Small-scale cultural festivals in Southern Europe: A motivation-based segmentation study

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Abstract
This research deals with small-scale festivals based on local cultural traditions in a European setting. These festivals have at present been poorly studied in literature, although they may play an important role in tourist attractiveness and local development. The context of the study is the Maiorchino Festival, a community-based festival which takes place annually in Novara di Sicilia, a small rural-mountain town in Sicily (Italy). The research aims to segment festival attendees, based on motivations, and to understand the differences between clusters with regard to socio-demographic and behavioural variables. Data were collected through a survey conducted on the participants of the 2019 edition of the Maiorchino Festival. The analysis allowed four motivational factors to be identified, namely *Novelty, Local culture experience, Festival attractiveness, Socialization,* and to detect four clusters, based on attendee motivations, namely *Escapers, Socialization lovers, Loyalists, Passionate about local traditions.* The specific features of each cluster are described, satisfaction and intention to return measured. Finally, the findings, theoretical contributions and managerial implications of the paper are discussed.

Key words: small-scale festival, motivations, segmentation, satisfaction, community-based festival, local traditions.

Introduction

This research deals with small-scale festivals, focusing on attendee motivation and segmentation. Festivals are specific events with significant place-related meaning (Chen, King, & Suntikul, 2019). They are public celebrations concerning a specific theme, which can be held annually or less frequently, for a limited period of time, and include tourism, leisure and cultural activities, such as music, food, crafts, rituals, shows, visual arts (Getz, 1991; Grappi & Montanari, 2011). More specifically, small-scale festivals are often a mixture of local handicrafts, food, and local traditions. They revive local habits and attract tourism flows, thus playing significant role for the economic development of regions (Akhoondnejad, 2016). These types of events are generally community-based (Li, Huang, & Cai, 2009), thus they are characterized by the active involvement of both the local community and visitors. For this reason, they represent important opportunities for creative and memorable tourist experiences, through an immersion of attendees in the local life and culture (Ferdinand & Williams, 2013; Kim, 2010; Kim, Hallab, & Kim, 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), thus favouring a mental connection with the territorial brand and destination loyalty (Chen, Tseng, & Lin, 2011). Several studies recognise such festivals as an opportunity for local development, since they may attract visitors who would not otherwise visit the area contributing to strengthening rural communities and improving small-town life quality (Cai, Liu, & Huang, 2008). Moreover, Bakas, Duxbury, Remoaldo, & Matos (2019) highlighted the role of small-scale festivals in creating social value by increasing the host community's pride, and specifically the strategic value of including creative tourism activities in order to increase the social connections between the visitors and the local people (Galvagno & Giaccone, 2019).

Whereas many studies have investigated motivations of people attending international festivals or large cultural events (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Formica & Uysal, 1998; Lee, 2000; Lee, Lee, &Wicks, 2004; Lesjak, Axelsson, & Mekinc, 2017; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993), less research has explored the reasons for participation in small-scale festivals. In particular, those few studies that have done so, have been carried out in non-European contexts (Lee & Hsu, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2009).

The relevance of the topic is related to the consideration that festival attendance motivations are linked to social, psychological and anthropological characteristics, and are rather distinct from those inherent to tourism motivation (Maeng, Jang, & Li, 2016). Moreover, attendance motivations have been recognized as being somehow different with regards to different types of festivals, i.e. international festivals and small-scale festivals (Formica & Uysal, 1996; Li *et al.*, 2009). It has been suggested that they should be studied inwardly, from the approach of the local community and considering the various social environments of visitors as well as festival diversity (Crompton & McKay, 1997).

Based on these premises, this study lies at the crossroads between research that has investigated motivations leading people to participate to a festival (Lee *et al.*, 2004; Lee & Hsu, 2013), and studies that have explored motivations inducing travellers to return to a certain destination (Lau & McKercher, 2004), thus developing loyalty to a certain festival (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Tsaur, Wang, Liu, & Huang, 2019; Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010). Segmenting attendees by motivation, this study enriches the currently scarce knowledge on the audience of such type of festivals (Tkaczynski, Gill, & Winkle, 2019), and provides useful insights for festival managers involved in setting effective marketing strategies to attract visitors and favour their return (Kim *et al.*, 2012).

The research was developed through an empirical investigation conducted during the traditional Maiorchino Festival, which is held annually in Novara di Sicilia, a small rural-mountain town located in the North-East of Sicily (Italy), and has its roots in the traditional production of the Maiorchino cheese. The festival, which attracts both local people and many external visitors, is characterized by the

Maiorchino race, a competition between teams that challenge each other by throwing whole Maiorchino cheeses along a path that winds through the streets of the historic centre of Novara di Sicilia.

A survey was carried out on a sample of visitors of the Maiorchino Festival not residing in Novara di Sicilia, which aimed at: identifying the socio-demographic profiles of participants and their motivations by applying a factorial analysis; segmenting attendees, based on their motivations, by applying a cluster analysis to factorial scores; understanding the satisfaction perceived from the experience of the Festival and the stay in Novara di Sicilia, as well as the intention of the visitors to return.

The paper is divided into five sections beyond this introduction. Section 2 presents the theoretical background on which this research is based. Section 3 describes the methodology of the empirical analysis conducted. Section 4 shows the results of the investigation carried out. Section 5 provides a discussion of results. Finally, section 6 proposes theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and further research opportunities.

Literature review
Extensive research has been conducted on the topic of events in general, and festivals in particular; several reviews have attempted to identify the main elements of this theme (Getz, 2010; Li & Petrick, 2006; Maeng *et al.*, 2016; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Mair & Weber, 2019; Park & Park, 2017; Wilson, Arshed, Shaw, & Pret, 2017). Among the most researched topics are motivations, behaviours and segmentation of event-goers (e.g. Formica & Uysal, 1996; Li & Petrick, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2009; Yuan, Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005; Savinovic, Kim, & Long, 2012; Shen, 2014; Son & Lee, 2011).

As regards motivations, some research considered motivations as pull factors related to the specific attractiveness of events and of the host destination (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Other viewed motivations as push factors related to the individual attitudes and needs, such as the desire to know new places and cultures, to get away from everyday life and relax, to socialize with new people and learn something new (Getz, 2008). Ralston and Crompton (1988) first identified seven motivational domains for event attendance, namely stimulus seeking, family togetherness, social contact, meeting or observing new people, learning and discovery, escape from personal and social pressures, and nostalgia. These domains were also reflected in subsequent research on the same topic (e.g. Formica & Uysal, 1996, 1998; Li & Petrick, 2006; Li *et al.*, 2009; Mohr, Backman, Gahan, & Backman, 1993; Scott, 1996; Uysal *et al.*, 1993), whose results were similar to those of Ralston and Crompton (1988). With regard to festival participation, Crompton and McKay (1997) proposed six motivational dimensions i.e., cultural exploration, novelty, recover equilibrium, known group socialization, external interaction, and gregariousness.

With reference to the behaviour of event attendees, some of the most relevant topics are satisfaction and intentions to return. Some studies specifically highlighted several factors which contribute in increasing attendee satisfaction, such as quality, value and authenticity of festivals (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Almeida, Teixeira, & Franco, 2019; Anil, 2012; Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Son & Lee, 2011). Moreover, research showed that perceived satisfaction in attending an event can strongly influence the intention to return regardless of the event (Giraldi, 2016; Quintal & Polczynski, 2010). In this regard, some frameworks were proposed which explained the effects of motivations and satisfaction on festival loyalty (Anil, 2012; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Tsaur *et al.*, 2019; Zhang, Fong, Li, & Ly, 2019). In particular, Lee and Hsu (2013) showed that motivation directly affects satisfaction and indirectly affects loyalty at aboriginal festivals. As regards the factors that encourage participants' attachment to festivals, Tsaur and

colleagues (2019) showed that "hedonism" is the most important factor, followed by novelty seeking, attractions and cultural exploration. Meretse, Mykletun, & Einarsen (2016) focused on benefits, which are considered as the outcome of visitors' experience and satisfaction from participating in events, and thus "are most likely what the visitors take away, convey into word of mouth, and partly rely on for deciding to revisit the event" (p. 208). Akhoondnejad (2016) observed that quality of local cultural event affects the perceived value, satisfaction and trust, which, in turn, stimulate event loyalty. Moreover, as noted by Wilson *et al.* (2017), a limited number of studies investigated the motivations of different groups of attendees, as well as the relationship between motivations and satisfaction of participants (Formica & Uysal 1998; Lee *et al.*, 2004).

Another research topic deriving directly from the previous two, concerns attendee segmentation (Chang, 2006; Formica & Uysal, 1996; Li *et al.*, 2009; Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2019). Tkaczynski & Rundle-Thiele (2011, 2020) reviewed event and festival audience segmentation studies from 1993 to 2017. The 210 articles reviewed revealed that festival and event attendees have been usually profiled by means of *a priori* criteria like sociodemographic and geographic variables. In their reviews, Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele (2011, 2020) identified several variables that researchers had frequently used as segmentation bases/criteria. In particular, they observed that socio-demographic variables, such as age (88.2%) and gender (81.0%), were most often used, followed by geographic ones such as place of origin (61.8%), and motivations (51.2%). Other variables, including past experience (39.6%), expenditure (38.2%), and length of stay (37.5%) were much less frequently used.

Among studies included in Tkaczynski's and Rundle-Thiele's reviews (2011, 2020), Table 1 shows those focusing on festivals based on local cultural traditions. Reported data were integrated with several categories, namely event scale, segmentation methods and variables, and segments' names.

As shown by Table 1, segmentation studies of festivals based on local cultural traditions are mainly on big-scale events, mostly in US or Asia. Segmentation techniques varied from factor-cluster analysis (Chang, 2006; de Guzman *et al.*, 2006; Horng *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2007; Lee & Lee, 2001; Lee & Kyle, 2014; Li *et al.*, 2009; Thompson & Schofield, 2009) and cluster analysis (Houghton, 2008; Poisson & Chen, 2010; Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2019), to *a priori* segmentation based on the answers to one selected question (Mohr *et al.*, 1993; Dodd *et al.*, 2006; Saayman *et al.*, 2012). The most used variable is attendee motivations. Other segmentation variables are demographics (Dodd *et al.*, 2006; Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2019), behaviours (Houghton, 2008; Mohr *et al.*, 1993; Saayman *et al.*, 2012), and perceptions of event attributes (Lee & Kyle, 2014; Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2019). The sample sizes are mostly small, in many cases not proportional to the event's scale (see Table 1 for details).

Despite the huge interest in segmentation of festival attendees, there are few studies about small-scale festivals, and most of them deal with other types of events rather than ones based on local cultural traditions, e.g. music, history and art festivals (Li *et al.*, 2009; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Wilson *et al.*, 2017). Among the studies on small-scale events, two of them deserve to be mentioned because they focus on local cultural traditions festivals. Li *et al.* (2009) segmented the attendees of a rural community festival on motivations, identifying five segments: family travellers, event enthusiasts, loyal festival goers, escapers, and social gathering lovers. The authors did not find any statistical difference among clusters but the revisit intention. Nevertheless, it was found that rural community-based festivals attendees and bigger festival attendees have similar motivations, while their relevance is different. These findings specifically indicated that people who attend smaller festivals are motivated more by internally generated factors than external factors.

Table 1. *Segmentation studies of festivals based on local cultural traditions*

Article	Festival/ Country	Typology/ Scale*	Segmentation methods	Segmentation variables	Sample size	Segments
Mohr et al., 1993	Freedom Weekend Aloft (FWA) US	Local traditions Large-scale	Descriptive	Behaviours	458	General festival visitors; General festival visitors, first time FWA; Not-a-general festival visitors, first time FWA; First time general festival visitors, first time FWA
Lee & Lee, 2001	Kyongju World Culture Expo Korea	Local traditions Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	558	The culture and variety seekers; The escape- oriented seekers; The least culture- oriented
Chang, 2006	Rukai Cultural Festival Taiwan	Local traditions Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	315	Aboriginal cultural learners; Change routine life travellers; Active culture explorers
De Guzman et al., 2006	WOW Philippines Philippines	Local traditions Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	600	Binding; Bonding; Blazing; Bracing
Dodd et al., 2006	Grapefest Wine Festival and Vintage Indiana Wine US	Wine Large-scale	Descriptive	Age	843	Young visitors; Old visitors
Kim et al., 2007	Baekje Cultural Festival Korea	Local traditions Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	335	Cluster 1; Cluster 2; Cluster 3
Houghton, 2008	Several Regional Wine Festivals Australia	Wine Medium-scale	Cluster Analysis	Motivations, Behaviours, Values	828	Wine lovers; Wine interested; Curious Tourists
Li et al., 2009	Rural Community Festival US	Local traditions Small-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	280	Family travellers; Festival enthusiasts; Loyal festival goers; Escapers; Social gathering lovers
Thompson & Schofield, 2009	Naadam Cultural Festival Mongolia	Local traditions Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Motivations	539	Multi-purpose seekers; Indifferent; Culture and Sports Seekers; Togetherness, Socialisation and Sports Seekers; Socialisation and Local Special Event Seekers
Poisson & Chen, 2010	Six wine festival US	Wine Medium-scale	Cluster Analysis	Motivations	385	Serious winery festival tourist; Common winery festival tourist; Novice winery festival tourist; Limited winery festival tourist.
Saayman et al., 2012	Wacky Wine Festival South Africa	Wine Large-scale	Descriptive	Expenditure	400	Low spender; High spender

Article	Festival/ Country	Typology/ Scale[*]	Segmentation methods	Segmentation variables	Sample size	Segments
Horng *et al.*, 2013	Eighth Macau Food Festival & Taiwan Culinary Exhibition Taiwan-China	Food Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Lifestyles	244 - 245	Family and quality valued; Work and fashion inclined
Lee & Kyle. 2014	Three community festivals in Texas, US	Food Large-scale	Factor Analysis Cluster Analysis	Level of commitment to festival	228	High committed; Medium committed; Low committed
Tkaczynski *et al.*, 2019	Six small-scale Festivals Australia, South Africa, Canada	Film, Music, Writing, Arts, Theatre Small-scale	Cluster Analysis	Experience evaluation	727	Satisfied, involved experience attendees; Lukewarm, experience attendees

[*] Small-scale < 3,000 visitors; Medium-scale 3,000-10,000 visitors; Large-scale > 10,000 visitors

More recently, Tkaczynski *et al.* (2019) segmented attendees of six small-scale festivals from different countries and of different types (e.g. music, arts, writing, film festivals were considered). The two segments ("satisfied, involved experience attendees" and "lukewarm experience attendees") were identified by the use of perceived experience and not by motivations.

The above-mentioned literature suggests the need to deepen research on small-scale festivals, in particular those based on local cultural traditions, by developing attendee segmentations on motivations and exploring key differences among segments, related to socio-demographic and behavioural variables. Moreover, the lack of studies set in a European context is evident. We believe it could be interesting to observe attendee motivations in a European context, in order to provide the opportunity for a comparison of motivation and behaviors of attendees across different geographical areas. This is because, as several studies observed, tourists' motivations and behaviors differ according to their country of origin (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Soldatenko & Backer, 2019). Thus, this study aims to contribute to the current debate on small-scale festivals, addressing the aforementioned shortcomings by answering the following research questions, related to small-scale festivals based on local cultural traditions:

RQ1: What motivations stimulate attendees to take part in a European small-scale festival based on local cultural traditions?
RQ2: What are the segments of attendees identified according to motivations, and the differences between them?

Research design
Research context
The empirical research was set in Novara di Sicilia, a small Sicilian town standing at 650 metres above sea level, on the border between the Nebrodi and the Peloritani Mountains. It has been part of the Association 'The most beautiful villages in Italy' since 2004. The local economy is mainly based on agriculture and dairy farming and the most typical product is the Maiorchino, an aged cheese made from sheep and goat's milk. The Maiorchino cheese produced in Novara di Sicilia is particularly valuable, due to the specific characteristics of the area and its high-altitude pastures.

The tradition that gave rise to the Maiorchino Festival dates back to the 1600s, when Maiorchino cheeses were thrown into the air to test their seasoning level (only the well-aged cheeses would have resisted the violent throws without breaking).

Therefore, the ancient race of Maiorchino consists in throwing a whole cheese weighing about 10-13 kg along a path of about one kilometre through the historic centre of Novara di Sicilia. The race involves several competing teams made up of residents mainly from Novara di Sicilia. The team that reaches the finish line of the race with the least number of throws is the winner. The throws are made by rolling a rope around the cheese which, on unrolling, gives considerable strength and direction to the cheese that begins to roll and hop along the rough and irregular path. For this reason, the race reserves surprises. And sometimes even the cheese thrown by the most experienced participants goes in unexpected directions or ends up in alleys outside the race course, making the race lively and fun, both for the teams involved and for the spectators that crowd the edge of the roads where the competition takes place, encouraging the racers and giving advice on throwing techniques.

The Maiorchino race has become over time an integral part of the cultural heritage of Novara di Sicilia and has been handed down from generation to generation. Today it is practiced only in Novara di Sicilia, where the residents, respecting the traditional rules, challenge each other with enthusiasm during the Maiorchino Festival.

The Maiorchino Festival, which is held every year, at the weekends of the month before Carnival, attracts numerous tourists and visitors to Novara di Sicilia, especially on the final day of the competition, when a feast of typical products is organized, in order to allow visitors to taste some local specialties, including Maiorchino cheese itself, for a low-price ticket.

Like other small rural towns (Borlido & Coromina, 2018), Novara di Sicilia suffers from a progressive depopulation linked mainly to the lack of job opportunities for young people, however the locals show a strong sense of belonging to the territory and social identity.

The residents' attachment to local traditions and cultural heritage stimulates their active participation in the Maiorchino Festival (Chen, Suntikul, & King, 2020; Zhang *et al.*, 2019). In fact, although the Festival is organised by a local non-profit association, several public and private local actors, as well as a number of local people and volunteers, are involved in the festival. For example, the Municipality of Novara di Sicilia contributes giving a small sum of money to the organizers, ensures public law and order, and also manages the communication activities of the Festival through the website and socials. Several sponsoring firms contribute to financing the expenses for the festival. The local tourism association offers participants information and promotional material about the area and its attractions. Moreover, local people actively participate in the tournament, competing or cheering for their favourite team, and help the organizers as volunteers. The active participation of the residents contributes to creating a unique atmosphere and an engaging context that makes external visitors feel part of the local community.

Visitors especially from the same region reach Novara di Sicilia to attend the cheese race for free. This festival, involving the participants in the joyful atmosphere of the competition, is believed to be particularly attractive for segments of tourists who are curious about the local culture, culinary traditions and eager to have creative and engaging tourist experiences (Kim, 2010; Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

Research methodology

Empirical research was focused specifically on the Maiorchino Festival. A survey was conducted on a sample of participants, to collect data aimed at investigating:

      a) participant motivation;

      b) market segmentation of the festival goers, based on motivations;

      c) factors influencing attendee satisfaction and intention to return.

A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 19 closed-ended questions was administered during the race days, which were held at weekends from January 26th to March 3rd. The final and most crowded day of the Festival, also a festival of typical local food products, where visitors could buy a ticket and taste these specialties, was organized.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first aimed at identifying mainly socio-demographic information and motivations of the visitors for attending the Maiorchino Festival (8 questions); the second aimed at acquiring information on the expenditure and behaviour of the participants (6 questions); the third explored attendees' satisfaction (2 questions, one of which included 11 items) and intentions to return to Novara di Sicilia, regardless of the Maiorchino Festival (5 questions).

Specifically, visitors were asked to answer question n. 5, which included 13 items on motivation statements by rating them on a scale from 1 (not important) to 7 (very important). Among those 13 items, 10 were taken from previous studies on tourism motivations in attending events and specifically festivals (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Li & Petrick, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Li *et al.*, 2009; Scott, 1996; Uysal *et al.*, 1993; Yuan *et al.*, 2005), while 3 items referred to the specific nature, features and activities of the Maiorchino Festival.

The survey was pre-tested on a small sample of 10 graduates to further refine it. In this regard, the attention was put on the wording and understanding of the questions, in order to check whether the questions were formulated in a clear and easily understandable way. Although the questionnaire was self-administered, a staff of 5 field assistants was available to provide clarification if needed, so as to dispel any doubts about the interpretation of the questions. Field assistants, who were chosen among the volunteer collaborators of the race organizing association and of the local tourism association, were previously instructed on both the research goals and how to assist respondents. The questionnaire was anonymous, in order to guarantee greater freedom of response, and to avoid embarrassment or conditioning the interviewees.

A convenience sample was used, recruiting the interviewees using the "street intercept method" (Lee *et al.*, 2004; Graham, Bernards, Clapp, Dumas, Kelly-Baker, Miller, & Wells, 2014).

The questionnaire was administered between 15.00 and 19.00 every day at the Maiorchino Festival, along the race route, favouring several areas where visitors stopped to see the race go past or where there were queues (for example near the refreshment points), in order to allow respondents to complete the questionnaire carefully, without taking time away from their fun. The interviewers stationed in such areas, approached passers-by, explained the aims of the research, and asked them to answer the anonymous questionnaire, which took about 10 minutes. The 'fixed line method' of recruitment was used to prevent selection bias in selecting the potential respondents (Voas, Furr-Holden, Lauer, Bright, Johnson, & Miller, 2006). Thus, the selection of the interviewees was made by approaching every third passer-by at the points established for the interception, then proceeding to fill in the questionnaire if the subject had the requirements to be included in the sample. To be eligible for the sample, the respondents had to be adults (at least eighteen) and not resident in Novara di Sicilia.

In total, 403 people were approached. Among them, excluding residents and minors (n=72), and those who for personal reasons did not want to take part (n=61), 270 questionnaires were obtained. Of these, 250 were fully completed and therefore considered for subsequent statistical processing. This represents a 75.5% of response rate, consistent with previous studies on tourists' segmentation utilising self-administered questionnaire (Dryglas & Salamaga, 2018; Lee & Kyle, 2014).

In order to check the appropriateness of the sample size, *a priori* and *post-hoc* power analyses using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Lee & Hallak, 2020) were applied, in order to guarantee an effect size of 0.3, with a statistical power of 95%. The *a priori* G*Power measurement suggested, for 4 groups, a sample size of 196. Besides, the *post-hoc* G*Power measurement for an effect size of 0.30, a sample size of 250, and 4 groups achieved a statistical power of 0.985 (98.5%), which is consistent with Cohen's (1988) recommendations, thus supporting the adequacy of our sample.

Results
Descriptive analysis
The sample of 250 respondents was made up of 44.4% women and 55.6% men (Table 2). The age of the interviewees ranged from 18 to 80 years old, but the highest concentration was between 45 and 64 (51.9% of the total). As regards the educational level, 52,8% of respondents had a bachelor's degree or master's degree, and 38,4% had a secondary school certificate.

Moreover, 50.6% of the respondents came from the surrounding areas, while 43.7% from other Sicilian areas, and only 5.7% from other Italian Regions or from abroad. Although the Maiorchino Festival attracts mostly Sicilians, the presence of visitors from other Italian Regions or from abroad shows interest aroused and the potential this festival has to attract tourists.

Visitors said they went to Novara di Sicilia to attend the Festival with friends (55.4%), but also as a couple (25.4%), with family (14.2%) and in some cases even alone (5.0%). As regards tourist behaviour, 75.0 % of visitors declared they would return home the same day, while the remaining 25.0% would stay overnight in Novara di Sicilia or in the surrounding area, in most cases for one (65.6%) or two (23%) nights. In particular, among the participants who spent the night in the area, 40% were hosted at friends' homes, 36.4% in a B&B, 16.3% slept in a camper. This highlights the fact that the participants in the Festival were mainly day-visitors, while the percentage of people staying overnight on site was very low. Word of mouth from friends and relatives was the main way in which respondents learned about Festival (52.8%), although other effective information tools were social networks (17.7%) and the institutional website of the Municipality of Novara di Sicilia (9.6%).

Attendee motivations
In order to investigate the main reasons for attending the Maiorchino Festival, the 13 motivational items were factor analysed using the principal component method and varimax rotation procedure. All factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained, because they were considered significant; all factors with less than 1 were discarded. Moreover, all items with a factor loading above 0.5 were included, whereas all items with factor loading lower than 0.5 were removed. In this regard, both the Bartlett sphericity test, which was significant (0.000 <0.001, df = 78), and the KMO sample adequacy measure of 0.829 (> of 0.50), confirmed the appropriateness of the development of a factorial analysis. Finally, all the variables showed a commonality equal to or greater than 0.50, showing a good overall significance of the analysis, which produced a structure of 4 factors. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the

individual factors was sufficient (with a range between 0.54 to 0.81). Finally, the total variance explained was 68.2% (Table 3).

Table 2. *Respondents' profile*

Variable	Category	Distribution (valid percentage)
Gender	Male	65.6
	Female	44.4
Age	18-24	6.2
	25-34	15.2
	35-44	13.3
	45-54	24.3
	55-64	27.6
	>64	13.3
Education	High school or less	46.8
	Graduate	44.3
	Post-graduate	8.9
Place of origin	Surrounding areas	50.6
	Rest of Sicily	43.7
	Rest of Italy	4.1
	Abroad	1.6
Returning visitor	Yes	30.9
	No	69.1
Accompanied by	None	5.0
	Partner	25.4
	Family	14.2
	Friends	55.4
Overnight stay	Yes	25.0
	No	75.0
Intention to return to the Festival	Yes	92.1
	No	7.9
Intention to return to Novara regardless the Festival	Yes	93.9
	No	6.1

The first dimension was labelled *Novelty*, which explained the 25.0% of the total variance, and refers to visitors who love to discover new places, traditions and local cuisine; therefore, they consider the Festival as an opportunity to get to know Novara di Sicilia.

The second dimension labelled *Local culture experience*, accounting for 20.6% of the total variance, characterizes those visitors who participate in the Festival driven by the desire to feel part of the local community, to immerse themselves in the pleasant atmosphere of the festival and to feel an active part in keeping the local traditions.

The third dimension *Festival attractiveness*, which explained 12.5% of the total variance, refers to those visitors attracted by the Maiorchino Festival itself, who appreciate both the Maiorchino cheese, the festival program, and the competition between the teams.

Table 3. *Results of factor analysis*

Motivation factors and items	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance explained	Reliability coefficient
F1: Novelty		4.4	25.0%	0.81
It is an opportunity to visit Novara di Sicilia	0.83			
It is an opportunity to get to know new places and have fun	0.82			
I love learning about local traditions	0.75			
I appreciate the local cuisine specialties	0.70			
F2: Local culture experience		1.6	20.6%	0.76
It makes me feel part of the local community	0.81			
It makes me feel an active part in maintaining traditions	0.79			
I like the atmosphere of the Festival	0.55			
F3: Festival attractiveness		1.2	12.5%	0.73
Participation is free	0.77			
I like Maiorchino cheese	0.68			
I am passionate about the race between the different teams	0.67			
I like the Festival program	0.58			
F4: Socialization		1.1	10.1%	0.54
Friends recommended it to me	0.80			
It is an opportunity to meet friends	0.68			
Total variance explained			*68.2%*	

The fourth dimension *Socialization*, which explains 10.1% of the total variance, characterizes those who participate in the Festival following a suggestion from friends or to take advantage of this occasion to meet and spend time with friends.

Attendee segmentation
A hierarchical cluster analysis using the factorial scores was conducted in order to identify groups of participants based on their motivations. The Ward hierarchical clustering algorithm, and the squared Euclidean distance were used to identify the best number of clusters. The results of agglomeration coefficients suggest that a four-cluster solution was the most appropriate (Table 4).

Subsequently, the four-cluster solution was validated with the non-hierarchical K-means method. The ANOVA data indicated statistically significant differences in motivation among the four clusters. A Tukey *post-hoc* test revealed many statistically significant differences in motivations among the four clusters (Table 5). Next, discriminant analysis was conducted to validate the four-cluster solution. The classification matrices showed that for the initial 250 observations, 98.8% of respondents were correctly classified (Table 6). In addition, 98.8% of cases were correctly classified for the cross-validated sample, supporting the reliability and validity of four-cluster solution in distinguishing the sample based on motivations.

Table 4. *Agglomeration coefficients from the hierarchical cluster analysis*

Stage	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Coefficient	Number of clusters	Coefficient increase	% of increasing
240	23	31	272,87	10	18,68	6,8%
241	16	114	291,553	9	22,01	7,5%
242	2	69	313,558	8	39,89	12,7%
243	2	36	353,447	7	46,16	13,1%
244	1	3	399,61	6	48,90	12,2%
245	2	23	448,505	5	63,14	14,1%
246	16	62	511,641	4	100,64	19,7%
247	2	29	612,281	3	119,24	19,5%
248	2	16	731,522	2	179,02	24,5%
249	1	2	910,546	1	-	-

The four clusters are mapped on a radar chart (Figure 1), which is based on the factorial mean scores of each cluster on the four motivations. The chart shows the differences between the four clusters in terms of motivations to attend the Festival.
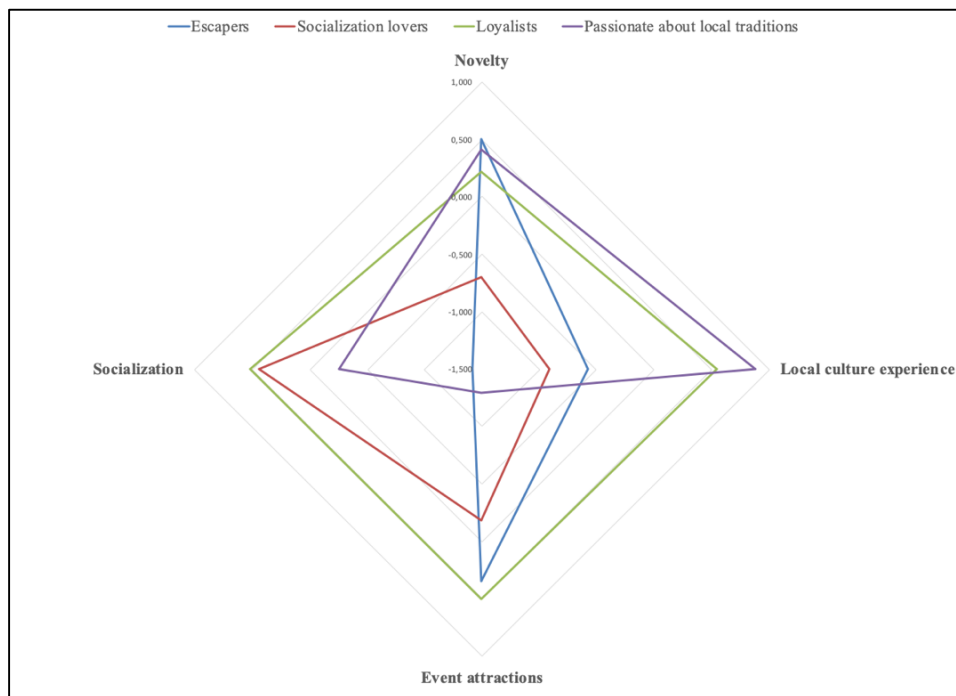

Figure 1. *Motivational profiles of the four clusters*

Based on the indications provided by the data of the final centres, each cluster was interpreted and their salient characteristics are described below:

Table 5. *Results of cluster analysis*

Motivation Factors	Clusters				F-value	Tukey's HSD post-hoc test					
	Cluster 1 (20%)	Cluster 2 (23.6%)	Cluster 3 (38.4%)	Cluster 4 (18.0%)		Mean difference					
						1-2	1-3	1-4	2-3	2-4	3-4
	factorial mean scores										
Novelty	0.50	-0.70	-0.22	0.41	23.721***	1.202***	0.278	0.091	-0.924***	-1.111***	-0.187
Local culture experience	-0.56	-0.91	0.55	0.88	68.338***	0.329	-1.127***	-1.459***	-1.457***	-1.788***	-0.331
Event attractions	0.35	-0.19	0.50	-1.21	42.505***	0.540***	-0.152	1.649***	-0.693***	1.108***	1.802***
Socialization	-1.41	0.44	-0.52	-0.26	80.817***	-1.847***	-1.932***	-1.153***	-0.085	0.693***	0.779***
Cluster name	*Escapers*	*Socializati on lovers*	*Loyalists*	*Passionate about local traditions*							

*** p<0.001

Table 6. Discriminant analysis of the four-cluster solution

Discriminant functions results [1]

Discriminant functions	Eigenvalues				Wilks' Lambda			
	Eigenvalue	% of variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' Lambda[2]	Chi-square[2]	df	Sig.
1 through 2	2.39	56.4	56.4	0.84	0.08	613.464	12	***
2 through 3	1.24	29.2	85.6	0.74	0.28	313.999	6	***
3	0.61	14.4	100	0.62	0.62	116.579	2	***

Classification results

			Predicted Group Membership				
			Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Total
Original sample[3]	Count	Cluster 1	49	1	0	0	50
		Cluster 2	1	93	0	1	95
		Cluster 3	0	0	59	0	59
		Cluster 4	0	0	0	46	46
	%	Cluster 1	98%	2%	0%	0%	100%
		Cluster 2	1.1%	97.9%	0%	1.1%	100%
		Cluster 3	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
		Cluster 4	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Cross-validated sample[4]	Count	Cluster 1	49	1	0	0	50
		Cluster 2	1	93	0	1	95
		Cluster 3	0	0	59	0	59
		Cluster 4	0	0	0	46	46
	%	Cluster 1	98%	2%	0%	0%	100%
		Cluster 2	1.1%	97.9%	0%	1.1%	100%
		Cluster 3	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
		Cluster 4	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

[1] Number of discriminant functions equals number of groups minus one

[2] The three functions are significant in discriminating among groups (*** = p < 0.001) in terms of the four motivation factors

[3] 98.8% of original grouped cases were correctly classified

[4] 98.8% of cross-validated grouped cases were correctly classified. Each case is classified by the functions derived from all cases other than that case

Cluster 1: Escapers. This cluster contains 20% of the sample and includes visitors who love to get away from the daily routine, looking for new places to know and curious to discover their typical products and traditions. Escapers have a significantly higher mean score on Novelty compared to Cluster 2, a significantly higher mean score on Festival attractiveness compared to both Cluster 2 and Cluster 4. Moreover, this cluster shows a significantly lower mean score on Socialization with respect to all the other three clusters. Escapers are mostly women, under the age of 55, with at least a graduate level of education. This cluster is largely made up of individuals participating in the Festival for the first time (80.5%), and coming from all over the Sicily. They are mainly visitors who choose to go to Novara di Sicilia for a day trip (71.7%); in fact, few of them decide to stay overnight in the area (28.3%). Visitors belonging to this cluster heard about the Festival through friends and relatives or social networks. They mostly participate with their partner or friends, are highly satisfied declaring that they would gladly return to attend another edition of the Festival, and in greater numbers that they would return to visit Novara di Sicilia regardless of the Festival.

Cluster 2: Socialization lovers. This cluster contains 23.6% of the sample and includes visitors who love to meet people and spend time with friends. Socialization lovers have a significantly higher mean score on Socialization compared to Cluster 1 and Cluster 4, a significantly lower mean score on Novelty compared to the other 3 clusters, a significantly lower mean score on Local culture experience compared to Cluster 3 and Cluster 4, and a significantly lower mean score on Festival attractiveness compared to Cluster 1 and Cluster 3. This cluster is made up mostly of women, aged between 35 and 64, with a graduate level of education. It consists for the most part of individuals who attend the Festival for the first time (86.1%), coming from surrounding areas, visiting Novara di Sicilia for a day trip (67.4%). They heard about the Festival through friends and relatives and decided to participate mostly with friends. Moreover, they are satisfied and said that they would gladly return to see another edition of the Festival, but they would also return to visit Novara di Sicilia regardless of the Festival. It contains visitors who love to be with friends and consider participation in the Maiorchino Festival as an opportunity to spend time together.

Cluster 3: Loyalists. This cluster contains 38.4% of the sample and comprises visitors who love the Festival and who therefore take part in various editions of it because they like its features, atmosphere and functioning. They like to immerse themselves in the host territory and fully experience the festival. Loyalists have a significantly higher mean score on festival attractiveness compared with Cluster 2 and Cluster 4, a significantly higher mean score on Local culture experience compared to Cluster 1 and Cluster 2. This cluster is the largest among those identified and is made up mostly of men, aged between 25 and 44, with a high school level of education or less. This cluster consists to a large extent of individuals who have already participated in the Festival (54.8%), mainly coming from the surrounding areas (54.4%), visiting Novara di Sicilia for a day trip (66.7%). However, some decide to stay (33.3%) especially at the home of relatives or friends in Novara di Sicilia, with an average stay of almost 2 nights. The members of this cluster heard about Festival through friend and relatives. They mostly participate with friends or as a couple, are highly satisfied and declare that they would return to see another edition of the Festival.

Cluster 4: Passionate about local traditions. This cluster contains 18.0% of the sample and includes visitors interested in the knowledge of places and their cultures, by experiencing the area and interacting with the local community. Passionate about local traditions have a significantly higher mean score on Local culture experience compared to Cluster 1 and Cluster 2, a significantly lower mean score on Socialization compared to Cluster 2 and Cluster 3, and a significantly lower mean score on Festival attractiveness compared to all the other three cluster.

This cluster is the least numerous among those identified and is made up mostly of men, aged between 35 and 64, and for the most part with a graduate level of education or more. It consists equally of people who have already participated in the Festival and others who were participating for the first time. The members of this cluster are mainly from the surrounding areas, and stay in Novara di Sicilia for a day trip. Those who stay overnight, sleep in a house of their own property or with relatives and friends, and spend an average of almost three nights in Novara di Sicilia. They heard about the Festival through friends and relatives or social networks. They mostly participate with friends or with their family, are satisfied, and unanimously declare that they will return to attend another edition of the Festival.

Key differences among clusters

The four clusters were profiled using additional variables including: gender, age, education, entourage, information sources, origin, satisfaction, and intention to return. Parametric (ANOVA) and non-parametric (cross-tabulation) tests were used to identify any significant differences among the clusters with regard to these variables. The results show that the four clusters are significantly different according to a number of key variables (significant findings are presented in Tables 7-8).

As shown in Table 7, statistically significant differences emerge among clusters with reference to the overall satisfaction and to 6 of the 11 satisfaction items, i.e. visitors' engagement, location, food quality, spectacularity of the race, friendliness of local people, facilities. Specifically, Cluster 1 (Escapers) and Cluster 3 (Loyalists) are significantly more satisfied than Cluster 2 (Socialization lovers).

As shown in Table 8 there are statistically significant differences among clusters with reference to education, place of origin, and intention to return to the Festival. Specifically, cluster 1 (Escapers) and cluster 2 (Socialization lovers) have a high level of education and come from the other areas of Sicily; on the contrary cluster 3 (Loyalists) and cluster 4 (Passionate about local traditions) have a lower level of education and come from near surrounding areas or from outside Sicily. In terms of intention to return, differences among segments are minimal, but it is possible to see that clusters 3 (Loyalists) and 4 (Passionate about local traditions) have a very high level of intention to return to attend the Festival again, if compared with the other two clusters.

Discussion

This research investigated a European small-scale festival based on local cultural traditions, in order to answer two research questions. With regard to RQ1, concerning the exploration of factors that motivate attendees to take part in small-scale festivals based on local cultural traditions, results of the factor analysis allowed four main motivational factors to be identified. They are: *Novelty*, which refers to visitors who love discovering new places, traditions and local food specialties; *Local culture experience*, which characterizes festival attendees who wants to feel part of the local community and be active in keeping the local traditions; *Festival attractiveness*, which refers to those visitors interested to the event itself, in fact they appreciate the Maiorchino cheese, the festival program, and the competition between the teams; *Socialization*, which attains to visitors who consider participation in the festival as an opportunity to meet and spend time with friends. The factor structure identified is coherent with the ones extracted by previous motivation studies (e.g. Lee *et al.*, 2004), and confirms that attendees of small-scale festivals are mainly motivated by push factors, such as search for novelty and for experiences, rather than pull factors, such as event attractiveness, which conversely have been found relevant for large-scale festival attendees (Li *et al.*, 2009).

Table 7. *ANOVA results*

	Cluster 1 (20%) Escapers	Cluster 2 (23,6%) Socialization lovers	Cluster 3 (38.4%) Loyalists	Cluster 4 (18.0%) Passionate about local traditions	F-value	Tukey's HSD post-hoc test Mean difference					
	Mean scores					1-2	1-3	1-4	2-3	2-4	3-4
Overall Satisfaction	8.56	7.52	8.94	8.08	9.119***	1.039***	-0.376	0.479	-1.416***	-0.560	0.856
Satisfaction about visitors' engagement	5.06	4.66	6.39	5.50	21.417***	0.408	-1.321***	-0.433	-1.729***	-0.841***	0.888***
Satisfaction about location	5.44	4.81	6.27	6.04	19.864***	0.638	-0.820***	-0.593	-1.459***	-1.232***	0.226
Satisfaction about quality of food	6.61	5.62	6.33	5.83	9.109***	0.993***	0.052	0.279	-0.941***	-0.714***	0.227
Satisfaction about the spectacularity of the race	6.20	5.43	6.55	6.33	10.885***	0.775***	-0.352	-0.133	-1.127***	-0.908***	0.218
Satisfaction about friendliness of local people	6.48	5.81	6.67	6.79	7.770***	0.674***	-0.187	-0.307	-0.862***	-0.982***	-0.120
Satisfaction about facilities	5.43	4.64	6.12	4.92	21.293***	0.790	-0.687	0.516	-1.478***	-0.273	1.204***

*** p<0.001

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Table 8. Cross-tabulation results

Variables		Clusters					Chi-square x^2	Cramer's V
		Escapers	Socialization lovers	Loyalists	Passionate about local traditions			
Education								
High school or less	Count	29.0%	28.9%	59.7%	36.4%			
	Expected Count	42.4%	42.5%	42.4%	42.3%			
Graduate	Count	48.4%	60.0%	37.3%	50.0%		19.433[**]	0.24[**]
	Expected Count	47.3%	47.3%	47.3%	47.3%			
Post-graduate	Count	22.6%	11.1%	3.0%	13.6%			
	Expected Count	10.3%	10.2%	10.3%	10.4%			
Place of origin								
Surroundings	Count	48.6%	53.3%	54.4%	64.0%			
	Expected Count	54.4%	54.4%	54.3%	54.3%			
Sicily	Count	51.4%	44.4%	38.2%	20.0%			
	Expected Count	40.1%	39.8%	39.9%	39.9%		20.312[**]	0.20[**]
Italy	Count	0.0%	2.2%	7.4%	8.0%			
	Expected Count	4.6%	4.7%	4.6%	4.7%			
Abroad	Count	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%			
	Expected Count	0.9%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%			
Intention to return to the Festival								
Yes	Count	78.1%	90.7%	97.0%	100.0%			
	Expected Count	92.2%	92.1%	92.1%	92.2%		13.092[**]	0.28[**]
No	Count	21.9%	9.3%	3.0%	0.0%			
	Expected Count	7.8%	7.9%	7.9%	7.8%			

[**] p<0.05

As regards RQ2, dealing with the identification of attendee segments, the analysis identified four clusters: *Escapers* who love to get away from the daily routine, and discover new places and their traditions; *Socialization lovers* who attend festivals to meet people and spend time with friends; *Loyalists* who are passionate about a specific festival, thus attend several editions over time; *Passionate about local traditions* who are interested in the knowledge of places and local cultures, by experiencing and interacting with the local community. Each cluster was described based on socio-demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, education) and behaviour related variables (e.g. number of nights, average expenditure in the territory). Moreover, significant differences between clusters were highlighted. The four clusters have different levels of overall satisfaction, and specifically differ with regard to several items such as visitors' engagement, location, quality of food, spectacularity of the race, friendliness of local people, and facilities.

Our results show a close similarity with the results of Li *et al.* (2009), who explored a rural community-based festival in the US and showed several analogies with our research setting, such as size, involvement of local people, races organized and performed at a local level. This has led us to the conclusion that the audience of small-scale festivals is similar regardless of the geographical context. However, differently from Li *et al.* (2009), who did not find any statistical differences among clusters except for the revisit intention, our study found significant differences regarding both revisit intention, and education, place of origin, and satisfaction.

With reference to the intention to return to Novara for the festival, despite our results show high values for all clusters, the *Escapers* have the lowest value, since they are constantly looking for new experiences, unlike, for example, *Loyalists* or *Passionate about local traditions*. It is also worth mentioning that almost all the visitors said they were likely to return to Novara di Sicilia, regardless of the Maiorchino Festival. This is coherent with what has been shown in previous research (Tsaur *et al.*, 2019), about the possibility that attachment to the festival can help extend participants' loyalty to the host territory (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Giraldi, 2016; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Quintal & Polczynski, 2010).

As regards the differences on the level of satisfaction among clusters, the lowest score of *Socialization lovers* could be explained by the fact that they perceive the festival mainly as an opportunity to meet friends, rather than as a cultural experience, while *Escapers* and *Loyalists* are interested in participating in the festival itself. Furthermore, considering satisfaction as an element that differentiates clusters contributes to answer the call of Wilson and colleagues (2017), who underlined the lack of studies investigating motivations and satisfaction of event attendees jointly.

Conclusion
The research offers several theoretical contributions. First, it contributes to the body of knowledge concerning motivations to attend small-scale festivals based on the handing down and enhancement of local traditions related to a typical local product, which have been poorly explored in previous research. Second, the research identifies four clusters of small-scale festivals goers. The study extends the results of previous studies (Chang, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2004) to small-scale festivals, confirming that motivation variables are more important than the demographic or behavioural ones in segmenting the attendees. Indeed, motivational factors and clusters identified in this research substantially confirm, in a European context, those shown in previous research set in non-European contexts. Third, this research contributes to enriching destination marketing studies, since it confirms the relevance of small-scale festivals as tourist attractors and opportunities for the development of a destination. The willingness of visitors to return to Novara di Sicilia regardless the festival highlights the value of festival as a marketing tool (Getz & Page, 2016; Mair & Weber, 2019; Van Nierkerk, 2017) to attract visitors and to favour their

physical and emotional approach with the local traditions and people, increasing the value of their tourist experience and their desire to return.

The research also provides some insights for policy makers. On the one hand, it highlights the relevance of customs and traditions as a distinctive trait of local cultural heritage and social identity; on the other hand, the research shows the strategic value of the active involvement and cooperation of several stakeholders in planning a coordinated, valuable tourist offer. Moreover, the analysis of motivations and satisfaction of small-scale festival attendees provides the organisers of similar events the opportunity to understand what the most appreciated elements are (such as authentic atmosphere of the festival, quality of food, positive attitude and welcome of both the local people and the staff toward attendees), so as to contribute to increasing satisfaction and the intention to return. Furthermore, the identification of four demand clusters, which express different motivations, suggests the need to think of marketing tools and strategies differentiated by cluster, in order to implement a communication policy and effective, targeted customer relationship. For example, with regards to the *Loyalists* and to the *Passionate about local traditions* who both declared their intention to return to attend future editions of the Festival, marketing strategies could be aimed at extending their average stay in the area, by offering more cultural activities and opportunities for tourist entertainment in the days immediately preceding or following the Festival.

Although findings offer several theoretical contributions and insights for local policy makers and festival managers, this research has some limitations that should be considered. The first concerns the limited number of items used to investigate motivations, only 13 in this study, while other research consider a larger number (Chang, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2004); therefore, future research should consider an adequate development of motivation scales to remedy this shortcoming. The second limit relates to the fact that no other small-scale festivals were investigated in this empirical research, nor were the respondents asked about their attendance experience in other small-scale festivals, thus it was not possible to compare performance and satisfaction from different experience of participants.

Further research could investigate different small-scale festivals attended by the same respondents. The third limit concerns how the relationship between motivations and satisfaction has been investigated in this paper. In fact, while we studied the differences of satisfaction perceived by groups of attendees clustered by motivations, further research could explore the direct relationship between motivations and satisfaction.

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