

# Who attends Christmas Markets and why? Analysis of visitor structure and motivation for attending two Christmas Markets in Croatia

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# WHO ATTENDS CHRISTMAS MARKETS AND WHY? ANALYSIS OF VISITOR STRUCTURE AND MOTIVATION FOR ATTENDING TWO CHRISTMAS MARKETS IN CROATIA

## ABSTRACT

There are various motives for visiting a festival or an event. Motivations explain why people behave in a certain way and are therefore of particular interest in the context of meeting consumer expectations and needs. In this paper, the authors investigate the motives for attending two increasingly popular Christmas Markets in Croatia. The study compares the demographic structure of visitors, their travel behaviour and motivation for visiting the two markets and determines the level of their satisfaction and intentions for future behaviour. The overall aim is to identify visitors' needs and help destination managers organise activities that appeal to the target market. To this end, the authors have conducted desk and field research. Empirical research was conducted on the samples of Christmas Market visitors in Zagreb and Karlovac. The samples were selected using the convenience sampling method. Data analysis was performed using descriptive, inferential and multivariate statistics. The results of the research show that the travel behaviour of visitors and their motives for coming to the Christmas Markets differ, as well as their satisfaction level and loyalty. However, for both fairs a strong link was found between the visitors' satisfaction with the visits and their intentions to revisit the two markets, recommend them, and share their experiences. This study makes a small contribution to the field of consumer behaviour by enhancing our understanding of the motivations for visiting different tourist events. The findings of this study may benefit festival and event managers by helping them deliver relevant customer experiences.

**Keywords:** Tourist events, festivals, Christmas Markets, tourist motives, satisfaction, loyalty

## 1. Introduction

Festivals are cultural events (Frisby & Getz, 1989) that are considered a form of cultural tourism (Formica & Uysal, 1998; Mahika et al., 2015). Festivals

and special events are the cultural resources of a destination that make possible the successful hosting of visitors (Uysal et al., 1993: 5). They provide communities with a way to celebrate their unique cultural traditions and attract tourist and local

visitors (Tanford: Jung, 2017: 209). These events are usually organized to create a positive image of a place and bring in money to the local community (Uysal et al., 1993: 5). Festivals offer various benefits to local communities because of their significant impact on the local economy (Getz, 1993) and reinforcement of social cohesion within communities (Rao, 2001; Yoon et al., 2010). Local events have been known to boost sustainable tourism by facilitating learning about unique cultural heritages, ethnic backgrounds, and local customs (Yoon et al., 2010: 335). Tourism is often seen as having a negative impact on the cultural content and “authenticity” of cultural events (Richards, 2007). As the events grow, the budget also increases and the organization becomes more professional, the entire organization of the event depends on the sponsors’ will. Richards (2007) studied a traditional cultural event in Barcelona and found significant differences between different visitor groups and between different groups of residents, suggesting the need for a more sophisticated analysis of the consumption of cultural festivals and its effects. Residents tend to have a constructive view of authenticity linked to cultural and social references, whereas visitors employ a more existential view of authenticity related to their enjoyment of the event and experience of difference (Richards, 2007: 33). Varičak et al. (2019) examined the Karlovac Advent visitors’ experience and spending intention, and found that the correlation between “the hospitality of the local residents” and “spending intention” was higher among the visitors (trippers and tourists) than among the residents. There is also a negative impact on the local residents caused by the influx of visitors that produces congestion and noise (Brida et al., 2017). The event could become so commercial that its original authentic traditions may be lost.

The motivations of hosts must be identified in a timely and appropriate moment, as well as their views of a particular event, in order to keep them participating. Marketing strategies may have an important role in the organization of events (Ferreira, Sarmiento, 2015). The success of events depends on the collaboration and coordination between all stakeholders, public and private, and the local residents themselves. Otherwise, its sustainability is uncertain.

There are many studies on event motivations (Meang et al., 2016), customer segmentation (Chang, 2006), satisfaction (Sohn et al., 2016) and loyalty (Yuan, Jang, 2008; Tanford, Jung, 2017). There is also abun-

dant research on visitors’ motivations for attending festivals and special events (Uysal et al., 1993; Getz, 2008; Getz, 2010; Matheson et al., 2014; Meang et al., 2016; Tanford, Jung, 2017).

However, there are only a few papers exploring the motivation for visiting Christmas Markets (Brida et al., 2012; Brida et al., 2014; Brida et al., 2017; Brida, Tokarchuk, 2017; Marković et al., 2018; Vitner Marković et al., 2019). Christmas Markets have become very popular events in Croatia. They attract different types of visitors, such as families with children, young middle-aged and older people. In order for the organizers of Christmas Markets to come up with effective marketing plans, it is important they know who their visitors are, and why they have decided to visit these events. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the debate on the motivation for attending Christmas Markets. To that end, an analysis of the visitor structure and their motivation to attend the two Christmas Markets in Croatia was conducted. This research seeks to answer the following questions: 1) Is there a difference in the visitor structure between the two analysed Christmas Markets? 2) Do the visitors’ motives for attending various Christmas Markets differ? 3) Do visitors differ in terms of the level of satisfaction and loyalty, i.e. do they intend to revisit the events, recommend and share the experience with friends and acquaintances? 4) Does satisfaction with a Christmas Market affect the visitors’ loyalty?

The paper consists of five chapters. The introductory part, explaining the purpose and objectives of the research, is followed by a description of the basic concepts used in the paper, a description of the methodology, and the presentation of the results of the empirical research. Discussion and conclusions of the research are given at the end of the paper.

## 2. Literature review

This section explains the motivations for attending different festivals and the concepts of satisfaction and loyalty of tourists.

### 2.1 Motivation to attend the festivals

To identify the reasons why tourists or other visitors decide to visit a particular destination, it is important to look at different motivation theories. Most authors use Maslow’s theory of motivation which posits that people are motivated by five basic categories of needs, extended by cognitive and aesthetic needs

(Šimková, Holzner, 2015); and constructs like Iso Ahola's push-pull theory (Iso Ahola, 1980). Push factors (internal motives) are present as escaping motives and pull factors (external stimulation) as seeking motives (Šimková, Holzner, 2014). Dann's (1977) push and pull theory of motivations is another widely accepted theoretical framework used for identifying tourists' motivations. According to this theory people travel because they are "pushed" by internal drives (push/intrinsic factors) or "pulled" by external drives (pull/extrinsic factors) such as destination attributes (Khuong, Ha, 2014; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). These theoretical frameworks have been used in the development of motivation scales for festivals and special events by researchers like Mannal & Iso-Aloha (1987), Uysal et al. (1993), Formica & Uysal (1996), Formica & Uysal (1998), Crompton & McKay (1997), Chang (2006), Lee & Beeler (2009), Yolal et al. (2012), Matheson et al. (2014). The motives that pull the tourist towards a destination are the factors that make it attractive to potential visitors, such as festivals, arts and culture, and other events. Some of the main motives for travelling are to escape, get in touch with oneself, relieve stress, do what you like, strengthen family relationships, socialize, acquire prestige, do something new and exciting, and to learn.

McIntosh et al. (1995) analysed motivation using four categories of motivators: physical, cultural, interpersonal and motivators of status and prestige (Cooper et al., 2008). Physical motivators involve refreshment of body and mind, health purposes and sports; cultural motivators inspire a person to learn something new about other cultures; interpersonal motivators include a desire to meet new people, socialize with family and friends; status and prestige motivators include the desire for recognition from others (Cooper et al., 2008).

Studies have found that gender and age significantly affect the perceived image of tourist destinations. There are also interpersonal reasons and wishes to be physically active which appear to be the prominent motives today. The perceived image is the impression of the destination and it plays a crucial role in the tourists' decision to visit a particular destination (Jönsson, Devonish, 2010).

Uysal et al. (1993) examined the theoretical framework of event motivation dimensions among different groups of individuals. The study has revealed that older visitors tend to place more importance on Event Novelty than younger visitors. It is interesting that Friday visitors placed significantly more importance on socialization than Saturday visitors.

In today's modern world we can say that the main reasons for choosing a destination are influenced by online reviews. Potential tourists can be motivated to visit a destination based on images they found online, but the visit can change their impression of the destination. Measurement of tourist motivation is seen as the key to satisfied visitors, attracting more visitors, predicting future demand and developing products and services that meet the tourists' needs (Wolfe, Hsu, 2004; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). Differences in motivation are evident according to the visitor type; key differences have been identified between domestic and foreign visitors where the mean scores for all motivation factors of foreign visitors were found to be consistently higher than those of domestic visitors (Lee, 2000; Matheson et al., 2014). Maráková et al. (2018) identified the main factors which motivate visitors to attend traditional cultural events in Slovakia, and examined their viability as the basis for festival market segmentation (reconnection seekers, experience and equilibrium seekers, multi-purpose seekers and change and togetherness seekers). The present study investigates the motivations of visitors to the Advent in Zagreb and Karlovac. A study by Vitner Marković et al. (2019) which looked into the motivation for visiting the Karlovac Advent concluded that it varies depending on the visitor's age (Vitner Marković et al., 2019).

Brida et al. (2012) used the sequential non-linear clustering method to analyse primary data collected at three Christmas Markets in Northern Italy: Torino, Bolzano and Brunico (Brida et al., 2012). The analysis identified three cluster segments 'business people', 'Christmas fans' and 'general tourists' (Brida et al., 2012). Brida et al. (2014) used the Bagged Clustering method to identify motivation and expenditure clusters for Christmas Market in Merano, North Italy (Brida et al., 2014). The objective of another study by Brida et al. (2017) was to estimate the economic or social value of the Christmas Market to understand in what way the event creates a benefit for society (Brida et al., 2017). The findings of that study suggest that the use and recreational values for tourists differ according to travel costs, the type of visit experience and perceived authenticity. They also depend on whether tourists visit for one or several days (Brida et al., 2017).

## 2.2 Satisfaction with festivals

In recent years, many authors have shown interest in examining the motivation – satisfaction relationship. Satisfaction has proven to have a positive influence on the tourists' post-purchase behaviour such as recommendations (Hui et al., 2007; Prebensen et

al., 2010; Albayrak, Caber, 2018) and intention to revisit (Bigné et al., 2005; Alegre, Cladera, 2009; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). According to Oliver (1997), satisfaction is considered as consumer judgment about goods and services (Kim et al., 2010). It is the outcome of a subjective evaluation about whether the selected alternative meets or exceeds expectation (Kim et al., 2010). The researchers have used different approaches to investigate the relationship between tourist motivation and satisfaction. One group of authors propose that motivation is the sole determinant of overall satisfaction (Yoon, Uysal, 2005; Pan, Ryan, 2007; Schofield, Thompson, 2007; Qiao et al., 2008; Prebensen et al., 2010; Savinovic et al., 2012; Battour et al., 2012; Lee, Hsu, 2013; Lee et al., 2014; Caber, Albayrak, 2016; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). Anderson et al. (1994) define overall satisfaction as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time (Yoon et al., 2010). The second group of researchers use motivation together with other variables as the antecedents of overall satisfaction (Meng et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2014; Tang, 2014; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). The third group of researchers use the same items of motivation for the measurement of respondents' satisfaction (Ross, Iso-Ahola, 1991; Thomas, Butts, 1998; Fluker, Turner, 2000; Severt et al., 2007; Kao et al., 2008; Correia et al., 2013; Albayrak, Caber, 2018). All of these approaches assume that there is a linear relationship between motivation and satisfaction (Albayrak, Caber, 2018).

Satisfaction in the context of festivals is defined as the visitor's overall satisfaction with the festival, as satisfaction with specific attributes is classified in the relevant attribute category (Tanford, Jung, 2017). However, merely understanding the visitors' motives is insufficient to guarantee visitor satisfaction and loyalty. The motives also need to be considered when creating attractive festival qualities and features which will influence visitor behaviour (e. g. satisfaction and loyalty) (Yoon et al., 2010). Baker and Crompton (2000) took the initiative in investigating the relationships between festival quality, satisfaction and loyalty (Yoon et al., 2010). Building on four dimensions of festival quality, they discovered that the quality of a festival affected behavioural intentions, attitudinal loyalty to the festival, and the willingness to pay more, more significantly than visitor satisfaction. The satisfaction of festival visitors has been described as a useful predictor of their future behavioural intentions (Baker, Crompton, 2000; Kim et al., 2010).

Many studies have found that key elements that affect tourist satisfaction with festivals and events are various motivations (e.g., novelty, escape, event attractions and socialization) (Lee et al., 2004; Kim et al., 2010). Past studies have emphasised that satisfaction is a significant direct factor influencing customer loyalty in tourism and hospitality (Kim et al., 2010). The customers are more likely to have a better service experience if they take part in producing the experience themselves (Harris et al., 2001; Organ et al., 2015). This co-creation through customer interaction leads to greater satisfaction levels (Bijmolt et al., 2010; Brodie, Hollebeek, 2011; Organ et al., 2015). Research has also suggested that festival visitors' emotions are related to their satisfaction levels (Grappi, Montanari, 2011; Lee et al., 2008; Mason, Paggiaro, 2012; Organ et al., 2015).

### 2.3 Loyalty to festivals

Loyalty is defined as repeating purchase behaviour and is characterised in terms of repurchase intentions, WOM communications and recommendations (Lee et al., 2006: 218). Oliver and Burke (1999) showed that creating loyalty depends on achieving customer satisfaction, which is affected by expectations (Kim et al., 2010). They suggested there is a significant positive correlation between the consumers' satisfaction and their future intentions (Kim et al., 2010). Past studies have suggested that perceptions of service quality and value affect satisfaction. Satisfaction furthermore affects loyalty and post-purchase behaviours (Oliver, 1980; Cronin, Taylor, 1992; Fornell, 1992; Andresen, Sullivan, 1993; Tam, 2000; Bignie et al., 2001; Choi, Chu, 2001; Petrick, Backman, 2002; Chen, Tsai, 2007; Chen, 2008; De Rojas, Camarero, 2008; Chen, Chen, 2010). Satisfied tourists may revisit a destination and recommended it to other tourists, or express favourable comments about the destination and not recommend it to others. Dissatisfied tourists may express negative comments about a destination and damage its market reputation (Reisinger, Turner, 2003; Chen, Chen, 2010). The degree of destination loyalty is frequently reflected in the tourists' intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Oppermann, 2000; Chen, Tsai, 2007; Chen, Chen, 2010).

In the hospitality and tourism field, several studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty (Kim et al., 2010). Loyalty is most often defined by behavioural intentions (Mason, Paggiaro, 2012), which include intentions to revisit the festival (Choo et al., 2016) and recommend it to others (Croes, Lee,

2015; Tanford, Jung, 2017). A few studies measure loyalty as expenditures, which include wine buying at an Australian wine festival (Brower, 2014) and intentions to donate at a charity festival (Inoue, 2016; Tanford, Jung, 2017). Some studies report significant relationships between satisfaction and loyalty, supporting the well-documented relationship between these two variables in the hospitality literature (Tanford, 2016; Tanford, Jung, 2017).

A study by Tanford and Jung (2017) confirmed that tangible festival attributes (activities, authenticity, environment, concessions) are more strongly related to satisfaction, whereas intangible attributes (escape, socialization) are more important for loyalty. Tangible attributes are experienced "in the moment" and contribute to visitors' satisfaction with the experience. Because of its strong relationship with loyalty, overall satisfaction may in turn influence intentions to return. Escape and socialization may evoke an emotional reaction so that visitors want to attend the festival again to experience the same feelings. In a study into Zagreb Christmas Market by Marković et al. (2018) tourist loyalty is defined as visitors' intention to return to the food festival and recommend it to other people.

### 3. Methodology

To achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions, an empirical study was conducted on two Christmas Markets, one in Zagreb and another in Karlovac, Croatia, in the period from December 1, 2018 to January 6, 2019. We chose the Zagreb Advent since it is the largest and best-organized Christmas Market in Croatia, which is attracting more and more visitors every year. It is a city-wide street party in the Christmas spirit. It offers a variety of events, plenty of fun, excellent food, unique events, art, and unforgettable Christmas atmosphere and experience. Visitors can visit the ice park, the Advent in Zrinjevac and the European Square, the Advent in the Tunnel, the Advent at Stross and Vranyczany Platou. The Zagreb Advent was voted the best Christmas Market in Europa for three years in a row (2016, 2017 and 2018). The first Karlovac Advent took place in December 2017. For now, it is a small local Christmas Market. The program for families with children starts in the morning and consists of workshops, storytelling, concerts for children and concerts by children attending Karlovac School of Music. In the afternoons there are performances of folk ensembles and students of Karlovac School of Music, while

the evenings are reserved for concerts by popular Croatian singers.

A self-administered survey was conducted as a data collection technique. The questionnaire was compiled in English and translated into Croatian. In addition to demographic questions about gender and age, the questionnaire included questions about the number of previous visits, duration of stay, travel companions and accommodation. The respondents could choose one of the offered answers. Scales from the literature were used to measure motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. Visitors responded by expressing their agreement on a Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Event motivation scale (Mohr et al., 1993), consisting of 22 items, was used to determine the motivation for attending the two fairs. Satisfaction with the experience was measured by four items taken from the paper written by Prebensen et al. (2015) to which a fifth item was added ("I will revisit the Zagreb/Karlovac Advent in the future."). Visitor loyalty was measured using three scales: intention to recommend the destination (three adapted items taken from Kim et al., 2016), intention to revisit destination (three items taken from Kim et al., 2015), and sharing the experience (two items taken from Buonincontri et al., 2017).

The survey was conducted on a purposive sample of visitors. A purposive sampling method was used since the accurate size of the population could not be determined. Trained researchers approached the people who visited the fair. Domestic visitors completed the questionnaire in Croatian and foreign visitors completed it in the English language. A total of 249 valid questionnaires were collected (113 in Karlovac and 136 in Zagreb). The descriptive, inferential and multivariate statistics were used in the data analysis using a software package SPSS v. 25.

### 4. Findings

To answer the first research question, a descriptive analysis of the sample (Table 1) was carried out and the differences between the visitors were determined using the chi-square test. The sample comprised 249 respondents. There were more women (62.7%) than men (36.8%). Most visitors (49%) were aged 18-25 years, while those aged 55 or more accounted for only 8.8% of the sample. No differences were found among Advent visitors in Karlovac and Zagreb in terms of gender and age structure. In addition, most of them had already

visited the Advent. However, the sample varied in other characteristics. Domestic visitors accounted for 47.8% and foreign 52.2% of all tourists who visited the Zagreb Advent. The Advent in Karlovac was visited mostly by domestic visitors. The difference in the structure of visitors (domestic vs. international) for both Christmas Markets is

statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 82.523$ ;  $df=1$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Statistically significant differences between the visitors of the Zagreb Advent and the Karlovac Advent were also found in the number of overnights ( $\chi^2 = 46.002$ ;  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), travel partners ( $\chi^2 = 26.576$ ;  $df=5$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and the type of accommodation ( $\chi^2 = 11.328$ ;  $df=3$ ,  $p=0.01$ ).

**Table 1 Sample structure (N = 249)**

Characteristics	Zagreb		Karlovac		Total		Test
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Gender							
Female	86	63.2	70	61.9	156	62.7	$\chi^2 = 0.027$ ; $df=1$ ( $p>0.05$ )
Male	50	36.8	43	38.1	93	37.3	
Age							
18 – 25	71	52.2	51	45.1	122	49.0	$\chi^2 = 6.186$ ; $df=5$ ( $p>0.05$ )
26 – 35	24	17.6	13	11.5	37	14.9	
36 – 45	18	13.2	25	22.1	43	17.3	
46 – 55	11	8.1	14	12.4	25	10.0	
56 – 65	8	5.9	7	6.2	15	6.0	
66 and more	4	2.9	3	2.7	7	2.8	
Country							
Croatia	65	47.8	113	100	178	71.5	$\chi^2 = 82.523$ ; $df=1$ ( $p<0.01$ )
Other countries	71	52.2	0	0	71	28.5	
The number of visits							
First visit	22	16.2	22	19.5	44	17.7	$\chi^2 = 0.460$ ; $df=1$ ( $p>0.05$ )
One or more visits before	114	83.8	91	80.5	205	82.3	
The number of overnight stays							
1 night	24	17.6	62	54.9	86	34.5	$\chi^2 = 46.002$ ; $df=3$ ( $p<0.01$ )
2-3 nights	75	55.1	22	19.5	97	39.0	
4-7 nights	16	11.8	9	8.0	25	10.0	
More than 7 nights	21	15.4	20	17.7	41	16.5	
Travel partners							
Alone	10	7.4	27	23.9	37	14.9	$\chi^2 = 26.576$ ; $df=5$ ( $p<0.01$ )
With a partner	11	8.1	18	15.9	29	11.6	
Family (with children)	28	20.6	29	25.7	57	22.9	
Family (without children)	11	8.1	3	2.7	14	5.6	
Friends/colleagues	71	52.2	33	29.2	104	41.8	
Organised group of people	5	3.7	3	2.7	8	3.2	
Accommodation							
Hotel	21	15.4	18	15.9	39	15.7	$\chi^2 = 11.328$ ; $df=3$ ( $p=0.01$ )
Hostel	33	24.3	23	20.4	56	22.5	
Private accommodation	49	36.0	24	21.2	73	29.3	
Relatives and friends	33	24.3	48	42.5	81	32.5	

Source: Research results.

Visitors to the Zagreb Advent stayed longer (82.3% stayed longer than one night) than visitors to the Karlovac Advent (45.2% stayed longer than one night). The Zagreb Advent visitors usually come with friends and acquaintances (52.2%) as opposed to the Karlovac Advent visitors (29.2%). Most of those who attended the Karlovac Advent stayed with relatives and friends (42.5%), while those who visited the Za-

greb Advent stayed in hotels (24.3%) and private accommodation (36%).

The second research question focused on identifying the motives for visiting the two Christmas Markets. To reduce the number of manifest variables to a smaller number of factors, explorative factor analysis was performed. Five factors were extracted that explain 59.42% of the variance (Table 2).

**Table 2 Results of the explorative factor analysis (N = 249)**

Item number	Item	Factor loadings	Total variance explained (%)	Alpha coefficient
<b>FACTOR 1 - Unique experience (event novelty)</b>			<b>25.80</b>	<b>0.798</b>
m_11	Because the Advent in Zagreb/Karlovac is unique.	.833		
m_13	Because it is stimulating and exciting.	.779		
m_12	Because I like the variety of things to see and do.	.732		
m_10	Because I enjoy arts and crafts.	.525		
m_15	To enjoy the food.	.477		
m_20	Because I heard about the Advent in Zagreb/Karlovac and it sounded like fun.	.459		
m_16	To get away from everyday life.	.403		
<b>FACTOR 2 – Family togetherness</b>			<b>13.03</b>	<b>0.955</b>
m_8	To help bring the family closer together.	.964		
m_9	Because I thought the entire family would enjoy it.	.950		
m_7	So that all family members could do something together.	.948		
<b>FACTOR 3 – Hanging out with friends</b>			<b>8.33</b>	<b>0.930</b>
m_2	So that I could do things with my companions.	.954		
m_1	So that I could be with my friends.	.951		
<b>FACTOR 4 - Excitement/thrill</b>			<b>6.50</b>	<b>0.704</b>
m_19	Because I was curious.	.739		
m_17	Because I enjoy the Advent crowd.	.639		
m_14	To observe other people attending the Advent.	.576		
m_21	To experience new and different things.	.531		
m_18	To change my daily routine.	.421		
m_22	Because I enjoy special events.	.412		
<b>FACTOR 5 - Socialization</b>			<b>5.75</b>	<b>0.643</b>
m_6	To be with people who enjoy the same things I do.	.679		
m_5	For a change of pace of everyday life.	.620		
m_4	For a change to be with people who are enjoying themselves.	.577		
m_3	To see the entertainment.	.374		

Source: Research results



By applying the t-test for independent samples, among Advent visitors in Zagreb and Karlovac (Table 3), the difference in the mean values was established (Table 3).

**Table 3 Results of the t-test for the main motive for attending the Advent (N = 249)**

Factors	Zagreb		Karlovac		F	t	sig
	M*	SD**	M	SD			
Unique experience	4.16	0.45	3.79	0.85	45.189	4498	0.000
Family togetherness	2.41	1.59	3.85	1.25	23.043	7838	0.000
Hanging out with friends	4.43	0.91	4.24	0.95	0.157	1611	0.108
Excitement/thrills	3.84	0.61	3.73	0.84	20.078	1152	0.251
Socialization	3.85	0.72	4.06	0.73	0.301	2232	0.027

\* M = arithmetic mean, \*\* SD = standard deviation

Source: Research results

The main motives of the Zagreb Advent visitors are 'Hanging out with friends' (M = 4.43, SD = 0.91) and 'Unique experience' (M = 4.16, SD = 0.45), and the lowest average mean was obtained for the motive 'Family togetherness' (M = 2.41, SD = 1.59). The primary motives of the visitors to the Karlovac Advent include 'Hanging out with friends' (M = 4.24, SD = 0.95), 'Socialization' (M = 4.06, SD = 0.73) and 'Family togetherness' (M = 3.85, SD = 1.25). Statistically significant differences were found in the mean

values of the three factors that reflected the motives for attending the Advent: Unique experience (t = 4498, p < 0.01), Family togetherness (t = 7838, p < 0.01) and Socialization (t = 2232, p < 0.05).

Furthermore, visitor loyalty and satisfaction with the experience measured by intention to recommend the destination, intention to revisit the destination and share the experience were explored to answer the third research question. The results are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

**Table 4 Results of the reliability test for satisfaction and loyalty (N = 249)**

Item number	Construct / item	Alpha coefficient
<b>SATISFACTION WITH THE EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>0.901</b>
s_1	I am glad that I have decided to visit Zagreb/Karlovac Advent).	
s_2	I have enjoyed this experience..	
s_3	I will participate in similar types of experiences in the future.	
s_4	I will revisit the Zagreb/Karlovac Advent in the future.	
s_5	I will recommend the Zagreb/Karlovac Advent to others.	
<b>INTENTION TO RECOMMEND THE DESTINATION</b>		<b>0.914</b>
rec_1	I would like to recommend others to visit Zagreb/Karlovac.	
rec_2	I would say positive things about Zagreb/Karlovac to others.	
rRec_3	If someone is looking for a good travel destination, I would suggest to him/her to visit Zagreb/Karlovac.	
<b>INTENTION TO REVISIT THE DESTINATION</b>		<b>0.813</b>
rev_1	Revisiting Zagreb/Karlovac would be worthwhile.	
rev_2	I will revisit Zagreb/Karlovac.	
rev_3	I would like to stay longer in Zagreb/Karlovac.	
<b>SHARING THE EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>0.674</b>
sh_1	I have shared my experience of the visit with others.	
sh_2	I will tell others about my experience of the visit.	

Source: Research results

The research results in the above table indicate that all constructs are reliable (Taber, 2018), having Cronbach alpha coefficients between 0.67 and 0.91.

**Table 5 Results of the t-test for satisfaction and loyalty (N = 249)**

Construct	Zagreb		Karlovac		F	t	sig
	M*	SD**	M	SD			
Satisfaction with the experience	4.64	0.56	4.27	0.82	15.345	4.193	.000
Intention to recommend the destination	4.52	0.84	4.14	1.04	135.771	7.321	.000
Intention to revisit the destination	4.51	0.76	4.20	0.92	50.090	6.203	.000
Sharing the experience	4.55	0.69	3.92	1.08	31.251	5.571	.000

\* M = arithmetic mean, \*\* SD = standard deviation

Source: Research results

It is evident that the mean scores for visitor satisfaction and intentions are higher for the Zagreb Advent compared to Karlovac Advent in all measured constructs. Furthermore, all differences are statistically significant.

A correlation analysis using a Pearson's correlation coefficient was also performed to determine whether there was a correlation between visitor satisfaction and loyalty (Table 6).

**Table 6 Results of the correlation analysis (N = 249)**

	Satisfaction with the experience	Intention to recommend the destination	Intention to revisit the destination	Sharing of the experience
Satisfaction with the experience	1			
Intention to recommend the destination	0.692*	1		
Intention to revisit the destination	0.684*	0.856*	1	
Sharing the experience	0.483*	0.631*	0.615*	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research results

The correlation analysis showed that there were statistically significant correlations between the observed constructs. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient ranges from 0.483 to 0.692. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Visitor satisfaction is highly correlated with intention to recommend ( $r = 0.692$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and intention to revisit the destination ( $r = 0.684$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while the correlation with intention to share the experience is somewhat lower ( $r = 0.483$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## 5. Conclusions

Christmas markets have become quite popular winter events in almost all major cities in Croatia. Zagreb was one of the first Croatian cities that recognised the importance of Christmas Markets

for tourism, and turned the Zagreb Advent into a recognisable brand. This is supported by the fact that it has been voted the best Christmas Market in Europe for three years in row, based on the survey conducted by European Best Destinations organisation. Since many other cities are faced with the problem of tourism seasonality, organising such events during winter, which for Croatia is the low season, is a good opportunity for creating a holiday atmosphere for the locals and attracting visitors from other cities and countries.

Empirical research has been conducted to answer the research questions concerning two Christmas markets in Croatia of which one is recent and local and the other was the best in Europe several times.

The first research question aims to determine whether there are differences in the visitor structure between the two Christmas Markets. It may be concluded that there is a difference in the demographic structure of visitors and their travel behaviour. The visitors to the Zagreb Advent were mainly foreign visitors (52.2%), while all of the visitors to the Karlovac Advent were domestic (100%). There is also a statistically significant difference in the number of overnights, travel partners and the type of accommodation. The Zagreb Advent visitors stay longer and usually come with friends and acquaintances (52.2%) compared to the visitors of the Advent in Karlovac (29.2%). The Karlovac Advent visitors mainly stay with relatives and friends (42.5%), while the Zagreb Advent visitors are more likely to stay in hotels (24.3%) and private accommodation (36%). This confirms that the Zagreb Advent is an internationally recognized tourist event, while the Advent in Karlovac is still a local event.

The second research question asked whether the visitors' motives for attending various Christmas Markets differ. The Zagreb Advent visitors' main motives were *'Hanging out with friends'* and *'Unique experience'*, while the visitors to the Karlovac Advent were mainly motivated by *'Hanging out with friends'*, *'Socialization'* and *'Family togetherness'*. In their study into traditional cultural events in Slovakia, Maráková et al. (2018), identified six domains of visitors' motivations: to experience something new and different, to be with friends and family, to reconnect with culture and tradition, to socialize, to restore equilibrium, and for a change from everyday life. The study by Vitner Marković et al. (2019) found that the motivation factors of the Advent visitors varied depending on their age. Some came for entertainment, others came to enjoy the Christmas atmosphere, food and wine, and yet others came to buy souvenirs and local products. An understanding of the socio-demographic structure of tourist event visitors, the tourist and consumer habits, as well as motivations for visiting fairs is of extreme importance for destination marketers and market segmentation. Understanding what motivates visitors to attend a certain event is essential for the development of attractive event offerings and an effective marketing mix aimed at increasing visitor numbers.

The third research question inquired whether visitors differ in terms of their satisfaction and loyalty that manifests by the intention to revisit, intention

to recommend it to friends and acquaintances, and intention to share the experience. Research results indicate that the mean scores for visitor satisfaction and intentions are higher for the Zagreb Advent than the Karlovac Advent in all measured constructs, and all the differences are statistically significant. This additionally justifies the higher status of the Zagreb Advent which has won multiple awards and become recognisable on a global level. Furthermore, it shows that the visitors of a smaller local market have high expectations and are likely to compare a local Christmas market with other markets, including the Zagreb Advent fair. Therefore, in order to enhance visitor satisfaction, the quality of tourist offerings should be increased which will result in their intention to revisit the event, recommend it to friends and acquaintances, and share the experience.

The fourth question seeks to establish whether satisfaction with a Christmas Market affects visitors' loyalty. As anticipated, visitor satisfaction is strongly correlated with the intention to recommend and intention to revisit the destination, while the correlation with the intention to share the experience is somewhat weaker. A study into the Strasbourg Christmas Market conducted by Castéran and Roederer (2013) concluded that if a tourist site is perceived as authentic, the frequency of visits increases. It can be concluded that the satisfaction of market visitors determines their loyalty to the destination, which means that they are more likely to visit it during other periods of the year.

The data and information obtained through this research may be useful to managers of tourist destinations in creating high-quality tourist offerings and positioning the destination. The Zagreb Advent is already recognised as one of the best in Europe. It is branded as a Christmas Market which competes with other Advent destinations in Europe. To maintain that position, it is necessary to continuously innovate and diversify the tourist offerings to attract old and new visitors. To attract more tourists to smaller Christmas markets, destination managers should develop marketing strategies that will promote it to a wider audience so that it does not remain a local seasonal event, and enhance the visitor experience by extending the tourist offer. In the case of the Karlovac Advent, there is a possibility of recommending the visitors of the Zagreb Advent to visit Karlovac for a day since it is only 50 kilometres away.

The present study has several limitations which have to be taken into consideration in future research. Different demographic characteristics of the visitors might have influenced the visitors' perception of event experience, satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, future research could conduct market segmentation on the basis of socio-demographic variables as well as determine the differences between tour-

ist experience, satisfaction and loyalty. It could also include a comparative analysis with other cities in Croatia, both inland and along the coast. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate the differences in tourist consumption among different types of Christmas Market visitors. The results of this research might help in developing targeted marketing strategies.

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## **TKO I ZAŠTO POSJEĆUJE BOŽIĆNE SAJMOVE? ANALIZA STRUKTURE POSJETITELJA I MOTIVA POSJETE DVAJU BOŽIĆNIH SAJMOVA U HRVATSKOJ**

### **SAŽETAK**

Postoje različiti motivi zbog kojih se posjećuju određena događanja. Uglavnom je motivacija ta koja određuje ponašanje potrošača i dolazi do izražaja kada potrošači očekuju da pružatelji usluga zadovolje njihove potrebe. Autori ovog rada usredotočili su se na motive zbog kojih posjetitelji posjećuju dva božićna sajma u Hrvatskoj, a koji su sve veći po broju posjetitelja. Ciljevi su bili usporediti demografsku strukturu posjetitelja i njihovo ponašanje na putovanju, motivaciju za posjećivanje božićnih sajmova i utvrditi razinu zadovoljstva posjetitelja te njihovo buduće ponašanje, a sve to u svrhu utvrđivanja aktivnosti koje bi subjekti koji rukovode turističkim destinacijama mogli organizirati. Autori rada proveli su sekundarno i primarno istraživanje. Empirijsko istraživanje provedeno je na uzorcima posjetitelja Adventa u Karlovcu i Zagrebu korištenjem namjernog prigodnog uzorka. Analiza podataka provedena je uz pomoć deskriptivne, inferencijalne i multivarijantne statistike. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da se ponašanje posjetitelja i njihovi motivi dolaska na božićni sajam razlikuju, kao i razina njihova zadovoljstva i odanost. Ipak, kod oba božićna sajma pronađena je snažna veza između zadovoljstva posjetitelja, namjere za ponovnim dolaskom i preporukom te dijeljenjem iskustva. Ovaj rad predstavlja maleni doprinos znanstvenom istraživanju na polju ponašanja potrošača s fokusom na motivaciju za posjećivanje različitih turističkih događanja. Nadalje, rezultati ovog istraživanja od koristi su i subjektima koji rukovode raznim festivalima i događanjima u svrhu poboljšanja kvalitete usluga.

**Ključne riječi:** turistička događanja, festivali, božićni sajmovi, motivi turista, zadovoljstvo, odanost