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An ethnographic study of tourist psychological states: Implications for festivities and events

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This is the first study that explores in such depth the emotional dimensions of visitors at numerous and various events held around the world, for almost ten years. Unexpected findings and new knowledge provide novel directions to the new millennium tourism stakeholders, and the tourism/psychology research community. Strong positive emotions are found to be the outcome of the unexpected, genuine hospitable offerings and a holistic sense-fulfilling experience at events/festivities. The tangibilisation of the visitor's experience with certain stimuli may lead to strong cognitive/emotional associations with a specific destination which will endure even for a lifetime. Even so, if a destination aims to stage an event/festival, then they must to it properly otherwise the negative impact on the attendees' emotional state may influence adversely their perception even towards the destination as a whole. Interestingly, the emotion of "frustration" was found to lead towards a revisit intention, "embarrassment", though, probably not. Surprisingly, "anger" and "frustration" do not have the same negative effect as "boredom" has on the behaviour of event attendees. An unexpected study finding is the fact that certain negative emotions, such as "sadness", may even add psychological value to a specific visitor experience.

Keywords: tourism, psychology, emotions, events

Introduction

Various countries and cultures within them have a rich tradition of ceremonies, rituals and festivities extending over thousands of years. These traditions have greatly influenced many *events* as they are celebrated nowadays which include exhibitions, fairs, festivals, shows, parades, cultural celebrations, sporting and social events and other forms of public celebration (Wagen & White, 2010; Bowdin et al., 2012). The core phenomenon of events is the experiences and the meanings attached to them (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). In Sweden, many customs are closely associated with the changing seasons. "Swedes celebrate summer with an intensity that can only be found in a people who have just endured a long, dark winter …" (Tidholm & Lilja, 2004, p. 2). Tourism has been a key force in promoting festival growth and expansion, while destinations (i.e. regions and towns) are increasingly keen to share their culture, environment and spending opportunities with visitors through the promotion of festivals. Cultural festivals have emerged as an instrument for developing tourism and expanding seasonality, improving city image and boosting regional economies (Okech, 2011). The positive economic impacts of events upon destinations are acknowledged not only by the research community but also by tourism stakeholders. A national festival held throughout India was found to revitalise the entire nation's economy (Gaur & Chapnerkar, 2015). The study of Taks et al. (2013) found that sport-event participants account for 39% of aggregate spend (i.e. on hospitality and retail), with coaches and athletes also spending money while at the destination. Cultural events are also supported to be contributors to

the implementation of tourism during the low season, such as the case of Easter festivities in the island of Sardinia (Giudici et al., 2013). Wine festivals, for example, provide a number of benefits for stakeholders, which include revenue and recognition generated for the participating wineries, enhanced awareness of the area and a new source of customers for the community and outside providers. Positive future visitation benefits for the wineries staging the festivals and the wider industry are also reported as a result of such festivals (Houghton, 2001).

By focusing on Charleston's hotel occupancy changes, the study of Litvin, Pan and Smith (2013) validates the increased tourism income due to rising accommodation prices during festivals and events, which can provide a significant boost to the local economy. Even so, researchers (i.e. Ellert et al., 2015) make reference to the complexity of events, which may even lead to event failure. For instance, one such complexity involved is the challenge of providing an overall satisfactory attendee experience, the importance of which in the successful performance of events such as festivals is highlighted in several studies (e.g. Lee, Yang, & Lo, 2008; Cheng, Chang & Dai, 2015). Yet, in spite of the connection and importance of emotions (i.e. negative/positive) with satisfaction (White & Yu, 2005), it appears evident that their consideration in the overall experience of event attendees is neglected even in recent research studies. A number of researchers (i.e. Brown & Hutton, 2013, Mair & Whitford, 2013; Pan & Huan, 2014; Wood & Moss, 2015) call for further event investigations from a psycho-social perspective, while more specifically, Bulger (2013) stresses the emotional dimensions of people, which could benefit stakeholders and

reveal novel information of great significance for destinations hosting successful events.

Experiences and emotions: A psychological perspective

The impact of events and festivities is not only valued in monetary terms since the experiences being generated may favourably impact on the satisfaction, well-being, positive psychology and behaviour of people. The study of Ramchandani and Coleman (2012) at three major sport events revealed that around two-thirds of the respondents reported that their experience had inspired them to increase their participation in sport or physical activity. In their qualitative approach of analysing the impacts of "Ganesh Chaturthi" annual Indian festival, Gaur and Chapnerkar (2015) concluded that the event promoted amongst others, communal harmony. Wine festivals were also found to offer the opportunity to socialise with friends and family, whilst enjoying natural settings and products (Houghton, 2001). By focusing on well-being and "happiness" studies, Wood and Moss (2015) evaluated the emotional responses experienced by event attendees and initiated a starting point in the better understanding of the complexity of emotional effects triggered at (live music) events. They argued the usefulness of emotional responses as a significant indicator of future behaviour. In their study, Liljander and Strandvik (1997) found that customers experience different (positive/negative) emotions which consecutively influence their satisfaction. Another study (Chiappa, Andreu & Gallarza, 2014) found that the cluster of visitors at a museum with higher positive emotions reported being more satisfied with their experience compared to the other group. The researchers concluded that emotions are more significant than cognitive aspects in shaping visitors' satisfaction.

Koenig-Lewis and Palmer (2014) note that models of customer satisfaction have been dominated by cognition rather than emotional affects, which are under-researched. The study of Tronvoll (2011) found that the negative emotion of "frustration" was the best predictor of complaint behaviour towards service providers. Svari and Erling Olsen (2012) established that increased levels of emotions as a result of negative service incidents may lead to complaints via negative word-of-mouth in social media and blogs. The examination of emotions has been regarded in various contexts such as in the case of a Norwegian hospital in which nurses were asked to reflect "forwards" and "backwards" about their emotional experiences to work changes. Emotion terms such as "uncertainty", "joy", "resignation", "anxiety", "excitement" and "frustration" were reported (Giæver & Smollan, 2015). Researchers (i.e. Barbalet, 2004; Tan et al., 2005) make reference to the increased recognition of the existence of emotions in everyday interpersonal interactions and social activities, while Kalat (2011, p. 437) states that "all of our emotions, within limits, provide richness to our experiences". Others (i.e. Fredrickson & Losada, 2005) concur that a happy mood increases someone's readiness to explore new ideas and opportunities that will help maintain their happy mood. Levine and Pizarro (2004) note that people remember emotionally arousing information better than neutral information. Also, emotions adjust our priorities: "If you are

running away from a mad attacker with a chainsaw, you don't stop to smell the roses" (Kalat, 2011, p. 423).

Psychologists have no consensus on how many types of emotions people have. Some propose a short list, such as, happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. Others add contempt, interest, frustration, love, embarrassment and boredom. Many consider surprise as an emotion which occurs when events do not match expectations. (Keltner & Buswell, 1997; Kalat, 2011). People tend to remember previous events that were surprising (Parzuchowski & Szymkow-Sudziarska, 2008; Kalat 2011). Emotional expressions are not altogether arbitrary. For instance, when people are frightened, they open their eyes wide, increasing their ability to see dangers, and inhale deeply, preparing for possible action. If they see something disgusting, they partly close their eyes and turn their nose away from the offending object, decreasing therefore their exposure to it. The wide-open eyes of a frightened face makes someone look more childlike and worthy of sympathy, whereas the narrowed eyes of angry people make them look more threatening (Susskind et al., 2008; Sacco & Hugenberg, 2009; Kalat, 2011). Emotional expressions occur mostly in a social context, while intentional emotional expressions seldom exactly match spontaneous expressions. For instance, the smile of a truly happy person includes movements of the mouth muscles and the muscles surrounding the eyes. Voluntary smiles generally do not include the muscles around the eyes (Ekman & Davidson, 1993; Kalat 2011). The similarity of facial expressions across cultures implies that they are unlearned. Researchers interested in the hypothesis of a few basic emotions used photos of people showing facial expressions and proved that people in other cultures also identified them, though somewhat less accurately. Yet, most people identify expressions fairly accurately even when viewing faces from an unfamiliar culture (Ekman, 1992; Russell, 1994). Even so, people supplement facial information by noticing gestures, posture, context, tone of voice, even smell (Zhou & Chen, 2009) and as psychologists (i.e. Ekman, 2001; Kalat, 2011) agree, simply observing people more carefully (i.e. their micro expressions), may lead us to understand someone's emotional state.

Chen and Ayoko (2012) stress the importance of considering emotions in social sciences and human interactions. Barbalet (2004) states that the centrality of emotions to all significant social and human activities is now acknowledged, though, their discussion in such core activities is undeveloped. Others (i.e. Peslak, 2005; Tan et al., 2005) argue that little research addresses the emotions felt and the emotional demands and dynamics involved in human interactions. Bulger (2013) requested more research on the emotional dimensions of people, based on the little attention which has been given, since these may impact on behaviours and attitudes that affect the well-being of people. Maguire and Geiger (2015) make reference to a gap in fully comprehending service consumption emotions. The relationship/significance of emotional dimensions with events and festivals is furthermore highlighted through the recent studies of Wood and Moss (2015) and Yan, Zhang and Li (2012) who call for further research in this regard. Brown and Hutton (2013) also call for an understanding of the psychosocial domain of events' audiences. All the same,

Kim, Boo and Kim (2013) found that even though the number of event studies has dramatically increased since 2000, the attention has still remained on a very limited number of topics; Their conclusion rests on a thorough review of 178 event-related articles collected from the *Annals of Tourism Research*, the *Journal of Travel Research* and *Tourism Management* published between 1980 and 2010. Mair and Whitford (2013) state that experts feel that there are several areas of events (such as logistics) that have been comprehensively researched and where further research is unlikely to provide any new information, and call for future events and festivals research from a social viewpoint.

Research approach

Considering the aforementioned, the aim of this study is to investigate the impact of events and festivities on visitors from a psychological (emotional) perspective. An ethnographic methodological approach was employed to address the research aim. The benefits of ethnography in terms of exploring and understanding event participants and their experiences are stressed in the study of Jaimangal-Jones (2014). Holloway, Brown and Shipway (2010), state that ethnography is advocated as an appropriate research approach to the events field which will lead to a more diverse literature on events, and will rebalance the current dominance of quantitative-based research papers. Mackellar (2013) suggests that ethnography can be used to gain a deeper understanding of social dynamics of audiences and the affective dimensions of their behaviour. The researcher adds that it is highly appropriate to the context of event environments, where the use of surveys can interrupt the flow of the event experience for audiences, or be made impossible by the structure of the event.

Ethnography is a prolonged research method in which the researcher attempts to understand social meanings in terms of what is meaningful to members of a social group and behaviour of people in a given setting, situation, or context, through regular observations, listening and conversations. (Bryman, 2004; Trace, 2007). It is used if research focus on the human side is desired (Damien 2006; Irvine & Gaffikin 2006; Saltmarsh, 2013; Muskat et al., 2013). Palmer (2005) suggests that the wealth of data generated and the level of detail from the participant observation cannot be created by either quantitative or qualitative questionnaires. Researchers undertake ethnographic studies to see the world from the point of view of those being researched (Veal, 1997; Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006). Participation in various events along with other attendees enabled Genzuk (2003) to feel what is like to be part of the group. Others (i.e. Sørensen, 2003; Salazar, 2005) note that its core interest is analytical, rather than statistical generalisation. McCabe (2007, p. 227) states that such approaches "offer something different, unique and liberating to scholars of touristic phenomena". In an attempt to gain insights into the travel culture of backpackers, Sørensen (2003) used an ethnographic approach. Others (i.e. Bowen, 2002; Bowie and Chang, 2005) adopted the same approach to evaluate tourist satisfaction. Nocker (2015) investigated English football fans through ethnographic techniques by travelling with them to events and observing their motivations and behaviour. Bowen

(2002) called for the employment of such research in the investigation of other tourist behaviour, while others (i.e. Godfrey & Clarke, 2000; Bowen, 2001a; Crossan 2003; Henn, Weinstein & Foard 2006) agree that ethnographic techniques provide in-depth explorations of tourist behaviour and are useful in understanding the tourism experience.

This researcher adopted a combination of ethnographer roles. This combination enabled the researcher to be involved, participate, observe and at the same time steer/engage in conversations with attendees at several events, while avoiding the risk of a "going native" (Bryman, 2004) situation, or being completely detached from the participants. The blend of roles also allowed the researcher to get exposed to the same experiences as those under investigation. Inevitably the researcher in most cases had a "complete participant/covert role" since it was impossible to inform all participants about his status. Homan (1991) states that it is not practicable or possible to inform all ethnography participants. In this study, the researcher did not deliberately adopt a "covert role" since it would not have allowed the desired interaction with attendees (Bowen, 2001b; Bryman, 2004).

Participants with whom the researcher chatted were given the opportunity to refuse participation. Ethnographic ethical principles (i.e. ASA 1997 – Codes of Ethics and Social Research Association 2003) were followed (i.e. ensuring anonymity and keeping information about respondents/event holders confidential). The study excluded respondents who were not able to fully understand the nature of the study and the implications for them of participating in it.

The specific ethnographic study commenced in early 2006 and was completed, after almost a decade (early June 2015) once sufficient information to reach conclusions was gathered and new information was reinforcing what had already been collected. The researcher was not an ethnographer continuously through these years. As Bryman (2004, p. 307) states, "it is impossible to be an ethnographer all the time". Ethnographers need to take time out to write up notes, and attend to other commitments and body imperatives (eating, sleeping, and so on).

In this case, the researcher reported his own experiences (Canniford, 2005), as well as the observed behaviour and expressions of attendees at several events. These were supplemented with casual conversations with visitors. Researchers (i.e. Bryman, 2004; Othman, 2004) agree that an ethnographic approach, apart from participant observation (joining the members being study) and observational research (watching users), also includes contextual inquiry – asking questions in the natural setting (e.g. Fayard & van Maanen, 2015). Thus, several informal interviews/chats took place with a number of events' attendees. These were used to supplement the researcher's experiences and fieldwork observations. The researcher chose to employ open questions (as the study of McCabe, 2001) and conversations which assist in the emergence of the emotional dimensions of the visitors' experiences. Other studies (e.g. Kneafsey, 2001; Damien, 2006) have also combined informal interviews and participant observation as data collection methods.

The outcome of the study is not solely based on the ethnographer's personal experiences given that observations and informal conversations supplement fieldwork findings to ensure reliable conclusions. The inclusion of emotions

experienced by the researcher and respondents are, as Koning and Ooi (2013) stress, incredibly insightful and enhance the trustworthiness and quality of the study.

The researcher engaged in hundreds of casual conversations with event attendees/visitors – in total approximately 500 (precise number: 532) and followed a random selection rule so that bias did not affect the validity of observations (Mariampolski, 2006). Emphasis was placed on the suggestion of Kitto, Chesters and Grbich (2008, p. 243): "Methodological criteria of quantitative research – validity, reliability and empirical generalizability – are generally not directly applied to qualitative research … Instead, terms such as *rigor* (thoroughness and appropriateness of the use of research methods), *credibility* (meaningful, well presented findings) and *relevance* (utility of findings) are used to judge the quality or 'trustworthiness' of a study…" In this study, the researcher noted his fieldwork experiences – after attending several events/festivities – and the findings from the conversations he had with respondents. Researchers (i.e. Sanders, 2002; Bryman, 2004; Trace, 2007) agree that the main recording equipment for ethnographers is a pen and a notepad to write field notes. The analysis of the findings begun while the data were being collected, by bringing order and organising the findings into general trends as a number of researchers suggest (i.e. Krueger, 1994; Beymon-Davis, 1997; Shaw, 1999; Damien, 2006; Trace, 2007). The most challenging task was to organise and analyse the fieldwork findings, attempting to find patterns and reach conclusions.

In regards to the study limitations, it was felt that some respondents experienced difficulties in expressing their feelings in what was for them a foreign language. Generally, the nature of the study, allowed a good rapport to be developed. Also, there were cases where certain respondents found it hard to express some personal emotions (e.g. embarrassment or frustration). Also, the study did not pinpoint any significant differences based on gender or other cultural/demographic criteria. Further research which may use a case studies-focus for specific countries/cultures may be able to do so. Although the study included various events held in several destinations, there is still the issue of the generalisation limitation involved; similar and additional investigations are strongly encouraged to further develop this relatively unexplored topic.

Findings

The findings revealed that generally positive emotions (e.g. contentedness, happiness or joy) were reported by all those who felt that the outcome of the event met or exceeded their personal expectations and aspirations (i.e. an advantageous team score), or promoted, as each participant perceived it, a pleasant "spirit", "aura" or "atmosphere" (e.g. a joyful folkloric dance show; a festive New Year's event). Even so, such emotions were not reported by those who did not value such events, or those who felt that a specific event was not well-organised, was over-rated through "deceitful" promotion, or was perceived as of "lesser value/ disadvantageous" compared to other similar events. An exception applies to those who were not necessarily fond of a particular event, yet acknowledged the positive outcomes on others – especially if these were close to them (i.e. their

children). "Love" is a positive emotion which was mentioned the least by participants compared to other positive emotions. Apart from "fans" of famous personalities (e.g. a singer or football player), those who expressed "love" as an emotional outcome of their experience were those who in very isolated cases received from locals particular (mainly psychological) elements which they perceived as honest expressions of "love" (i.e. genuine hospitality, comfort and sympathy). In this regard, Lashley (2008) notes the importance of those guests' emotions which are stimulated by the hospitableness involved in the host-guest transaction. This was mainly reported by those who attended events in the countryside, or small urban areas, or stayed at particular destinations holding an event for many days (mostly more than three). Interestingly, people that expressed this particular emotion were more likely to find themselves bonded with certain locals and the region, and more likely to revisit it/them (i.e. visitors making reference to destination revisits even in different seasons). The findings thus give value to Wood and Moss's (2015) argument on the usefulness of emotional responses as a significant indicator of future behaviour.

"Enthusiasm" was observed, as well as reported at those events which the participants were greatly anticipating (i.e. a particular sporting event). Also, by those that were pleasantly surprised by something which they had little, or no expectations for (e.g. a fan who was given the opportunity to chat with a famous singer). Strong positive emotions, through enthusiastic verbal expressions and non-verbal clues (i.e. gestures and facial expressions), were also observed and communicated by those who experienced a "holistic agreeable" (for them) experience; This involved an overall satisfying "senses feeling" which covered sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell (e.g. a wine festival with nice natural/ artificial physical surroundings, music, the opportunity to socially interact with others, actively engage with fermentation-related equipment and tasting of wines/local specialties). A possible negative (even minor) distraction of any of these, seem to be able to impair the overall participants' experience (e.g. attendees making reference to unpleasant odors by a person sitting/standing close to them, or others stating how thirsty they felt on a hot day at a particular event). Yet, no conclusions can be drawn on whether people with impaired (e.g. visual) abilities are not able to express strong positive emotions at events (e.g. concerts). Destinations and organisers should therefore seek to "thrill the senses" by including such presentations, physical attributes and offerings that will enhance the overall experience of attendees and impact on their emotions favourably. A genuine hospitable/ comfort stance on behalf of the locals may also foster strong positive emotions. The "surprise" element should also be considered and offered, although its inclusion in the promotional process will definitely take away the unforeseen result and the associated outcomes, since it will be expected by the visitors.

Further fieldwork findings indicate that the impact on attendee's emotions of an event/festivity organised by a local community, for example, may impact on the perceived "image" that someone has even for the destination as a whole (region or country). For instance, if negative emotions are experienced (e.g. disappointment or frustration) then this, depending on the situation, will negatively influence the

perception that the attendee will have towards not only the event organisers, but also, towards the destination (e.g. that they lack organisation/ professionalism) and the locals (e.g. that they are inconsiderate towards their guests, or are largely profit-oriented). This leads, based on fieldwork findings, to the almost definite intention of a negative word-of-mouth report. However, successful organisation of an event may not necessary impact favourably on the emotions of all attendees, for various reasons. Apart from apparent external impacts (e.g. a storm on the day of an al-fresco event), one such reason may be that the specific event may not be valued by certain people, such as carnival festivities which may create emotions of "content" and "happiness" for some, and "frustration" (e.g. due to "carnivalesque" behaviour) for others. A festivity/event will have the same consequence if it is not perceived as pleasant by all attendees. For instance, a "gay pride" parade may create emotions and expressions of "joy" and "pride" for certain attendees, or even opposing feelings of "shame" for others. Also, a "dark" event/ festival in which perhaps any ritual associations or certain physical presentations (e.g. skeletons with nerves) may impact delightfully on the emotional state of a person highly interested in this type of thing, but create "disgust" in others. Although negative feelings (e.g. sadness) are experienced at particular events (e.g. dreadful historical presentations), attendees still communicate their intention to recommend these to others, as part of the overall experience visitors should have at a particular destination. Even so, the local authorities and organisers should be aware of the fact that in the case of an event "open to the public", the outcomes may not be as favourable as intended, especially if attendees happen to fall into certain specially sensitive groups.

Prior to an event, monetary cost can be found to restrict participation if the fee is perceived as high (not always – depending on the willingness of someone to attend the event), yet it is not taken into consideration once the experience is completed and the overall impact on the emotions is perceived by the attendee as positive, based on the respondent's comments. Yet, when certain negative feelings (e.g. "disappointment") were reported, the "price" element was often raised.

Specific seasonal celebrations/festivities and associated events, provided that they create strong positive emotions (e.g. "happiness" or "surprise") are found to be linked by attendees with the destination at that precise season (e.g. Christmas markets/events and the city of Vienna; Easter festivities and certain villages in the Cypriot countryside). This is further fostered by particular stimuli which attendees experience while at the destination (e.g. distinct images, smells, tastes or songs) and which they intentionally (or not, e.g. while browsing a photo album) come across them even years after their return home (e.g. respondents noticing specific smells that remind them of an experience they had at a particular destination). All those who expressed such emotions communicated their willingness to share the information with others, and the majority (nearly nine out of ten) viewed favourably a revisit at some point in the future. Yet, this study was not able to confirm the association between intention and actual behaviour. Even so, such seasonal events are subject to exogenous influences, some of which may be beyond the control of destinations

but have an impact on the overall experience of visitors, especially if they value these specific events/festivities (e.g. an expectation that a Halloween-theme outdoor event is "complemented" by a frightful, grey autumn sky). Although such expectations were not anticipated by those in climatic environments in which particular festivities do not match "expected weather conditions" in the northern hemisphere (e.g. in Australia), attendees would regard this as a "plus" element in their overall experience, based on their perceived specific event-image created through the media, for example (e.g. snow at a Christmas market). Destinations are thus encouraged to promote/link such "seasonal" events – if possible – with specific regions while attempting to diversify their offerings, to avoid comparisons. This may be achieved by linking these events with local traditions and customs, practices and specific stimuli which, along with local memorabilia, may foster "re-living" such experiences once visitors (local or international) return home.

Negative emotions (e.g. sadness, disappointment or frustration) were reported by attendees whose expectations were not meant. This was extended to a "shocking" (unpleasant) experience when dreadful, or dramatic circumstances were experienced at a particular event (e.g. an accident). The ethnographer's personal experiences and observations also support this. Specific negative emotions such as "frustration" and "anger" were also found to be felt mainly towards other people (e.g. a respondent who got annoyed with another attendee, or towards the organisers or someone closely linked to them, such as, an employee). Depending how strongly the attendee felt about the incident, the emotion could even jeopardise the whole experience for them. Participants who expressed such negative emotions were found to be the most likely to complain/express their discontent – if possible orally, or mainly, via social media platforms. This reinforces the outcome of other studies (e.g. Tronvoll, 2011; Svari & Erling Olsen, 2012) that the negative emotion of "frustration" is the best predictor for complaint behaviour. Of note, however, is the fact that the emotion of "anger" was felt and expressed by those who attended specific events which were closely linked to certain occurrences (e.g. a sad, historical war representation). Once more this feeling of "anger" was found to be directed against others (e.g. those who originally facilitated in the process of torturing/killing people). Even so, such emotions were perceived by attendees as giving even more psychological value to their (specific) experience. Indeed, as Kalat (2011) notes, our emotions provide richness to our experiences.

In this context, "fear" is an emotion which can be categorised as positive or negative, depending on the circumstances. For instance, this emotion could be the result of unpleasant experiences at events perceived by attendees as threatening their safety or wellbeing (e.g. extremely crowded venues/places, risk of a terrorist attack or severe weather conditions). Yet, the same emotion could add to someone's overall experience, depending on the situation, with attendees reporting words such as "surprise", "excitement" and "enthusiasm" in the case of extreme fireworks, for example. Those that communicated the emotion of "embarrassment" also expressed their intention not to visit the same event, especially if held at the same location (approximately seven out of ten). Such emotions were the result of exogenous

(e.g. offensive behaviour by others), or self-related factors (e.g. someone falling from the stage in front of others). Perhaps more interesting is the fact that almost all those that felt "bored" at events not only communicated a non-revisit intention but also communicated their experience as an unpleasant one. Exceptions apply only in certain (e.g. sporting) events which "boredom" (e.g. due to a not challenging game) does not at all affect future intentions to attend similar events. Even so, in most cases it does negatively affect the overall experience at the particular event. Thus, whenever possible, it is highly suggested that destinations should seek ways to keep participants actively engaged and interested (e.g. by offering the "do", not only the "see"). Yet the task becomes more challenging if the events/festivities address a wide market.

Conclusion

Fieldwork findings reveal that a pleasant and joyful event/ festival "spirit/aura" may impact favourably on the emotions of attendees, under certain circumstances. Strong positive emotions may be the outcome of unexpected elements, genuine hospitable offers and a holistic – without distractions – agreeable, sense fulfilling experience. Positive outcomes may even extend to the creation of strong bonds between visitors and hosts/destination. The enforcement of seasonal festivals at specific regions and the tangibilisation of the (event) experience with strong sense stimuli may lead to strong cognitive and emotional connections with a specific destination which will endure even for a lifetime. Even so, if a destination wishes to stage an event, then they must "do it properly – otherwise not do it at all" given that the damage will outweigh the positive outcomes. The negative impact of an event on someone's emotional state may impact adversely on the perception the attendee will have even towards the destination as a whole. Negative emotions such as "disappointment" and "frustration" will lead to negative publicity even towards the destination as a whole, also via social platforms. The unexpected findings of the study are that under certain circumstances certain negative emotions (e.g. "sadness", "fear" or "anger") may add psychological value to a specific experience. All the same, "frustration" may lead to a revisit intention, "embarrassment" though, probably not. Finally, "anger", "disappointment" and "frustration" may not have the same negative effect as "boredom" does. Letting attendees get bored probably has the worst impact on destinations staging/hosting events and festivities.

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Appendix 1: List of events attended (by date of occurrence)

Event/ Occasion	Exact location	Country	Date
Cultural theme show	Phuket Island	Thailand	Jan-06
Offerings ceremony	Bangkok	Thailand	Jan-06
Religious (funeral) ceremony	Phuket Island	Thailand	Jan-06
Religious event	Bangkok	Thailand	Jan-06
Float market	Outskirts of Bangkok	Thailand	Jan-06
"Green Monday" event	South island countryside	Cyprus	Feb-06
Easter festivities	Pitsillia villages	Cyprus	Apr-06
Folkloric dance show	Dublin	Ireland	May-06
Beer event	Dublin	Ireland	May-06
Open market	Covent Garden – London	UK	May-06
Halloween party	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-06
New Year's Eve festivities	Central London	U.K	Dec-06
Special meal event	Kalopanayiotis village	Cyprus	Aug-07
Traditional fair (Paniyiri)	Athienou village	Cyprus	Sep-07
Folkloric dances/music	Aradippou village	Cyprus	Oct-07
Halloween event	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-07
Dance/music event	Athens	Greece	Feb-08
Easter night festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Apr-08
Open food market	Salzburg	Austria	May-08
Music event	Salzburg	Austria	May-08
Water show/exhibition	Hellbrunn	Austria	May-08
Contemporary art exhibition	Salzburg	Austria	May-08
Musical event	London	UK	May-08
Cultural music event	Granada	Spain	Aug-08
Art exhibition	Toledo	Spain	Aug-08
Folkloric dance show	Seville	Spain	Aug-08
Bull-fight event	Madrid	Spain	Aug-08
Pride parade/night event	Stockholm	Sweden	Aug-08
Open ethnographic museum	Skansen	Sweden	Aug-08
Theme (Halloween) party	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-08
Graduation ceremony	Xanthi	Greece	Nov-08
Special meal event	Xanthi	Greece	Nov-08
Religious ceremony	Ayion Oros	Greece	Nov-08
Christmas festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Dec-08
Wedding occasion	Melbourne	Australia	Jul-09
Victoria Market	Melbourne	Australia	Jul-09
Sport (soccer) event	Melbourne	Australia	Jul-09
Medieval torture exhibition/reenactment	Ballarat	Australia	Jul-09
Open Museum	Sovereign Hill	Australia	Jul-09
"Christmas in July" occasion	Dandenong Mountains	Australia	Jul-09
Aquarium show	Sydney	Australia	Jul-09
Halloween party	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-09
Changing guard ceremony	Central London	UK	Nov-09
Christmas markets	Vienna Inner City	Austria	Dec-09
Concert	Vienna	Austria	Dec-09
Church mass	Vienna	Austria	Dec-09
Christmas Market	Schloss Schonbrunn	Austria	Dec-09
Carnival celebrations	Limassol	Cyprus	Feb-10
Easter traditional festivities	Pitsillia villages	Cyprus	Apr-10
Wedding occasion	Kastroria	Greece	Jul-10
Special meal event	Thessaloniki	Greece	Jul-10
Wine festival	Limassol	Cyprus	Aug-10
National day celebrations	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-10
Easter festivities	Pitsillia villages	Cyprus	Apr-11
Changing guard ceremony	Amalienburg Palace-Copenhagen	Denmark	Aug-11
Music event	Tivoli Gardens-Copenhagen	Denmark	Aug-11
Summer open park	Kobenhavn park	Denmark	Aug-11
National Day parade	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-11
Christmas market	Nicosia	Cyprus	Dec-11
New Year's Eve	Troodos	Cyprus	Dec-11
Easter festivities	Pitsillia villages	Cyprus	Apr-12
Easter market	Central square Prague	Czech Rep.	Apr-12
Medieval torture exhibition	Prague	Czech Rep.	Apr-12

Appendix 1: Continued

Event/ Occasion	Exact location	Country	Date
Jewish Cemetery/exhibition	Prague	Czech Rep.	Apr-12
Music rock event	Prague	Czech Rep.	Apr-12
Night event	Rome vicinity	Italy	Jul-12
Special meal occasion	Rome city center	Italy	Jul-12
Mini soccer occasion/market	Sant' Angelo area	Italy	Jul-12
Halloween event	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-12
Christmas festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Dec-12
National Day parade	Larnaca	Cyprus	Mar-13
Easter festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Apr-13
Soccer sport event	Ayios Konstantinos	Cyprus	Apr-13
Music event	Ayia Napa	Cyprus	Jun-13
Night music event	Central Budapest	Hungary	Jul-13
Fair	Budapest	Hungary	Jul-13
Open Sunday park	Budapest	Hungary	Jul-13
Open arts/crafts market	Bratislava city Hall area	Slovakia	Jul-13
Traditional fair (Paniyiri)	Aradippou area	Cyprus	Sep-13
National Day celebrations	Larnaca	Cyprus	Oct-13
Christmas festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Dec-13
Carnival festival& parade	Limassol	Cyprus	Feb-14
Flower market/fair	Amsterdam city center	Netherlands	Feb-14
Red light district	Amsterdam city center	Netherlands	Feb-14
Carnival festival& parade	Torres-Vedras	Portugal	Feb-14
Beach volley sport event	Larnaca	Cyprus	Jun-14
Traditional fair (Paniyiri)	Athienou village	Cyprus	Sep-14
Cultural event (Palouzes)	Agios Konstantinos village	Cyprus	Oct-14
Music/dance event	Gianitsa outskirts	Greece	Nov-14
European cultural event	Kria Vrisi	Greece	Nov-14
Christmas festivities	Larnaca	Cyprus	Dec-14
Dance (bouzoukia) event	Athens	Greece	Feb-15
"Green Monday" occasion	Athens	Greece	Feb-15
Ballet dancing show	Larnaca	Cyprus	May-15
Beach tennis event	Larnaca	Cyprus	Jun-15
Traditional wedding	Ayios Konstantinos village	Cyprus	Jun-15
European cultural event	Prague	Czech Rep.	Jun-15