

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE OF A MUSIC FESTIVAL, SUBJECTIVE NORMS, SATISFACTION, AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to study the correlation between perceived experience of music festivals, subjective norms, satisfaction, and electronic word of mouth intention from the Cat Expo Music Festival. The researchers observe that there is a gap about Thai music festival study, therefore this research should help contribute to this area which will be beneficial to the music festival entrepreneur. The researchers collected 432 surveys together with responses from 20 interviewees to gain robust data in both the qualitative and quantitative spheres. The results fill the gap, the results show that there is a correlation between perceived experience and satisfaction among the Cat Expo Music Festival goers. Furthermore, satisfaction among the festival attendees also correlates with their intention to spread electronic word of mouth. All in all, the festival entrepreneur can apply the finding from this study to the festival that will be held in the future, as this research also show the consisting components that create satisfactory experience, which in turn, if perceived experience is rated high, it correlates with the satisfaction and intention to spread eWOM.

Keywords: Music Festival, Perceived Experience, Satisfaction, eWOM.

INTRODUCTION

Creative tourism has become a significant area of focus in the tourism industry (Richards, 2011; Richards & Raymond, 2000) as trends have shifted from mass tourism, such as coastal tourism, in the first era to cultural tourism in the second era (Designated Area for Sustainable Tourism Administration, 2011). Agha and Taks (2015) claim that mass tourism, which is abundant and large in scale, has become too commodified and, as a result, makes tourists feel less pleasure when they travel (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckertb, 2016). Therefore, demand for meaningful touristic activities exists, which has led to the development of creative tourism.

Creative tourism in Thailand could be divided into many spheres. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), music is listed as one of the creative products in the concentric circle model (2010). Moreover, the economic policy of the 11th National Economic and Social Development (NESD) plan in 2008 stated that the tourism industry is considered one of the key economic sectors that make a significant contribution to the development of the country. The NESDB proposed that the tourism industry could introduce new products to drive the development of the sector and strengthen Thailand's position as a leading tourist destination worldwide (Wattanacharoensil & Schuckertb, 2016).

Music festivals are a product of creative tourism and as such have become opportunities for locals and the country as a whole to attract tourists from around the globe. Music festivals largely achieve profitability in Europe and America (Hiller, 2014). Coachella, a well-known music festival in the US, earned \$114 million in 2017 (Brooks, 2017). The Glastonbury music festival in England earned \$42.4 million in 2014 (Dakers, 2015). Summer Sonic, one of the largest rock music festivals in Asia, based in Japan, attracted 40,000 visitors to the venue in one day in 2018 (Michel, 2018).

Music festivals contribute to and positively impact tourism as they make favourable impressions on tourists (Duarte et al., 2018) and because of their ability to generate income for the economy (Vecco & Srakar, 2017; Shuib et al., 2013). Moreover, they provide opportunities to expose a nation's cultural vision to the tourists (Lee, 2017). Given the aforementioned significances and their contributions to the host country, music festivals which are held on a regular basis also make their localities become tourist destinations.

Music festivals are an intriguing player in tourism; however, studies about music festivals are still rare in Asia, especially in Thailand. Therefore, the researchers wish to fill this gap by studying the correlation between perceived experience of a music festival, subjective norms, satisfaction, and eWOM intention. Furthermore, the researchers believe that the finding from this research will contribute to the strategic management in the future. CAT Expo Music Festival is one of the most successful music festivals in Thailand, as it is the largest indie music festival in Thailand (Terrens, 2018). Therefore, the researchers use this festival as a case study. The aims of this research are:

1. To explore the correlation between perceived quality of music festivals, comprising programs, information, convenience, esthetics, and price, with tourist' satisfaction and intention to spread word of mouth;
2. To explore the correlation between subjective norms and tourist' satisfaction and intention to spread word of mouth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Music festivals are defined as events with duration and space limits, which develop a specific artistic project, and which take place at regular intervals (Négrier et al., 2013). Musical themes are key differentials that categorize music festivals (Getz & Page, 2016). However, country, jazz, folk, and blues festivals usually account for over half of all such events. Among all other types of festivals, music festivals are usually considered the largest when measured by audience size (Vesci & Botti, 2019). As the objective of this research is to find the correlation between perceived experience of music festivals, subjective norms, satisfaction, and electronic word of mouth intention; therefore, the research will introduce each variable that will be used in the conceptual framework in this research. The variables are comprised of components of experience in music festival, subjective norms, satisfaction in festival, and electronic word of mouth intention.

Dimensions of Quality Experience in Music Festivals

Many studies attempt to find the key elements of a successful music festival. However, before one knows what makes a festival appealing, one should also know the significant attributes which facilitate satisfactory outcomes of such a festival. Rivera et al. (2015) have tested Pine & Gilmore's (1998) experience economy framework, which is traditionally

composed of four domains: education, entertainment, escapism, and esthetics; the study from Rivera et al. (2015), however, shows that there is another important domain that creates a memorable experience among music festival attendees. That domain is economic value. Rivera et al. (2015) then applied the experience economy framework from Pine & Gilmore (1998) to the 5E's of the festival experience, which will be used in this research as a framework.

The 5E's involved in the festival experience according to Rivera et al. (2015) are education, entertainment, escapism, aesthetics, and economic value, on which the researchers focus as independent variables in this study, while satisfaction and spreading word of mouth intention are dependent variables. Education in the festival context pertains to when the festival goers believe attendance of the festival elevates their learning experience (Wood & Moss, 2015). This could come in the form of physical self-growth or intellectual self-growth. Entertainment at festivals is one of the vital factors facilitating a pleasurable experience for the festival attendees. Entertainment is experienced when the participants passively watch others' performances and they feel satisfied (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Getz & Page (2016) suggests that people sometimes search for a product and/or service that offers them exposure to different experiences and helps them temporarily escape their daily routine. This explains how the escapism dimension works in a festival context. People sometimes explore ways to revitalize their lives, by attending concerts and going to theme parks for example (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Esthetics in relation to festivals is about the overall physical ambience or mood of the festival (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Economic value is when the festival goers believe that the price they pay is worth the experience they gain from the event (Rivera et al., 2015).

Social Factors and Subjective Norms in Festival Attendance

Many studies have examined the various spheres of social impact related to the occurrence of festivals, such as Pavluković et al. (2017) and Yilmaz (2020). The occurrence of festivals affects society in many ways, including impacts on the host communities (Pavluković et al., 2017) and on social dimensions among the festival attendees (Yilmaz, 2020). According to Kinnunen et al. (2020), attendance of a festival can create bonds among the attendees while they attend the festival. There is a high probability that they feel such bonds when they share mutual memorable experiences. Moreover, the festival attendees may avail themselves of the benefits of sharing experiences with the other festival attendees and make new friends, referred to by Kinnunen et al. (2020) as "*bridging*" in social contexts.

Moreover, the attendance of festivals, especially among adolescents, can help create a sense of community among them and their friends as the experience facilitates collectivism and action from shared enjoyment (Wilks, 2011). When the shared sense of community lasts, a sense of belonging, which shows the shared social identity, follows, such as in the cases of immigrants and refugees or the fans of musicians (Rihova et al., 2015).

Satisfaction and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Satisfaction often predominates among festival attendees during or after their experiences at a festival. According to previous research about festivals from Yoon et al. (2010), and Tkaczynski & Stokes (2010), despite differing approaches and the different attributes of

festivals, festival quality and satisfaction are consistent; additionally, festival quality is antecedent to festival satisfaction among festival goers.

Customer satisfaction is a vital factor of long-term behaviour among customers, and there have been many studies over the decades about the relationship between these two variables. Satisfaction affects and influences a customer's future behavioural intention (Tudoran et al., 2012). The customer's future behavioural intention can be categorized into five possibilities: positive word of mouth (WOM); recommendation of product or service to others; loyalty or revisit intention; possibility to spend more on product or service; and possibility to escalate spending on premium products or services of the same provider. This research focuses on the aspects of satisfaction and WOM (Cantallos & Salvi, 2014).

As the world becomes borderless due to advanced communication and transportation technology, online communication is considered a trustworthy communication equivalent to offline channels, especially when the message sender is one whom the message receiver knows (Williams et al., 2015; Moran & Muzellec, 2014), such as friends, family, and celebrities. Strutton et al. (2011) say that the common online communication platforms generally used are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Moreover, Strutton et al. (2011) say that music festival attendees can use online communication platforms to create conversations about the music events they attend, whether to encourage, review, or sabotage the events' reputations. Furthermore, several online communication channels allow people to provide real-time feedback; subsequent discussions are held, which can be advantageous to those looking for reviews in order to make a decision about attending a festival (Williams et al., 2015; Moran & Muzellec, 2014). Moreover, Kim et al. (2015) say that music festival attendees are likely to pass on eWOM if they find the festival experience is memorable and have provided satisfaction.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

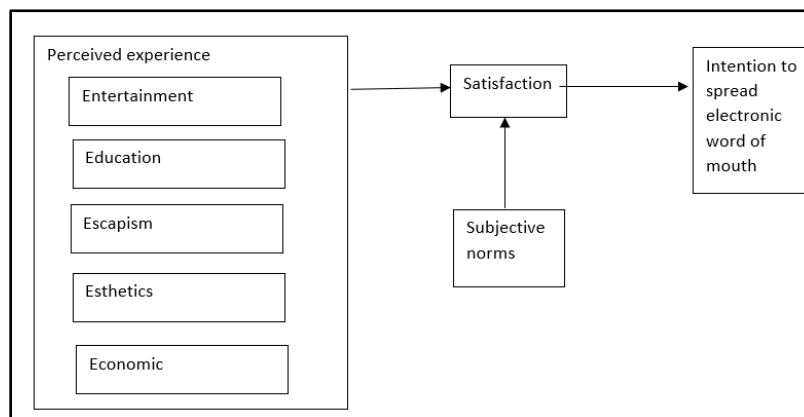


FIGURE 1

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

From the review of the literature, the research hypothesis of this research is there is a correlation among perceived experience of the festivals, subjective norms, satisfaction, and electronic word of mouth intention. And the research framework is developed to the Figure 1.

RESEARCH METHODS

Population and Sample

The researchers select CAT Expo Music Festival (CEMF) as a field to collect the data. Given the significance that, CEMF is the largest indie music festival in Thailand (Terrens, 2018). Therefore, this research requires questionnaire respondents with experience attending the Cat Expo Music Festival; however, the number of CEMF attendees is unknown. Therefore, the researchers used a formula to calculate the sample size for an unknown population size. The desired sample size calculation is 385 samples. However, to avoid insufficient data, the researchers sent out 450 surveys; 432 surveys were considered eligible for data analysis. For the qualitative data sphere, the researchers conduct in-depth interview with 20 samples who attended CEMF.

Data Collection

This research includes three stages of data collection, which entail both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to extract robust data from music festival attendees. After the researchers reviewed the literature and designed the questionnaire, the researchers tested them with a pilot group containing 30 samples. And data collection is comprised of three stages. In the first stage, the researchers found the pilot sample by posting invitations on the researchers' personal social media channels asking Cat EXPO goers last year to complete the survey. After the 30 pilot samples completed the questionnaire, the researchers corrected word choices according to suggestions from the pilot group to clarify the language used in the questionnaire.

In the second stage, the researchers collected samples by using the simple sampling technique. The researchers attended both days of CEMF and manually handed out the surveys at the exit gates of the festival. For the final question of the survey, the researchers asked the respondents to leave their telephone numbers if they were interested in giving interviews about the festival afterward.

In the third stage, after the researchers ran the survey data, the researchers called the respondents who had left telephone numbers. Of the 35 respondents who left their numbers, only 20 respondents were available to participate in a phone interview session due to time and other constraints. At this stage, the researchers conducted in-depth phone interviews with the 20 samples.

Data Analysis

Validity and reliability are significant to the credibility of the research. The researchers created a questionnaire survey based on the literature reviewed, together with three expert reviewers' opinions; the Cronbach's alpha value of the research instrument is 0.85. After that, the researchers analysed correlation coefficient to find the correlation between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting 432 surveys, the researchers found that the music tourist samples who attended CEMF were 51.50% female (240 samples), and a total of 49.14% (229 samples) had an

age range of 21-30 years old. The average income calculated from 143 samples (30.69%) is 10,001-20,000 THB. With regard to the perceived experience of the music festival among the samples, the levels of correlation were (1) entertainment, $\bar{x}=4.35$, $SD=0.72$; (2) esthetics, $\bar{x}=4.21$, $SD=0.74$; (3) escapism and economic, $\bar{x}=3.89$, $SD=1.14$; and (4) education $\bar{x}=3.79$, $SD=1.18$. All in all, the respondents experienced satisfaction with the festival, and $\bar{x}=4.23$, and $SD=0.59$ show very high correlation.

The results from the interviews also show that the attendees who participated in the Cat Expo Music Festival seemed to be happy and felt positive about the festival, with the researchers simply ask them the question, “*Are you satisfied with the festival?*” and their answers expressing high degrees of contentment, such as being very satisfied with the event or the event being very enjoyable.

Table 1 THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION AMONG THE MUSIC TOURIST RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED CAT EXPO MUSIC FESTIVAL		
Perceived Experienced Attributes	Correlation Coefficient	
	r	p
Entertainment	0.378**	0.000
Education	0.101**	0.044
Escapism	0.110**	0.029
Esthetics	0.315**	0.000
Economic	0.110**	0.029
Perceive Experience	0.224**	0.029
*Statistically significant level is 0.01		

The results from Table 1 show that the correlation between perceived experience, which is composed of entertainment, education, escapism, aesthetics, and economic, correlate with the satisfaction of the music tourists who attended the Cat Expo Music Festival. The correlation coefficient value shows that entertainment ($r=0.378$), and aesthetics ($r=0.315$) have low correlation, while escapism ($r=0.110$), economic ($r=0.110$), and education ($r=0.101$) have very low correlation; the statistically significant level is 0.01.

When the researchers called the respondents, who were willing to give interviews, the researchers asked them to talk about the perceived experiences that impressed them with the Cat Expo Music Festival. Many of the interviewees responded that they were impressed with the program and the entertainment value gained. This factor was also a priority when making the decision on whether to attend the festival. Moreover, the aesthetics of the festival played a significant role in their enjoyment of the festival ambience.

Table 2 THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE NORMS AND SATISFACTION AMONG THE MUSIC TOURIST RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE CAT EXPO MUSIC FESTIVAL		
Subjective norms	Correlation Coefficient	
	r	p
Social factors that influence music attendees	0.101**	0.044
*Statistically significant level is 0.01.		

The result from Table 2 shows the correlation between subjective norms and satisfaction among music tourist respondents who attended the Cat Expo Music Festival by finding the correlation coefficient value (r). The researchers found that subjective norms, which include social factors and social agents that influence the music tourist respondents, such as friends, family, and artist, have moderate correlation ($r=0.044$). The statistically significant level is 0.01.

As the researchers mentioned above, many of the interviewees decided to attend the music festival mostly due to the influence of the artists or because of the show program that they were interested in. Moreover, when the researchers solicited details when they attended the music festival, the interviewees explained that they were content with the festival not only because of the artists, but also because of the social agents that accompanied the festival. In addition, the bonds they co-created when they attended the music festival with their peers facilitated contentment and satisfaction with the event.

Table 3 THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN SATISFACTION AMONG THE MUSIC TOURIST RESPONDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE CAT EXPO MUSIC FESTIVAL AND INTENTION TO SPREAD ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH		
Intention to spread electronic word of mouth	Correlation Coefficient	
	r	p
I will boast about via an online platform that I attended the Cat Expo Music Festival.	0.494**	0.000
I will talk about the Cat Expo Music Festival in a positive way on an online platform.	0.600**	0.000
I will use an online platform to recommend the Cat Expo Music Festival to people I know.	0.603**	0.000
Intention to spread electronic word of mouth	0.639**	0.000
*Statistically significant level is 0.01.		

The results from Table 3 show that the correlation coefficient between satisfaction among music tourist respondents who attended the Cat Expo Music Festival and the intention to spread electronic word of mouth has high correlation ($r=0.639$). If the researchers rank the statement of intention to spread electronic word of mouth with satisfaction from high correlation to lesser correlation it would be: I will use an online platform to recommend the Cat Expo Music Festival to people I know ($r=0.603$) has high correlation with satisfaction; I will talk about the Cat Expo Music Festival in a positive way on an online platform ($r=0.315$) and I will boast about via an online platform that I attended the Cat Expo Music Festival ($r=0.494$) have moderate correlation. All the calculations have a statistically significant level of 0.01.

The correlation between satisfaction with the Cat Expo Music Festival among the music attendees and the intention to spread electronic word of mouth show high correlation, in accordance with literature reviews from Kim et al. (2015) and Moran & Muzellec (2014) which state that music festival attendees are likely to spread electronic word of mouth when festivals are memorable and satisfactory; which relates to the previous study by Rivera et al. (2015) that if the experience perceived by the festival goers is rated satisfied, they tend to have a future positive behaviour related to the festival, such as intend to visit the festival in the future, or spread positive testimonial to the public. As per the researchers' phone interviews with the interviewees, the interviewees said that if they are happy with the festival, there is no reason they would not spread electronic word of mouth online. They feel like sharing the positive

experiences related to something they are interested in. This would be advantageous to them when they look back at the posts in the future as they will be able to reminisce about the events. Moreover, it can be an advantage to others who are exposed to the electronic word of mouth as they may find this information useful when deciding on whether to attend the festival in the future; as the previous study from Hoksbergen & Insch (2016) finds that nowadays social media platform allows festival goers to share their real time experience to others which may be considered a promising testimonial and public relations of the festival to the festival entrepreneur in the future.

CONCLUSION

The research from this study shows that there is a correlation between the perceived experience of the festival and satisfaction among the Cat Expo Music Festival goers. Furthermore, satisfaction among the festival attendees also correlates with the intention to spread electronic word of mouth. Since the introduction of this research mentions creative tourism, of which music festivals are a product that can generate revenue for the country, the researchers intend for this study to contribute to both the academic and music festival entrepreneur spheres by using the results of this research to strategically develop the music festival experience among festival goers, subsequently driving satisfaction, intention to spread electronic word of mouth, and the overall industry in the future. As this research already shows the correlation among perceived experience and satisfaction among the festival goers, festival entrepreneur may consider to apply this finding to add value in festival in the future by bring creativity and innovation to elevate experience among the festival goers. Moreover, the future research could explore more about the perceived service quality of the festival, which may be used the SERVQUAL model, the model that has been used most when measuring service quality in the research.

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