



The Role of Relationship in Determining Event Satisfaction Attributes

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Introduction

Past research supports the notion that healthy relationships promote positive physical health, psychological well-being, and can increase adults' quality of life (Schoenborn, 2004). Travel has been identified as one of the means to strengthen relationships (Petrick & Huether, 2013). For example, Li & Petrick (2005) found that attending a festival can be an opportunity to escape from daily routines and improve family togetherness (Li & Petrick, 2005). In examining the impact of vacation satisfaction on relationship commitment, Durko & Petrick (2016) found satisfaction to be the strongest antecedent of the various types of loyalty (Durko & Petrick, 2016). Due to the above, the current study is grounded in the investment model, which posits that relationship loyalty is strengthened by how satisfied one is with the relationship, investments in the relationship, and the quality of alternatives to the relationship.

Since satisfaction with the relationship has historically been found to be the best predictor of relationship loyalty, the current study will attempt to better understand how attributes of satisfaction with a relationship (in this case a festival) vary depending on the type of relationship one is in. Past research has found that marital status is a significant factor in leisure time use (Lee & Bhargava, 2004) and that compared to single individuals, married individuals spend less time on leisure. While the determinants of satisfaction have been studied extensively, to the best of the current researchers' knowledge, no previous studies have examined the relationship between the relationship status and satisfaction attributes in the context of event and festivals. This study seeks to address the impact of relationship status on event satisfaction attributes, specifically, three groups (single, married, in a relationship) are examined in the context of event and festival satisfaction.

Literature Review

QUALITY ATTRIBUTES AS ANTECEDENTS OF SATISFACTION

Service quality is one particular attribute that has consistently been found to be a strong predictor of satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Similarly, (Mason & Nassivera, 2013) suggested that overall satisfaction is a function of the total consumer experience and is based on quality attributes and information from the provider (i.e., festival satisfaction) as well as quality attributes from the products consumed at an event. Each of these studies suggest that improving service quality will likely increase visitor satisfaction, although it is not the sole driver of satisfaction.

Pertinent to this study, Tanford & Jung (2017) performed a meta-analysis of festival attributes and their relationship with satisfaction and loyalty. Their analysis included over 66 articles relating to festival attributes, satisfaction, and loyalty. From those studies, they identified 23 attributes which they were able to combine and condense into 6 attributes. These attributes included: activities, authenticity, concessions, environment, escape, and socialization (Tanford & Jung, 2017). Because not all of these attributes are controllable by festival organizers, the present study will focus on four specific attributes: activities and entertainment, souvenirs, facilities, and information services.

Yoon et al. (2010) developed or adapted scales based on previous research (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Crompton & Love, 1995) (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Crompton and Love, 1995; City, 2005). They found all of the measured attributes had significant factor loadings between .61

and .84 (Yoon et al., 2010). Hence, this study will adapt those scales to measure the 4 identified attributes: activities & entertainment, souvenirs, facilities, and information services.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND SATISFACTION

Extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between marital or relationship status and life satisfaction (Ball & Robbins, 1986; Botha & Booyesen, 2013; Chipperfield & Havens, 2001; Han et al., 2014; Jung & Ellison, 2022; Zhu et al., 2018), job satisfaction (Kemunto et al., 2018; Knerr, 2006; Olatunji & Mokuolu, 2014; Ouyang et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2020), and residential satisfaction (Ball & Robbins, 1986; Botha & Booyesen, 2013; Chipperfield & Havens, 2001; Galster & Hesser, 1981; Han et al., 2014; Jiboye, 2012; Jung & Ellison, 2022; Onibokun, 1976; Wang et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2018). Several studies have also found a link between marital status and vacation satisfaction (Gregory & Fu, 2018; Kang et al., 2018; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1985), and others have found that vacation satisfaction can translate to relationship satisfaction (Andriotis et al., 2008; Cai et al., 2020; Durko & Petrick, 2016; Hoopes & Lounsbury, 1989).

The above studies suggest the importance of understanding the determinants of satisfaction, in order to increase loyalty. However, the current authors were unable to find any studies which have assessed the impact of relationship status on the satisfaction attributes of events. Hence, the current study will attempt to better understand how attributes of satisfaction with a relationship (in this case a festival) vary depending on the type of relationship one is in.

Methodology

Attributes of event satisfaction were operationalized with four variables, informational services, activities/entertainment, souvenirs, and facilities, and are based on Yoon et al.'s. (2010) validated measurement scales. A broad survey of Gen X and Millennial tourism festival goers was conducted via an online panel. The population for the current study was those who have traveled to attend a tourism festival in the past ten years. An initial total of 798 surveys were submitted. Upon screening, a total of 403 complete responses were used in the analysis. Results revealed that of respondents, 334 were married couples, 49 single individuals, and 20 in a relationship.

The composite scores of the four event attributes were used as dependent variables in the analysis. Based on previous research indicating that relationship status significantly moderated life satisfaction (Zhu et al., 2018), the authors hypothesized that relationship status would play a significant role in separating the four event satisfaction attributes, with married couples differing significantly than those that are single or in a relationship.

A linear descriptive discriminant function analysis (DFA) was performed to analyze the extent to which the four event satisfaction attributes can distinguish between groups. DFA is a multivariate statistical method that serves to set up a model to predict group memberships (Büyüköztürk & Çokluk-Bökeoğlu, 2008). While it has been recommended that DFA can be a more appropriate technique for multivariate post hoc testing procedure to MANOVA, when there is only one grouping variable, DFA generates all the information required to identify and interpret notable effects, with no need for a prior MANOVA (Huberty & Olejnik, 2006; Smith et al., 2020). This multivariate analysis was chosen as the study hoped to reveal differences among the three relationship status (single, married, in a relationship) on all four outcomes simultaneously. The DFA was conducted using STATA's "candisc" command (Stata Corp, 2019). The assumptions of DFA were examined including outliers, multivariate normality, linearity, and homogeneity of covariance matrices among the three levels of relationship status factor.

Results

Outliers were checked using studentized residual value. Using the absolute value of studentized residual value greater than 3 as cutoff, a total of 19 responses were considered extreme outliers and were dropped from the analysis. Results of the multivariate Doornik-Hansen test were statistically significant ($X^2=185.386$, $p<0.001$), suggesting violation of the multivariate normality assumption. Results of Box's M test were also statistically significant, suggesting covariance matrices of informational services, activities/entertainment, souvenirs, and facilities were not the same across the groups ($X^2= 41.83$, $p=0.0029$). Brusseau & Burns's (2018) reported similar violations of multivariate normality and equality of covariance matrices (Brusseau & Burns, 2018), indicating perhaps it is not uncommon to encounter issues such as this in multivariate analysis. Stevens (1996) argued that discriminant function analyses are robust to multivariate normality and homogeneity of covariance matrices violations, but cautions should be made when interpreting the results (Stevens, 2012).

Results indicated that DFA correctly classified 53.38% of respondents into the three groups (relative to 33.33% chance rate). Two discriminant functions (*df*) were yielded. A closer examination of the first *df* produced the majority of the between-group discriminant power (94.81%) and is statistically significant ($F(8, 756) = 3.84$, $p<0.001$). The second *df* explained the remainder of the variance but was not statistically significant ($F(3, 379) = 0.45$, $p=0.65$). The standardized function coefficients were -0.45, -0.97, 0.10, and 1.37 for informational services, activities, souvenirs, and facilities, respectively. The canonical loadings for *df*-1 were negative for activities/entertainment, and informational services, but positive for facilities and souvenirs; implying that facilities and souvenirs, and to a lesser extent activities/entertainment, and informational services distinguished between groups, such that married couples reported markedly higher facilities and souvenir scores but lower activities/entertainment and informational services score than the singles and in a relationship groups. This suggests that for married couples, facilities and souvenirs are stronger drivers of satisfaction. Further, the second function suggests that singles' satisfaction is driven by activities and entertainment more so than married couples or those in a relationship.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics: average informational services, activities/entertainment, souvenirs, and facilities as a function of relationship status (means and standard deviations)

Group	n	Information Services	Activities	Souvenirs	Facilities
Single	48	5.79 (0.97)	5.87 (0.97)	5.75 (0.97)	5.74 (0.98)
Married	317	5.74 (0.80)	5.75 (0.84)	5.92 (0.87)	5.94 (0.86)
In A Relationship	19	6.03 (1.11)	6.06 (1.18)	5.84 (1.20)	5.54 (1.35)
Total	384	5.76 (0.84)	5.78 (0.88)	5.90 (0.90)	5.90 (1.01)

Table 2. Correlations among informational services, activities/entertainment, souvenirs, and facilities

	1	2	3	4
Informational services	1			
activities/entertainment	0.88*	1		
souvenirs	0.69*	0.67*	1	
facilities	0.70*	0.71*	0.76*	1

*p<.05

Table 3. Classification table derived from the discriminant function

	Single	Married	In A Relationship	Total
Single	10 20.83%	23 47.92%	15 31.25%	48 100%
Married	78 24.61%	188 59.31%	51 16.09%	317 100%
In A Relationship	4 21.05%	8 42.11%	7 36.84%	20 100%
Total	92 23.96%	219 57.03%	73 19.01%	384 100%

Notes: $F(8, 756)=3.84, p<0.001$; Classification accuracy of 53.38% relative to chance (33.33%). Eigenvalues were $c_1=0.078, c_2=0.004$.

Conclusion and Discussion

THEORETICAL IMPLILCATIONS

The Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980) was initially developed to assess commitment to an interpersonal relationship, and has since been used to assess commitment or loyalty to a variety of other types of relationships, including: including business and marketing (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), tourism (Durko & Petrick, 2016; Li & Petrick, 2008), organizational behaviour (Fu, 2011), healthcare (Chiu et al., 2021), and education (Zainol et al., 2018). However, studies of satisfaction and loyalty have typically focused on attributes or factors that drive satisfaction and by extension loyalty, but they have not generally considered that relationship status could indicate specific attributes or factors which may impact satisfaction. The current study suggests that relationship

status could be a key factor in differentiating whose satisfaction is driven by specific attributes and factors and that relationship status should be included when trying to understand determinants of satisfaction with a relationship. This suggests that when trying to understand how satisfaction is formulated, it is likely important to include relationship status as a moderating variable.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This cross-sectional study suggests that event managers can improve satisfaction among married attendees by enhancing the facilities and souvenirs available at their event. Specifically, maintaining clean restrooms, having convenient parking and well-maintained rest areas can improve satisfaction among married couples attending events. Further, having a good variety of high-quality souvenirs at reasonable prices can also enhance satisfaction among married couples. Event managers are likely to increase satisfaction among all attendees by improving facilities and souvenirs, however, according to this research, it is likely to have a greater impact on married couples than on singles or those in relationships.

For event attendees that are single, this research suggests that event managers should focus on the activities and entertainment to increase satisfaction. In particular, the event managers should provide a variety of entertainment and activities that are well managed and well organized. These activities and entertainment should be fun and enjoyable to improve satisfaction among attendees. While these factors are likely to improve satisfaction among all attendees, the research suggests they will have a stronger impact on singles than married couples or those in relationships.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should look at additional attributes of festivals and events to determine the role relationship status has on other satisfaction attributes. This would give marketers additional ammunition to use to market to specific groups. Future research should also include younger and older generations as this study was limited to Gen X and Millennials. Further studies should also consider attendees of local festivals instead of limiting it to tourism festivals to determine if there are variations in satisfaction attribute ratings between local and tourism festivals. Finally, satisfaction research should consider the role of relationship as a moderating variable.

LIMITATIONS

The research was only conducted online and during one weekend, and thus could have precluded individuals who work on weekends or do not have internet access. Future research should consider using multiple panels and collecting the data over a broader timeframe. This study was also limited to Gen X and Millennials and thus may not be generalizable to other age groups. Finally, the research only considered those attending tourism festivals where the respondent stayed overnight, and thus may not be applicable to local or regional festivals and events.

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