. These are (1) the quality of the venue and the infrastructure, i.e., health and safety considerations, food and drink provision, accessibility, security etc., (2) the effectiveness of the organization, i.e., waiting times for performances, the ease of buying goods and services or general services provision such as medical assistance and information, and finally (3) the audience profile and the level to which visitors feel familiar and self-assured with the rest of the crowd.

Additionally, it should also be noted that visitors coming from other Greek cities perceive their travelling to Thessaloniki as accessible and easy when compared to their visits to other music festivals taking place outside Greece. This different perception on the drivers and intentions between the national and the foreign festival unravels a new set of opportunities for destinations like Thessaloniki seeking to establish as an upcoming destination for festival travelers.

Within the framework of distinguishing national and international festival travelers, there are functional and emotional aspects, with related encouraging and discouraging elements. In particular, the facilitators for national festival travelers are mostly functional and these are cost, ease of practical arrangements (i.e., transport), language and high level of familiarity. On the other hand, when the same festival travelers decide to visit festivals in foreign destinations, the emotional facilitators act as equally strong to the artistic aspirational drivers. For instance, there is a benefit of rarity, directly linked to the three key attributes namely the distance, the time, and the frequency. Firstly, the bigger the distance and the effort visitors make to reach the festival destination, the more augmented the experience is. Secondly, the time planned to spend in the foreign festival includes time for sightseeing, landmark visits, even extended excursions around the primary destination, as if there is a kind of obligation to offer oneself the opportunity of sightseeing along with festival attendance. Thirdly, the perception that people have low potential to visit foreign destinations frequently urges them to maximize the expected experience and generates excitement during planning such trips.

City Related Information Searches Before and During the Festival Visit

When travelers decide to visit a festival and hence a destination, looking for information about the city is the epicenter of their research. Based on the qualitative outcomes of our study, it is implied that the key types of information travelers pursue are presented from low importance (sightseeing) to high importance (transportation) in the following figure:

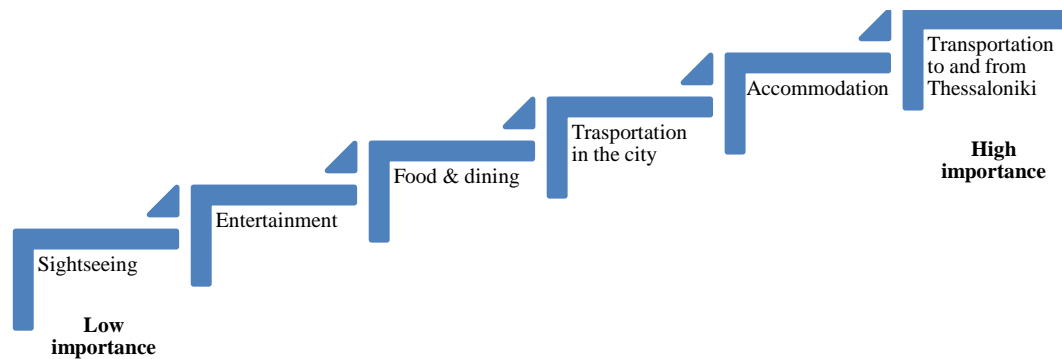


Figure 1. City related information searches before and during the festival visit.

The first most significant information festival visitors are looking for is transportation to and from Thessaloniki, via multiple transportation means such as car, bus or train, depending on the distance from the place of origin and the available means (i.e., buses vs. trains). The second most significant is the accommodation information. It is very interesting that the “community” acts fast when it comes to accommodating friends for a city event that connects everyone that is why many visitors were hosted by friends and relatives. Having secured free of charge accommodation is a huge facilitator during the decision-making process. Additionally, searches for renting a low budget apartment via Airbnb or a hostel room are also very popular before visiting the city. Subsequently, getting around the city and reaching the festival venue timely and cost efficiently are also very advantageous. In regards to food and dining, internet sourced information guides visitors unless they have a local network of people who offer their recommendations. Similarly, as far as entertainment is concerned, either a local specific event or a well-kept “local secret” can become a strong driver to explore and experience in parallel with the festival.

At that point, little to no mentions were made regarding visitors’ interest in local sightseeing, while the discussion, when raised unprompted, was focused around the evident city highlights of the White Tower, the Castles, or the New Seafront Promenade. The majority of respondents stated that “When I was in Thessaloniki, I visited places my friends hang about like Castles, New Seafront Promenade and downtown cafes and bars”. Contrary, mature festival travels demonstrate a more vivid interest in exploring not only the city center but also the broader area Thessaloniki, such as the popular summer resort of Khalkidhiki.

Finally, the three main factors that define the level of the visitors’ involvement and interaction with the local city environment were identified as related to (a) prior knowledge about the destination usually via past visits or friends, (b) friends and relatives living in the city and acting as hosts, and (c) the acquaintance of friends or co-travelers with the city.

Festival Related Information Sources Before and During the Festival Visit

Although both festivals offer a number of communication platforms mainly through the digital media, it looks like these platforms are not as impactful with regards to first time festival visitors. When it comes to the festivals’ awareness, friends and peers seem to be strong influencers and ambassadors for the specific music festivals, highlighting the significant role that the social interaction and the word of mouth have within these specific target groups.

However, all the festivals’ communication platforms act as the major point of reference for repetitive visitors. The key communication touch points are the festivals’ website and social media platforms, with

emphasis primarily on Instagram and then Facebook, while artists' or other musical websites are important sources of information. It is worth mentioning that apart from the high impact that word of mouth has to the festivals' awareness and engagement, it is also perceived by the respondents as the most reliable source of information. We could say that the one-to-one communication activates the emotional drivers among visitors while the digital media consolidate what is already known in a functional level, nourishing visitors' interest in more linearly informative way. Indicatively, many respondents stated that "I was introduced to the festival by my friends and the used Instagram and social media to find out more out the festival's practical details".

Table 2

Festivals' Communication Impact: Offline vs. Online Media

Offline sources	Online sources
Friends & peers	Internet & social media
Emotional impact	Functional impact
Offer multilayered update reinforcing social participation drivers (i.e., participation of trend setters attendance, international visitor profile etc.)	Offer linear information reinforcing festival related drivers (lineup & program information, tickets, parallel events etc.)

Other than digital communication material, such as posters & brochures, they are being noticed only when visitors actually land in the destination of Thessaloniki. Consequently, it is not surprising that communication messages regarding the festivals' profile—positioning, values, vision, objective—are hardly being recalled, neither can be described with clarity. It is the content—primarily the performance lineup and then the event atmosphere—that drives their perception through a more subjective experience for each festival, rather than an explicitly cultural identity and message that these festivals have.

Barriers Hindering Festival Tourists Visits From Further Tourism Engagement in the City

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned festival visitors' profiles, and motivations as well as the city's appeal as a dynamic capital of the Balkan area, significant tourism barriers are revealed hindering visitors from further engaging in the city's rich historical attractions, renowned gastronomy, vibrant night life, or peripheral natural sights.

Firstly, public transport in the city and suburbs of Thessaloniki is unanimously noted as a disappointing experience whether they are first time or repetitive visitors. Serious inefficiencies in regular schedules lack of adequate connections or timely information which is the ones most commonly stated. One of the most typical answers collected was: "In Thessaloniki I got about on foot and sometimes. I took the bus but I was not happy with the service. I wish transport in the city was improved. Lime scooters make it a bit easier".

Then, some concerns were also raised in regards to security issues, mostly related to pickpocketing, adding to a feeling of "cautiousness" when strolling around in the city. Additionally, for the majority of the respondents, their budget and spending capacity was mostly prioritized and limited to festival tickets and related costs so considering spending extra money on, i.e., dining or museum entrance was not a prime intention.

Finally, special focus on the reciprocal lack of connection and information flow between the festivals and the city tourism stakeholders was also identified. In numerous occasions festival visitors perceived the organization of festivals as irrelevant to the hosting city with many of them not acknowledging enough about, for example, the city's historical sights. Respondents do not seem able to recall any touristic information or advertising steering them around the city of helping their tourism related decision making, currently or for the

future. Therefore, bridging the current gap of communication between tourism and festival stakeholders must be further addressed and is analyzed in the following section.

Discussion

Initially, the need to deepen into the festival visitors' profiles is revealed in regards to their primary and secondary visit motivations as well as the criteria of their "consumer" journey experience. Based on the respondents' profile, the connection between the festivals and the city's tourism attractions is not easily identified. Consequently, a number of respondents clearly implied that the city needs to take advantage of the festivals' popularity in order to introduce itself to new and broader touristic crowd, which in our case involves younger crowds. Therefore, it is recommended that Thessaloniki's tourism destination managers and stakeholders include in their strategic planning the strong and established presence of Reworks and Street Mode Festivals as potential and additional city branding tools, targeting new age groups.

Furthermore, a number of behavioral differences were identified when Greek festival attendants visit Thessaloniki festivals, compared to when the same visitors visit foreign ones. As a result, destination managers should aim at activating a benefit of rarity for Thessaloniki, in order to assimilate the perception of visitors as if they were going to visit foreign festivals. Through the establishment of a dialogue in principles and in actions, between the festivals and the city's tourism authorities, a new & ambitious scope can emerge, in favor of both the cultural and the tourism industries. In this approach, all tourism related businesses can be aligned to cater and benefit from festival tourism. According to Richards (2018), the value focus of cultural tourism also often depends on the governance style but there has been little research on the types of governance arrangements that promote, support, and develop cultural tourism.

Thereafter, the city of Thessaloniki can (a) be additionally promoted as a unique multicultural festival destination (with its already popular International Film Festival, Documentary Festival & "Dimitria" Performing Arts Festival etc.), (b) attract new target groups and first-time visitors such as festival tourists, (c) extend its tourism season, and (d) maximize its exposure as well as its sights and experiences visibility, such as its nightlife or gastronomy. In addition, increased revenues for all tourism related industries could possibly be achieved by leveraging consumption opportunities. For instance, tourism consumption could be either linked thematically to the festival or through a "seasonal" policy supported by local authorities, commercial & touristic chambers, in order that festival visitors take advantage of special "offers" within or outside the festival venues. As also stated by Haigh (2020), tourism, artistic activity, and development are complex, so the scale of changes required for a population to increase the level of its participation in any of these areas requires that policy priorities and public support coalesce over a lengthy period of time.

From the festival organizers' side, such a strategic partnership can help them build a more location relevant festival brand. This can also formulate more holistic and complete festival experiences ranging from its artistic programs to peripheral services of accommodation, transportation or develop a loyal audience across all visitors' profiles, even the more hesitant "Music Tourists". For instance, organizers could practically assist their audiences by connecting them to tourism professionals setting up and promoting "all-inclusive packages" for festival goers at special rates.

Finally, research findings about Street Mode & Reworks Festivals validate the growing stream of previous empirical research (Chen & Rahmam, 2018; Duran & Hamarat, 2014; Kruger & Saayman, 2009; Slater, 2006; Swanson, Davis, & Yushan, 2008). However, further quantitative research is recommended in order to (a)

consolidate the key findings, (b) measure the market size and define its segments, across all visitors' profiles & origin, and (c) assess the range of the opportunities emerging from the cultural and tourism strategy for the city of Thessaloniki.

Conclusions

In the research paper we sought to explore the connection between the visitors' perception of the festival experiences and the city experience. Special focus was placed on the proposed segmentation of visitor profiles as it defined their motivations according to their age groups, both regarding the specific cultural events as well as their expectations from the hosting destinations. The successful presence of both festivals provides and is undisputable motivator for attracting many visitors from all over Greece and abroad; however it was easily evident that festival tourists do not connect their experience with a further tourism engagement in the city. Respondents clearly implied that it is the city that needs to "visit" the festivals in order to introduce itself so that a broader touristic motivation & perception is generated.

Furthermore, the initial ranking of importance concerning information people look for before travelling to Thessaloniki for these music festivals proves undoubtedly strong these events are, raising once more the issue of disconnection between them and the touristic destination of the city. Thessaloniki represents a quite hospitable ground where both festivals are held, acting however, more like a picturesque background instead of a destination itself. Besides, the aspirational motives—the content, the festive experience, and the satisfaction that escapism offers—are the ones that drive primarily people to visit these festivals.

People travelling from Greece seem familiar with the city or at least they have easy access to the key city related information through their local social network. However, neither the city authorities nor the festivals' organizers represent an established and reliable point of reference to (a) inform visitors on the key types of touristic information or (b) provide more incentives to purposefully navigate them in the city during their staying.

The city of Thessaloniki represents a potentially very attractive tourist destination offering a range of value for money accommodation, multicultural historical sites and museums, seaside promenade and mountain hikes, renowned gastronomy and vibrant nightlife, all relevant to festival visitors' profile. Surprisingly, in visitors' minds, little relevance is attached between their music festival attendance and the city sights. Therefore, leveraging the trend of those festival visitors who aim to explore the wider geographical region can render Thessaloniki an important gate to Northern Greece. In conclusion, research findings highlight the importance of the potential cooperation between festival organizers and destination management authorities by sharing knowhow & resources in order to create a common strategy at a tourism, cultural, & economic level.

References

- Barbieri, C., & Mahoney, E. (2010). Cultural tourism behaviour and preferences among the live performing art audiences: An application of the univorous-omnivorous framework. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(5), 481-496.
- Boo, S., & Busser, J. A. (2006). Impact analysis of a tourism festival on tourists' destination images. *Event Management*, 9(4), 223-237.
- Cha, S., Mccleary, K. W., & Uysal, M. (1995). Travel motivations of Japanese overseas travelers: A factor-cluster segmentation approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 34(1), 33-39.
- Chen, H., & Rahman, I. (2018). Cultural tourism: An analysis of engagement, cultural contact, memorable tourism experience and destination loyalty. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 26, 153-163. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Crompton, J. L. (1979). Motivations for pleasure vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), 408-424.

- Crompton, J. L., & McKay, S. L. (1997). Motives of visitors attending festival events. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(2), 425-439.
- Dann, G. M. S. (1977). Anomie, ego-enhancement and tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4, 184-194.
- Dann, G. M. S. (1981). Tourist motivation: An appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(2), 187-219.
- Dewar, K., Meyer, D., & Wen, M. L. (2001). Harbin: Lanterns of ice, sculptures of snow. *Tourism Management*, 22, 523-532.
- Du Cros, C., & McKercher, B. (2014). *Cultural tourism*. London: Routledge.
- Duran, E., & Hamarat, B. (2014). Festival attendees' motivations: The case of International Troia Festival. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 5(2), 146-163.
- Dwyer, L., Gill, A., & Seetaram, N. (2012). *Handbook of research methods in tourism: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781001295>
- Ferrell, O. C., Hartline, M. D., & Lucas, G. H. (2002). *Marketing strategy* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Georgoula, V., & Terkenli, T. S. (2018). Exploring the perceived impacts of arts festivals on tourism development. The case on two Greek international festivals. *International Journal of Cultural and Digital Tourism*, 4, 55-65. ISSN:2241-9705
- Getz, D. (2007). *Event studies: Theory, research and policy for planned events*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Gibson, C., & Connell, J. (2012). *Music festivals and regional development in Australia*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Haigh, M. (2020). Cultural tourism policy in developing regions: The case of Sarawak, Malaysia. *Tourism Management*, 81, 104166. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104166>
- Huang, J. Z., Li, M., & Cai, L. A. (2010). A model of community-based festival image. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(2), 254-260.
- Iso-Ahola, E. (1982). Towards a social psychology theory of tourism motivation: A rejoinder. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 9(2), 256-262.
- Kim, K., Uysal, M., & Chen, J. S. (2001). Festival visitor motivation from the organizers' points of view. *Event Management*, 7(2), 127-134.
- Kotler, P., Haider, D. H., & Rein, I. (1993). *Marketing places: Attracting investment, industry and tourism to cities, states and nations*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Kreitner, R. (1989). *Management* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kruger, M. (2009). *Spending behaviour of visitors to the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival*. Potchefstroom: Boloka Institutional Repository.
- Kruger, M., & Saayman, M. (2009). Travel motives of visitors attending Oppikoppi Music Festival. *Acta Academica*, 41(4), 56-73.
- Kruger, M., Saayman, M., & Ellis, S. M. (2010). Determinants of visitor expenditure at the Aardklop National Arts Festival. *Event Management*, 14(2), 137-148.
- Lee, C. K., Yoon, Y. S., & Lee, S. K. (2007). Investigating the relationships among perceived value, satisfaction, and recommendations: The case of the Korean DMZ. *Tourism Management*, 28(1), 204-214.
- Liu, C., Lin, W., Wang, Y., & Chen, S. (2019). Sustainability indicators for festival tourism: A multi-stakeholder perspective. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 20(3), 296-316. doi:10.1080/1528008X.2018.1530165
- Marais, M. (2010). Key success factors of managing a wine festival (Unpublished MC thesis, North West University, 2010).
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.
- McCarthy, K. E., & Jinnett, K. (2001). *A new framework for building participation in the arts*. Santa Monica, California: Rand.
- Mehmetoglu, M., & Ellingson, K. A. (2005). Do small-scale festivals adopt "market orientation" as a management philosophy? *Event Management*, 9(3), 119-132.
- Middleton, V. T. C., Fyall, A., Morgan, M., & Ranchhod, A. (2009). *Marketing in travel and tourism* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Nicholson, R., & Pearce, D. G. (2001). Why do people attend events: A comparative analysis of visitor motivations at four south island events. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39, 449-460.
- O'Sullivan, J. M., Pickernell, D., & Senyard, J. (2009). Public sector evaluation of festivals and special events. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 1(1), 19-36.
- Pulido-Fernandez, J., & Sanchez-Rivero, M. (2010). Attitudes of the cultural tourist: A latent segmentation. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 34(2), 111-129.
- Richards, G. (2018). Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 36, 12-21.

- Saayman, M. (2011). Motives for attending the Cultivaria Arts Festival. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 33(1), 109-120.
- Scott, D. (1996). A comparison of visitors' motivations to attend three urban festivals. *Festival Management & Event Tourism*, 1(1), 89-97
- Slater, A. (2006). *Escaping to the gallery': Understanding the motivations of visitors to galleries*. Wiley Digital Archives.
- Swanson, S. R., Davis, J. C., & Yushan, Z. (2008). Art for art's sake? An examination of motives for arts performance attendance. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 37(7), 300-323.
- Van de Wagen, L. (2005). *Event management: For tourism, cultural, business and sporting events* (2nd ed.). Frenchs Fores, N.S.W.: Pearson Education.