

Intangible aspects of tourism in Istria: Event and Festival Destinations Assessed by the —Millennials

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Intangible aspects of tourism in Istria: Event and
Festival Destinations Assessed by the “Millennials”

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ABSTRACT

In the last years, events and festivals have been having more and more influence when it comes to the tourism development of Istria. Growth in interest of events and festival destinations can be explained by an adaptation to trends and the demands of Millennials. Since there is a lack of research done on the intangible aspects of tourism in Istria, this paper is focused on Millennials' expectations and motivations to attend tourist events and festivals. By focusing on the expectations of the Millennials, this paper will show if those have been met.

The paper questionnaire was delivered to a specific targeted group of Millennials who have already experienced some of the events and festivals in Istria to provide an accurate estimate of their reactions and expectations with regard to those tourism offerings. Furthermore, the questionnaire measured all the key issues concerning those events and festivals. The results of this paper suggested that there are some minor issues that need to be improved. On the other hand, most of the results are positive and are suggesting that events and festivals offered in Istria are generally good, but there is still an area of improvement in order to meet the expectations of this specific generation.

Key words: technology, sustainability, innovation, education, authenticity

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Introduction

There is a lack of research done on the intangible aspect of culture, events and festivals in Istria, specifically on the expectations of the Millennials. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the expectations of Millennials, and to fill the knowledge gap by assessing if those expectations are being met. Furthermore, the main goal of this research is to present the specific ways for making those events and festivals more interesting for the Millennials.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural Tourism is regarded as the practice of traveling to specific destinations with the aim of developing one’s knowledge of different cultural aspects of a tourism destination such as heritage sites, festivals and events. In return, the tourist receives a more enhanced knowledge about and insight to other cultures. (*Timothy and Boyd 2003*). Therefore, the purpose of today’s traveler is to educate and learn something new about a culture or specific destination by attending cultural events or festivals. The tourism industry has been showing rapid interest in developing cultural tourism. Due to higher traffic and larger demand for such tourism, this sector has been facing substantial challenges in return for executing potential opportunities. This industry should implement more draconian measures when handling regulations and compliance in order to boost governance models that positively impact all stakeholders involved and prevent the loss of value within all cultural assets. (*Poeta and Maragall,2003*). Cultural tourism is usually focus on the tangible or intangible aspects of the destination. It is a form of tourism that allows tourists to be involved in cultural activities such as events and festivals in order to inform and educate the potential tourist or customer about the specific destination. For destinations it is crucial to develop and embrace their culture in order to differentiate and offer different types of attractions

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that are authentic specifically for that area, and to further achieve an authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors to maximize their overall experience. The main factors maintaining the authenticity of a cultural destination are such tangible and intangible aspects as the local community, heritage, history, architecture, traditions, arts and crafts, gastronomy, painting, dance, music, social practices, rituals, festive events. The authenticity of a destination is very important in order to attract and maintain customer loyalty. Furthermore, Cultural Tourism (CT) is effectively a synonym for heritage or ethnic tourism is a way for travelers to access the charm of local communities' traditions, folklore, spaces and values (*Artal—Tur et al 2018*).

Cultural Tourism in Croatia

In modern tourism, the concept of mass tourism is abandoned. On the other hand, cultural tourism offers big advantages. Cultural tourism is a large contributor to the tourism sector, and ultimately, plays a large role in shaping consumer demands. As a result, most tourists will wish to see the unique cultural aspects of a destination while visiting it. (*Dujnovic and Vitasovic 2017*). Croatia as a tourist destination is full of potential from the heritage perspective to the gastronomy of the regions. It also has a rich history, each and every stone has his own story. Therefore, heritage and culture attract many tourists and makes Croatia one of the most popular destinations in the world. In order for a destination to be recognizable in the market, the development of cultural tourism is particularly important to set a specific and unique image that represents a destination. Evolving cultural tourism is crucial in Croatia. The Strategy of the Development of Cultural Tourism in Croatia was launched by the Institute for Tourism of Zagreb in 2003 and activated in 2004. The project set out to enhance the cultural tourism industry in Croatia, by formally presenting the industry to potential tourists, hoping to increase their desire for travel

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and stimulate tourism traffic. (*Dujnovic and Vitasovic 2017*). That leads to an increasing quality of presentation and interpretation of existing cultural resources that establish the development of Croatia as a destination of cultural tourism. However, Croatian cultural tourism is still short of human resources and there are still areas to improve. Croatian cultural potential are numerous, but so far the development results are modest in relation to opportunities, because of the lack of comprehensive planning and clearly defined objectives and priorities for development, particularly on regional and local levels (*Boniface 2013*).

Expectation of the Millennial for the Intangible Aspects

Millennials are the generation born from 1977 to 2000. They are a key group of target consumers as they are the generation driven and satisfied most by technology (*Oblinger 2003*). The expectation of a millennial for the intangible aspects such as events and festivals are totally different from the other generations. In order to meet the expectation of a Millennial you have to understand the needs and wants. Consequently, Millennials hold a unique mindset and have differing expectations in comparison to other generations. (*Gilbert 2016*). Millennials are well educated, skilled in technology, very self-confident, able to multitask, and have plenty of energy. They have high expectations for themselves, and prefer to work in teams, rather than as individuals (*Gilbert 2016*). However, they realize that they have a fundamental need for social interaction (*Alton 2018*). The Millennials are a very specific generation and they are the largest age group since the Baby Boomer. In order to maintain the balance and to keep motivating, engaging and educating this specific generation we have to know what their needs and wants are. (*Krahn and Galambos 2014*). Therefore, to meet those expectations there are six main categories in order to understand the fundamental needs and wants of the Millennials: Convenience,

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Choices, Experience, Budget-Friendliness, Belonging and Recognition (*Hoed and Russo 2017*).

Those six factors are crucial for the Millennials in order to attract them and engage them in the intangible aspects of a business. In order to be successful you need to optimize your marketing strategy and personalize the service. In doing so, you will find it easier to penetrate the market and attract the specific target (*Alton 2018*).

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Method

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the expectations of the Millennials with regard to the intangible aspects of cultural events and festivals in Istria and to see if those expectations are being met. The paper is based on the quantitative method “Questionnaire” that is the most appropriate instrument to conduct this research. The questionnaire was taken from “A Guide to Designing and Conducting Surveys, The University of Arizona.” It was distributed to 30 participants from a group of Millennials (18–34 age) within the territory of Istria who attended some of the events and/or festivals. The questionnaire is divided into three main parts. The first part is focused on the overall satisfaction of guests as well as the expectations for the intangible aspects in Istria (Events & Festivals). The questions are rated from Extremely Bad to Excellent, and there are numbers to circle from 1 to 7 depending on their previous experience. In the second part of the questionnaire, the goal is to measure how important are the following factors (Weather conditions, Quality of food, Desire to learn about culture, Ways of life and heritage, Opportunities to learn about natural and cultural attraction etc.) in their decision to visit the Events/Festival of Istria. They have to circle the number in the answer (1 to 7) that represents their evaluation of each factor. The following factors are rated from *Not Important at All* to *Extremely Important* depending on their experience. Before the last and most important part of the questionnaire there are three questions to see how they heard about the events and festivals in Istria (Radio, Television, Newspaper, Magazine, Internet, Travel brochure, Tour operator or Word of mouth). Then they had to define their gender and state their age. In the last and most important part of the questionnaire, they had to give their opinion or list a factor that they think is crucial in order to attract Millennials to the events and festival of Istria (Factors such as Sustainability, Maximizing Technology, Education, Gamification etc.)

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Results

Out of 30 questioned people, 16 were female and 15 were male. This questionnaire was made for a specific generation called “Millennials,” that is, people who are from 18 to 34 years old. The participants were mostly from the territory of Istria and had already experienced some of the intangible aspects such as events and festivals in order to provide the best results for the questionnaire.

Based on 30 questioned people these are the following results. In the first part of the questionnaire in which people were asked to measure the expectation of the Millennials for the intangible aspects of cultural heritage in Istria, and if those expectations are being met—With a specific focus on cultural events and festivals. The best rated factors are: General ambience of the events and festivals, Overall satisfaction provided from the events and festivals in Istria, Staff friendliness, Quality of the cuisine/drinks provided in the events and festivals (restaurant, snack bar, food-pairing etc.), all of those services listed above are considered between Good and Excellent. On the other hand, the following factors: Personal Safety, Cleanliness of the intangible assets (at the day of the event & festival), Marketing and Promotion and quality of other activities of the events and festivals were rated with a grade between *Average* and *Bad*.

The results from the second part of the questionnaire in which the respondents had to rate how important are the following factors in their decision to visit the events & festival in Istria were the following. Most of the respondents have rated the weather as a moderately important factor. The factors with the highest importance to Millennials and which have influenced them the most are the following: Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life and heritage, Tasting local food, Opportunities to learn about natural and cultural attractions, Opportunities for

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adventure/sports activities and good prices for quality received. On the other hand, the factors that get the lowest grade were: quality of natural scenery and landscape/environment. The overall safety was considered less important and neutral.

The third part of the questionnaire is composed of two sections. The first one focuses on measuring how the respondents heard about the events or festival in Istria. The majority (10 out of 30 - 33.33%) of the respondents heard about a particular event and/or festival through the word of mouth. The second most effective way of advertising the events and/or festivals was the Internet (8 out of 30 - 26.67%). Other ways of advertising used in finding out about the events and/or festivals were through the radio (6 out of 30), newspapers (4 out of 30) and travel brochures (2 out of 30) with a total percentage of 40%. The second and most important section of the third part of the questionnaire focuses on giving their opinion and listing one factor that they think is crucial for them to attend the events and/or festival in Istria. According to the results, I got six main categories: Sustainability, Education, Technology, Gamification, Authenticity and Marketing. Millennials are mostly driven by technology as this category got a score of 36.67% (11 out of 30 participants). The second most important factor is sustainability that got a score of 20% (6 out of 30 participants). Following these factors, education got a score of 13.33% (4 out of 30 participants). The last three factors, namely, gamification, authenticity and marketing, got a score of 10% each which means that 3 out of 30 participants voted for each of these factors.

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Discussion

The purpose of this research was to measure the expectation of the millennials for the intangible aspect of heritage in Istria and to see if those expectations are being met, with a specific focus on events and festivals. I was interested in this topic because I grew up in Istria and I love attending all types of events and festivals, and personally, I have been to most of them. It has always been my passion to organize all types of events and festivals and I see a big potential in Istria which can be improved and developed. Because of all that, I chose this topic in order to explain the whole concept from not just my point of view, but rather from other millennials who have already experienced some of the events and festivals in Istria. The benefits of developing the events and festivals in Istria would be to not only attract Millennials from Croatia, but also to expose and promote Istra worldwide in a more interesting way. Some of the factors that surprised me are personal safety and cleanliness of the intangible aspects. I wasn't expecting those factors would be so low rated. However, most of the factors are highly rated and that shows that the events and festivals are generally well organized. Still there is a minor area that needs to be improved in order to attract millennials to attend and enjoy the events and festivals that Istria provides and might provide in future.

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Appendix

Section	Grading/Number of participants						
	Extremely bad- 1	Very bad- 2	Bad- 3	Average- 4	Good- 5	Very good- 6	Excellent- 7
General ambience of the events & festivals	0	0	2	7	8	10	3
percentage %	0%	0%	6.67%	23.33%	26.67%	33.33%	10%
Overall satisfaction provided from the events & festivals in Istria	0	0	2	8	10	7	3
percentage %	0%	0%	6.67%	26.67%	33.33%	23.33%	10%
Personal safety	0	0	9	7	5	5	4
Percentage %	0%	0%	30%	23.33%	16.67%	16.67%	13.33%
Staff friendliness	0	0	0	4	6	12	8
Percentage %	0%	0%	0%	13.33%	20%	40%	26.67%
Cleanliness of the intangible aspects	0	1	9	5	3	9	3
Percentage %	0%	3.33%	30%	16.67%	10%	30%	10%
Quality of cuisine/drinks provided in the events & festivals	0	0	0	7	3	14	6
Percentage %	0%	0%	0%	23.33%	10%	46.67%	20%
Marketing & Promotion	0	0	4	7	7	5	7
Percentage %	0%	0%	13.33%	23.33%	23.33%	16.67%	23.33%

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Quality of other activities at the events & festivals	0	0	10	3	8	4	5
Percentage %	0%	0%	33.33%	10%	26.67%	13.33%	16.67%

Factors	Grading/Number of participants						
	Not Important at all- 1	Low Importance- 2	Slightly Important- 3	Neutral- 4	Moderately Important- 5	Very Important- 6	Extremely Important- 7
Weather Conditions	1	1	4	4	12	6	2
Percentage %	3.33%	3.33%	13.33%	13.33%	40%	20%	6.67%
Quality of natural scenery and landscapes/environment	0	0	3	7	7	7	6
Percentage %	0%	0%	10%	23.33%	23.33%	23.33%	20%
Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life and heritage	0	0	1	3	3	13	10
Percentage %	0%	0%	3.33%	10%	10%	43.33%	33.33%
Tasting local food	0	0	1	1	4	15	9
Percentage %	0%	0%	3.33%	3.33%	13.33%	50%	30%
Opportunities to learn about natural and cultural	0	0	1	2	5	13	9

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attractions							
Percentage %	0%	0%	3.33%	6.67%	16.67%	43.33%	30%
Opportunities for adventure/sport activities	0	2	3	7	2	6	10
Percentage %	0%	6.67%	10%	23.33%	6.67%	20%	33.33%
Good prices for quality received	0	0	1	1	8	9	11
Percentage %	0%	0%	3.33%	3.33%	26.67%	30%	36.67%
Safety	0	1	7	6	6	5	5
Percentage %	0%	3.33%	23.33%	20%	20.00%	16.67%	16.67%

Participants Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	14	46.67%
Female	16	53.33%
Total	30	100%

Ways of finding out about the Events/Festivals	Number of participants	Percentage
Radio	6	20%
Television	0	0%
Newspaper	4	13.33%
Magazine	0	0%
Internet	8	26.67%
Travel brochure	2	6.67%
Tour operator	0	0%

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Word of mouth	10	33.33%
Total	30	100%

Crucial factors to attract Millennials	Number of participants	Percentage
Sustainability	6	20.00%
Education	4	13.33%
Technology	11	36.67%
Gamification	3	10%
Authenticity	3	10%
Marketing	3	10%
Total	30	100%

Questionnaire

Questionnaire for intangible aspects in Istria

1. “What do Millennial expect from intangible aspects of cultural heritage in Istria, and are those expectation being met”—With specific focus on cultural events and Festivals. (Dani Maslinovog Ulja, Vikend Media Festival, Dani Tartufa, Craft Beer Festival etc.)

CULTURAL TOURISM, MILLENNIALS, FESTIVALS & EVENTS	Extremely Bad	Very bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
General ambiance of the Events & Festivals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Overall satisfaction provided from the events festivals in Istria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal safety (Police, emergency, security etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Staff friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cleanliness of the intangible aspects (at the day of the event & Festival)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of the cuisine/drinks provided in the events and festivals (restaurant, snack bar, paring food & beverage etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CULTURAL TOURISM, MILLENNIALS, FESTIVALS & EVENTS	Extremely Bad	Very bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
Marketing & Promotion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of other activities at the events and festivals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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2. How important were the following factors in your decision to visit the events/festivals in Istria? (Please circle the number of the answer that represents your evaluation of each factor.)

FACTOR	Not at all important	Low importance	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
weather conditions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of natural scenery and landscapes/environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Desire to learn about other cultures, their ways of life, and heritage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tasting local food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Opportunities to learn about natural and cultural attractions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Opportunities for adventure/sports activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Good prices for quality received	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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3. How did you hear about events and festivals in Istria? (Please choose one)

radio television newspaper magazine Internet travel brochure

tour operator word of mouth

4. Please circle your gender Male/Female

5. Please state your age_____.

6. In your opinion can you please list a factor that you think is crucial in order to attract millennials to the events and festivals in Istria _____.

Examples

1. Maximize technology—Millennial use technology, and events that utilize technology are far more appealing to millennials.

2. Give back—Millennial’s love the idea of giving back to a cause. If your event helps a family in need or serve a local community, a nonprofit you build goodwill with your attendees.

4. Gamify—Millennial’s like to participate in events. It may seem the opposite, and many won’t want to be the center of attention, but if you gamify your event, your attendees can still hang out with their group of friends and participate in the game within your event.

6. Sustainable—Millennial’s want a sustainable, healthy world. They don’t like leaving carbon footprints and they prefer to use clean energy if possible. If you announce that your event is sustainable, you will get a strong following of support and word will travel. Millennial’s like

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talking about progressive companies, businesses, and events.

(This survey was adapted from Leones, Julie, 1998, A Guide To Designing and Conducting
Visitor Surveys, The University of Arizona)

Thank You for Participating!