Uncovering the factors impacting visitor’s satisfaction: evidence from a portfolio of events

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to get insights on a real-life portfolio of events from a demand-centred prospective, based on the identification of factors influencing the degree of attendee’s satisfaction, with the ultimate aim of identifying commonalities and prospective cross-leverage strategies among events.

Design/methodology/approach – Data from attendees to three major events taking place in Funchal, the capital city of Madeira, were analysed based on multivariate statistics and categorical regression owing to the overwhelming presence of categorical data in the database. The econometric analysis pursued in this paper is based on a sample of 1,830 tourists.

Findings – The research demonstrates that the impact of the socio-economic variables and travel arrangements on attendees’ satisfaction is rather irrelevant, irrespective of the event under analysis, with cross-cutting factors defining the overall quality of any event (mainly technical aspects such as aesthetical elements, organization and opening hours) determinant in predicting the overall degree of satisfaction. Another key finding relates to the existence of a number of commonalities among events, in terms of tourists’ profiles, market orientation, themes and resources laying ground to define ready-to-apply cross-leverage strategies.

Research limitations/implications – The analysis concentrated on three major events taking place in the capital city of a peripheral region. The content of the questionnaire co-developed with the destination management organization with order to get access to a large sample of respondents.

Practical implications – Lessons to be learnt in terms of managing a disparate collection of events developed over time in an ad hoc manner. A few examples of cross-leverage strategies are put forward.

Originality/value – The analysis and empirical content portrayed in this study contribute to the literature on event portfolio via description of real-life case examples of how to develop competencies based on post-event analysis in a proactive manner.

Keywords Destination image, Madeira Island, Event portfolios, Visitors’ satisfaction

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Mature destinations have become increasingly dependent on the promotion of cultural resources, in their various forms, for a number of reasons (Todd et al., 2017). The diversification of the current offer based on untapped cultural resources and alternative market niches, capable of providing complex and rewarding experiences (Silberberg, 1995; Terluin, 2003; Richards, 2017) is purportedly the main reason behind the current drive to develop interlinkages between tourism and culture (Wicks and Fesenmaier, 1995; Getz, 2005, 2008). Attracting new consumer segments in order to reduce the extent of the local industry dependence on a few dominant markets of origin constitutes another important reason. The development of cultural tourism is equally associated with positive impacts on the economic dynamics of the territory through the development of endogenous development policies and as a seasonality mitigation tool (Todd et al., 2017; Long and Perdue, 1990; Marujo, 2014a; Terluin, 2003). In this regard, the
attempts to promote the progressive opening up of remote areas based on material and immaterial resources (e.g. architectural details, old religious and mystique traditions, culinary traditions and popular festivities) are justified on the grounds of to strengthening the territorial cohesion of mature tourism destinations (Andriotis, 2003, 2006; Sharpley, 2002).

In the Western European context, event tourism and festivals have become one of the most pervasive manifestations of cultural tourism, and a “popular applied tactic” (Antchak, 2017, p. 281) on a wide range of small-scale events, in order to attain several developmental goals, such as those ones mentioned above (Buning et al., 2016; Ziakas and Costa, 2011; Mehmetoglu and Ellingsen, 2005; Richards, 1999).

The myriad initiatives rooted in the development of festivals and events are based on the assumption that the proliferation of such initiatives offers an undeniable commercial interest, as well as an opportunity to attract a substantial base of well-off, first-class and loyal customers capable of co-creating (and co-staging) memorable experiences (Richards, 2013; Tanford and Jung, 2017; Yoon et al., 2010; Akhondnejad, 2016). While most festivals and events are purpose-built to attract specific market niches, in a number of instances such events seek to attract a large and undifferentiated audience of residents and “passing by” visitors. Nowadays, destinations tend to offer such a quantity of both generic and thematically diverse events throughout the year that they have no alternative but to look constantly for more efficient ways to manage the increasing number of events. The formal establishment of an event portfolio is considered to be the most promising way to administer in the most efficient manner a diverse collection of events (Ziakas and Costa, 2011; Ziakas, 2010, 2013). However, the destination management organization (DMO) officials are still reliant on a piecemeal approach to tackle the challenges confronted by them when managing a wide array of disparate events (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2017; Ferdinand and Williams, 2013; Ziakas and Costa, 2011). Moreover, most studies reported in the relevant literature are based on single events, which limits the ability to generalize findings and to disseminate good practices, success stories and lessons learned to other events’ landscapes (Tanford and Jung, 2017; Ziakas, 2014).

Research on the topic of the portfolio of events has been relatively limited (Pereira et al., 2015; Antchak, 2017; Clark and Misener, 2015; Buning et al., 2016). Antchak (2017, p. 282) reports “little theory and lack of empirical studies” and Ziakas (2014, p. 183) mentions that the topic portfolio of events is still at an “embryonic stage of development”, in spite of the increasing number of experiences in planning and implementation portfolios worldwide. The lack of studies reporting “consistent and accurate estimation of the contribution” from each of the events in a portfolio is rather common (Ziakas and Costa, 2011, p. 163), and one of the reasons that explain the ineffective proactive festival management and lack of strategic thinking based on post-event analysis leading to recommendations for improvement (Clark and Misener, 2015; Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2017). For host communities betting on “events”, positive benefits are “expected as a matter of course” (Kelly and Fairley, 2018; Gursoy and Kendall, 2006; Shipway, 2007; Chalip, 2004). However, recent research suggests a number of failures in this regard (Chalip, 2014), owing to the “innate fragmentation” of the events sector (Ziakas, 2019a). As observed by Antchak (2017, p. 281) “it is not enough just to host discrete events in a hope to anchor market attention, attract crowds of international visitors and redevelop the place itself”.

Although a number of important lessons in terms of planning and management of event portfolio have become increasingly well-established in the literature, there is still a lack of empirical studies in event portfolios in peripheral areas, as a number of questions regarding a portfolio’ grounding logic, management and upgrade are still unanswered (Ziakas, 2014, 2019b; Antchak, 2017). The literature lacks examples of a comprehensive overview of the “entire festival landscape” (Hjalager and Kwiatkowski, 2017, p. 3). This is clearly an issue of growing importance in the current turbulent environment of fierce competition and competing strategies based on events’ initiatives (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017). Quite often, portfolios are developed in an ad hoc manner (Antchak, 2017), without a common grounding logic, and systematic and recurrent
efforts to update competencies based on monitoring attendees’ satisfaction. For these reasons, we provide in this paper a descriptive analysis of a real-life portfolio of three key events in Madeira, which has only rarely been done in the literature. As elsewhere, the portfolio analysed in this study has not been formally established, being instead the result of the piecemeal and additive approach of developing new events to cover the whole calendar year. Therefore, this paper contributes to the literature on the portfolio by focussing on small-scale events developed in an ad hoc manner for the purpose of tourism development. In order to highlight key aspects of the data, this study adopts a demand-centric approach. For that purpose, we carried out a post-analysis exam of data on tourists’ satisfaction in order to identify commonalities in terms of behavioural patterns amongst attendees, profiles and attitudes and how information and analysis of items that may inform the planning phase of the next round of events.

In terms of the structure of the paper, it must be mentioned that the following section summarizes a few relevant aspects regarding the research around events are presented. The recent evolution of the tourism sector in the Autonomous Region of Madeira and the methodological approach retained in this study is described in the third section. The fourth section describes the main results and the fifth section offers some preliminary conclusions and suggestions for future analysis.

**Literature review**

*Event portfolios*

Event tourism had become one of the key strategic areas of intervention in most destinations (Getz, 2005; Kelly and Fairley, 2018). Events are expected to make a substantial contribution to the regeneration of urban areas and to the territorial dynamics of underdeveloped territories (Getz and Page, 2016; Mariani and Giorgio, 2017; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Quinn, 2006; Antchak, 2017; Ziakas and Costa, 2011; Gotham, 2005; Harcup, 2000). In this regard, the attempts to promote the progressive opening up of remote areas based on material and immaterial resources (e.g. architectural details, old religious and mystique traditions, culinary traditions and popular festivities) are justified on the grounds of to strengthening the territorial cohesion of mature tourism destinations (Andriotis, 2003, 2006; Sharpley, 2002). DMOs also expect developments in terms of reduced levels of seasonality, place marketing, image formation and destination branding as well as in an increased stock of high-profile entertainment and leisure attractions (Xu et al., 2016).

With all these likely advantages in mind, the increased role of events and festivals in destinations’ tourism development strategies and policies, and the growing number of studies and reports in the field of tourism on the subject of event tourism is hardly surprising. However, many destinations have been affected adversely directly or indirectly by the “random and eclectic choice of events” in the recent past (Antchak, 2017, p. 282) transcribed in the establishment of a “kaleidoscope of sporting, cultural, and arts events” (Antchak and Pernecky, 2017, p. 545).

In order to attract additional segments of demand, well-established and popular local cultural events and decades-old habits, customs and traditions have been rebranded as mega-events or as events of special interest for tourists (Marujo, 2014b; Dwyer et al., 2000; Tomljenovic and Weber, 2004). In such cases, the critical input provided by marketers and cultural managers and alike lies in the introduction of innovative “unauthentic” creative elements and media coverage intended to create an emotional response towards such events. In other instances, marketers create postmodern events from scratch inspired by contemporary urban experiences or on enactments of historical events or mythological epics, either by staging authentic elements or by adding artificially reinterpreted elements from the locality’s past (Jago et al., 2003; Bankston and Henry, 2000; Che, 2008; Davis, 2017; Chhabra, 2006; Hughes, 1999).

Whatever the logic behind or intrinsic nature of festivals being currently staged, Getz (2010) refers that we are witnessing a general “festivalization” process as a result of the
over-commercialization of festivals and other cultural events in destinations too anxious to diversify and differentiate the tourism offer and marketing mix (Quinn, 2006; Richards, 2007; Falassi, 1987). In fact, a growing number of events have been created intentionally to develop what Richards and Palmer (2010) call “eventful cities” (Getz and Page, 2016; Mariani and Giorgio, 2017; Gabr, 2004). Nevertheless, succeeding in this field remains a major challenge. Cities expecting to become competitive “eventful cities” (Richards and Palmer, 2010), must evolve from a simple juxtaposition of unrelated and undifferentiated events in the calendar towards the development of a portfolio of events managed professionally. For that purpose, the grounding logic of the events’ portfolio must be in line with the city’s key strategies and policies, and the DMOs officials must implement learning and monitoring processes.

Cities have been competing to attract and stage large-scale events of national and international significance (Antchak, 2017). However, it is worthy of consideration that small-scale events have similarly been recognized as an appropriate and fiscally sound way of developing the event tourism industry (Gibson et al., 2012). Chalip and Costa (2005), O’Brien (2007), Gibson et al. (2012) and Pereira et al. (2015) concluded that smaller events are equally capable of contributing to the socio-economic development of the host community (Veltri et al., 2009). Small-scale events have been thoroughly acknowledged as a significant way to develop managerial and organizational competencies to host major events in the near future and to reinforce the stock of the events (Ziakas, 2014; Taks, 2013; Taks et al., 2013, 2014; Higham, 1999; Higham and Hinch, 2002; Wilson, 2006). In fact, mega-events can lead in the long term to negative impacts, because it is harder to be competitive and effective in bidding processes against wealthier regions (Pinson, 2016). Ziakas (2014, p. 2) observes that “one-off mega-events are inherently limited because of their one-time temporal character”.

Whatever the strategy followed by the communities hosting events, such communities confronted with a growing number of events to be managed began to adopt a strategic event portfolio approach (Getz, 2005, 2008; Ziakas, 2013; Chalip and Costa, 2005). An event portfolio was defined by Ziakas and Costa (2011, p. 409) as a “system that assembles different event stakeholders in a network and serves multiple purposes”. A “coincidental potpourri of miscellaneous events” (present in a number of instances) cannot be appropriately defined as a strategically planned and managed portfolio of events with a common theme and shared strategies and resources (Ziakas and Costa, 2011, p. 151).

It must be acknowledged that it is not easy to move from a single event mindset towards a portfolio of events because, as observed by Benur and Bramwell (2015, p. 214), tourism products are often the result of “uncoordinated individual market-based decisions rather than coordinated destination-level policies and market interventions”. The strategic management of a portfolio demands the identification of cross-leverages among the events in the portfolio and a “mind shift” from single (events) analysis to a comprehensive analysis of multiple events (Ziakas, 2013), which is even more difficult. According to Ziakas (2010), success in planning and managing events demands multiple goals (economic, political, and cultural) to be defined, cross-leverages between events and the current tourism strategy and the identification and nurturing of synergies among different events (Andersson et al., 2017). The development of synergies among events and economic, tourism, leisure, sports or socio-cultural objectives is an additional requirement to be reckoned with (Ziakas, 2010; Benur and Bramwell, 2015).

The portfolio approach is perceived as a key precondition for the successful management of an assorted mix of events in order to ensure the development of synergies between “seemingly disparate events” (Ziakas, 2014, p. 333; Ziakas and Costa, 2011; Gibson et al., 2012). Getz (2010) “highlighted” the advantages of employing principles of strategic development, in order to take advantage of market tendencies and changing behavioural patterns to foster tourism and economic development, capacity building and private sector development. The effective management of a portfolio of events demands hosting multiple
and different types of events in both the low and shoulder season (Getz, 2005; Pinson, 2016),
the development of synergies and (joint event strategies) among them (Chalip, 2004; Chalip
and Costa, 2005; Jago et al., 2003) and the adoption a multi-goal agenda (Ziakas, 2013, 2014)
to avoid an overemphasis on economic matters. The development of a common theme was
highlighted by Ziakas and Costa (2011) and Dickson et al. (2018) refers to the development of
organizational capacity and collaborative networking as another critical factor of success.
Getz and McConnell (2014) consider that the combination of events and destination
attributes is of paramount importance.

By failing to adopt principles of strategic portfolio management, host communities have
found out that the benefits predicted in the pre-planning phase simply do not occur, owing
to faulty and ad hoc planning (Pereira et al., 2015, p. 27). The concept of event portfolio is
based on the idea that any event supports and potentiates both short (immediate) and long-
term benefits if event leveraging techniques are adopted (Ziakas, 2014; Green et al., 2003;
O’Brien, 2007; Chalip, 2000). Ziakas (2014) mentions that successful portfolios lead to
attaining multiple outcomes. Portfolios must be purposefully designed to achieve multiple
goals (economic, political, social and cultural), to foster complementarities and synergies,
learning capabilities and a sense of achievement (Benur and Bramwell, 2015).

However, the paucity of empirical studies on the subject of portfolio of events (Dragin-Jensen
et al., 2016; Etemad and Motaghi, 2018; Andersson et al., 2017) and on the role of events as a
leverageable resource (Pereira et al., 2015; Chalip and Costa, 2005) prevents further analysis on
the importance of an event portfolio as a strategic tool impacting the development of the
tourism industry. Ziakas (2010, p. 147) refers to the lack of illustrative and descriptive studies on
the “nature of an event portfolio and the ways that different events are interrelated”. Although
a number of studies were produced in recent times on the “subject of event-led leverage” economic
and social leverage, Pereira et al. (2015) and Smith (2014) report a dearth of research on
event-theme leveraging (Schulenkorf, 2010). Moreover, the effective development of synergies
and the definition of joint event strategies among them is also a relatively under-researched
Mariani and Giorgio (2017) and Giovanardi et al. (2014).

There is also a clear recognition of the many challenges associated with developing a
portfolio of events. The question remains as to how to develop the capability to effectively
develop synergies amongst events and long-term benefits. Ziakas (2010, p. 148) relates
cross-leveraging events to “understanding inter-relationships, fostering synergies, and
enhancing complementarities”.

The definition of cross-leverage strategies demands to analyse of the different events can
be “synergised” (Ziakas and Costa, 2011) to optimise the intended outcomes. Cross-leveraging
strategies may be conceptualized based on the exchange of resources, best practices and
common themes and marketing strategies and campaigns. Cross-leverage demands the
incorporation of events into the overall destination branding and management of the
destination (Chalip and Costa, 2005), and offer opportunities to different stakeholders to
“converge” and to “capitalizing on the strategic opportunities that portfolios offer to
cross-leverage events for multiple developmental purposes” (Ziakas and Costa, 2011, p. 154;
Seckelmann, 2002). The identification of tactics and strategies (O’Brien and Chalip, 2008;
O’Brien, 2007) to extend the length of stay and daily expenditure based on cross-leveraging
the main activities of each event with tourism attractions and subsidiary events constitute an
example of areas of interest in terms of cross-leverage.

A key issue in the topic of event portfolio regards relatedness is defined by “the ways that
events complement one another” (Ziakas, 2014, p. 329), in terms of resources, theming and
markets (Ziakas and Costa, 2011, p. 151). Ziakas (2010, 2013) consider that relatedness may be
operationalised through a series of different processes, namely, transfer of knowledge among
events in the practicalities of organizing events in an efficient and effective manner,
identification, allocation and coordination of shared resources (e.g. pools of volunteers) among events, definition of a common theming uniting and “symbiotically connecting” the different events aiming at facilitating the exchange of good practices and the establishment of links with the destination main comparative advantages and the development of new markets in order to attract a new clientele in the low and shoulder season.

Relatedness offers the opportunity to think in a practical way about interdependencies and complementarities without running the risk of jeopardizing the current advantages through “hosting monotonously repetitive” akin to “exhausting the pool of local resources” (Ziakas, 2014, p. 333). To that end, it is necessary to identify operational and thematic relatedness and to plan strategically the addition of new events to the portfolio. Envisaging a further stage of implementing of cross-leveraging strategies is permissible as long as the events managers succeeded in devising practical manners to empirically pursue a relatedness-led agenda. Cross-leveraging strategies are intended to facilitate "the timely and synchronized implementation of activities and related tactics" (p. 346) with the ultimate goal of attaining multiple purposes.

Any attempt to create synergies and achieve success is clearly dependent “on considerable market intelligence” (Getz and McConnell, 2014, p. 76). In this study, based on the results of three intercept surveys, we seek to identify possible complementarities and potential synergies among events based on the empirical study aiming to identifying critical factors of success impacting satisfaction. Positive event experiences appear to lead to positive tourism destination experiences (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017, p. 91; Lee et al., 2012). Lee et al. (2012) demonstrated that higher levels of satisfaction reported by attendees lead to “moderate levels of emotional attachment to the festival” and in a later stage, to higher levels of loyalty. Because achieving success in terms of attendee’s satisfaction is critically important, Dickson et al. (2018) pledge for a more “professional and strategic approach to events” and Andersson et al. (2017) advocates “mechanisms for making and managing the event portfolio” in order to match visitors’ expectations (Mossberg and Getz, 2006; Nicholson and Pearce, 2000). In that sense, we think that the identification of the most important features of each event, as well as the examination of the critical factors of success, offers the opportunity to develop feedback mechanisms as learning methods feeding critical inputs in the decision-making process (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017).

Portfolios are not static (Andersson et al., 2017) and rapidly changing market conditions must be taken into consideration to offer products matching customers’ preferences and expectations; feedback mechanisms offer the opportunity to identify opportunities, maximize benefits and minimize costs/problems. By evaluating the current portfolio of events, critical success factors can be identified, and resources allocated more effectively. Mariani and Giorgio (2017) consider that is it necessary to place more emphasis on the DMOs efforts to efficiently develop a portfolio of events, rather than on “social practices and processes”. Moreover, the dramatic reduction in public financing and “public subsidies” for promotion (as observed by Andersson et al., 2017, “events need to demonstrate a financial return on investment”) had the merit of forcing the local authorities to find ways to manage in a coordinated, cost-effective, creative and synergistic way the pool of physical, human, cultural and financial resources allocated to stage events (Mariani, 2015; Mariani and Giorgio, 2017).

Events attendee’s satisfaction
Customer satisfaction is considered a critical measure of destination’s performance (Smith and Costello, 2009). Yoon and Uysal (2005, p. 47) consider satisfaction to be the most basic parameter in terms of assessing the performance of a destination in terms of the product and service mix. In this regard, the identification of the critical factors of success impacting customer satisfaction is a key managerial issue (Trindade et al., 2018; Schofield and Thompson, 2007), owing to the impact of satisfaction on daily expenditure, customer
loyalty and repeat attendance behaviour. With regard to issues of measurement of satisfaction, Costa et al. (2004) refer two main conceptual approaches: attitude-oriented and satisfaction-oriented. A satisfaction-oriented assessment is based on “customers experience with a product” and/or service “while attitude-oriented assessments are formulated through a preconceived belief or conviction” (Smith and Costello, 2009, p. 99). While most authors employed a measure of customer satisfaction based on the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm developed by Oliver’s (1980), Crompton and Love (1995) shown that “performance was the best predictor of satisfaction”.

In fact, expectations play a minor role in cultural events, especially if participants attend the event by chance or have no prior knowledge (Cuadrado-Garcia et al., 2017; Trindade et al., 2018). As observed by Cuadrado-Garcia et al. (2017, p. 160), attendants participating in a cultural-related event for the first time may lack “clear expectations about it”, and as a result, satisfaction is “developed after the visitor’s experience with the event”. Furthermore, performance-based measures are easier to collect, which similarly favours a satisfaction-oriented approach. Still on the topic of satisfaction, Cuadrado-Garcia et al. (2017) consider that “satisfaction” in connection with cultural and arts-related events is mostly derived from a combination of three aspects categorized as “the subjective and experiential aspects of the cultural product”, plus “the quality of the venue”, and finally, the “quality of the associated peripheral services”. In the same vein, Trindade et al. (2018) developed a satisfaction-scoring index based on factorial analysis of a number of core and peripheral characteristics of a music festival event. Cuadrado-Garcia et al. (2017) measure satisfaction based on the analysis of both the core product centred around the artistic performance, and the augmented product defined as the “attributes connected with the artistic event”, including several physical amenities such as parking facilities and bathroom facilities. In line with Tanford and Jung (2017) and Cuadrado-Garcia et al. (2017), we measure satisfaction as a global assessment of experience, asking respondents a single overall assessment of their degree of satisfaction, “omitting the role of expectations”. Therefore, satisfaction refers to the attendee’s overall satisfaction with the festival and is considered to be the result of the attendants’ evaluation of specific attributes.

However, we also analysed attendants’ perceptions on a series of festival characteristics, such as organization, beauty, creativity, to differentiate the impact of the core exhibition from its peripheral elements.

Getz and Page (2016, p. 597) refer that event tourism is a “form of special-interest travel”, determined by tourist’s specific interests. Accordingly, in this study, we differentiate participants travelling to attend the event from those ones attending by chance. Implicitly, the DMO expects a large number of tourists to attend by chance, as a result of having travelled to the region at the precise moment. As observed by Oppermann and Chon (1997) and Getz (2008), attendees participate for different reasons and experience and interpret the event in a differentiated manner, in line with their motivations to travel, degree of past participation and particular “wants and needs”. Events have the capacity to “instantiate meanings” to tourists and to intensify the overall tourist experience (Ziakas and Boukas, 2013, p. 94). The key issue essential to understand tourist’ attitudes is less the “nature of lived experiences” while attending the event but rather the “meanings attached to them” (Getz, 2008).

According to Ziakas and Boukas (2013, p. 95), meanings “include all experiences, feelings and thoughts as well as the subsequent sense of salience that people obtain from their participation in, or attendance at, event-based activities”. Meaning although conditioned by a high degree of subjective significance, influences the overall degree of satisfaction with the event, and consequently, future tourism behaviour. For that reason, past research focused on examining how meaning was formed following tourists’ interaction with the event experience. Past research showed that the characteristics and intensity of the experience impacted the overall significance attached to the event and the degree of satisfaction (Getz, 2008; Ziakas and Boukas, 2013). This study does not focus on understanding in a detailed way what makes the
experience meaningful. However, we strongly believe that further analysis informed by the results of this study must focus on a qualitative approach intended to grasp the motivations, meaning and the needs, aspirations and difficulties faced by attendees.

Madeira presents an excellent opportunity to examine the main propositions described in this section. The local tourism office has been pursuing an active events policy, with a number of high profile and smaller events being established in recent decades. The increasing concern about growing competitive pressures from other well-established destinations and issues of accountability and declining external financing prompted the local government to put in place a quality/satisfaction monitoring system. What this paper does, therefore, is to study the main factors impacting satisfaction in each of the events under study to detect common traits and critical key issues with the potential to be managed conjointly.

Methodology

Contextual setting

Before moving on, it is useful to consider a few notes on the recent evolution of the tourism sector within RAM. Funchal, the capital city of the Autonomous Region of Madeira (RAM), was chosen as the field study location because event tourism is growing in importance as the local DMO attempts to diversify the current tourism offer and lessen its reliance on nature. The tourist industry of RAM is the key local economic sector, contributing decisively in terms of GDP and employment, if we take into account all the direct and indirect impacts 21 per cent of GDP and 15 per cent of employment (Ismeri Europa, 2011).

In terms of the current stage development, by taking into account the evolutionary history development of the neighbouring destinations, namely the Canary Islands (mass tourism) and of the Azores (development of market niches), there are reasons to rank RAM as in an intermediate stage of development. The region attracted 1,365m tourists in 2016, providing 7,368m overnight stays. The hotel offers comprised 156 hotels by the end of 2016, corresponding to an accommodation capacity of 29,118 beds. Data on occupancy and the average length of stay point to above-average figures in national terms (69.2 per cent and 5.4 days), which suggests a relatively positive outlook in the national context.

In order to understand the reasons behind the region’s current emphasis on event tourism and the recent dynamics of the sector, it matters to examine two key variables: RevPAR and arrivals growth rate. The trend recorded in terms of RevPAR broadly suggests a positive trend for the 1976–2000 period, followed by substantial losses in the years 2000–2010, with signs of recovery since 2014. The figures for 2010 are 32.5 per cent lower than the values recorded in 2000. That is, the successful consolidation of an image of top-quality hotels (the region excels in the number of four and five-star hotels) did not match the sector’s ability to charge higher prices in line with the quality of the service provided. The erratic pattern of demand in the period after 2000, in sharp contrast with the impressive record of the preceding years, raised further concerns about the sector’s prospects.

The data on arrivals suggest a relatively consistent upward trend, with breaks limited to a few years, for the period 1976–2000. The average annual growth rate is around 4.18 per cent with respect to the period 1976–2016. However, the pace of growth has slowed since 1990, with a loss of 0.05 percentage points per year. An analysis of the data on the period 1976–2010 placed the sector in a stagnation stage, with the obvious risk of decline if measures were not taken. The outlook seems more positive if we consider the recovery that began in 2012. However, any decision-maker in office in the years 2008–2012 could not afford to ignore the strong signs of decline. Not surprisingly, the local authorities reacted by adopting a development strategy based on the multiplication of events, experiences and promotional offers. One of the areas that deserved attention at that particular moment was culture and heritage, given its relatively incipient level of development at the time.
The image of the destination conveyed abroad was characterized by a high degree of emphasis on a few main themes. Broadly, a set of motivations based on the nexus nature-relaxation prevailed, with a limited but increasing number of respondents mentioning additional reasons to visit the island such as gastronomy, cultural events and contact with the local culture. Factors such as climate/weather, nature/landscape, travel with family and friends, coupled with the opportunity to discover a relatively exotic environment, located within a reasonable distance from the European mainland emitting markets emerged as the key determinants in the decision-making process.

Currently, Madeira offers a wide range of events comprising both major events aiming at larger audiences, and smaller events scheduled to attract a specialist market. A number of such events are deeply rooted in the local traditions and identity. Based on the typology developed by Getz and Page (2016), it can be stated that Madeira offers mainly festivals and culture-related events, based on festivals, parades and commemorations. The local DMO succeeded in placing entertainment events through the year calendar. Every year Funchal hosts three major events and a number of small events, including sportive events, managed either by the Tourism Office or by the local City Hall. The event-based strategy in place seeks to change the island’s image which is still heavily reliant on nature. The information available in official documents and regional press suggests that planners are “overly” focussed on “delivering economic results” (Pereira et al., 2015, p. 293; ACIF, 2015; Marujo, 2014a, b, c) via tourism development because a year-round programme of events covers both the off-season/shoulder season and the peak of the summer.

The events analysed in this study are presented in Table I. The analysis provided in Table I has been made on the basis of the information provided by the DRT (on the website) (Marujo, 2014a; ACIF, 2015). Both the Carnival and Flower Festival have the hallmark status and are significant contributors to the city’s reputation (Marujo, 2014b, c). The local Tourism Office (DRT) began to increase the number of events in a rather planned and additive way, but one cannot affirm that the city manages a portfolio of events. However, the region gained valuable experience in managing events and festivals.

The Strategic Planning Document of 2002 already expressed the intention to upgrade the supply of tourism products and value for money of the current offer based on events, festivals, recreation and leisure areas, culture and ethnography. The development of events followed a multi-purpose logic. For example, the Atlantic Festival was conceived in order to celebrate the Atlantic specificity of Madeira, by highlighting the exuberance of the island’s nature, the richness of its heritage and the contribution of the Region to the history and culture of Europe. The festival also aimed at affirming the regional identity from the very outset. At the political level, enhancing the ability to gain footholds in the management of an autonomous tourism development policy (vis-à-vis Lisbon) was regarded as an important issue. Both the Carnival and Flower Festival, in their current formats, aim mostly at attracting every year a pool of loyal repeat visitors along with new ones (Marujo, 2014a, b, c).

The events under analysis represent the core of the portfolio of events currently managed by the Tourism Office. The first two events correspond to well-established festivals widely covered in the news, benefitting from a high percentage of loyal followers and enthusiasts. The Atlantic Festival has been staged since 2002 as a result of sustained efforts to attract a more diverse clientele in the peak of the Summer. The Carnival has international standing and has been packaged as a week-long festival. The Flower Festival consists of floral displays, music and a colourful parade through the streets of the capital of Madeira with floats decorated with natural flowers and fairy tale costumes.

Further details are provided in Table I.

Mariani and Giorgio (2017) mention that governments are increasingly involved in planning and managing events (Dredge and Whitford, 2011; Dredge and Jamal, 2015;
### Carnival

One of the region’s liveliest events, deeply rooted in the traditions of the island, with parades and a variety of activities to be enjoyed either as a spectator or as an active participant. The Madeira Tourism website advertises a “constant festive atmosphere”, with both a number of official initiatives and spontaneous activities “with joy and cheerfulness prevailing in the streets, establishments and private homes”.

**Event**: Carnival  
**Venue, dates and organization**: February or March. As of 2019, activities took place between 19th February and 1st March. The main activity comprises a float parade attracting thousands of visitors to the Centre of Funchal taking place on a Saturday. Event organized by DRT.  
**Market orientation**: International tourists in general and repeat visits in particular. The event attracts thousands of loyal attendees mainly from the mainland. Locals from around the island attend the event and residents from traditional city districts and samba schools take part in most activities.  
**Type of event**: Hallmark event, with national-wide coverage in the media; Sub-genre: festival and culture; Origins in traditional celebrations. At a more local level, Carnival celebrations include the so-called “Comrades Feast”, which is characterized by social and political satire comprising a “part of passage from winter to spring ritual and the renewal of the local community”. Carnival traditions also involve parties taking place in private homes to celebrate friendship and the insular identity through seasoned delicacies. In recent times, themed parties such as the Hippies Night and the Travesties Night.  
**Scope and attendance**: Occupancy rate in the Hotel establishments in 2019: 73%. Based on the results from this study we estimate the number of visitors travelling to attend as around 8830.

### Flower Festival

The Flower festival intends to celebrate the “specific climatic conditions that allow species of (flowers) from both tropical and cold regions to flourish”. The Flower Festival is advertised as “a tribute to spring, and the celebration of metamorphosis and rebirth, fertility and the abundance of the flowers that colour,”.

**Event**: Flower Festival  
**Venue, dates and organization**: March or April. As of 2018, activities took place from 2nd of May to 26th of May, in a month long festival. The main activity comprises a float parade taking place in the Centre of Funchal.  
**Market orientation**: International tourists in general. Repeat visits and a sizeable number of loyal participants. Locals from around the islands participate.  
**Type of event**: Hallmark event: Sub-genre: festival and culture. The Flower Festival is a pure artificial event aiming at the tourism market established since 1979, but increasingly important from a local point of view.  
**Scope and attendance**: Occupancy rate in the Hotel establishments in 2018: 90%. Estimated number of visitors travelling to attend the event.

---

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>General description</th>
<th>Venue, dates and organization</th>
<th>Market orientation</th>
<th>Type of event</th>
<th>Scope and attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td>The Atlantic Festival is a recent tourist entertainment initiative aiming at bringing together pyro musical shows, a Regional Arts Week, a music festival and Popular Saints Festivities</td>
<td>A month long festival centred in June</td>
<td>International tourists in general and local residents</td>
<td>Sub-genre: entertainment</td>
<td>Occupancy rate in the Hotel establishments in 2018: 90%. Estimated number of visitors travelling with the main purpose of attending the festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"perfume and inebriate the surrounding environment and that give value and take the good name of this tourist destination across borders"
In fact, the planning, organization and funding of events remain some of the few areas of the direct intervention of DMOs in terms of product development, which is presently the case of the Tourism Office in Madeira.

**Methodological approach**

In the early years of festival studies, the analysis of event tourist experiences from the perspective of identity, cultural and political meanings predominated (Getz, 2008; Mariani and Giorgio, 2017; Richards, 2007, 2013). However, a substantial number of recent studies and analyses adopted a quantitative stance characterized by an instrumentalist view of the role of festivals at expenses of developing further theoretical analysis based on well-established sociological and anthropological theories. In this study, we adopt a quantitative demand-centred analysis. The database used in this study derives from a fieldwork commissioned by Madeira Regional Directorate for Tourism (DRT) aimed essentially at ascertaining the degree of satisfaction of attendees with a series of events organized by the DRT, which fits with the most instrumentalist view of the role of festivals. Respondents were invited to answer a series of questions regarding their socio-demographic background, travel motivations, travel experience, quality appraisal, satisfaction and loyalty. The questionnaire consisted of three parts.

The first part collected data on the key demographic characteristics of the attendees. The second part comprised questions pertaining to attendees’ motivation to travel to the region at that precise moment, travel arrangements, party size and daily expenditure. The third part asked respondents to rate the significance of the items on quality, satisfaction, intention to return and willingness to recommend on a seven-point Likert scale (1 completely disagree, 7 completely agree). Fieldwork was conducted from February 2017 to June 2017 and comprised various surveys. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect empirical data for this research.

In total, we carried out three data collection processes, one for each event. Events (and the corresponding data collection processes) took place in February (Carnival), May (Flower Festival) and June (Atlantic). For events spanning through an entire month, we distributed questionnaires, at different moments in time. In order to approach the maximum number of visitors, in the days following the main events, we opted for a quantitative survey. We adopted a double approach regarding the data collection procedures with active support and participation of a network of hotels, plus the distribution of questionnaires in the check-in areas of the local airport.

Hotels owners were contacted by the DRT to solicit their participation in the survey. In total, 40 hotels accepted to participate. The sample of hotels that accept to participate included a number of 3, 4 and 5 stars hotels, randomly selected from a database provided by the DRT, in line with their representativeness in terms of the total number of hotels in the islands. A sufficient number of questionnaires were left in each hotel, and the questionnaires filled out by visitors were collected in a one-week time. Questionnaires were also made available to visitors departing the destination at the island airport. In this case, visitors were approached as randomly as possible. It was considered in line with Barajas et al. (2016) and Tanford et al. (2012) that a mixed sampling convenience plus and random selection method was, pragmatically, the best approach to gather as many questionnaires as possible in a short period of time, taking into account, furthermore, that the events took place in open spaces.

The objectives of this study were to determine the profiles of the festival-attendees based on socio-demographic data, to identify commonalities in terms of the demographic factors and intended behaviour, and to obtain data on attendees’ assessment of their degree of satisfaction and daily expenditure. Based on the review of the literature and in-depth analysis of measures used in prior studies, we identified several pertinent attributes of the “festival experience” (motivation and quality) and the key themes of attendants’ behaviour most examined in the literature (satisfaction, intention to return and daily expenditure).
(Axelsen, 2007; Backman et al., 1995). Quality in this study reflects to attendants’ perceptions on a series of festival characteristics, such as organization, beauty, creativity and their impact on satisfaction. Loyalty reflects attendants, intentions to return to the festival next year as well as the willingness to recommend it to others. The relationship between festival attendance and satisfaction is one of the items measured in festival studies (Shanka and Taylor, 2004). From this point of view, we follow standard procedures in the field of tourism events.

Although the questionnaire lacks a relatively complex theoretical and conceptual framework to analyse satisfaction, we follow Tanford and Jung (2017), Trindade et al. (2018), Cuadrado-García et al. (2017) and Yoon et al. (2010). Such studies adapted, with varying degrees, established methodological approaches, but included a numbers of characteristics such the use of a single overall assessment of satisfaction measured in the aftermath of the event and the writing-up of the final draft of the questionnaire in collaboration with other entities (Cuadrado-García et al., 2017; Trindade et al., 2018; Tanford and Jung, 2017). The methodological approach retained in this study to define the layout of the questionnaire transcribed in limited number of questions “in order to keep the questionnaire on a single two-sided sheet” (Tanford et al., 2012, p. 85), enabled the research team to significantly increase the number of questionnaires collect from different sources (hotels and airport venue), thus circumventing the technical constraints (i.e. impracticability of conducting surveys conducted in open spaces during the performance or shows) imposed by the very nature of the events taking place in open areas. The results of this study provide significant encouragement to engage further in research on the topic of event portfolio from different perspectives (e.g. based on complex constructs and/or qualitative methodologies) with support from the DRT.

In order to get basic answers on the variables and constructs identified above and better understand the commonalties shared by the three festivals under analysis, the current research tested a model analysing the effects of festival quality, socio-demographic factors and motivation on satisfaction. Furthermore, the research examined the relationships among the predictors, and the differences in terms of socio-demographic data.

In total, the sample comprises 1,823 respondents, which makes it possible to characterize different demand segments (festival as a key motivation vs other motivation to visit the island, first visits vs repeaters and previous experience with the festival under analysis vs the first-hand experience) with a great degree of accuracy.

Data analysis followed a three-stage process. The first phase is based on the calculation of simple descriptive statistics to characterize the key features of the sampled respondents. The second phase involves the analysis of distinct segments, and the third phase employed econometric models aiming at the identification of key drivers of satisfaction. It should be mentioned that 33 per cent of the sample refers to the Carnival, 35.3 per cent to the Flower Festival and 31.7 per cent to the Atlantic Festival.

Results
The average age of the respondents is 56.8 years, with the segment of 65-year-olds or more corresponding to 35 per cent of the respondents. The sample appears balanced in terms of gender, with 50.8 per cent male and 49.2 per cent female, with 73.5 per cent of respondents declaring themselves married/non-marital partnership. In terms of country of origin, 27 per cent of respondents declared residence in the UK, 23 per cent in Germany, while respondents residing in Portugal and France account for about 13 per cent of the sample each, which corresponds roughly to the profile provided by the official statistics in terms of markets of origin. The average reported income is €3,576. Approximately 38.8 per cent of the respondents reported as having an academic degree, with 14.4 per cent of respondents reporting a master or PhD diploma. Additional data are depicted in Table II. Given that we
are dealing with events subject to a differentiated historical evolution, located at different moments in time, we also provide individual statistics on each event.

Although statistically significant differences can be detected amongst the different data sets in relation to key socio-demographic variables (see Table III), there are no significant “differences” in terms of order of magnitude in relation to socio-economic data in general.

### Table II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Carnival</th>
<th>Flower Festival</th>
<th>Atlantic Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>56.0 years</td>
<td>59.3 years</td>
<td>54.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>€4,025.4</td>
<td>€3,290.8</td>
<td>€3,394.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First visit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Festival</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average daily expense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>€143.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Festival</td>
<td>€155.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td>€142.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous event assistance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Festival</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation-travel purpose</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Festival</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic background</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSNA</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/PhD</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower festival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSNA</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/PhD</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Festival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSNA</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/PhD</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Visitor's satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$t$-Test</th>
<th>Carnival</th>
<th>Flower Festival</th>
<th>Atlantic Festival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs main motivation$^a$</td>
<td>$t = -2.864; \text{Sig.} = 0.005$</td>
<td>$t = -4.123; \text{Sig.} = 0.000$</td>
<td>$t = -3.878; \text{Sig.} = 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs prior knowledge$^a$</td>
<td>$t = 1.614; \text{Sig.} = 0.107$</td>
<td>$t = -2.118; \text{Sig.} = 0.036$</td>
<td>$t = -1.243; \text{Sig.} = 0.215$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs prior assistance$^a$</td>
<td>$t = 1.045; \text{Sig.} = 0.161$</td>
<td>$t = -1.315; \text{Sig.} = 0.181$</td>
<td>$t = 0.642; \text{Sig.} = 0.522$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>Averages: 5.99 vs 5.76</td>
<td>Averages: 6.26 vs 6.03</td>
<td>Averages: 5.82 vs 5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends</td>
<td>Mann–Whitney test: sig. = 0.25</td>
<td>Mann–Whitney test: sig. = 0.219</td>
<td>Mann–Whitney test: sig. = 0.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs prior assistance$^a$</td>
<td>$t = 1.634; \text{Sig.} = 0.103$</td>
<td>$t = -1.511; \text{Sig.} = 0.132$</td>
<td>$t = -0.956; \text{Sig.} = 0.324$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Source</td>
<td>Sim (6.32); Não (6.17)</td>
<td>Sim (6.32); Não (6.17)</td>
<td>Sim (5.84); Não (5.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends$^a$</td>
<td>Sim (5.86); Não (6.67)</td>
<td>Sim (6.32); Não (6.17)</td>
<td>Sim (5.62); Não (5.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs Source of information$^a$</td>
<td>$t = -2.675; \text{Sig.} = 0.027$</td>
<td>$t = -0.281; \text{Sig.} = 0.780$</td>
<td>$t = -0.759; \text{Sig.} = 0.459$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income$^a$</td>
<td>Anova: $Z = 0.564; \text{Prob.} = 0.822$</td>
<td>Anova: $Z = 0.911; \text{Prob.} = 0.507$</td>
<td>Anova: $Z = 0.970; \text{Prob.} = 0.458$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kruskal–Wallis test; Sig. = 0.068</td>
<td>Kruskal–Wallis test; Sig. = 0.067</td>
<td>Kruskal–Wallis test; Sig. = 0.064</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&lt; 5,000$</td>
<td>$&lt; 5,000$; 5.2</td>
<td>$&lt; 5,000$; 5.2</td>
<td>$&lt; 5,000$; 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,001$–$1,000$</td>
<td>$5,001$–$1,000$; 6.0</td>
<td>$5,001$–$1,000$; 6.0</td>
<td>$5,001$–$1,000$; 6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,001$–$2,500$</td>
<td>$1,001$–$2,500$; 5.7</td>
<td>$1,001$–$2,500$; 5.7</td>
<td>$1,001$–$2,500$; 5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,501$–$3,000$</td>
<td>$2,501$–$3,000$; 5.6</td>
<td>$2,501$–$3,000$; 5.6</td>
<td>$2,501$–$3,000$; 5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,501$–$5,000$</td>
<td>$3,501$–$5,000$; 5.8</td>
<td>$3,501$–$5,000$; 5.8</td>
<td>$3,501$–$5,000$; 5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&gt; 7,500$</td>
<td>$&gt; 7,500$; 5.6</td>
<td>$&gt; 7,500$; 5.6</td>
<td>$&gt; 7,500$; 5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs academic qualifications$^c$</td>
<td>$Z = 1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.365$</td>
<td>$Z = 1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.365$</td>
<td>$Z = 1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.365$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree; 6.2</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree; 6.2</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree; 6.2</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree; 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters/PhD; 6.0</td>
<td>Masters/PhD; 6.0</td>
<td>Masters/PhD; 6.0</td>
<td>Masters/PhD; 6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs country of origin$^c$</td>
<td>$t = 0.070; \text{Sig.} = 0.945$</td>
<td>$t = -2.281; \text{Sig.} = 0.023$</td>
<td>$t = 0.593; \text{Sig.} = 0.553$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al/Fr/Pt/Uk/Op</td>
<td>Al/Fr/Pt/Uk/Op</td>
<td>Al/Fr/Pt/Uk/Op</td>
<td>Al/Fr/Pt/Uk/Op</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5.50$/$5.91$/$5.79$/$5.75$</td>
<td>$5.50$/$5.91$/$5.79$/$5.75$</td>
<td>$5.50$/$5.91$/$5.79$/$5.75$</td>
<td>$5.50$/$5.91$/$5.79$/$5.75$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs gender</td>
<td>$Z = 1.567; \text{Sig.} = 0.182$</td>
<td>$Z = 2.237; \text{Sig.} = 0.054$</td>
<td>$Z = 3.800; \text{Sig.} = 0.050$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (5.9); Fem. (5.8)</td>
<td>Male (6.2); Fem. (6.2)</td>
<td>Male (6.2); Fem. (6.2)</td>
<td>Male (6.2); Fem. (6.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily expense vs satisfaction$^a$</td>
<td>$t = -2.124; \text{Sig.} = 0.033$</td>
<td>$t = -0.679; \text{Sig.} = 0.498$</td>
<td>$t = -1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.280$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages: 2,808 vs 2,787</td>
<td>Averages: 2,936 vs 2,786</td>
<td>Averages: 2,936 vs 2,786</td>
<td>Averages: 2,936 vs 2,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = -2.124; \text{Sig.} = 0.033$</td>
<td>$t = -0.679; \text{Sig.} = 0.498$</td>
<td>$t = -1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.280$</td>
<td>$t = -1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.280$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages: 2,808 vs 2,787</td>
<td>Averages: 2,936 vs 2,786</td>
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<td>Averages: 2,936 vs 2,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = -2.124; \text{Sig.} = 0.033$</td>
<td>$t = -0.679; \text{Sig.} = 0.498$</td>
<td>$t = -1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.280$</td>
<td>$t = -1.082; \text{Sig.} = 0.280$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction vs recommendation$^b$</td>
<td>$t = 2.126; \text{Sig.} = 0.034$</td>
<td>$t = -0.259; \text{Sig.} = 0.795$</td>
<td>$t = -0.399; \text{Sig.} = 0.696$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommendation</td>
<td>$t = 2.126; \text{Sig.} = 0.034$</td>
<td>$t = -0.259; \text{Sig.} = 0.795$</td>
<td>$t = -0.399; \text{Sig.} = 0.696$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 143.172; \text{Sig.} = 0.000$</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 43.069; \text{Sig.} = 0.000$</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 108.180; \text{Sig.} = 0.000$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
- $^a$-Test average; $^b$-$\chi^2$ test; $^c$ANOVA

*Table III. Results of the comparison of averages*
For example, the average age of attendees is 56.0 years for the Carnival, 59.3 years for the Flower Festival and 54.9 years in the Atlantic Festival. In all, the profiles of the three samples are quite similar in terms of gender. About 52 per cent of the respondents in the Carnival event are reportedly on their first visit to the region. The figures for the Flower Festival and the Atlantic Festival are relatively similar (58 and 64 per cent). However, the conclusions drawn from the data are qualitatively different with regard to other variables. For example, about 40 per cent of the respondents travelling to the Flower Festival report the event as the main reason behind the visit. In contrast, only 12 per cent report the Atlantic Festival as the main driver of the visit.

Overall, about 30 per cent report having had attended in years prior to the event under consideration, with 60 per cent reporting having had prior knowledge of the event, but the differences amongst Festivals are substantial, as can be seen in Table II. In terms of average length of stay, the computed values point to an average of nine days, without any significant differences. Likewise, no major differences were found in terms of average total expenditure, with (Z = 1.801, sig. = 0.166).

Table III reports the results of a series of t-tests applied to sub-samples under analysis. The results reported allow us to draw a number of additional conclusions. For example, respondents travelling on purpose to attend the event report higher levels of satisfaction (Carnival: 6.09/5.64; Flower Festival: 6.41/6.06; Atlantic Festival: 6.41/5.72), no matter which festival is considered. It also appears that the highly satisfied respondents (reporting levels of 6 or 7 on a Likert scale) in terms of satisfaction tend to exhibit a higher average of daily expenditure levels (€2,808/€2,787; €2,936/€2,787; €2,811/€2,600). And it can be observed that respondents declaring prior knowledge of the event tend to report higher scores in terms of satisfaction (5.78/5.59; 6.32/6.17; 5.84/5.74). Likewise, the reported degree of satisfaction differs according to nationality, with respondents of German nationality exhibiting a less positive attitude in general.

Table III also shows that there were no significant differences between the first visits and repeat visitors regarding the degree of satisfaction in the case of Carnival and the Festival of the Atlantic Festival. There are also no significant differences (in terms of degree of satisfaction) in terms of the academic background, and in terms of income levels (e.g. with regard to the Carnival, the values of satisfaction regarding the levels of income NSNR, ≤€500, €501–€1,000, €1,001–€1,500, €1,501–€2,500, €2,501–€3,500, €3,501–€5,000, €5,001–€7,500, €7,500–€9,000, €9,001–€11,000, €11,001–€12,000, ≤€0, and >€12,000 are 5.5, 5.8, 5.7, 5.8, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9 and 5.6). There are, however, significant differences in terms of nationality, although minimal in absolute terms. For example, in relation to the Carnival, the nationality satisfaction indexes are as follows: 5.50 (German), 5.94 (French), 5.68 (Portuguese), 5.79 (British) and 5.75 (other nationalities).

Given the relevance of the satisfaction variable for the DMO, we sought to identify the critical factors determining the degree of satisfaction reported. Owing to the high number of ordinal and nominal variables, we opted for categorical analysis, using the SPSS CATREG functionality. The categorical regression (CATREG, according to the terminology of the SPSS statistical software) consists of an extension of the OLS method based on the simultaneous scaling of nominal, ordinal and numerical variables, treating quantified variables similarly to numerical variables. The CATREG method quantifies categorical variables by assigning numerical values to each of them, resulting in a linear optimal regression equation for the transformed variables. The CATREG method provides information on the degree of importance of each variable in isolation, based on Pratt’s indicator.

An initial set of relevant variables, including both socio-demographic and quality-related variables, was considered under the CATREG procedure. A successive process of elimination of non-significant variables (Pratt measurement of less than 0.05) allows us to identify a smaller set of relevant variables. The results clearly indicate that festival attributes (beauty, creativity, organization, opening hours and advertising) decisively influence the reported levels of satisfaction. Only a few other variables were identified as relevant in this regard.
In order to corroborate the above results we also employed a stepwise logit model, with the variable satisfaction defined as dichotomous (with value 1 recorded if the respondent indicated the levels 6 or 7 in terms of satisfaction and 0 otherwise), in order to determine the “best” predictors of satisfaction (see Table V). The results point in a similar direction. Being highly pleased or not depends to a large extent on respondents’ assessment of main technical characteristics of the event (quality assessment), that is, beauty, creativity, organization and time.

The impact of the socio-economic variables and travel arrangements is rather irrelevant, with the exception of age, which impacts satisfaction in the Carnival and Flower Festival (see Table IV). In both festivals, older respondents exhibit higher levels of satisfaction. Travelling to Funchal for the very first time (in the case of the Atlantic Festival), to stay longer (in the case of the Atlantic Festival) and higher levels of income also impact favourably affect the degree of satisfaction (in the case of Carnival). Being a German negatively impacts the degree of satisfaction in the case of the Carnival and Atlantic Festival. Previous experience with the festival (Carnival) and getting information from travel agencies (in the case of Carnival) or outdoors (Flower Festival) also negatively impact satisfaction (Table V).

### Discussion and conclusion

**Discussion**

The results provided so far suggest a number of conclusions. A number of similarities (as well as differences) were detected, which is tantamount to recognizing the existence of common issues and continuities, namely in terms of critical factors of success. The events exhibit noticeable (significant) differences in terms of the degree of motivation (travelling on purpose, or not, to attend the event), previous knowledge of the event, rate of previous participation. Both Carnival and Flower Festival are able to generate high numbers of international tourists (including Portuguese nationals from the mainland), and as a result, high levels of tourism-related income along with the promotion of the region abroad.

The Flower Festival emerges as the event with the greatest potential for attracting repeat visitors, and with the greatest ability to ensure a memorable experience consistent with a high degree of satisfaction. It is worth mentioning that both the Flower Festival and the Atlantic Festival have targeted the tourist market segment since their inception, and lack elements of “authenticity” in terms of its roots in popular traditions, with decades of existence, but this does not stop them from providing memorable experiences (as expressed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Carnival Coef. (Prob.)</th>
<th>Carnival Importance</th>
<th>Flower Festival Coef. (Prob.)</th>
<th>Flower Festival Importance</th>
<th>Atlantic Festival Coef. (Prob.)</th>
<th>Atlantic Festival Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.106 (0.004)</td>
<td>0.059</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regarding the event</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction</td>
<td>0.239 (0.183)</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>0.336 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0.494 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>0.561 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>0.200 (0.043)</td>
<td>0.188</td>
<td>0.128 (0.043)</td>
<td>0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press releases</td>
<td>0.116 (0.100)</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.116 (0.088)</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.128 (0.043)</td>
<td>0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>0.097 (0.088)</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.116 (0.088)</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.128 (0.043)</td>
<td>0.113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event participation</td>
<td>0.451 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>0.310 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats</td>
<td>$F = 242.664$</td>
<td>$F = 39.104$</td>
<td>$F = 64.736$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$F = 325$</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig.: 0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
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</table>

Table IV. Regression CATREG: variable-dependent satisfaction
by the degree of satisfaction). It is obvious that multiple rationalities in terms of the historical background, attendance and decision-making processes exist in harmony in this (ad hoc and informal) portfolio of events, which is to say that a number of commonalities and cross-leverage strategies can be worked on. As reported above, no radical discontinuities can be found regarding satisfaction and intention to recommend, two of the most common indicators of satisfaction, given the similarity of the mean values of satisfaction (5.7, 6.2, 5.8) and of intentions to recommend (80, 87, 73 per cent). It is also observed that tourists travelling expressly for the event report higher scores in terms of satisfaction (6.09 vs 5.64, 6.41 vs 6.06, 6.34 vs 5.87), which is also replicated by respondents reporting higher levels of prior knowledge.

The first results correspond to the DMOs’ best expectations, while the second points to the key importance of working properly the promotional campaigns underway and the dissemination of information to the targeted audience. Successful promotional campaigns and related interventions on the social networks will allow, in all evidence, an increase in the number of highly satisfied respondents with a consequent impact in terms of satisfaction and expenditure. And such campaigns are entitled to share a number of common elements (e.g., aim at both large audiences and market niches), and able to sustain cross-leverage strategies based on relatedness.

In fact, by taking into account the data, it may be concluded that Madeira succeeded in staging attractive festivals, regardless of the festivals’ leitmotiv, number of editions and time of the year. It can also be concluded that the Region offers an attractive product for a heterogeneous clientele. There are, as expected, significant differences in terms of the capacity to encourage repeated attendance, with the Flower Festival demonstrating the ability to create a more devoted following among its participants, but a number of commonalities are quite evident.

A number of additional conclusions can be derived from this study. First, the findings showed that perceived quality decisively influenced satisfaction and loyalty in each of the events under analysis (a key commonality identified in this study). This means that perceived

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-demographic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.321</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.732</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>-0.529</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.114</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average stay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regarding the event</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.240</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.287</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>-0.565</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous assistance</td>
<td>-0.699</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Info. travel agency</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor information</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table V. Stepwise logit regression: variable-dependent high satisfaction
quality had a significant effect on perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty. Organizers had gone to considerable lengths to create some impressive and aesthetical pleasant images. This has been a winning strategy, leading to high rates of return on the investment made. Accordingly, organizers should look into possibilities of further increasing their competences in staging beautiful theatrical performances, by applying the lessons learned through experience to devise cross-leverage strategies.

Competences in defining convenient opening hours and other organizational aspects, in general, can similarly become applicable (another example of a cross-leverage strategy) in future events. In fact, a number of attendees made complaints on organizational aspects, accessibility issues, as well as on opening hours and lack of information. Second, the results of this study show that the festivals surveyed are highly diverse with respect to motivations to travel. However, commonalities prevail (see Table VI), which suggests that the main findings and lessons learnt in previous festivals can become applicable next month. The festivals share common elements, objectives, resources and processes conducive to greater customer satisfaction, which corresponds to the portfolio concept to a large extent.

The number of common issues underpinning the quality satisfaction nexus in any of the surveyed festivals, suggests that leveraging strategies can be planned and organized under a framework of common goals, resources and priorities to stimulate attendance and satisfaction. A common pool of resources (personnel, experts on staged performances) can be used by different events’ organizers. For that purpose, local officials need to establish appropriate support mechanisms for the coordination of all features of event portfolio management. Many of attendees’ travel to the region specifically because of the cultural opportunity presented by the festival. In this case, it would pay to devise strategies to obtain higher levels of involvement by studying programme and workshops appealing to this type of attendee.

An eventful city offers a portfolio of events “that are, inter alia, strategic, holistic, provocative, participative, imaginative, and co-operative” (Thomas, 2011, p. 726). In a more practical way, Richards and Palmer (2010) consider that eventful cities may result from a number of initiatives such as developing from scratch new events, rejuvenating existing ones, besides attracting one-off major events and encouraging the organic growth of local events in order to become hallmark events. To this end, issues of resources sustainability, critical success factors and complementarities and synergies are worth of consideration (Getz, 2017). A portfolio of events demands intentionality, defined by Antchak and Pernecky (2017, p. 549), as the “extent to which all the procedures, activities, and portfolio scope are strategic and intended to achieve certain objectives”.

While the literature provides a number of well-written assertions about how to deliver cross-leverage initiatives, developed in collaboration with local stakeholders, in order to achieve a number of social and economic outcomes, the practicalities of such measure are not well defined. As observed by Thomas (2011) is not possible to guarantee that a city offering a number of events will become an eventful city provided that “sufficient resources are allocated to such undertakings”. In this paper, we argue that post-event analysis offers the opportunity to select best practices and to identify commonalities and strategies aiming at cross-leverage initiatives aiming at attaining the “eventful city” status (see Table VI).

In fact, Table VI describes a number of examples of commonalities and potential cross-leverage strategies based on post-event analysis that should be interpreted by policymakers, event managers and alike as a “strategic community asset” (Ziakas, 2014, p. 348), comprising transferable knowledge and expertise in an increasingly strategic area in the field of tourism ready to be used by key actors to capitalize on the current portfolio of events to attain a number of additional goals and strategic advantages (Ziakas, 2014, p. 344). The efforts underway to monitoring visitors’ satisfaction offer the ability to increase stakeholders’ awareness of a wide range of resources and experiences, as well as feedback of shortcomings and criticism, besides opportunities to work together across
public-private, commercial and administrative boundaries. The characteristics shared by events in terms of tourist’s profiles, themes and critical factors of success provide ground to “cultivate critical complementarities” (e.g. overdependence on the older age cohorts) and to explore synergies to enhance the region’s destination image based on cross-leverages (Ziakas, 2014, p. 346). In all likelihood, opportunities in terms of new market niches, attractions, experiences and products strongly related to the island’s identity, heritage and culture can be envisaged at a minimum cost without any substantial investment being
needed (Kelly and Fairley, 2018). For example, opportunities to explore the local gastronomy, shopping, history linked to the Discoveries could be linked directly and explicitly to each events’ main celebration. However, any benefit to be derived from any compilation of measures intended to promote leverage demands a proactive and strategic stance in terms of identification, selection and implementation of initiatives.

Table VI offers the opportunity to further discuss and comment on the results obtained in this study, based on an appraisal of the experiences related by other authors. For example, in line with the accounts and case studies analysed by Ziakas (2014b), Dickson et al. (2018), Misener (2015) there is scope to foster the dynamics of cooperation and inter-organizational relationship in order to achieve high-order goals. For example, expertise in communicate, exchange resources and experiences, and solve “minor” problems (e.g. complaints about lack of information) can be translated in a collaborative culture deeply rooted in the principles of joint-problem solving and forward-looking planning (Ziakas, 2014). Ziakas (2010) refers that events offer the opportunity to develop a collaborative mind-setting and to achieve high levels of operational and strategic efficiency. But, more mundane interest is also at stake. Kelly and Fairley (2018) and Pereira et al. (2015) refer that a collaborative mindset empowers the local business community to develop and explore new commercial opportunities. Other regions shared similar difficulties and shortcomings in excelling in this area, though not to the same extent, which suggests that each destination must develop specifically designed leveraging strategies to help firms to tackle the problems in establishing themselves successfully in the “events” market. Policy-makers and strategists must resist the temptation to use ready-to-apply one-size-fits-all initiatives.

Another interesting resemblance between Madeira and other case studies reported in the literature lies in the lack of an officially stated strategy and planning and/or “coordination mechanisms” in the area of events (Ziakas, 2010, p. 146; Dickson et al., 2018), even if tourism organizations are become increasingly involved in the event industry (Kelly and Fairley, 2018). Antchak (2017), Giovanardi et al. (2014), Mariani and Giorgio (2017) argue in favour of an institutional arrangements based on a clearly focussed and well-articulated set of goals, transcribed in the establishment of formal strategies. Pereira et al. (2015) observed that the planning and implementation process of a major nautical event that were “insufficiently developed” lead to missed opportunities in getting the maximum benefit out of the investment. However, Dickson et al. (2018) observe that the key to success lies in adopting a professional attitude based on low levels of collaborative inertia among key public and private partners rather than on formally established public bodies. Madeira has succeeded in establishing a quite successful informal portfolio of events with the DRT directly in charge of most events. However, a well-articulated strategy of accumulation of events can position the region to respond better to market changes, by sharing with relevant stakeholders information on upcoming events. In this regard, sustained effort must similarly be developed to highlight and nurture a number of additional “mutual interests”, for instance, in the field of alternative market niches, culture, arts and sports. Ziakas (2010, p. 162) understand events as the opportunity to connect “missing links” and to remove obstacles hampering further developments and an occasion for mutual understanding.

Moreover, significant advances in resource-sharing offer ground to handle further levels of complexity, for example, in terms of employing smart technologies to manage and to help tourists to co-create their own experiences, in order to be more “responsive” to both tourists, residents and commercial interests needs. The management of an event portfolio based on high levels of tourists’ satisfaction constitutes a source of and a catalyst for learning, solution development and testing of new forms of cross-leverages, and an opportunity to “secure a competitive advantage in the market place” under the fundamental premise of making the best use possible of the limited range of resources available (Kelly and Fairley, 2018, p. 335).

A final word must be reserved to provide a critical appraisal of the management philosophy behind the current development of the events industry in Madeira. Our results
illustrate the dominance of the tourism led economic growth paradigm coupled with an overwhelming focus on a marketing agenda (Antchak, 2017), a tendency verified worldwide. Antchak (2017, p. 293) refers that event planners in Auckland have been too focussed in delivering economic results, which limits the diversity and the multidimensional value of the portfolio. Such an approach leads to incoherencies in terms of social, political and tourism development, owing to the overwhelming predominance of one key theme (Clark and Misener, 2015). In other instances (Kelly and Fairley, 2018, p. 342), event organizers benefiting from subsidies may face “undue pressure”, to make changes “not congruent with the core focus of the event”. Events in Madeira are over-reliant on tourism development concerns as well, but it is undeniable that despite the market orientation of most events, the degree of involvement of the local population it is quite high. Events in Madeira are clearly focussed on tourism development goals, but community-based concerns are also taken into consideration to a certain extent. DRT organizers are not entirely “agnostic” (i.e. economic and marketing-oriented) on the nature of events (Antchak, 2017, p. 290), owing to the undeniable historical and social roots of most events. Clearly, more research is needed to find out how the analysis of commonalities and the implementation of cross-leverage strategies permit to go beyond mere objectives of economic-centred tourism development to embrace an inclusive, multilayer and holistic approach that ensures economic, social, environmental and technological developments.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of a portfolio of events that varied in historical background, dimension, organization, period of the year, links to local traditions and reputation abroad, we uncovered a number common factors offering grounds to manage the portfolio of events in a professional manner through the lens of traditional satisfaction analysis (Downward et al., 2009; Sato et al., 2014).

The festivals under analysis have succeeded in attracting a heterogeneous pool of participants in terms of socio-economic status and nationality, but without compromising in terms of satisfaction. Seemingly, similar behaviour patterns govern the interaction of those surveyed, regardless of which festival is under analysis. For instance, participants who are intrinsically motivated to attend an event reveal the greater capacity to transform their attendance and participation into a memorable experience and into satisfaction. However, casual attendees behave in a fairly similar fashion. It translates into the ability to meet expectations. It is inferred that repeated participation will tend to reinforce loyalty and repeated visits to the region. Data suggest that extremely satisfied participants and attendees tend to report higher average daily expenses, in any of the three events, though it does not necessarily correspond to higher levels of average income. There are reasons to suggest that the emotional dynamic generated by the festival will tend to create a greater predisposition and liberty to spend, which goes in line with the initial expectations of festival promoters.

Other data worthy of a more detailed analysis relates to the attendee’s profile. Registered figures regarding age, average income, marital status, level of education, average stay and number of previous visits to the region suggest that festivals attract, in addition to those who travel to the destination deliberately for the event, a huge number of tourists who are visiting the island at the time of the festival (just passing by). Aside from the well-known Flower Festival, which attracts a large pool of fans, both the Carnival and Atlantic Festival survive by means of the passing by tourists present at the time of the festival, which is still a legitimate method to attract tourists. With regard to satisfaction, the reduced impact of the socio-economic variables highlights the key role of event production and organization in engineering satisfaction among attendees. The main concern is not attendees’ background; emphasis should be put on capturing their attention via attractive, creative, organized,
conveniently scheduled and well-advertized events. This means that the event organization depends essentially on itself to maintain high satisfaction rates.

Developing a learning mindset congruent with portfolio aims and with attendees’ needs, aspirations and expectations is clearly a necessity. Well-established destinations face increased competition from newer competitors making it necessary to identify new ways of being competitive by offering aesthetically pleasing events, value for money and memorable tourist experiences, while preserving the current competitive advantages (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017, p. 89; Coghlan et al., 2012; Snepenger et al., 2004; Jamal and Getz, 1995). In this regard, the role of the DMO is increasingly important in terms of planning, leadership, research, product development and innovation (Mariani and Giorgio, 2017). In this study, we provide evidence to state that tourists’ satisfaction may increase as a result of innovations in terms of creativity and aesthetic elements, besides extra offerings, which illustrates the importance of studying and understanding tourists’ perceptions and expectations.

The accomplishments of the region in organizing successful events and the growing importance of events in attracting tourists suggest that the destination must upgrade the image being conveyed abroad for decades, purposing to highlight the events being staged as a source of new, meaningful and rewarding experiences that can be a great source of satisfaction for tourists. The image of the destination conveyed abroad was characterized by a high degree of emphasis on a few main themes. Broadly, a set of motivations based on the nexus nature-relaxation prevailed. Further campaigns promoting the region can be cross-leveraged via incorporation of extra themes centred on the rewarding co-produced experiences, meanings, feelings and surprises linked to the main events being staged.

Theoretical and practical implications and further research
The relevance of the concept of event portfolio in events’ studies is well-established in the literature, and the concept plays an increasingly important role in management of and the logic behind multi-annual programming of events “event policy domain” (Antchak and Pernecky, 2017). Given the dearth of research on real-life cases of portfolios of events, from the point of view of the attendees, in contrast with the current availability of a number of theoretical papers, this paper has sought to address the relatively lack of empirical studies examining the concept of event portfolio based on the descriptive analysis of a number of issues pertaining to a portfolio of events from a demand-centred point of view (Todd et al., 2017).

A number of contributions can be drawn both from a theoretical and methodological point of view and in terms of management practice. The findings of this study enrich the literature on events in several ways. In terms of its theoretical contributions, this study adds new insights to the literature on event portfolio by highlighting the main characteristics of an ever-growing and tourism-oriented portfolio of small-scale events, developed in an ad hoc and informal manner, and portfolio of events, without any formal agenda, which has been rarely addressed in the literature. This is a relevant contribution owing to the growing number of ad hoc portfolios of events being fuelled over time with the development of new events in order to commoditize untapped resources and to extend the tourist high-season. Under such circumstances, a fully understanding of the main characteristics and inter-relationships between events is only feasible in a post-implementation phase.

Though the present study describes a specific geographical background, the findings and results outlined in this study are of relevance to other destinations in need of give meaning to a separate set of events. An important insight from this study relates to the “blurring” of events’ main role and critical factors of success. As noted previously, the events under analysis attract a relatively indistinct audience sharing a high level of satisfaction, being impacted by a common pool of critical factors of success. As shown above, idiosyncrasies pertaining to different socio-demographic backgrounds, previous
experience and economic status appear to be relatively unimportant in explaining satisfaction. As discussed, events attract a relatively similar audience.

The uncovering of these characteristics has potential “implications” in terms of understating the main characteristics of the event’s audiences and the potential links with the main product being advertised and main comparative advantages of the destination, in order to develop a symbiotic relationship between the events sphere and the destination strategic development/priorities and strategies. In a similar vein, this study contributes a new perspective to the portfolio of events under analysis in terms of the design, organization, production and post-event analysis/marketing of the events (Li et al, 2013). In this regard, the issue of applying lessons to the design and management of brand new events based on the engagement of the destination main resources is worth of consideration.

This study also reveals the extent to which events with a distinctive history and origins, but organically grown over time, share a number of commonalities, which allows for the development of cross-strategies. This paper also brings to the fore the need to examine the (Ziakas and Costa, 2011) the inter-relationships between the meanings of the attendee’s experiences and the characteristics of the destination (motivations to visit the regions), by studying how region’s symbolic elements affecting the attendee’s experiences.

Second, this research focusses on the European periphery, which has received little attention outside studies on sea-and-sun tourism. And third, the research developed in this study identifies a number of commonalities giving purpose, meaning, grounded logic and a workable basis to officials and managers. Limited marketing resources and increased competition from other destinations suggests that destinations on the periphery need to develop their portfolio of events in an effective manner.

This study also offers a methodological contribution by outlining the key benefits of establishing a partnership between official entities and the University for research purposes, as it is usually difficult and impracticable to conduct surveys in open spaces. Based on a relatively simple instrument, it was possible to gain an understanding of the attendant’s profile and to uncover new knowledge of a real-life portfolio of events. The use of the collection data procedures defined in this study was “valuable in eliciting” a number of relevant facts and conclusions. The method employed in this study could be replicated in the similar research setting to uncover the specificities of the audiences and how to engage each event with each other.

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for festival organizers and managers undertaking efforts to create conditions for improving the degree of relatedness of the current portfolio of events. From a managerial perspective, destination managers endeavouring to add strategic meaning to event portfolios developed over time in an ad hoc manner could take into consideration and learn from the methodological approach retained in this study. Festival managers have much to gain from pursuing a strategy based on improved levels of quality in order to increase the reported levels of satisfaction. Managers may regard the critical factors of success identified in this study as the foundation to pursue a strategy of development strongly anchored on technical aspects (expertise, aesthetical and dramaturgical aspects and practical organizational issues such as opening times). Grounded on the relatively irrelevance of segmentation strategies based socio-demographic data identified in this study, managers may envisage the saliency of events in tourism management from a different prism.

Quality emerged as a major factor impacting satisfaction and loyalty. Because perceived festival quality is a significant predictor of loyalty, managers must excel in producing festivals offering superior value for attendee. Given that no major significant differences are discernible between casual attendees and purposeful attendees, managers can pursue, to a certain extent, a one-size-fits-all approach, based on the commonalities identified in this study. Any gains in perceived quality positively impact any type of attendees’ degree of satisfaction. Focus on quality and satisfaction should be at the centre of the stage. The “saliency” of attendees’ needs in terms of socio-demographic is likely to be less “pronounced” that those
ones relating to organizational. More important than market segmentation is the analysis of consumer demand-based factors affecting satisfaction.

Future studies should focus on identifying the nature of the experience, the level of involvement of the participants, and conditioning factors that limit accessibility to such events as well as the satisfaction-daily expenditure nexus. Future analysis should address the limitations of this current study. One of the main limitations of this study related to the specific setting under analysis. Madeira is not endowed with a richness of archaeological, historical and cultural resources and practices that may allow the DMO to successful marketing a highly attractive cultural spot abroad. However, tourism industry in other regions is likely to face a number of quite “similar circumstances” in terms of managing disparate events, “requiring them” to adopt similar strategies. For that reason, a number of conclusions may be of relevance to other event tourism and destination management settings. The main findings could also be of interest in other organizational settings sharing similar characteristics within the cultural and event industries.

It should be pointed out that the questionnaire conforms to the immediate needs of information of the DRT, lacking a relatively complex theoretical and conceptual framework to analyse satisfaction. Ideally, the recommended line of research should be rooted in the field of anthropology or sociology, with the intention of identifying the production of meanings associated with festival attendance, besides highlighting issues such as place attachment, identity, personal statement and involvement in cultural subjects. Respondents should be asked about access to information, the role of hotel reception desks and travel agents in providing accurate information, the location of hotels in relation to the urban geographical area surrounding the events and organizational aspects, and daily planning whilst on holiday to understand festival attendance.

It would also be important to understand the extent to which the participation in events triggers a greater predisposition to incur higher levels of daily expenses. In that sense, we suggest additional efforts centred on the issues of accessibility (travelling from the hotel to the city centre), promotion conveyed abroad in the pre-event phase and in-locos promotion prior to the event. Before undertaking a further anthropological and sociological analysis based on qualitative methods, it is important to collect additional data to understand the underlying rationality to attend from a marketing perspective.

Trindade et al. (2018) argue for the application of an event satisfaction index, in order to improve services for attendees in the next edition of a recurrent event, via adaptation of the current product to attendees’ preferences. Further research may contemplate a detailed analysis of the different aspects of the organization, production and ancillary services and aspects of attending events, such as accessibility. A preliminary analysis (results not shown) suggests that attendees’ satisfaction diminishes with the distance to be travelled from the hotel and the event main venue, which is understandable in view of the large number of elderly people watching the events.

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**Further reading**


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