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Intention to Revisit the Chariot Festival (Ratha Yatra): An Experience Economy Approach

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Cover Page Footnote

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The present study addresses visitors' experiences at the world-famous Chariot Festival - Ratha Yatra - which is held every year at Shri Kshetra, Puri Dham in the state of Odisha, India. Empirical evidence is used to analyse how each of the experience dimension affects the overall event and to assess the likelihood of revisiting. In order to develop a conceptual framework for the study, a thorough review of the literature was conducted. The conceptual framework was then tested using a quantitative approach, in which data were gathered from a convenience sample of 295 respondents using a self-administered questionnaire. Finally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to process and analyse the data. According to the findings of SEM, the entire festival experience is greatly influenced by the experience dimensions of education, entertainment, and escapism. The empirical results demonstrate how the organisers could improve the visitors' experience and urge them to revisit the festival. The experience dimensions scale can be used as a reference for marketers to determine how effectively a festival or event satisfies customer expectations.

Key Words: festival experience, chariot festival, education, revisit intention, structural equation modelling

Introduction

One of the most important components of the tourism industry is festivals. Festivals draw tourists and help to create a positive destination image for the region (Prentice & Anderson, 2003; Gokce & Culha, 2009). A festival's attendees expect a high quality, memorable experience. Festivals, like any other tourism product or service, provide an immersive experience (Grunwell & Inhyuck, 2008). For festival organisers to anticipate the likelihood of a return visit, they must first understand the importance of the festival experience. The key to a festival's long-term success rests more on the ability of the organisers to deliver attendees the best experience possible (Cole & Illum, 2006).

Festival experiences are a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that calls for a careful and in-depth analysis (Getz, 2007). However, there hasn't been much research

on the subject. Manthiou (2015) examined the opinions of VEISHEA festival visitors in 2015. Piramanayagam, Kumar and Mallya (2021) conducted a study in Udupi, India to comprehend the experience dimensions. This research was undertaken at the biennial Paryaya festival in Udupi, India, to better understand the divergent aspects of festival experience and behavioural interaction. The findings from Structural Equation Modelling show that experience, as well as aspects of education, esthetics, communities, spirituality, and authenticity, have a considerable influence on behavioural intention.

The experience component of tourists' intentions to revisit has not received much attention in the Indian context. The renowned Ratha Yatra, which attracts millions of tourists annually, is organised at Puri, where the present research study was undertaken. This study seeks to analyse the experience aspects and revisit intention in a systematic manner in light of the research gap. Despite

the significance and popularity of the event, no research has been conducted on this festival in India (Lee, Hwang & Shim, 2019).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) coined the notion of 'experience economy' and defined 'experience' as a type of economic offering that provides a competitive advantage over other dimensions that is difficult to duplicate and replace. *Education, Entertainment, Escapism, and Esthetics*¹ are the four components of the experience economy. Thus, visitors who believe that participating in the festival will improve their knowledge and abilities will look for educational experience.

When attending festivals, people typically take advantage of the entertainment opportunities to watch performances and engage in a variety of activities. While esthetic experiences are festival goers' overall assessments of the event's physical surroundings, escapism is festival goers' desire to engage in sensory situations that are distinct from their everyday and ordinary lives (Manthiou *et al.*, 2014).

Festivals are considered an experience; hence the study is best matched to the experience economy paradigm. For a more satisfying experience, Pine and Gilmore (1999) argued that firms could plan memorable events for their customers to engage in. Earlier research has demonstrated the importance of consumers' memories of their experiences as a motivator for positive word-of-mouth and revisiting the event (Andereck & Caldwell, 1993; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

The present study is best fitted to the experience economy paradigm because festivals are viewed as experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1999) claimed that businesses may organise memorable events for their customers to engage with in order to provide a more pleasant experience. Previous studies have shown the value of consumers' memories of their experiences as a catalyst for favourable word-of-mouth (Andereck & Caldwell, 1993; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Previous research found that participant satisfaction with experience is strongly linked to loyalty, which includes

¹ Following the style of the overall paper, the word should be spelled 'aesthetic', however for alliteration purposes, the US spelling 'esthetic' is used here.

favourable word-of-mouth and return visits (Cole & Illum, 2006). A service encounter is composed of a sequence of behaviour that clients expect during service delivery (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Similar to how previous experience functions in the brain as message input and response output, cognitive information processing suggests that festival attendees' allegiance, attitudes, and behaviours also play a vital role in their experience. If the cognitive process between message input and reaction output is not grasped, discussions of the connection between prior experience and loyal attitude and behaviour may be biased (Cole & Illum, 2006).

The development and assessment of a framework that demonstrates the relationship between experience and the desire to return is the objectives of this study. The results of the study will be useful for both academics and industry. There isn't much study on the experience economy, and what exists, is still in its infancy (Oh *et al.*, 2007). The present study also attempts to analyse the potential of returning to a festival environment which is the first of its kind in India. The current study is also unique and highly pertinent because it takes into account how festival attendees interact with the surrounding area. The development of successful festival activities and attractions is aided by this research. The study's specific objectives are to assess the influence of each experience dimension on experience and also to assess the likelihood of returning.

The Chariot Festival

The city of Puri is popularly known as Srikhetra, Sankhaketra and Purusottam Dham in Hindu Mythology. The economy of the city is deeply dependent on Jagannath Temple and the numerous religious festivals and events linked to the sacredness of the site. It is believed that in order to experience complete human life in this birth and attain Nirvana (salvation), one must visit four Dhams (literary means God's abode) of God in India: Badrinath in the north, Dwarka in the West, Rameswaram in the south and this site - Purusottam Dham - in the east. People all over the world look to this Chariot festival as the most suitable time to visit Puri and become mesmerised at the glorious sight of Lord Jagannath riding on a chariot with his siblings, Balabhadra and Subhadra.

Figure 1: View of Puri Ratha Yatra



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/20/Rath_Yatra_Puri_07-11027.jpg

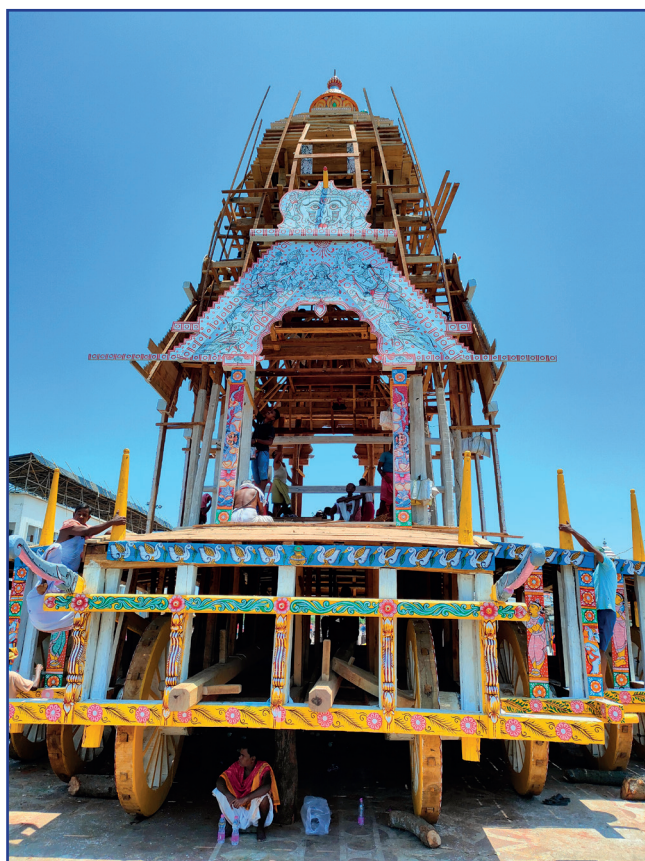
For believers and tourists alike, the Ratha Jatra, or yearly Chariot Festival, at Shree Jagannatha Temple in Puri, Odisha, is a captivating experience. It is observed on the second day of the Ashadha Maasa's Shukla Paksha (moon waxing cycle) (third month in the Hindu lunar calendar). Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra, along with Sudarshana Chakra, the most powerful weapon of Lord Jagannath are brought in a ceremonial procession from the Jagannatha Temple to their respective chariots amidst millions of devotees who have come from across the globe. Huge colourful chariots carrying the deities are rolled along the *badadanda* (Grand Road in front of lord Jagannatha temple) and driven two miles to the north to the majestic avenue of the Gundicha Temple (Gundicha was King Indradyumna's Queen).

The three deities are offered Poda Pitha, a particular sort of pancake believed to be Lord Jagannatha's favourite, near Mausimaa (the Lord's aunt) Temple on their return journey back from Gundicha Temple. The deities return to their abode - Shreemandir - the heavenly abode of Lord Jagannath, after a seven-day stay. Over 10 lakh² devotees from India and abroad normally participate and look forward to experiencing this annual celebration at least once in their lifetimes.

² 10 Lakh is written 10,00,000 - or one million.

During the festival, devotees come from all over the world to Puri with a sincere desire to assist in pulling the Lords' chariots, with the many priests and participants. Devotees believe that pulling the chariot with ropes is an auspicious act, and many are even willing to risk their lives in the throng. The devotees sing the glory of Lord Jagannath with mellifluous religious songs along with drums, tambourines, trumpets, and other musical instruments during the long processions accompanying the chariots. Devotees line the streets that the chariots drive through and join the celestial procession singing and chanting the holy names of the deities.

Each year, the chariots are built new using a specific tree called 'Phasi'. The name of Lord Jagannath's chariot is Nandighosa. At the level of the wheels, it is 44 feet and two inches high and is outfitted with a cover made of red and yellow coloured cloth and has sixteen wheels, each measuring seven feet in diameter. The Taladhwaja - Lord Balabhadra's chariot - is wrapped with red and blue fabric and has fourteen wheels, each with a seven foot diameter and its height is forty three feet three inches. The Darpadalana, or 'trampler of pride,' - the Chariot of Subhadra - stands forty-two feet and three inches tall and

Figure 2: Chariot During Construction

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratha_Yatra_\(Puri\)#/media/File:Ratha_Yatra_Chariot_is_under_construction.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratha_Yatra_(Puri)#/media/File:Ratha_Yatra_Chariot_is_under_construction.jpg)

has twelve wheels which are seven feet in diameter. Black has always been connected to Shakti (Energy) and the Mother Goddess as per Hindu mythology and this chariot is decorated with a covering of red and black fabric. This important celebration is broadcast live on major Indian and international television channels, as well as being streamed online on a variety of platforms.

Theoretical Background

Customer experience is the process by which consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by their cognitive and emotional evaluations of all of their direct and indirect interactions with the business (Klaus & Maklan, 2013). The quality of the customer experience is defined by how well it is perceived during the customer's direct and indirect encounters with the service provider (Lamke *et al.*, 2011). Consumption of tangible goods is changing in favour of experiential goods including communications, educational, and entertainment services (Palmer, 2005). According to some experts, a visitor's experience is a

subjective mental state that they have when receiving services (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Researchers' interest in Consumer Cultural Theory (CCT), which emphasises the social, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption, has been sparked by consumer experience (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). According to this CCT theory, consumers use a variety of resources to enhance their social life.

In their paradigm for the experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999) established four categories of economic offerings: commodities, goods, services, and experiences. The four areas of consumer experience that these authors identified are education, entertainment, escapism, and esthetics. Depending on the level of consumer engagement and connection with the environment, these areas of experience embody, in that order, the characteristics of feeling, learning, being, and doing (Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2012). In the context of India, Dash and Samantaray (2018) have expanded Pine and Gilmore's model by include a fifth dimension of tourism experience, which comprises esthetics, ease of facility, education, entertainment, and escapism. The 'economy' value outlined by Pine and Gilmore has been added to the festival experience by Rivera *et al.* (2015) as an additional layer (1999).

Knowledge, learning, stimulation, and interest about the event are the main concerns in this study. Essentially, the educational aspect is all about learning, the entertainment aspect of the experience is all about feelings, the esthetic aspect is all about presence, and the escapism aspect examines how the experience has affected the customers' emotions and levels of happiness (Hosany & Witham, 2010; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011).

Reflecting on these various parameters and dimensions, the experience economy concept is a sensible approach to employ in assessing customer behaviour during festivals, given that it is an experience-oriented industry sector. The following section discusses the four types of experience in more details.

Education in the Festival Context

Educational activities stimulate consumers' thoughts and excite their interest in 'learning something new,' which is especially true in the tourism industry (Hosany &

Whitam, 2010). Tourists participate enthusiastically in order to learn something new (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In the case of Puri, visitors can learn about the numerous rituals / events held in Lord Jagannath's honour and encounter him personally.

In the tourism business in particular, educational activities stimulate consumers' minds and pique their curiosity in 'learning something new' (Hosany & Whitam, 2010). Tourists take part with enthusiasm to pick up new skills (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Entertainment in the Festival Context

Entertainment is a vital component of the tourist experience and is probably one of the oldest types of experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Every event or festival has an entertainment element that gives attendees a distinctive experience. This kind of experience is the most developed and pervasive in the business world, and it pre-dates civilisation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Through entertainment events, visitors can learn about other people's behaviours and acts. The components of entertainment, such as activity performance, amusement, fun, and entertainment, were explored in this study.

Esthetics in the Festival Context

The experience of beauty is influenced by the general ambiance and mood of the physical environment (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Examples of such aspects include the physical surroundings, colour, lighting, signs, and techniques for piquing interest (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). Numerous event planners have made investments in renovations in light of the growing competition for attendees' time and money as well as the important role that the physical environment plays in influencing attendees' opinions, future purchasing intentions, and willingness to return (Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes & Cave, 2007).

Escapism in the Festival Context

According to Mannell & Iso-Ahola (1987) and Slater (1998), the primary reason for attending a festival is escape, followed by learning and social/family contact (2007). People might attend an event to experience a

different time or place and get away from their homes or places of business (Chauhan, 2006; Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009). The escapist experience uses a range of tactics to engage the visitor. By using physical, mental, and sensory signals - interpretation, for instance - an event might give visitors an immersive experience while also swaying their beliefs (Crozier, 2012). A customer can engage fully in an escapism experience even though they are a passive participant. Travellers can enjoy interacting with people from various walks of life and educational backgrounds when they come across a world-class celebratory event. These elements of escapism are important components of harmony, enjoyment, attractiveness, and attentiveness which were all examined in this study.

Conclusion of Literature

From the review of literature, various elements that influence travellers' destination decisions and experiences have been ascertained. The authors assembled these diverse traits in order to comprehend their relevance to the tourism experience. This kind of interaction has a significant effect on how people act.

Kim (2010) observed that visitors are more likely to recall their vacation when it is memorable. Many devotees attend festivals for hedonistic reasons, such as seeking novelty, escaping from daily life, learning something new, or pursuing their personal development goals (Morgan, 2009). If attendees have a unique and exceptional experience at the festival, it is more likely to enhance their overall enjoyment. Based on the previous discussions concerning the significance of experience and the desire to return to a festival environment, the following hypotheses are put forth:

- H1:** Education has a positive impact on festival experience.
- H2:** Entertainment has a positive impact on festival experience.
- H3:** Escapism has a positive impact on festival experience.
- H4:** Esthetics have a positive impact on festival experience.
- H5:** Festival experience has a positive impact on intention to return.

Research Design

Research Approach

The research began with secondary sources of information, exploring a range of previous literature. Derived from these sources, the author took a quantitative approach and developed a tool to measure the results (questionnaire). There were three parts to the questionnaire survey. The first part of the questionnaire was about the demographic profile of the respondents and second part looked into the Chariot Festival attendees' experiences. The scale from Oh *et. al.* (2007) was used to operationalise the measurements for the participants' experiences. Four statements were chosen to symbolise each of the four experience dimensions (education, entertainment, esthetics, and escapism). The third segment used three measuring scales derived from Lam and Hsu to estimate the likelihood of attendees returning to the festival (2006). For all constructs, a five-point Likert scale with a range of 1 to 5 was utilised.

Research Population

Locals, tourists, or devotees who visited the festivals were all clearly identified as the population of the current study. The devotees, tourists, and residents who attended the event made up the sampling element, while the event itself served as the sampling unit. Tourists frequently travel to the area to explore the extent of enjoyment. Both locals and devotees who come to worship Lord Jagannath are directly involved in the festival.

Sample Type

Because of the convenience in terms of accessibility and proximity for data collection, the convenience sampling approach was chosen, which saves time, effort, and money (Emerson, 2015). The authors distributed 320 questionnaires, with 295 questionnaires being completed, yielding a response rate of about 92 percent. All respondents were informed about the subject and gave their informed consent before they participated in the survey.

The study was conducted in accordance with all appropriate ethical guidelines. The researchers ensured that there was no risk of harm to minors (above the age of 12), who were allowed to complete the survey if

they were accompanied by a consenting guardian. All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, no identifiable information was collected from any respondent and all were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time without repercussion.

Data Analysis

Four faculty members from the same university's tourism and hospitality management school assessed the preliminary questionnaire to confirm the study's validity. A convenience sample of 50 undergraduate students from a hospitality management institute participated in a pilot test. All of the measurements were reliable above the cut-off of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The pilot test's wording was also changed in response to the respondents' comments. 320 people filled out surveys throughout the course of nine days during the festival.

Results

The general demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1. Only 295 out of the 320 questionnaires were judged to be usable due to incomplete surveys or errors in completion. Males made up 65 percent of the group, while females made up the remaining 35 percent. The median age of the respondents is 30 years, indicating that the majority of the respondents are young, working, well paid individuals with an average annual salary of almost three lakhs. The respondents were found to be well-educated, 60 percent being graduates and 40 percent being postgraduates. The Indian-to-foreign respondents ratio was 9:1.

Understanding how the visitor experience aspects affect pilgrim involvement with the event and determine the possibility of returning are the two objectives of the study. The results of the study explored the four factors of customer experience with esthetics and escapism being the most the important dimensions (Table 5). This signifies that visitors want to explore an event to experience the ambience, appealing atmosphere and the sightseeing activities. The escapism experience reveals that a festival can give the participants ample opportunity to escape from their routine life, relieve boredom, and enjoy a 'few days out'.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to establish reliability and validity in the second part of the analysis. To begin, Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine the construct’s internal consistency. To examine the reliabilities of each factor, the minimal Cronbach’s alpha coefficient reliability of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) was employed. The reliability test was passed because the reliability was between .792 and .845. The CFA findings were good (CFI=.957, GFI=.914), according to the report.

With GFI=.883, CFI=.953, AGFI=.854, and RMSEA=.054, the structural model fit was excellent, showing significant predictive validity for all relationships in the structural model. Moreover, the outcomes of a structural equation model showed that the educational, esthetic, escapism, and entertaining aspects of encounters greatly contribute to the entire experience of visitors. Additionally, attendees’ overall festival experience serves as a statistically significant indicator of their propensity to return.

Table 6 presents the standardised path coefficient and accompanying t-values. The goal of this research was to look into the effects of various factors on festival experience, based on the hypotheses outlined above. The

Demographic Group	Demographic Sub-group	Number
Age Group	13-19 years	71
	20-35 years	145
	36-50 years	65
	51-65 years	14
Gender	Male	221
	Female	74
Marital Status	Married	92
	Single	203
Place of Residence	Local	145
	National	123
	International	27
Occupation	Government employed	43
	Private service	61
	Professional	25
	Business	37
	Student	129
Monthly income	Less than INR 10,000	75
	INR 10,000-INR 25,000	119
	INR 25,000-INR 40,000	63
	More than INR 40,000	38

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.882
Approx. Chi-Square	2809.609
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity df	153
Sig.	.000

hypothesis outcomes are shown in Table 6. H1, H2, H3, and H5 were shown to be significantly supported in this investigation (P=0.01). The constructs of all structural routes are shown in Figure 3.

Discussion and Implications

The study found that festival experience may be divided into four categories: education, entertainment, esthetics, and escape. The findings also revealed that festival attendance leads to a desire to return. Education, entertainment, and escapism all have a beneficial impact on the festival experience and can lead to a stronger desire to return, according to SEM.

	Initial	Extraction
ED1	1.000	.847
ED2	1.000	.853
ED3	1.000	.836
ED4	1.000	.784
ENT1	1.000	.621
ENT2	1.000	.619
ENT3	1.000	.521
ESC1	1.000	.671
ESC2	1.000	.735
ESC3	1.000	.691
ESC4	1.000	.665
ESC5	1.000	.771
ESC6	1.000	.600
ESTH1	1.000	.578
ESTH2	1.000	.479
ESTH3	1.000	.631
ESTH4	1.000	.547
ESTH5	1.000	.553
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.852	32.508	32.508	5.852	32.508	32.508	4.229	23.494	23.494
2	3.356	18.643	51.151	3.356	18.643	51.151	3.354	18.631	42.125
3	1.548	8.600	59.751	1.548	8.600	59.751	2.639	14.663	56.788
4	1.247	6.928	66.679	1.247	6.928	66.679	1.780	9.892	66.679
5	.771	4.283	70.963						
6	.711	3.951	74.913						
7	.644	3.580	78.493						
8	.588	3.266	81.759						
9	.508	2.825	84.584						
10	.466	2.591	87.175						
11	.455	2.526	89.701						
12	.401	2.227	91.928						
13	.340	1.888	93.816						
14	.295	1.637	95.453						
15	.242	1.342	96.795						
16	.235	1.306	98.101						
17	.181	1.003	99.104						
18	.161	.896	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
ED1		.915		
ED2		.923		
ED3		.914		
ED4		.885		
ENT1				.781
ENT2				.722
ENT3				.608
ESC1	.768			
ESC2	.810			
ESC3	.805			
ESC4	.758			
ESC5	.848			
ESC6	.747			
ESTH1			.600	
ESTH2			.639	
ESTH3			.770	
ESTH4			.663	
ESTH5			.698	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

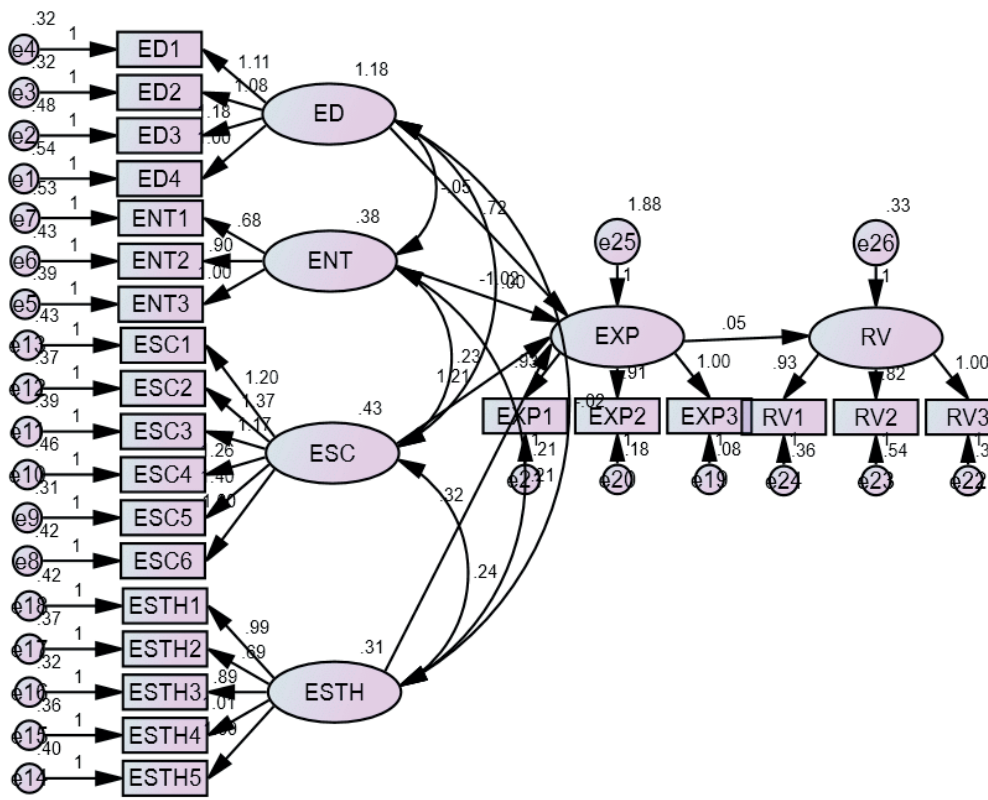
Importance of Education

The findings showed that visitors' experiences are significantly impacted by education. Events with a variety of themes might incorporate educational experience. Given that younger participants can participate in educational activities for intellectual growth, the education opportunity may be particularly significant for family visits. For the purpose of entertainment, it is crucial that event organisers include cutting-edge activities in order to engage attendees. Event organisers are urged to take advantage of the opportunity to create a festive atmosphere with a fun educational theme that allows attendees to temporarily shift their pace of life.

The authors also stress the importance of including religious concepts into these festivals in order to instil value systems. This is linked to education and suggestions are to integrate pamphlets and expert speeches into various aspects of an event which can function as an educational resource for devotees.

Getz (2007) presented similar guidelines in the general festival context, with an emphasis on skill development,

Figure 3: Constructs of all Structural Routes



expanding knowledge, learning from experts, and discovering a new world. Many art and culture festivals, as well as community events, provide these types of opportunities for cultural inquiry (Lee, 2003; Schofield & Thompson, 2007). Considering the various attendee groups, educational opportunity may be especially relevant for family visits, as youngsters in visitor groups can participate in educational activities to help them grow intellectually or physically.

Importance of Entertainment

One of the important elements of any international festival that attracts the attention of visitors is entertainment. Live musical performances, dance shows, and visual arts can all enhance the entertainment experience (Getz *et al.*, 2010). Brown *et al.* (2002) underlined the importance of esthetic design inventiveness and distinctiveness, as generic elements don't offer the quality of benefits and thus are unlikely to last. By utilising the host community's rituals and symbols, such sensory variety can be achieved. When planning festivals of this calibre, organisers should keep the interests of guests in mind.

Table 6 : Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

Hypotheses	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P Value
Experience <--- Education	.716	.088	8.134	***
Experience <--- Entertainment	1.021	.286	3.575	***
Experience <---Esthetics	1.211	.228	5.306	***
Experience <--- Escapism	.324	.294	1.102	.271
Intention to Return <--- Experience	.190	.051	3.732	***

Importance of Escapism

The escapism experience demonstrates that a festival can provide abundant opportunities for visitors to escape their regular routines, unwind, and take a few days off. Festival organisers should concentrate on creating a fun-themed, festive environment that enables attendees to temporarily take a vacation from their everyday routine. At festivals, visual arts can also be a theme of escape (Getz, 2007).

Importance of Esthetic

For visual esthetic expression, a festival can feature painting, sculpture, handicrafts, and architecture. For many festivals, the esthetic experience is a crucial component (Brown *et al.*, 2002). Beautiful amenities and facilities, an engaging atmosphere, an alluring location, and tourist activities should be the main marketing strategy and investment focus. Town squares and parks, public streets, and seaside amenities, as well as multi-purpose sports and arts complexes, are all examples of well-designed festival settings (Getz, 2007). Brown *et al.* (2002) stress the importance of visual design inventiveness and individuality.

Comments

The four experience dimensions must be considered when developing marketing strategies and, as previously said, they must influence festival event design. Additionally, when attending a much hyped festival, visitors expect first-rate amenities like dependable and comfortable transportation, pleasant ambiance, emergency services, clean restrooms, adequate hygiene, and healthcare facilities. This is particularly important in India, given the low visitor satisfaction index and the evidence of poorly maintained national historic sites (Manish, 2009).

The findings of the SEM revealed that a positive experience leads to a desire to revisit. The paper recommends that festival organisers create one or more distinctive moments that help attendees gain a memorable experience. The marketers can use the experience dimensions assessment scale as a guide to see how well their festivals and events satisfy customer expectations. While planning festivals, they should keep in mind the experiential elements that will make the event memorable for the attendees. The

authors recommend that marketers incorporate surprise and creativity into the design of their festival activities. In terms of theoretical implications, this study made use of both existing theory and the concept of the experience economy, which spurred intriguing debates on the assertions made regarding the relationship between service and experience.

The service industry is often referred to as the experience industry. Consumers are provided with iconic experiences by the event and tourist industries. The experience economy is even more potent and powerful in the event and tourism sectors, thus, the authors caution against separating service from experience. Thus, the delivery of the various experiential factors outlined in this research must be undertaken with attention to the highest service standards possible.

Conclusion

The four experiential components discussed in this paper should be tailored to various festivals and should be incorporated into festival design by the event organisers.

The findings of the study reveal that, in order to give tourists a memorable experience, the organisers should establish up a setting where participants may learn about local customs, traditions, and values. It must enable the visitors to grow in spiritual awareness, social connection, find a respite from daily life, and discover new things. Thus, event planners should focus on fostering social connection, learning, and ensuring that attendees' overall experience ultimately leading to inner fulfilment.

By examining the various elements of experience within the context of a renowned religious event, the study also attempts to add substantial value to the body of existing knowledge. It demonstrates how the tourist experience affects future travel intentions. Additionally, it discusses the various aspects of the experience that are observed to be the most crucial for visitors attending Indian religious festivals.

While the findings are limited to a sample collected from Puri, India, during a specific event, the present study can serve as a springboard for inviting more investigation in India. To further comprehend the tourist experience,

future research can take into consideration additional factors such as facilities, amenities, and service quality to better understand the tourist experience.

Studying similar events can help researchers find new opportunities for expanding their scholarly study and add to the body of knowledge. The findings and recommendations call for a thorough re-examination of India's event planning and management procedures. Based on the findings of the present study, future research studies may be undertaken focussing on collecting comparable information from similar events at various times and with various tourist demographics. It would also be interesting to observe whether the characteristics of tourists' experiences change with respect to time, place, and demography.

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