

Chapter 1

Segmentation of Visitors to Contribute to the Sustainability of a Cultural Festival in an Emerging Country

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing satisfaction and intention to visit the Loja International Living Arts Festival (Festival Internacional de Artes Vivas Loja), by analysing the visitors' sociodemographic variables, media sources for festival information, and recommendation and evaluation variables. We used cluster analysis to segment a sample of 314 festival attendees, and then, we investigated the differences between the different profiles of attendees. The research contributes to

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the Theory of Planned Behavior by exploring which factors are significant in the decision to attend cultural events. The findings demonstrate the impact of both internal and external factors on recommendation and evaluation, with communication channels playing a significant role in influencing these factors. By identifying the sociodemographic profiles of attendees and the influential media sources, this study highlights the importance of developing well-informed guidelines tailored to specific attendee groups to ensure the sustainability of cultural festivals in emerging countries like Ecuador.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Loja International Living Arts Festival (FIAVL) originated from the construction of the Benjamín Carrión National Theater in 2013, which marked the beginning of performing arts in the province of Loja. Subsequently, in 2014, the first meeting of performing arts organizers and producers took place, accompanied by various workshops. The announcement of FIAVL was made on the “Citizens Outreach” TV and radio show, hosted by the Ecuadorian government on August 30th, 2014, taking the Avignon festival in France as a model (Ministerio de Cultura y Patrimonio, 2018). These festivals are especially important in emerging countries as they contribute to the economic growth of the host cities. In the case of Loja, Ecuador, the development of FIAVL in 2017 resulted in a 52% increase in visitor numbers compared to the previous year (Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, 2017). Given the significance of these events, it is relevant to analyze the factors that influence tourists' attendance. Previous literature suggested that this can be achieved by examining variables related to visitors' sociodemographic profiles, travel behavior, and their use of social networks to gather information about the event (Collins & Potoglou, 2019; Castillo-Canalejo et al., 2020; Hermann et al. 2019; Kruger & Saayman, 2017). How tourists travel to festivals is also influential, as this variable allows for the identification of travel behavior theories and the internal and external factors that affect attendance, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the event (Collins & Potoglou, 2019). The analysis of social networks reveals a distinct approach to reaching consumers of cultural events by examining the interaction between consumers and festival brands in the market. Hudson et al. (2015) found that this interaction is related to visitors' emotional attachment to the festival, which, in turn, directly impacts “word-of-mouth marketing,” influencing loyalty and visitation. While some studies have explored variables related to attendance at cultural events and consumer preferences in emerging destinations, most have focused on tourism expenditure (Chalip et al., 2003; Báez-Montenegro & Devesa, 2020; Snowball & Antrobus, 2021; Borges et al., 2016; Pulido-Fernández,

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