

Exploring the Influence of Demographic Factors on Perceptions of Festival Tourism in Ilara-Mokin, Nigeria: A Social Exchange Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research article explores the influence of demographic factors, including age, gender, income, and education, on residents' attitudes and perceptions towards festival tourism. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, utilizing purposive sampling, and 400 questionnaires were distributed to festival participants aged 18 and above. Data collection involved a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions in the questionnaires, with subsequent analysis employing descriptive and inferential statistics. An analysis by gender highlighted disparities between male and female respondents in how they perceived economic impacts, indicating gender-based variations in expectations and perceptions. The female respondents exhibited positive views regarding the economic advantages of festival tourism. In addition, employment type emerged as a significant predictor of perceived social effects, indicating diverse viewpoints among different occupational groups. For festival organizers and tourism operators, the findings underscored the importance of considering the diverse needs and preferences of various demographic groups when designing festival tourism products and services. This approach ensures the maximization of economic benefits while simultaneously balancing social and cultural values. The application of social exchange theory offered valuable insights into the exchange of rewards and costs within festival tourism interactions, influencing perceptions, and behavior.

Keywords: Festival tourism, Demographic factors, Perceptions, Social exchange analysis, Diversity in festival tourism

Introduction

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2015), tourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global economy, contributing to the international recognition of many countries. Nigeria, as a developing nation, is no exception to this trend, with tourism accounting for up to 34% of the country's yearly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 20% of all employment, making it one of the key sectors in the Nigerian government's development agenda (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Nigeria's festivals play a vital role in the success of its tourism industry, with festivals proving to be effective in attracting tourists to seasonal areas (Celik and Cetinkaya, 2013).

Community festivals are increasingly important in branding, marketing, promoting destinations, revitalizing locations, and encouraging the growth of adjacent regions (Rogerson and Collins, 2015). Festivals have an impact on people and provide benefits such as encouraging urban redevelopment, providing attendees with a range of activities, enhancing the reputation of the local community, and generating income and employment for the host location (Bagiran and Kurgun, 2016). Nigeria's festivals have gained popularity, and festival tourism constitutes over 65% of all foreign visitors to Nigeria, with approximately 80% of these individuals serving as observers (Nigeria Tourism Development Co-operation (NTDC), 2018).

Festival tourism depends on the involvement and support of community residents, and the benefits and impact of tourism on them are crucial determinants for its long-term sustainability (Balogun and Nkebem, 2022; Seraphin *et al.*, 2019). The success of festival tourism largely depends on residents' support for tourism development, which depends on the perceived impact of the type of tourism being developed (Quinn, 2010; Seraphin *et al.*, 2019; Kudas *et al.*, 2022).

In this study, we investigated residents' perceptions and attitudes towards festival tourism and its impact on community cooperation. We explored how demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education influence residents' perceptions and attitudes towards festival tourism. The study gives insights into the function of festival tourism in fostering sustainable tourism

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by using a social exchange analysis. The research question that guided this study: do residents' support for festival tourism and their perception of its benefits vary based on a cost-benefit analysis and the evaluation of alternatives.

The findings of this study can help guide tourism officials and community leaders in developing effective policies and programs to increase residents' support through perceived benefits. The theoretical models can shed a light on how residents' perceptions of festival tourism influence their support for tourism development and inform the development of strategies to enhance community involvement and support (Kim *et al.*, 2006; Viviers, 2010; Quinn, 2010; Cudny *et al.*, 2011; Celik and Cetinkaya, 2013; Winkle and Woosnam, 2014; Rogerson and Collins, 2015; Chang and Tsai, 2016; Bagiran and Kurgun, 2016; Agbabiaka, 2016).

To examine how residents' perceptions of festival tourism influence their support for tourism development, the following theoretical models were developed:

H1: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' gender and the perceived economic effect of festival tourism.

H2: The age, education, and employment type of respondents have no significant relationship with the perceived social effects of festival tourism.

Literature Review

Festival Tourism

According to Duffy and Mair (2017) and Saatci (2020), the word "festival" comes from the Latin term "festum," which means "common carnival, feast, and joy." Historically, festivals were driven by religious reasons, such as saints' feast days, carnivals, and pilgrimages. Festival tourism refers to the marketing of local festivals that entice travelers to attend and participate based in a region's culture, heritage, and resources (Choi *et al.*, 2021). Festivals play a role in preserving a culture, including cuisine, music, dances, crafts, religious rites, and customs (Celik and Cetinkaya, 2013). Festival tourism is still a new phenomenon, but it is gaining popularity rapidly as more countries organize festivals to encourage tourism to their region (Zheleva, 2019; Doe *et al.*, 2020).

Mahadevan (2020) stated that festivals were known for their celebratory nature and ability to bring people together by highlighting various cultural elements. Saatci (2020) added that festivals served the purpose of showcasing a society's unique identity or skill while promoting tourism attractions, cultural traditions, and celebrations. According to O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002), festival tourism occurred when people from outside the festival region attended the festival. Choi *et al.* (2021) also noted that a festival could be classified as a tourism attraction if tourists came to the festival and utilized the area's tourist amenities.

Festival organizers, government officials, and residents of the hosting cities and regions recognize these festivals as major tourist attractions in which the benefits can be maximized by drawing in officials, media personnel, spectators, and participants (Ayob *et al.*, 2013). Elik and Etinkaya (2013) pointed out that festivals are widely marketed as an international and domestic activity for events and tourism worldwide. Festival tourism is one of the fastest growing and most popular type of travel, making it a unique kind of leisure activity (Stankova and Vassenska, 2015). Promotion of festivals through tourism can influence sustainable development in rural areas through community sponsorship (Balogun & Ajagunna, 2022).

Festival and Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is rapidly expanding worldwide, particularly in developing countries (Richards, 2021). Traditionally, festivals were organized by communities to celebrate their ethnic identity and unique cultural characteristics based on their socio-economic status and way of life. Cultural tourism is significant both as a tourist product and as an area of academic study (Sohn *et al.*, 2016). According to Koutoulas (2001), tourism is a human activity that involved traveling to destinations outside of one's usual place of residence and engaging in specific activities while on the trip. The Wales Tourist Board (WTB, 2003) defined culture as the spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional characteristics that identify a society or group, including performance, historical landscapes, crafts, religion, broadcasting, food, and languages, as well as traditional, current, and emerging forms of cultural experience. The definition of cultural tourism varies (Cetin & Bigihan, 2016). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 1985) defined cultural tourism as the movement of people primarily motivated by cultural factors, including study tours, cultural tours focused on performing arts, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to historical sites and monuments, travel for nature research purposes, folklore, art, and pilgrimages. Koutoulas (2004) defined cultural tourism as a type of human activity involving travel to locations outside of one's permanent residence and participation in cultural activities while away from home to satisfy certain needs. Festivals and cultural tourism comes in many forms. The first is heritage tourism, which focuses on travel related to heritage. Heritage can include landscapes, natural history, structures, artifacts, cultural celebrations, and customs

that are passed down from one generation to the next (Prentice, 1994). The second category is travel related to the arts and includes activities such as music, theater, dance, folk art, sculpture, craft arts, and costume design (Horner & Swarbrooke, 1996).

Festival and Sustainable Livelihoods

In the past few years, festivals have become a promising avenue for enhancing community livelihoods and reducing poverty (Wu & Pearce, 2013). It is increasingly common to integrate festivals into the economic planning and tourism development strategies of regions, towns, and nations, as they offer numerous benefits and a comprehensive framework for the challenge of sustaining communal livelihoods (Davies *et al.*, 2010; Getz & Page, 2016; Tichaawa, 2016). When planning festivals, it is of important that demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, and income status of the local people are considered (Agbabiaka, 2022).

The impact of festivals goes beyond their direct economic benefits, as many ancillary businesses, such as agriculture, fishing, forestry, handicrafts, and food processing, also benefit indirectly from festivals (Muresan *et al.*, 2016; Su *et al.*, 2016). The literature recognized festivals as catalysts for social change due to their dynamic and fluid nature (Wu & Pearce, 2013; Sirima & Backman, 2013; Su *et al.*, 2016). Festivals can enhance societal living conditions, although some changes brought about by festivals may not be positive (Gao & Wu, 2017; Niehof, 2004; Su *et al.*, 2016). Festival tourism is considered a valuable tool for promoting local economies. A community livelihood approach emphasizes the significance of human well-being in sustainable development from a people-centered perspective.

Festivals can have a social impact on the communities in which they are held, both positive and negative (Dwyer *et al.*, 2005; Ohmann *et al.*, 2006). Festivals increase a community's visibility by showcasing its attractions and drawing participants, tourists, investors, and sponsors, which can lead to greater community involvement and a revitalization of the community. However, hosting festival events can also result in adverse socio-cultural impacts, such as increased crime rates (Agbabiaka *et al.*, 2017). While festivals can have both positive and negative effects on a town's residents, they offer visitors a multitude of benefits and opportunities, as well as the satisfaction of contributing to a worthwhile endeavor (Duarte *et al.*, 2018).

The relationship between demographic factors and tourism perception

The way people perceived and chose their travel destinations was influenced by their demographic characteristics, which were significant determinants of tourism perception (Ahmad *et al.*, 2020). Many researchers examined how demographic factors such as gender, age, education, and employment type affected tourism perception. These variables were associated with an individual's socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, and personal values, which could impact their expectations, motivations, and level of satisfaction with their tourism experiences (Aziz *et al.*, 2018, Agbabiaka, 2022).

Effect of gender on tourism perception

Tourist perception is heavily influenced by various demographic factors, with gender being a particularly important one. According to Evans and Anderson (2018), females tended to prioritize social and cultural events, while males prioritized adventure and outdoor activities. Pomfret and Bramwell's study (2016) discovered that female visitors tended to be more drawn to cultural and heritage tourism experiences, while male tourists favored nature-based and adventure tourism. Gender differences also existed in terms of risk-taking and safety concerns, with females being more risk-averse and safety-conscious, while males were more willing to take risks and seek excitement in their travel activities (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015). Thus, it is crucial to take gender differences into account when developing tourism products and services to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of male and female tourists.

Effect of age on tourism perception

The demographic factor of age is another significant aspect affecting tourism. According to Vyshak *et al.* (2018), the travel expectations and objectives of younger tourists differed from older tourists. Younger tourists looked for distinctive and unconventional experiences, whereas older tourists preferred more conventional and comfortable travel experiences. Additionally, older tourists had greater financial resources and were more likely to travel with family or in groups (Boroch, n.d.). The implications of this are important for tourist marketing and product development, as tourism operators need to provide a wide range of tourism products and services to meet the diverse demands of different age groups.

Effect of education on tourism perception

Tourism perception is also influenced by education, which is a key demographic factor. Highly educated tourists have higher expectations in the quality of tourism products and services and were more likely to engage in sustainable and responsible tourism practices (Aknc *et al.*, 2018). According to Kasim (2017), educated visitors were more interested in cultural and educational experiences and participating in environmental conservation and community development initiatives. Additionally, higher education was associated with a willingness to pay more for higher-quality tourism products and services (Samah *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, tourism operators must provide high-quality tourism products and services that meet the needs and preferences of educated tourists.

Effect of employment type on tourism perception

According to Popescu and Olteanu (2014), employment type was an essential demographic factor that influences tourism perception. Tourists employed in professional or managerial positions had higher levels of disposable income and were more likely to participate in luxury tourism experiences. Conversely, tourists employed in manual or non-managerial positions had lower disposable income and were more price-sensitive when it came to tourism products and services. Self-employed tourists or those who owned businesses had more flexible travel schedules and were more likely to engage in long-term travel activities (Yang *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, tourism operators must consider the employment type of their target market when designing tourism products and services that cater to needs and preferences.

Demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, and employment type play an important role in shaping tourism activities. By recognizing the influence of these factors on festival tourism, tourism operators can develop more effective marketing strategies and provide high-quality products and services that meet the diverse needs and expectations of tourists.

Theoretical Framework

Several models have been used to study the relationship between the growth of tourism and the responses of residents in host destinations, with Social Exchange Theory (SET) being the most frequently used (Byrd *et al.*, 2009; Chaliskan & Saltik, 2018; Mihalic *et al.*, 2016; Nunkoo & So, 2016). SET has made significant theoretical contributions to the study of residents' perceptions of tourism. According to Homans (1958), SET was one of the first theories of social behavior that gained popularity in the literature of sociology and social psychology. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) modified economic theory to develop the social exchange theory for the study of group social psychology, focusing on the relative costs and benefits of relationships and their implications for relationship satisfaction.

SET suggests that human behavior or social contact involves an exchange of activities, both tangible and intangible, particularly of rewards and costs (Homans, 1961). The theory examines how interaction behaviors are influenced by the structure of incentives and costs in a relationship (Molm, 1991). People behave in ways that enhance the positive outcomes they value and reduce the negative ones, and if the advantages of the exchange outweigh the costs, they will continue to engage in exchanges over time (Cook, Molm, and Yamagishi, 1993).

According to SET, individuals' attitudes toward tourism and their subsequent level of support for its development are influenced by their evaluations of the outcomes of tourism for themselves and their communities (Andereck *et al.*, 2005). After evaluating the benefits and the costs, people engaged in an exchange process and entered relationships to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages. Social trades are fundamentally different from economic ones in a number of ways. Benefit exchange is a voluntary act that includes undefined obligations in the future (Blau, 1964). The social exchange, according to SET, results in economic and/or social outcomes (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Tourism is considered a reliable strategy for job creation, infrastructure development, and development of community pride, among others, which aid in getting community cooperation in touristic development. However, it is not without controversy, as it is often associated with negative social, cultural, and environmental effects (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2007). The Social Exchange Theory is one of the key ideas used to explain tourism research (Chang, 2021; Gannon *et al.*, 2021), which hypothesizes a connection between elements that are favorable and unfavorable to certain activities.

Residents often weigh the advantages and disadvantages of engaging in social interactions or participating in activities before doing so (Thaichon *et al.*, 2018). If residents believe that the advantages of an event or activity exceed its drawbacks, they will see it favorably and could even act in ways that are supportive of it (Fredline, 2005). However, if they believe that the costs outweigh the benefits, they will start to have unfavorable views about an activity, which could cause them to stop supporting the celebration of the event since the conditions of trade will no longer be followed. SET suggests that residents are prepared to participate in the exchange provided they believe they will gain advantages from it that do not require them to shoulder unbearable expenses (Gursoy and Kendall, 2006).

Methodology

Study Area

The Ijesu Annual Festival in Ilara-Mokin, a fast-growing university town located in Ondo State, Nigeria, was used as the study area. The town is situated about 12 km from Akure, at latitude 7.204150°N and longitude 5.06700°E, with a population of around 45,000 people. The region has two distinct seasons: the wet season, which occurs from March to October with an average rainfall of 1900mm, and the dry season, which occurs from November to February (Ashaolu & Adebayo, 2014; Adu *et al.*, 2019). The average monthly temperature in the town is between 27°C and 30°C, and the average monthly relative humidity is below 70%. Ilara-Mokin has undergone significant development in the last decade, primarily due to the establishment of Elizade University and its Golf Course, which transformed the once peaceful rural area into a dynamic and rapidly expanding city. A majority of the population are Yorubas, who work as farmers, traders, and artisans. The Ijesu Festival is indigenously known as "Odun Ijesu", a "New Yam Festival" celebrated to commemorate the beginning of another agricultural year cycle. The event often features traditional prayer sessions by the Alara (King) of Ilara-Mokin, the presentation of gifts, and the preparation of indigenous meals, which are all usually made of yam as a vital ingredient.

A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect the data. The sampling frame included all residents who participated in the festival and were aged 18 years and older. Four-hundred questionnaires were conveniently distributed to participants, who were selected using the purposive sampling method based on their willingness to participate and direct experience with the festival.

The sample size was determined using a sample size calculator to ensure adequacy. Data was collected using hard copy questionnaires that consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions to gather information on participants' festival tourism perceptions, social exchange relationships, and overall festival experience.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics such as correlation analysis were used to test research hypotheses.

Ethical considerations were considered by ensuring that participants were informed about the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and their anonymity was ensured by not collecting any personal confidential information.

The researchers modified a scale that was developed by Gursoy *et al.* (2004) to collect data from the respondents. The economic effect was considered in terms of "increased employment opportunities", "increased standard of living", "locals encouraged to develop new facilities", and "increased sales and revenue". Social benefits were considered in terms of "provide more recreational opportunities", "promote organizations and businesses", "offer family-based recreation activities", "enhance community image to outsiders", "help foster relationships between residents and visitors", and "make people aware of culture", while Social costs were considered in terms of "increased traffic congestion", "pressure on local services", "increased crime rate", "overcrowding", "sexual abuse or prostitution", and "noise pollution".

Results

Socio-demographics

A descriptive analysis showed that most of the study participants were female (53.5%), between the ages of 34 and 41 (26.75%), married (65.75%), with 51.5 percent having tertiary educational qualifications, and Christians (66.5%). The majority of participants were indigenous to the community (74.5%) and employed (69%). The results of the demographic characteristics of participants are presented in the table below (Table 1).

A descriptive analysis of the perceived economic effects, social benefits, and social costs of festival tourism revealed interesting findings. The respondents demonstrated a moderately positive perception of the economic effects, indicating that festival tourism is believed to contribute to employment opportunities, the standard of living, and sales or revenue. This suggests that festival tourism has the potential to generate economic benefits for the local community, fostering growth and prosperity.

The respondents expressed a favorable perception of the social benefits associated with festival tourism. Festival tourism was perceived as providing recreational opportunities, promoting organizations and businesses, fostering relationships between residents and visitors, and raising awareness of the local culture. These findings highlight festival tourism's potential to enhance the social fabric of the community by offering enjoyable activities, strengthening community bonds, and promoting cultural exchange.

However, the respondents also expressed moderate concerns regarding the social costs associated with festival tourism. These concerns included increased traffic congestion, pressure on local services, crime rates, overcrowding, sexual abuse and prostitution, and noise pollution. These findings underscore the need for effective management strategies to mitigate the potential negative

Table 1. *Sample Demographic Characteristics*

| Gender | f | % |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Male | 186 | 46.5 |
| Female | 214 | 53.5 |
| Age | | |
| 18-25 | 68 | 17 |
| 26-33 | 77 | 19.3 |
| 34-41 | 107 | 26.7 |
| 42-49 | 102 | 25.5 |
| 50-above | 46 | 11.5 |
| Educational Qualification | | |
| No schooling | 0 | 0 |
| Primary | 46 | 11.5 |
| Secondary | 148 | 37 |
| Tertiary | 206 | 51.5 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Single | 84 | 21 |
| Married | 263 | 65.75 |
| Divorced | 12 | 3 |
| Widowed | 41 | 10.25 |
| Religion | | |
| Christianity | 266 | 66.5 |
| Muslim/Islam | 79 | 19.75 |
| Traditional | 55 | 13.75 |
| Indigen of the Community | | |
| Yes | 298 | 74.5 |
| No | 102 | 25.5 |
| Employment Status | | |
| Self-employed | 69 | 17.25 |
| Employed | 276 | 69 |
| Unemployed | 55 | 13.75 |

Table 2. *Descriptive Analysis: Items for Measuring Perceived Economic, Social Benefits, and Social Costs*

| ITEMS | Mean | SD |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| Perceived Economic Effects | | |
| Increase employment opportunities | 3.78 | 0.92 |
| Increase standard of living | 4.12 | 0.75 |
| Encourage locals to develop new facilities | 3.56 | 1.02 |
| Increase sales and revenue | 3.94 | 0.86 |
| Perceived Social Benefits | | |
| Provide more recreational opportunities | 4.08 | 0.79 |
| Promote organizations and businesses | 3.72 | 0.98 |
| Offer family-based recreation activities | 3.86 | 0.91 |
| Enhance community image to outsiders | 3.94 | 0.85 |
| Help foster relationship between residents and visitors | 4.16 | 0.77 |
| Make people aware of culture | 3.62 | 1.03 |
| Perceived Social Costs | | |
| Increase traffic congestion | 2.78 | 1.15 |
| Put pressure on local services (police, utilities, etc.) | 2.96 | 1.02 |
| Increase crime rate | 2.44 | 1.10 |
| Overcrowding | 2.68 | 1.05 |
| Sexual abuse or Prostitution | 1.98 | 1.05 |
| Noise pollution | 2.32 | 1.12 |

impacts of festival tourism. This includes implementing traffic management measures, ensuring adequate provision of local resources, and addressing safety concerns.

Table 3. *T-Test: Relationship between Gender and Perceived Economic Effect of Festival Tourism*

| | Male (n=186) | Female (n=214) | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Perceived Economic Effect | 3.75 | 4.10 | 2.30 | 0.000 |

The t-test results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceived economic effect of festival tourism between male and female respondents ($t(400) = 2.30, p = 0.000, \alpha = 0.05$). Female respondents ($F = 4.10$) perceived a higher economic effect compared to Male respondents ($M = 3.75$).

Table 4. *ANOVA: Relationship between Demographic Factors and Perceived Social Effects of Festival Tourism*

| | Male (n=186) | Female (n=214) | t-value | p-value |
|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Perceived Economic Effect | 3.75 | 4.10 | 2.30 | 0.000 |

The ANOVA results show that there is no significant relationship between age groups and the perceived social effects of festival tourism ($F(2, 397) = 1.78, p = 0.169, \alpha = 0.05$). Similarly, there is no significant relationship between education levels and perceived social effects ($F(3, 396) = 2.56, p = 0.057, \alpha = 0.05$). However, there is a significant relationship between employment types and perceived social effects ($F(2, 397) = 4.12, p = 0.003, \alpha = 0.05$).

Discussion

Tourism is a significant economic contributor in many countries, generating revenue and creating employment opportunities in sectors beyond the immediate tourist expenditure. Festival tourism is increasingly popular due to the unique cultural experiences that attract tourists and contribute to local community development. This study investigated the relationship between the demographic factors, attitudes, and perceptions of festival tourism using the Ijesu Festival in Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, Nigeria, as a case study.

An analysis of the perceived economic effects, social benefits, and social costs of festival tourism provided valuable insight into residents’ perceptions of festival tourism. The findings revealed that female respondents generally hold positive views regarding the economic benefits of festival tourism. They believe that festivals contributed to increased employment opportunities, a higher standard of living, and increased sales and revenue. These perceptions align with previous studies that highlighted the potential economic advantages of festival tourism (Agbabiaka, 2022; Doe et al., 2020; Imbeah et al., 2016). Positive economic effects can stimulate local development, improve the livelihoods of residents, and generate revenue for the community. Due to this effect, and the resilience of local people enable tourism events to grow and sustain the industry (Seraphin et al., 2019).

In terms of social benefits, the respondents expressed a favorable perception of festival tourism, which aligned with Zamani-Farahani, as residents found tourism favorable due to their influence on the outcomes related to tourism events and development. They believed that festivals provided more recreational opportunities, promoted local organizations and businesses, fostered relationships between residents and visitors, and raised awareness of the local culture. These findings were consistent with research emphasizing the social benefits of festivals, including the enhancement of community image, the promotion of cultural exchange, and the creation of social bonds (Agbabiaka, 2022; Yilmaz, 2020; Pope et al., 2017). Festival tourism can contribute to social cohesion and the well-being of a community by offering diverse and engaging activities for both residents and visitors.

However, respondents also acknowledged certain social costs associated with festival tourism. Concerns were raised regarding increased traffic congestion, pressure on local services, crime rates, overcrowding, sexual abuse and prostitution, and noise pollution. These findings highlighted the importance of effective planning and management strategies to address these potential negative impacts. It is crucial to develop sustainable tourism practices that minimize social costs and maximize the benefits for the local community (Krems & Gurbanli, 2022). This can involve implementing traffic control measures, ensuring the provision of adequate resources, fostering community engagement, and promoting responsible behavior among festival attendees.

The gender analysis revealed a significant difference in the perceived economic effect of festival tourism between male and female respondents. Female respondents perceived a higher economic effect compared to their male counterparts. This finding may be attributed to gender-based variations in perception, roles, and expectations within the community. Future studies could delve deeper into understanding the underlying factors contributing to this difference.

Regarding the demographic factors of age, education, and employment type, the analysis showed no significant relationship

with the perceived social effects of festival tourism. While age and education did not exhibit significant associations, employment type emerged as a significant predictor of perceived social effects. This suggests that individuals employed in different sectors may have varying perceptions of the social impacts of festival tourism. Further research could explore the specific mechanisms through which employment type influences these perceptions and inform targeted strategies for engaging different occupational groups.

The findings of the study indicated that social exchange theory, which posits that individuals engage in interactions with others based on the exchange of rewards and costs, is applicable in the context of festival tourism. Tourists engage in the exchange of economic and social benefits, such as the consumption of products and services, social interaction with the local community, and cultural experiences, respectively. Different demographic groups prioritize different types of rewards and costs in the exchange of benefits, shaping their tourism perception and behavior.

Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

In this study, we investigated residents' perceptions and attitudes towards festival tourism and its impact on host community cooperation. The study explored how demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education influenced residents' perceptions and attitudes towards festival tourism. The study gave insights into the function of festival tourism in fostering sustainable tourism development by employing a Social Exchange analysis. The research determined the perceptions of residents based on perceived economic benefits, social benefits, and social costs. Hypotheses were tested between gender and perceived economic benefits as well as demographic factors and perceived social effects of Festival Tourism.

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that demographic factors are significant in shaping tourism perception and the economic impact of festival tourism in the community. Specifically, the study highlights the importance of considering gender, age, education, and employment type when developing festival tourism products and services. To maximize the economic benefits and minimize the social and environmental costs of festival tourism, it is crucial to develop innovative and sustainable festival tourism products and services that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of different demographic groups.

Therefore, festival organizers, community leaders, and tourism operators must create strategies that balance the economic advantages of festival tourism with the social and cultural values of the community to ensure the long-term success of festival tourism. Tourism officials and community leaders should develop effective policies and programs to increase residents' support through these perceived benefits. The theoretical models shed light on how residents' perceptions of festival tourism influence their support for tourism development and inform the development of strategies to enhance community involvement and support.

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