

Factors that Motivate Tourists' in Visiting the Cultural Festivals: A Study of Meghalaya Region Festivals

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Abstract

Festivals are fast-growing tourism segments, which is considered an important tool for promoting and understanding market segmentation based on tourists' motivation. Identifying tourists' motivation has been a key requirement that leads to tourism development and improvement, it also facilitates marketers, stakeholders, and decision-makers to formulate efficient marketing strategies, improve and enhance the satisfaction and leisure of the tourists throughout the festivals. The main purpose of the study is to identify the factors that attract tourists visiting Meghalaya to attend the various cultural festivals; eighteen festival motivation variables were formed based on various literatures and reduced to three dimensions by Factor analysis. Also, these motivational factors were examined to confirm if there is any statistical significance between the demographic variables by using ANOVA and T-Test. The results indicate that "Change from everyday life" and "Friends and family togetherness" are the most important factors for tourists visiting the cultural festivals in Meghalaya.

Keyword: Festivals; Cultural; Meghalaya; Tourists; Motivation

Introduction

Festivals are essential to every single society and it has developed into the fastest emergent tourist attractions for the past two decades (Thrane, 2002; Insun et al., 2012). The growth of festivals within tourism has opened up in organizing various festivals events which act as a motivator of tourism. However, these festivals do not attract the same level of tourist attention because of the lack of uniqueness. Among the various festivals, cultural festival has emerged and has attracted tourist attention as niche tourism attractions. In general, tourists are fascinated by learning various cultures; therefore, the originality of the festivals motivates individuals to travel (Casteran, Roederer, 2013; Robinson, Clifford, 2012).

The celebration of cultural festival play a vital role in the identity and revitalization of local communities, create jobs and improve trade (Ferdinand, Williams, 2013). The rising of cultur-

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al festivals can strengthen the cultural roots and principles and facilitate the preservation of traditions as well (Jauhari, Munjal, 2015). In several parts of the world, festivals are resources to attract tourists. It has developed into immense importance to countless people particularly the areas where tradition, customs, and principles of the society are still being upheld. Cultural festivals lure people from various cultures and backgrounds to come together for social interaction, exchange of local knowledge and practices (Agbabiaka, 2016).

Motivation is one of the significant aspects of festivals or events and has received major interest since the early 1990s. Motives are an internal factor that arouses, directs, and understand human behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1980); it is also a major contributing aspect that ignites individuals to travel to different destination and experience novel things (Um, Crompton, 1992). According to Maslow (1970), all individual needs can be arranged in a hierarchy of five categories. The most basic need is the physiological needs such as 'hunger, thirst, and sex'. The other needs are 'safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization'. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a key theory in travel motivation research. The travel career ladder (TCL) and travel career patterns (TCP) are the concrete frameworks in understanding travel motivation. TCL includes 'relaxation needs' (lowest level), followed by 'safety/security, relationship, self-esteem and development, and fulfilment'. TCP consists of the 14 motivational factors 'novelty, escape/relax, self-actualization, nature, kinship, self-enhancement, romance, kinship-belonging, autonomy, self-development (host-site involvement), nostalgia, stimulation, isolation; and recognition' (Huang, Hsu, 2009). Mannell and Iso-Ahola, (1987) propounded a four-dimensional motivational theory namely; 'personal seeking, personal escaping, interpersonal seeking and interpersonal escaping', which according to them, are not mutually exclusive. Whereby, people travel to get away from their personal or interpersonal problems, and to attain personal or interpersonal rewards. In terms of festival motives, Crompton and McKay (1997), point out three reasons for understanding the attendees' motives. Firstly, the designing and offering of products are the key motives for visitors. Secondly, motives in which visitors are satisfied and persuade them to revisits. Finally, identifying and prioritizing the motives of the visitors.

Various studies relating to travel motivation informed that tourists are motivated to satisfy their needs (Kim et al., 2010; Park et al., 2010). These theories relating to the motivation aspect explain that people travel to a certain location because they are influenced by the attributes of the destination. Antónia et al., (2013) state that 'culture is an important motivator that influences destination preference'. On this regard, cultural festival is progressively becoming a tool for promoting and branding the destinations. On the other hand, learning the motivation of tourists permits researchers and marketers to enhance the significance of tourist behavior and future travel patterns (Uysal et al., 1993). Hence, this study was carried out to identify the essential factors that motivate tourists' for attending a cultural festival in Meghalaya (North-East India) and whether motivation differs concerning the demographic composition of the attendees.

Need for The Study

The interests of tourists' are uncertain and their activities are getting more complex. Therefore, to improve their experience, understanding of tourists' requirements and, identifying well as specifying tourists' motivation is an important action for tourism development and improvement (Kang et al., 2014). Tourist motivations vary from one individual to another for the reason that their desires and requirements are related to diverse tourism products and services,

it is also different from event to event (Park et al., 2010; Mohammad, 2014). This paper tries to find and understand the tourist motivations in attending the cultural festivals in Meghalaya (NorthEast India). The festivals mainly include; Shad Suk Mynsiem, Shad Nongkrem, Behdienkhlam Festival and Wangala festivals, which receive a highly participated number of tourists and the most popular ones. Understanding the tourists' motivations facilitate marketers, stakeholders, and decision-makers to formulate efficient marketing strategies, improve and enhance the satisfaction and leisure of the tourists throughout the festivals. Hence, attain competitive benefits in the region and country as a whole.

Literature Review

Cultural Festival

Cultural Festivals are generally organized by communities for different purposes such as: displaying their rich cultural tradition, providing and showcasing their cultural entertainment, contribute towards attracting tourists and promoting their region. This way it provides opportunities to improve the quality of life and conserve their culture (Cudny et al., 2012; Sharma, Sharma, 2015; Macheke, 2016). Besides, it also offers a novel location to the visitors belonging from different regions that are interested to experience the local traditions, learning their way of life, sensory which can improve their engagement and fulfillment. According to Turgay and Dikmen, (2013) Cultural festivals and events are valuable resources to attract an outstanding number of tourists belonging to different areas to exchange experience and activities; thus, it has emerged as one of the fastest-growing types of tourism. From the perspective of festival attendees, their experience is the primary benefit or value they can obtain from the festivals (Aikaterini et al., 2014). According to Duran and Hamarat, (2014) festival organizers must be designed and managed festivals efficiently to maximize the tourist visit through the knowledge of visitor motivation. But at the same time, the sustainability of culture should be the priority towards the cultural theme of identity, authenticity, and diversity.

Motivational Factors of Cultural Festival

Motivation for attending festivals or events has been a primary issue in research on festivals. Several researches have examined the motivations for attending festivals and recognized various salient motivation dimensions in a selection of festival environments and several cultural groups, regularly suggesting different scale items in the motivation construct (Maeng et al., 2016). Although several studies on the festival motivational factors appear to be collective, there are evident factors that are culturally bound and consequently unique to the cultural context (Li, Wood, 2016). Most of the festivals and events are extremely dependent upon repeat visitors. If the experience is positive and needs are fulfilled, satisfaction and return visits will result (Medet et al., 2012). According to their study, single people are more motivated to attend festivals for excitement than married people; however, married people are more likely to attend festivals for family motives. Festival attendees visiting a destination for cultural related experience are also motivated to meet new people (Hawkes et al., 2016) and to learn new skills (Chianga et al., 2015) which were found to be the utmost spending group by some margin.

On the other hand, attending the festival could be associated with factors such as accessibility entertainment, performance, and relaxation (Duran, Hamarat, 2014; Turgay, Dikmen, 2013).

Socialization has been emerged as a salient component from some motivation research with the statement that tourism motivation can be people-orientated in preference to place-orientated. The importance of socialization as a motivating element for festivals and events is not surprising for the reason that large numbers of people with a common interest gather together on these occasions (Schofield, Thompson, 2007). To wind up socialization provides an opportunity for people to enjoy festivals with their friends or others to build new relationships. Similar to socialization, family togetherness has also been the majority of studies into festivals and event motivation as a significant dimension (Lee et al., 2004). In summary, family togetherness involves spending time and enjoying festivals with family members. Escapism is also one of the desires to release stress which is caused by one's daily routine (Duran, Hamarat, 2014; Li et al., 2009). Escape involves creating a change or escaping from daily routines and thereby releasing stress. Novelty, as well seek out new and different experiences through thrills, adventure to lighten boredom and the desire to explore different cultures (Crompton, McKay, 1997; Schofield, Thompson, 2007). Cultural exploration is the desire to learn and experience the traditions and culture of a certain area (Lee et al., 2004). Cultural exploration involves experiencing local customs and cultures, thereby enhancing cultural knowledge. Manolika and Baltzis, (2019) in their study found that the cultural aspect of motivation is the core aspect for tourists, which are then followed by the leisure issues (Prada-Trigo et al., 2016). Cultural exploration involves the tourist to experience and increase their cultural knowledge, and to learn about indigenous culture. Entertainment is also one of the desires to enjoy the exciting and thrilling events of the unique festival environment (Nicholson, Pearce, 2001). It involves experiencing interesting and exciting things or events, thereby having an interest in special or unique things.

Research Methodology

Data Collection

Before progressing towards a final data collection, a pilot study was conducted during the Behdienkhlam festival 2017. A structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data and the variables for this study were adopted from the review of the literature; accordingly, the questionnaire was designed. A total of 54 questionnaires were received in the pilot study stage. The responses were used to test the reliability and item analysis of the research instrument. The Cronbach's alpha values of all the study variables and all the values are found to be more than the acceptable level of 0.7 and the final questionnaire was modified based on the feedback.

A final survey was conducted in the event of the various cultural festivals in Meghalaya, in 2018 and the respondents were directly in contact at the events. A total of 394 respondents was collected during the survey. Simple random sampling was used in collecting the data. The target population was tourists visiting the festival and a total of 12.16.454 tourists visited Meghalaya in 2018 (Directorate of Tourism, 2019).

Questionnaire Design and Variables

In order to attain the study objectives, A structured questionnaire was designed to measure the tourist motivation in visiting the cultural festival in Meghalaya, the study utilizes 18 motivational items to identify the main reasons that drive tourists to visit the festival. Out of which 4 items were deleted due to their low factor loading which is less than 0.5. All the motives items

were developed on related literature (Maeng et al., 2016; Mohammad, 2014; Turgay, Dikmen, 2013; Li et al., 2009)

A five points Likert scale was used to measure tourist motivations with assigned value ranking from highest to lowest 5 “Strongly Agree” to 1 “Strongly Disagree”. The first section of the questionnaire includes the demographic profile such as (gender, age, marital status, level of education, etc.), the second section consist of the important motives for tourists in visiting the festivals and the third section of the questionnaire captured issues of the motivational factors visiting cultural festival.

Questionnaire survey

A total of 8 field assistants, who were trained by the authors before the fieldwork, randomly distributed the questionnaire survey at the sites for collecting the representative respondents. Natives who attended the festival are deliberately excluded from the study. 415 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents directly to collect the data. 410 were received. Out of which 16 were excluded because of incomplete data. The remaining usable questionnaires received were 394. The distribution of the questionnaires was divided into three distinct sections/areas. First section was dedicated to food stalls with seating offered to relax and enjoy a meal, another section was the seating areas provided to the tourists by the organizers to have a good view at the cultural program, the last section was dedicated to the parking lot. All the questionnaires were completed on the festival sites, where field assistants frequently moved around to minimize bias.

Data Analysis and Result

Factor analysis, independent sample t- test and one way ANOVA were used in order to analyze the results and to indentify the motivational factors which influence tourists to visit the cultural festival in Meghalaya.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the sampled were profiled and presented in table 1. The study sample consists of Domestic tourists visiting the cultural festival in Meghalaya. A total of 394 respondents participated in this study. Frequency analysis of the sample showed that there were more male (54.6 %) respondent than female, and most of the visitors were between ages 25-35years (42.4 %), the respondents were mainly single or unmarried (60.2 %), with an education of a degree/diploma level (37.8 %), and majority of the respondents have a family monthly income (Indian Rupees ₹) between 25,001/- to 50,000/- (36.0 %).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Tourists

Variables	Percentage
Gender	
Male	54.6
female	45.4
Marital Status	
Un-married	60.2
Married	39.8
Age	
Less than 25	24.4
25-35	42.4
36-45	27.9
46 and above	5.3
Educational Level	
10th Standard or Less	12.4
12th Standard	20.8
Degree/Diploma	37.8
P.G and above	28.9
Monthly Family Income (₹)	
Less than 25,000/-	17.3
25,001/- to 50,000/-	36.0
50,001/- to 75,000/-	31.5
More than 75,001/-	15.2

Important Motives for visiting the Cultural festival

Table 2 shows the important motives that drive tourists to visit cultural festival in Meghalaya. “To be entertained by different cultural activities” was the most important motive among all factors ($m = 4.37$), followed by “learning and improving knowledge regarding the festival” and “experience new and different lifestyles or traditions” ($m = 4.19$), and last was “meeting people with the same interest” ($m = 3.02$).

Table 2. Important motives

Motives	Mean	Rank
To be entertained by different cultural activities	4.37	1
To learn and improve knowledge regarding the festival	4.19	2
To experience new and different lifestyles or traditions	4.19	2
To have enjoyable time with my travel companion(s)	4.14	3
To enjoy the festival atmosphere	4.07	4
For Fun	4.02	5
For Sight Seeing	3.98	6
To have a change from my daily routine (Relaxing)	3.98	6
To get out in the open air	3.90	7
To enjoy the traditional food	3.74	8
To have a bonding time with friends	3.57	9
To have a bonding time with family	3.32	10
To enjoy the traditional beverages	3.13	11
To meet people with the same interest	3.02	12

Factor Grouping of Motives

To underline the motivational factors of tourists visiting the cultural festival in Meghalaya, the principal component factor analysis with a Varimax rotation was used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.79. and according to the thumb rule, if the KMO test is at 0.5 or higher, then the data is suitable. The value p is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, says that there is a relationship between the variables.

All factors with an eigenvalue higher than 1 were preferred. Four items were deleted due to the factor loading less than 0.5 or because they loaded on several factors simultaneously. Table 3 shows the results of the 14 motivational factors that persuade the tourists to visit the cultural festival in Meghalaya. The factors grouping of motivations that drive these tourists are “Change from everyday life”, “Friends and family togetherness”, and “Experiencing the Activities”. Out of three underlying motives, “Change from everyday life” is the most essential motive for the tourists to visit the cultural festival. It obtains 4.39 eigenvalue and 31.39 % variance followed by “Friends and family togetherness”, and “Experiencing the Activities” simultaneously.

Table 3. Factor Analysis of Motives

Factors	Loading	Eigen value	Variance	Reliability
Change from everyday life		4.39	31.39	.86
To have a change from my daily routine (Relaxing)	.864			
To get out in the open air	.814			
To enjoy the festival atmosphere	.783			
For Sight Seeing	.763			
For Fun	.686			
To have enjoyable time with my travel companion(s)	.668			
Friends and family togetherness		3.38	24.14	.83
To meet people with the same interest	.854			
To have a bonding time with friends	.775			
To have a bonding time with family	.762			
To enjoy the traditional food	.747			
To enjoy the traditional beverages	.657			
Experiencing the Activities		1.70	12.14	.85
To learn and improve knowledge regarding the festival	.891			
To be entertained by different cultural activities	.888			
To experience new and different lifestyles or traditions	.759			

Motivational Factors with Demographic Profile

This study intends to determine any statistically significant differences between motivational factors and the demographic profile. Tables (4-8) show the results of independent sample t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) accordingly. The study finds that some significant differences in motivational factors across some of the demographic variables.

Table-4 shows the results of the independent sample t-test of gender with motivational factors. The result shows that “change from everyday life” has a significant difference among the

categories of gender. Where female tourists perceive higher motivation than male tourists. On the other hand, “friends and family togetherness” and “Cultural exploration” are not significantly different among male and female tourists. Table 5 shows the difference in marital status concerning the motivational factors for visiting the cultural festival. The result shows that the “change from everyday life” has a significant difference among the categories of marital status. Where married tourists perceive higher motivation than un-married tourists. On the other hand, “friends and family togetherness” and “Cultural exploration” are not significantly different among the married and unmarried tourists.

Table-6 shows the results of the mean difference in the motivational factors based on the age of tourists, significantly differs at 5 percent level. This represents that the difference in means of “Change from everyday life”, “Friends and family togetherness” and “Cultural Exploration” is different among the different age groups of the tourist. Table 7 shows the results of the mean difference in the motivational factors based on the educational level of tourists. It represents that the difference in means of “Change from everyday life” and “Friends and family togetherness” is different among the different educational groups of the tourist. In the case of the “Cultural Exploration” of the tourist, the difference is not statistically significant (0.068). Table 8 shows the results of the mean difference in the motivational factors based on the Family Monthly income of tourists. It represents that the difference in means of “Change from everyday life” “Friends and family togetherness” and “Cultural Exploration” is different among the different income groups of the tourist.

Table 4. Differences in Motivational factors based on gender.

	Male	Female	T	Sig.
Change from everyday life	3.94	4.09	-2.19	0.005
Friends and family togetherness	3.35	3.35	-0.01	0.347
Cultural Exploration	4.21	4.29	-1.08	0.561

Table 5. Differences in Motivational factors based on Marital Status

	Un-married	Married	T	Sig.
Change from everyday life	4.01	4.03	-0.32	0.00
Friends and family togetherness	3.42	3.25	1.95	0.19
Cultural Exploration	4.33	4.14	2.57	0.10

Table 6. Differences in Motivational factors based on the Age group

	Age	M	F	Sig.
Change from everyday life	Less Than 25	4.14	5.30	0.001
	25-35	3.86		
	36-45	4.13		
	46 and above	4.00		
Friends and family togetherness	Less Than 25	3.81	28.87	0.000
	25-35	3.44		
	36-45	2.83		
	46 and above	3.24		
Cultural Exploration	Less Than 25	4.36	3.94	0.009
	25-35	4.30		
	36-45	4.05		
	46 and above	4.30		

Table 7. Differences in Motivational factors based on the Education Qualification

	Education	M	F	Sig.
Change from everyday life	10th Std. or Less	3.79	16.82	0.000
	12th Std.	3.76		
	Degree/Diploma	4.29		
	P.G and above	3.94		
Friends and family togetherness	10th Std. or Less	3.29	11.07	0.000
	12th Std.	3.40		
	Degree/Diploma	3.10		
	P.G and above	3.68		
Cultural Exploration	10th Std. or Less	4.12	2.39	0.068
	12th Std.	4.12		
	Degree/Diploma	4.28		
	P.G and above	4.36		

Table 8. Differences in Motivational factors based on the Monthly Family Income

	Income (₹)	M	F	Sig.
Change from everyday life	Less than 25000/-	4.07	6.20	0.000
	25000 /- to 50,000 /-	3.97		
	50,001/- to 75,000/-	4.17		
	More than 75,000/-	3.74		
Friends and family togetherness	Less than 25000/-	3.91	31.66	0.000
	25000 /- to 50,000 /-	3.55		
	50,001/- to 75,000/-	2.87		
	More than 75,000/-	3.27		
Cultural Exploration	Less than 25000/-	4.45	9.91	0.000
	25000 /- to 50,000 /-	4.38		
	50,001/- to 75,000/-	3.98		
	More than 75,000/-	4.28		

Findings, Discussion and Conclusions

The paper mostly studies the motivational factors that attract tourists to visit the cultural festivals in Meghalaya. Based on literature there have been several studies on visitor motivation in the festival tourism field in general, but on the other hand, there are few studies which are related to the motivations for visiting a cultural festivals (Macheka, 2016; Kang et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2012). The findings of this study contribute to the literature in Festival tourism and Marketing. The study also bear managerial result, suggesting the prospect to segment festivals market on the source of importance of motives domain, which would offer helpful information for festival and event organizers related to tailoring festivals programs and activities. Moreover, learning the important motives of tourist in visiting the cultural festival act as an important marketing tool for promotion and understanding market distinctiveness based on

motivation which can articulate a successful destination (Kim et al., 2011; Molina et al., 2010; Duran, Hamarat, 2014).

On the other hand, the motivational dimension was also identified through a principal component and factor analysis, which drive tourists to visit the cultural festival. The findings of this study are mostly in compliance with previous research (Kang et al., 2014; Duran, Hamarat, 2014; Mohammad, 2014; Turgay, Dikmen, 2013; Li et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2004). The results show that the “Change from everyday life” factor was strongest among the festival visitors, which report that the tourists visit the festivals to have a change from their daily activity and enjoy the festive atmosphere. The second factor “Friends and family togetherness” is stronger with visitors who travel with families, and married couples. The last factor “Experiencing the Activities”, mostly motivates those with the eagerness to learn and explore their cultural knowledge.

On the other hand, the tourist demographic profile shows significant differences and relations towards the motivational dimensions. “Change from everyday life” are the main motivational factors for female visitors and married couples to visit the cultural festival. Whereas the different age group and their family income level are motivated by all the three motivational dimensions.

The most important intention of visiting the various cultural festivals in Meghalaya view was for change from everyday life. Learning the culture of the Meghalaya people is also an important reason for their visit to the festivals. Based on the study sustainability of culture should be the priority towards the cultural theme of identity, authenticity, and diversity.

Limitation and future research of the study

The research was conducted on the four main cultural festivals of Meghalaya; Shad Suk Mynsiem, Shad Nongkrem, Behdienkhlam Festival, and Wangala festivals. Apart from the selected cultural festivals, few other cultural festivals are not taken into consideration due to its less representation. A further limitation of this work is that only domestic tourists have been taken into account. These limitations can be considered in future research, where international tourists can also be taken into account, and a comparative research can be carried on the motives of the domestic and international tourists while visiting the cultural festivals.

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