

A Conceptual Framework of Festival Visitors' Behavioral Intentions

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Abstract. The purpose of this article is to develop a conceptual framework to determine the factors influencing visitors' behavioral intention to attend festivals and events. The theoretical framework focuses on the relationship between experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of the festival tourists. The diversity of growth and popularity of festivals and events have been growing and many communities are arranging different festivals and events as leisure and cultural recreation for their community members. Such arrangements have led to improvements in both local community lives and image.

In order to increase visitor participation, it is important that they perceive good value in relation to their satisfaction and high quality in services. From previous research, it was evident that service quality, perceived value and satisfaction are some of the major factors that influence tourists' behavioral intentions. In the context of festival tourism, little research has been conducted to test the relationship between quality, value, satisfaction and behavioral intention. In this paper a conceptual model has been proposed to examine whether experience quality has an impact on perceived value, which in turn is posited herein to affect satisfaction and behavioral intention. Several hypotheses have been proposed to test a research model in the context of festival tourism. In an ensuing study, the proposed model will further be tested empirically at a music festival named Malakoff occurring yearly in western Norway. The festival generates considerable interest and regional and national participation within the region.

Keywords: festival tourism, behavioral intentions, experience quality, satisfaction

1 Introduction

The diversity and popularity of festivals and events have been growing, and many communities are arranging different festivals and events as leisure and cultural recreation for their community members. Such arrangements have led to improvements in both local community lives and image (Getz 2008; Crompton and McKay 1997; Thrane 2002). A considerable amount of research has been conducted focusing on visitors' motivation and economic impact of festivals. However, an understanding of visitor motives and expenditure patterns alone may not be enough to identify what determines visitors' satisfaction and their intention to revisit festivals and events (Yoon, Lee, and Lee 2010).

Over the past decades in marketing research arena, service quality has emerged as one of the more discussed and researched topics, with an emergent consensus that quality influences perceived value, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty in turn (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000; Parasuraman and Grewal 2000). This indicates the relationship between service quality, value, satisfaction and behavioral intention are well covered research topics. From earlier research, it follows that service quality, perceived value and satisfaction are also some of the major factors that influence tourists' behavioral intentions (Petrick and Backman 2002; Baker and Crompton 2000; Hutchinson, Lai, and Wang 2009). Relations between service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intention have been

previously researched in a festival context, and the results show visitors' perception of service quality has an indirect effect on behavioral intentions through satisfaction, together with a direct impact on behavioral intentions (Baker and Crompton 2000). The festival quality dimensions influencing visitors' post-visit perception have however been less researched (Yoon, Lee, and Lee 2010).

Direct relationship was found between music quality and visitors' intentions to recommend the festival in the context of jazz music festivals (Thrane 2002). In tourism research importance of service quality has been highlighted but experience quality has not been studied noticeably (Chen and Chen 2010). Experience quality relates to tourist psychological outcome derived from their participation of tourism activities. Festival and event tourism is viewed as experiential consumption since quality perceived by visitors is very much related to their experience during attending the festival. While consuming or using a service, consumers' subjective reaction and feeling towards the service evaluation influence their satisfaction (Otto and Ritchie 1996). In case of tourism services, a better understanding of consumer's experiential consumptions will help industry to perform better. This study posits that experience quality is more appropriate to test when identifying visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

In order to increase visitor participation, it is important that they perceive good value in relation to their satisfaction and high quality in services (Chen and Chen 2010; So Yon Lee, Petrick, and Crompton 2007). Perceived value is one of the key factors in consumer decision making and behavior process. According to the utilitarian value perspective, value is measured as a trade-off between benefits received and sacrifices and effort given (V. Zeithaml 1988). In the tourism context that is service focused, considering utilitarian and socio-psychological perspectives of value will give a better understanding of visitors' perceived value (J Sweeney and Soutar 2001). According to previous research (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000) in comparison to quality and satisfaction, perceived value has a stronger affect in predicting repurchase intentions.

In light of the discussion, the purpose of this article is to develop a conceptual framework to determine the factors influencing visitors' behavioral intention to attend festivals and special events. The theoretical framework focuses on the relationship between experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions of the festival tourists. To this end, this study proposes a conceptual model to examine whether experience quality has an impact on perceived value, which in turn is posited herein to affect satisfaction and behavioral intention. Alongside, a multi-dimensional perspective of values has been conceptualized, namely: functional, emotional and social. The proposed model will further be tested empirically in the context of a popular music festival in an ensuing study. Behavioral intentions will be measured through willingness to pay, positive word of mouth, and revisits to festival – a construct used in lieu of visitors' loyalty as it is deemed more context appropriate.

Literature review was conducted focusing on service marketing, consumer behavior and tourism research areas. The next section will discuss earlier research to identify the factors related to visitors' behavioral intention towards attending the festival and relationships between such factors.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Experience Quality

In today's competitive environment, one of the essential critical success factor for an organization is to deliver the quality services. Service quality is determined by the differences between customers' expectations of services provider's performance and their evaluation of the services they received. Definitions of service quality hold that this is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the way the service has been performed. The service quality model, SERVQUAL instrument is designed to measure consumers' comparison between expectations and perception of service performance in a specific service transaction (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). The service quality model, SERVQUAL has been widely applied in the travel and tourism literature to measure visitors' expectations and perceptions of the service performance (Lian Chan and Baum 2007; Nowacki 2005; Fick and Ritchie 1991).

(Fick and Ritchie 1991) have applied the SERVQUAL instrument to examine the quality of service in four major sectors within the travel and tourism industry. In their study, they opined the SERVQUAL scale does not sufficiently contribute to the overall quality of 'service experience'. Tangible factors included in the scales are service specific and not a broader generalizable set of measures. (Otto and Ritchie 1996) also argued that service quality measures may not be sufficient to provide an understanding of satisfaction in case of tourism services. They developed and tested alternate measures to understand the service experience in three different sectors in tourism industries: Airlines, hotels and tours and attractions. They have defined experience as 'the subjective mental state felt by participants during a service encounter' (Otto and Ritchie 1996). In their study four factors were included to measure experience quality. They are hedonic which includes effective responses regarding excitement, trilling, enjoyment and memorability; Peace of mind which is related to visitors need for physical and safety issues, personal security, privacy, comfort and relaxations; involvement which is related to visitors' desire to have choice and control over the outcome and being involved in the process; and recognition refers to the feelings related to being taken seriously and given importance.

Evaluation of the quality of experience contains both functional and emotional attributes. Functional attributes delivered by the service providers, and effective and emotional attributes are ones that are carried by the visitors through the duration and after the consumption of the services. In the tourism context, experience quality is related to psychological outcome results while tourist participate in the tourism activities. In the ecotourism context, the experience quality was conceptualized by (Lian Chan and Baum 2007) as eco tourists' "affective responses to their desired social-psychological benefits". This definition is adopted in the present study to define experience quality in the festival context.

2.2 Perceived Value and Its Dimensions

Perceived value is a vital antecedent to determine satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000). In the previous studies value is defined as a "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product (or service) based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (V. Zeithaml 1988). Conceptualization of perceived value has two major parts: one part is related to benefit received which could be economic, social and emotional, and another part is related to sacrifices made which could be price, time, effort, risk and convenience (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000).

Perceived value could be measured by considering unidimensional or multidimensional perspectives. In some marketing and hospitality literatures perceived value was conceptualised as a unidimensional scale which measures overall value perceived by customers in relation to monetary value (Jillian Sweeney et al. 1996). Functional, utilitarian perspective of value constructs were considered in traditional value research and a utilitarian functional value perspective is one of the most significant elements to determine repeat purchase behavioral and purchase intention (V. Zeithaml 1988). However, while considering tourism product consumption, which is mainly experiential consumption, only considering functional value perspective may be too simplistic (Baker and Crompton 2000).

It is more appropriate to consider multidimensional perspective of value in the service contexts. The need for multidimensional value perspective and their relationship with post-consumptions construct have started to be highlighted by tourism researchers in recent times (J Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Petrick and Backman 2002). Quality, monetary price, non-monetary price, reputation and emotional responses are five value dimensions discussed by (Petrick and Backman 2002). (J Sweeney and Soutar 2001) measured customer’s perceived value considering four dimensions of value, their study results showed that when explaining preferences of customer, multi perspective value dimensions achieved better result compared to single value items such as value for money. Following their study, (Sánchez et al. 2006) have construed perceived value more broadly, focusing on functional, social and emotional perspectives of value dimensions in a tourism package product. According to (J Sweeney and Soutar 2001) four value dimensions can be described as follows:

Table 1: Perceived Value Dimensions

Emotional value	The utility derived from the feelings or affective states that a product generates.
Social value (enhancement of social self-concept)	The utility derived from the product’s ability to enhance social self-concept.
Functional value (price/value for money)	The utility derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived short term and longer term costs.
Functional value (performance/quality)	The utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the product

Source: (J Sweeney and Soutar 2001) pp. 211

2.3 Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention

“Satisfaction is a person’s feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations” (Kotler, 2001, p.36). Satisfaction refers to consumer judgement and subjective evaluation after consumption of goods and services as to whether they meet or exceed expectations. It describes the perceived differences between previous expectation and perceived performance after consumption. When the product or service performance exceeds prior expectation, satisfaction occurs (Oliver 1999, 1980). In a tourism context, satisfaction is an emotional state that is principally experiential and derived after the consumption of tourism product. It is a function of tourist’s expectation related to pre-travel and experience is related to post-travel. When the experiences exceeds expectations resulting in feeling of pleasure, satisfaction occurs for the tourist (Reisinger and Turner 2003). Several studies were conducted on the concepts of satisfaction and its relation with behavioral intention in tourism context

(Baker and Crompton 2000; Kim et al. 2010; Chen and Chen 2010; Žabkar, Brenčič, and Dmitrović 2010; Hutchinson, Lai, and Wang 2009).

Behavioral intentions indicate desirable behaviors that visitors expect to perform in the future. In marketing and tourism literature, behavioral intention and loyalty have been used alternatively. After using products or services a customer might show favorable or unfavorable behavioral tendency towards the product or services. When customer admires the products or services, talks positively to others regarding the products and services, or is interested to pay a premium it indicates that a customer has developed a bonding to the product or services and shows a positive or favorable behavioral intention towards the product or service. An unfavorable behavioral intention occurs when customers perceive service performance at a less than expected level. Such behavior may include complaining, refusal to consume the product or services, asking for compensation, negative word of mouth communication (V. A. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996). Positive word of mouth, recommendation to others, repurchase intention, willingness to pay more are several dimensions used in previous research to measure behavioral intention (Cronin and Taylor 1992; V. A. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996).

2.4 Relationship Between Experience Quality, Perceived Value, Satisfaction and Behavioural Intention

In several previous studies, perceived value, service quality and satisfaction were identified as important determinants of tourists' behavioural intention (Baker and Crompton 2000; Petrick 2004; Petrick and Backman 2002). (Baker and Crompton 2000) tested the relationships among Quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in a festival context. The results from their study mentioned that performance quality had a significant direct effect on visitor satisfaction and both quality and satisfaction had significant direct effects on visitors' behavioural intention. (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000) developed four relationship models from different perspectives regarding the relationships among quality, satisfaction, value, and behavioral intentions. Their first model was derived from service value literature, where value directly leads to favorable outcomes. The first model, based on the service value literature, suggests that value leads directly to favorable. The second model was developed based on the satisfaction literature, where they defined customer satisfaction as the key and directly linked to outcome measures. The third model derives from literature that address the inter-relationships among the variables service quality, value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. The fourth model identifies all three variables to directly lead to favorable behavioral intentions. Findings from the study indicate that both service quality and service value lead to satisfaction. Considered together service quality, service value, and satisfaction are directly related to behavioral intentions.

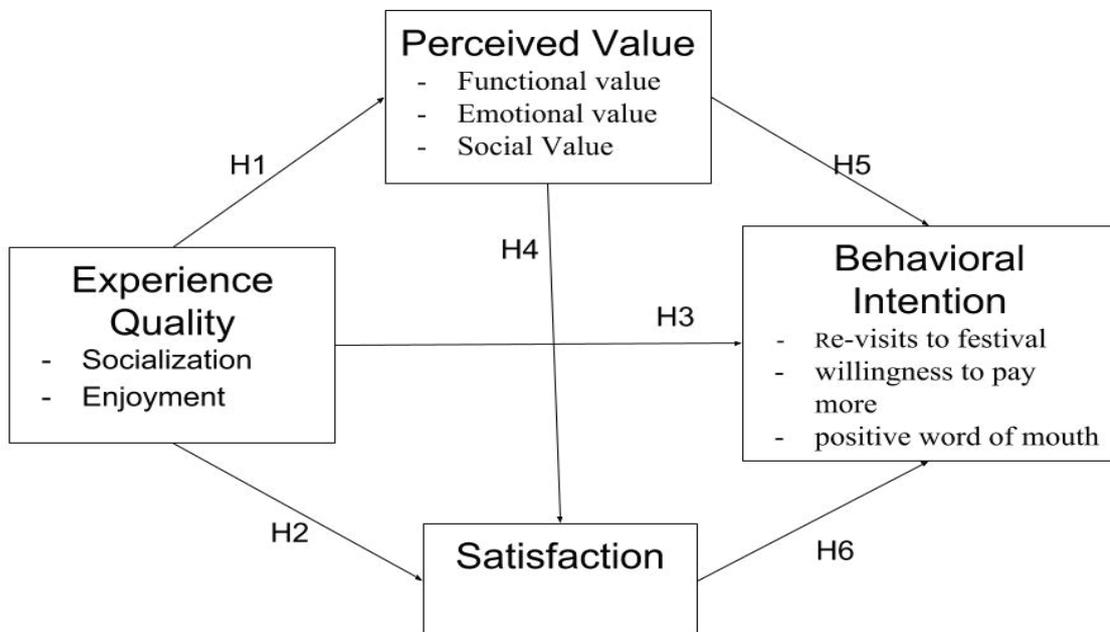
(Cole and Illum 2006) examined the relationships between performance quality, experience quality and satisfaction and their role in predicting visitors' behavioral intentions in a festival setting. In their study, they found experience quality to directly influence visitor's behavioral intention. They also found performance quality do not have a direct influence on visitors' behavioral intention. Performance quality influences behavioral intention through experience quality and satisfaction and visitors' overall satisfaction level influences their decision regarding future visits. (Chen and Chen 2010) conducted a study focusing on the visitor experience in heritage tourism and investigated the relationships between experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Their results show the direct effects of experience quality on perceived value and satisfaction, and indirect effects of quality of experience on behavioral intentions when mediated by perceived value and satisfaction. (So Yon Lee, Petrick, and Crompton 2007) examined the relationships between visitors' perceived service quality, perceived service value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. According to the results of the study, perceived service value was the best predictor of behavioral

intentions and strong relationship was found between perceived service quality and behavioral intention. The concept of experience quality is more suitable than service quality to understand experience in the tourism context. Experience quality has a direct and significant impact on satisfaction and perceived value (Chen and Chen 2010).

Based on the depicted relationships identified in the previous research discussed above regarding the relationship between experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intention, we proposed our research model and propositions in the following section.

3 Research Model, Conceptualization, Hypotheses and Further Research Suggestions

Similar to other leisure and tourism activities, festival tourism is viewed to a great extent as an experiential consumption. The quality visitors perceive is much more associated with their experiences during the process of attending the festival. In order to increase visitors' positive behavioral intentions, festival organizers should set their priorities to provide high quality, satisfying experiences so that visitors perceive a good value. Following the previous literature discussions, the present study proposes a conceptual model to test in a music festival context; where we proposition experience quality perceived by visitors directly affect their satisfaction, and perceived value influence their overall satisfaction. In addition, both satisfaction and visitors' perceived value are posited to have a direct influence on visitors' behavioral intention in attending music festivals. Behavioral intentions will be measured through positive word of mouth, willingness to pay more, and revisit intention to the festival. Multidimensional experience quality and value perspective are considered in the proposed research model.



3.1 Proposed Hypotheses

- H1 The higher the experience quality festival visitors perceive, the higher the perceived value they have.
- H2 The higher the experience quality festival visitors perceive, the higher the level of satisfaction they have.
- H3 The higher the experience quality festival visitors perceive, the more positive the behavioral intentions they have.
- H4 The higher the value festival visitors perceive, the higher the level of satisfaction they have.
- H5 The higher the value festival visitors perceive, the more positive the behavioral intentions they have.
- H6 The higher the level of satisfaction that festival visitors have, the more positive the behavioral intentions they have.

Table 2: Conceptualizations of the variables in Research model

Variables	Measurement criteria	References
Experience quality: Visitors' affective responses to their desired social-psychological benefits. Dimensions: Socialization and Enjoyment	Socialization: Talk to other people, Be around people, Meet new people, Be with people who share similar interests and values, Get together with friends. Enjoyment: Enjoy a friendly atmosphere, Watch families having fun together, enjoy music and dance, have fun/a good time.	(Otto and Ritchie 1996; Cole and Illum 2006)
Value: The consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product (or service) based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, 1988)		
Functional value: The utility derived from the perceived quality and expected performance of the festival.	Consistent quality, Done well, Acceptable standard of quality, Well organized	(J Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Williams and Soutar 2009)
Emotional value: The utility derived from the feelings or affective states after attending festival	Gave me feelings of well-being, was exciting, Made me elated, Made me feel happy	(J Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Williams and Soutar 2009)
Social Value: The utility derived from the attending festival to enhance social self-concept.	Gives social approval from others, makes me feel acceptable to others, Improves the way a person is perceived, Give a good impression on other people	(J Sweeney and Soutar 2001; Williams and Soutar 2009)
Satisfaction: In festival context, satisfaction is a visitors' emotional state of mind after	Satisfaction with decision, wise choice, a good experience. Pleased at decision to attend the festival,	(Oliver 1999)

attending the festival.	Participating with this festival exceeding expectations. Sense of joy at decision to come to the festival	
Behavioral Intentions: Behavioral intentions will be measured through willingness to pay more, positive word of mouth, and revisits to festival	Say positive things Visit again in the future Willingness to pay more	(V. A. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1996)

3.2 Proposed Research Methods and Future Research Suggestions

Several hypotheses have been proposed to test a research model in the context of festival tourism. A quantitative research approach will be deployed to test the research model and the proposed hypotheses. In line with previous research, the constructs in research model will be measured with multiple scale items. A questionnaire will be developed and data will be collected from the popular “Malakoff” music festival, occurring yearly in Western Norway. The festival generates considerable interest and regional and national participation within the region.

3.3 Expected Theoretical and Practical Implications of The Study

Based on previous research conducted in the tourism research area, a model has been proposed to be tested in the context of music festival. In this proposed research model, perceived value and experience quality were incorporated as a multidimensional construct to be tested in the music festival context to understand visitors’ satisfaction and behavioral intention.

It is vital for festival organizers to understand visitors’ experiential phenomena because visitor satisfaction directly influences the future of a festival. A high level of service quality will produce satisfied visitors, who are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth, and to become repeat visitors. Thus, it is in the interest of festival organizers to understand visitors’ perceived experience quality and satisfaction, as predictors of visitors’ behavioral intention. Expected results from the study should help festival organizers to understand the relative importance among visitors’ perceived experience quality, perceived value and satisfaction in terms of their behavioral intention. This understanding could provide guidance to the organizer to direct their management effort to improve the quality of the festival, ensuring visitors satisfaction following their needs. Understanding the overall relationship among experience quality, perceived value and satisfaction will help event organizers to segment their market accordingly and develop a specific marketing strategy.

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