

IMPACT OF PAST EXPERIENCE ON PERCEIVED VALUE, OVERALL SATISFACTION, AND DESTINATION LOYALTY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN VISITOR AND RESIDENT ATTENDEES OF A FESTIVAL

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This study examines the similarities and differences of the impact past experience has on perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty between two groups: visitors and residents who attended the 2008 National Cherry Blossom Festival (NCBF). Data were collected using the convenience sampling method and analyzed using factor analysis, *t*-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that there were major distinctions between first-time and repeat visitors with the latter being more positive than the former in their perception of social and emotional values of the festival, more satisfied with and more loyal to the festival than the former. However, first-time and repeat residents did not differ significantly from each other. In addition, first-time visitors were found to be consistently different from repeat visitors, first-time and repeat residents in perceived value, satisfaction, and destination loyalty while repeat visitors did not differ significantly from first-time and repeat residents. This study also found that overall satisfaction mediates the effect of the perceived value on destination loyalty for the visitor group, regardless of past experience. However, for the resident group, the mediation effect is present for repeat residents, but not for first-time residents. Research implications and future research needs are also discussed.

Key words: Cherry blossom; Festival; Visitors; Residents; Satisfaction

Introduction

From the tourism industry's perspective, a festival or event (hereafter festival) usually functions as a means for economic promotion and destination enhancement (cf. Getz, 2008; Wooten & Norman, 2008). Parallel to the increasing popularity of using festivals to achieve this dual goal is the increasing popularity of research on the associated

economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political impacts, as reflected by a collection of papers on these aspects recently published as a special issue by journals such as *Event Management*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, and *Managing Leisure*.

While the success of a festival has been justified primarily by the magnitude of its economic contribution to a community/city or region (i.e.,

direct effect, indirect effect, and multiplier), and hence a large number of studies in this regard (Boo & Busser, 2006; Chhabra, Sills, & Cabbage, 2003; Frechtling, 2006; Mchone & Rungeling, 2000), other aspects beyond economic impacts have begun to draw increasing attention from researchers. This was noted by Dickinson, Jones, and Leask (2007) "no longer, . . . are economic impact studies the key priority" (p. 301) and implied by *Event Management's* special issue titled "Festivals and Events: Beyond the Economic Impacts."

In terms of the social impact of a festival, one component of it relates to the perceived value or benefits that the festival can bring to the destination or the festival attendees. Petrick and Bachman (2002) argued that the perceived value measurement has not drawn sufficient attention from tourism researchers, although it is the leading predictor of behavioral intentions.

Perceived value was found to closely correlate with visitors' overall satisfaction of a tourism destination (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009), a tourism attraction (Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Simpson, 2000), and a festival (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Lee & Beeler, 2007; Yuan, Morrison, Cai, & Linton, 2008). Visitors' overall satisfaction, in turn, was also found in these studies to affect their destination loyalty: intention to revisit and/or willingness to recommend to others. Thus, to some extent, destination loyalty is an indicator of the quality of a destination/attraction or a festival.

Destination loyalty to a festival may be directly affected by past experience (i.e., repeat visits), or indirectly affected through the effect of past experience on other factors such as perceived value and/or satisfaction. Getty and Thompson (1994) stated that "satisfied patrons are more likely to be repeat customers and provide positive word of mouth to others. This is a basic axiom of business" (p. 10). Wooten and Norman (2008) pointed out that "the previous experiences visitors have with a festival may influence their reasons for returning to the event and their expectations and behaviors while there" and "as a result, the past experience of attendees (both locals and tourists) should be examined when developing marketing strategies" (p. 110). Despite this, past experience has received

little attention in the literature on festivals (Wooten & Norman, 2008) and few studies, if any, have examined the effect of past experience on perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty from the perspectives of both visitors and local residents. In view of this, this article examines the similarities and differences between first-time and repeat visitors/local residents in the three variables—perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty—using data collected from the 2008 National Cherry Blossom Festival (NCBF) held in Washington, DC between March 29 and April 13, 2008. Visitors and local residents in this study refer to those who lived outside the city's boundary and those who lived within the city's boundary at the time the survey was conducted. Research questions for this study are:

1. Do first-time attendees differ from repeat attendees within each group (i.e., visitor group, resident group, and aggregated group) in their perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty?
2. Do first-time attendees differ from repeat attendees between groups (i.e., visitor group and resident group) in their perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty?
3. Does overall satisfaction mediate the effect of the perceived value on destination loyalty for each attendee group (i.e., first-time and repeat visitors, first-time and repeat residents)?

Literature Review

Past Experience: First-Time Versus Repeat Visitors

While past experience has not been extensively examined in the context of festivals (Lee, Lee, & Yoon, 2009), it has been investigated in many other fields, including vacation destination selection, outdoor recreation, customer loyalty, expenditures, motivations and constraints, and safety concerns (Wooten & Norman, 2008). Given the limited literature on past experience as it relates to festivals, this review drew upon findings from a wide range of study areas.

Previous studies have examined past experience as it relates to sociodemographic variables (e.g., age and gender), trip characteristics (e.g.,

trip length and length of stay), consumption behavior (e.g., expenditures), and psychological factors (e.g., motivations and satisfaction). For example, Gitelson and Crompton (1984) reported that younger visitors to a vacation destination were more likely to be first-time visitors who were more likely to seek novel cultural experiences than were repeat visitors. Seeking novelty by first-time visitors was also found in Fluker and Turner's study (2000) wherein the first-time whitewater rafters tended to focus on the action and adventure aspects of the experience, while repeat rafters were more involved in the social aspects. Similarly, Wooten and Norman (2008) reported that repeat festival goers were more highly motivated by socialization than were first-time attendees (also see Lee & Beeler, 2007).

Past experience has been treated as either a moderator or an antecedent variable when examined along with other variables. For example, Maestro, Gallego, and Requejo's (2007) study on examining the relationships among such variables as perceived quality, attitudes toward rural tourism, and satisfaction suggested that past experience moderated the relationship between visitors' attitudes toward rural tourism and their perceived quality of rural tourism accommodation in a way that the more experienced a visitor was, the less likely his or her prior attitudes affected the perceived quality. Another study by Baloglu, Pekcan, McCain, and Santos (2003) compared the linkage among destination performance, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intention among the aggregated group, first-time visitor group, and repeat visitor group. They found that overall satisfaction mediated between destination performance and destination loyalty, and this is true across all three groups, irrespective of the interaction between past experience and traveling motivations.

More recently, Yuan et al. (2008) used past experience as an antecedent variable, rather than a moderating variable as used in the above two studies, to examine its effect on perceived value, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intention among attendees of a wine festival using a structural equation model. They found past experience directly influenced the intention to revisit and the level of perceived value. However, past experience had no significant effect on the level of satisfac-

tion. In contrast, Yuksel's (2000) study found that first-time and repeat visitors were significantly different in their satisfaction and future intention with repeat visitors being more likely than the first-time visitors to be satisfied with their experiences and to be more willing to return.

Perceived Value, Overall Satisfaction, and Destination Loyalty

The term value can have a variety of meanings when used in different contexts. For example, in sociological or psychological terms, value refers to "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence" (Rockeach, 1973, p. 5). It serves as the basis in the cognitive hierarchy model of human behavior, wherein value determines the attitudes and norms, which, in turn, affect behaviors (Vaske & Donnelly, 1999). While in economic terms, the meaning of value is different from that defined in sociology or psychology, in that the economic term of value refers to "monetary value" for the market valuation of an asset, or "use-value" for the subjective valuation of a commodity, or "exchange-value" for the factors underlying commodity prices and exchange (Rotering, 2006). Here, the "use-value" is also conceptually similar to the perceived value or consumer value that has been widely examined in consumer science and marketing studies.

Perceived value can be defined as "consumers' overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 14). Perceived value is multifaceted, not single dimensional. Based on Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991)'s work, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed a PERVAL scale in which four dimensions of perceived value were identified: emotional value, social value, and two types of functional value (price/value for money and performance/quality). Most of previous empirical studies on tourism and hospitality have adopted a utilitarian perspective to measure the functional aspect of perceived value (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Williams & Soutar, 2009; see also, e.g., Bojanic, 1996; Chen & Tsai, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 2009, Jayanti & Ghosh, 1996; Murphy

& Pritchard, 1997; Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000; Oh, 1999; Tam, 2000; Yuan et al., 2008). Relatively, few studies have measured emotional and/or social dimension of perceived value (except for Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2009; Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez, & Molineret, 2006; Williams & Soutar, 2009).

Assessing the social or emotional aspect of perceived value may be more relevant than assessing the functional aspect of perceived value for some tourism products or activities that are partly or entirely free of charge. This is particularly true for open-gated festivals/events like the NCBF whereas festival attendees do not need to pay to enjoy the beauty of cherry trees, the stage performance, parade, and other activities. Thus, attendees' tourism experience and satisfaction cannot be easily assessed by value for money (i.e., functional value) associated with the festival. As a result, it is more meaningful and appropriate to assess their perceived emotional and social values or sociological and psychological aspects of consumption of the festival (cf. Williams & Soutar, 2009).

Satisfaction is an overall affective response to the use or consumption of a product or service (Oliver, 1981). According to Oliver's expectancy-disconfirmation theory, a customer's satisfaction with a product or service is a result of his or her subjective comparisons between expectations and perceptions. In the tourism context, satisfaction can be defined as a visitor's perceived discrepancy between pretravel expectations and posttravel experiences. A visitor is satisfied when experiences turn out to be superior to expectations. On the contrary, a visitor is dissatisfied when experiences fall short of expectations (Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

The more satisfied a visitor is, the more likely he or she will revisit a destination, recommend it to others, or say positively about the destination (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Oliver (1997) defines customer loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repurchase or repatronize a product or service. In his four-stage loyalty model, loyalty is characterized by a sequence of four stages: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty. Thus, loyalty is a concept that can be measured attitudinally (i.e., cognitive, affective, and conative) and behaviorally (actual purchase behavior or action). However, due to the difficulty in

measuring the actual purchase behavior or action loyalty, much of the research has focused on the linkage between satisfaction and the attitudinal aspects of the customer loyalty with few having examined the relationship between satisfaction and the action loyalty (Blut, Evanschitzky, Vogel, & Ahlert, 2007).

The existing tourism literature indicates that a positive causal linkage exists among perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty with perceived value being an immediate antecedent in the prediction of tourist satisfaction, which further affects destination loyalty (Hutchinson et al., 2009; McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000; Petrick & Backman, 2002). For example, Gallarza and Saura (2006), in examining university students' travel behavior, found that satisfaction was the behavioral consequence of perceived value with destination loyalty being the final outcome. More specifically, functional value such as efficiency and quality were related to loyalty behavior, and social value was related to satisfaction. Likewise, another study (Williams & Soutar, 2009) in an adventure tourism context showed that all five of the value dimensions (functional value, emotional value, value for money, social value, and novelty value) were significantly related to satisfaction, suggesting value plays a major role in predicting satisfaction.

The Festival

The NCBF is originated from the initial planting of two cherry trees in 1912 on the north bank of the Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park, Washington, DC by the then First Lady Helen Herron Taft and Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador (NCBF, 2008). As a return gift, the US government sent flowering dogwood trees to Japan in 1915. Today more than 3,700 cherry trees of over 13 varieties grow around the Tidal Basin, at East Potomac Park, and on the Washington Monument Grounds. Most trees are the Yoshino variety, which encircle the Tidal Basin (National Park Service, 2008).

In 1927, a group of American school children reenacted the initial planting, and the first festival was held in 1935, sponsored by civic groups in the city (NCBF, 2008). Since then the NCBF has been

held annually except from 1942 to 1946 because of the World War II (McClellan, 2005). In 1994 the NCBF was expanded as multifaceted events held in 2 weeks usually in late March and early April to best synchronize with the trees' blooming period. The festival includes a variety of activities at different locations across the DC such as the Smithsonian kite event, a fireworks show, ethnic food tasting, street parades, the Cherry Blossom 10-mile run, and daily cultural performances at the Tidal Basin stage, among others (Park, Daniels, Brayley, & Harmon, 2010). These events/activities organized by the festival have remained more or less the same over years (McClellan, 2005). Today the festival is coordinated by the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc., an umbrella organization composed of representatives of business, civic, and governmental organizations (NCBF, 2008).

As an annual celebration of the arrival of the spring in the nation's capital, the festival also serves many other purposes, including enhancing the friendship between the US and Japan and increasing cultural understanding between peoples of the two countries through numerous cultural activities (i.e., calligraphy, Japanese Way of Tea, Japanese food tasting, and stage performances). Thus, the festival is a natural resource-dependent cultural festival (Park et al., 2010). Yet, visitors are initially attracted by the blossoming cherry trees themselves and walking around the Tidal Basin to observe and photograph the blossoming trees is among the most popular activities during the festival period (Park et al., 2010). In the eyes of most visitors, flowering cherry trees around the Tidal Basin area are as much a symbol of Washington, DC as the Washington Monument and the White House (McClellan, 2005). Because of the charming beauty of the blooming trees and associated cultural elements, it is estimated that nearly 1 million local residents and visitors attended the festival and viewed the blossoming cherry trees in 2008 (Deng & Pierskalla, 2009).

Research Methods

Data Collection

Data were collected each day during the whole festival period between March 29 and April 13, 2008 using convenience sampling method by au-

thors of this article and eight graduate and undergraduate students majoring in recreation, parks, and tourism resources from West Virginia University. Surveys were largely carried out at two spots (i.e., the picnic site and the Jefferson Memorial) of the Tidal Basin area—the main venue of the festival. These two locations were chosen for conducting surveys because the picnic site was where attendees sat for a rest or for eating foods and where several food and information tents were around, while around the Memorial were a stage for cultural performances and several information tents. Both spots were attended in large crowds. In addition, attendees at other festival venues such as the National Buildings Museum (at the entrance), DC Welcome Center (inside the Center), and the Sakura Matsuri Japanese Street Festival (on street) were also surveyed.

Convenience sampling method is a type of non-probability sampling method, which has been widely used by “almost all of the major public opinion polling groups, political polling groups, and market research organization” (Fowler, 1993, p. 49). Convenience sampling is also known as opportunity sampling, accidental sampling, or haphazard sampling. It is used in a situation (i.e., street surveys) in which it is difficult to set up a predetermined procedure that sets a rate of selection for a defined population. At the festival, this method was used to intercept or approach whoever was willing to take part in a survey. The questionnaire was designed to be filled out by festival attendees on a face-to-face basis and was collected on site once it was completed.

Measures

A survey questionnaire of four sections was designed by the research team with inputs from the NCBF Administration staff. The first section of the questionnaire was about attendees' trip characteristics. The other three sections measured attendees' perceptions of the festival, their spending during the festival, and their background information, respectively. This questionnaire was reviewed and approved by West Virginia University IRB (Institutional Review Board) prior to the survey being conducted.

Perceived social value and emotional value re-

sulting from attending the festival were measured by 14 items. Participants were asked to indicate how much they disagreed or agreed with each item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Example items were "the festival promotes Washington DC as a tourism destination," "the cherry blossoms make the city unique," "the festival increases my desire to know about other people and cultures," among others (see Table 3).

Overall satisfaction was measured by a single item "overall, I am satisfied with my experience with the festival" on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A single overall measure of satisfaction was used in many other studies (e.g., Bigne et al., 2001; Bloemer & Ruyter, 1998; Bolton & Lemon, 1999; Chi & Qu, 2008), although multi-item scales were also very often used to measure satisfaction, particularly satisfaction related to individual attributes (Bigne et al., 2001).

Destination loyalty was measured with four items on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) by asking participants to indicate their intention to revisit and willingness to recommend to others. This approach of measuring intentional behaviors has been widely used in the literature (e.g., Bigne et al., 2001; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Chen & Tsai, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008).

Finally, repeat visitors were those who have attended the festival at least once in the past while those who have not attended the festival previously were considered as first-time attendees, regardless of how many times they have visited the festival during the 2-week festival period for their current trip.

Data Analysis

All measurement items except the one measuring the overall satisfaction were first factor analyzed on the aggregated data. Second, based on the latent variables or factors obtained from the factor analysis, *t*-tests for equality of means between first-timers and repeaters in latent variables and overall satisfaction were conducted. Third, pairwise comparisons were conducted using ANOVA to examine if first-time attendees differed from re-

peat attendees for both visitor and resident groups. Finally, further analyses were conducted to see whether satisfaction mediated the relationship between perceived value and destination loyalty using the three step procedure suggested by Baron and Kenney (1986) (also see Williams & Soutar, 2009). These analyses were conducted using SPSS.

Results

Sociodemographic Characteristics

A total of 1,714 visitors were approached. Of this number, 1,237 people were willing to participate in this study, resulting in a response rate of 72.2%. The main reasons for those who declined to partake in the survey were "no time," "not interested," and "with kids." As shown in Table 1, visitors and residents were similar in terms of gender, age, education, income, and occupation. Specifically, females outnumbered males for both groups (57.8% females for visitors vs. 61.9% for residents), the majority of attendees were aged 26–54 (60.7% for visitors vs. 64.6% for residents) and were well educated, with 85.9% of visitors and 92.8% of residents having at least one bachelor degree. In addition, most attendees in both groups were affluent with 67.2% of visitors and 62.9% of residents having a family income of over \$60,000. Finally, the majority of attendees for both groups were white collars (69.1% for visitors vs. 77.9% for residents).

Trip Characteristics

Trip characteristics for visitors, residents, and the aggregated group are presented in Table 2.

As shown, the majority of visitors (64.3%) reported leisure/vacation as their main purpose for attending the festival, followed by visiting family and relatives (26.6%). In addition, 51.5% of them were day-trippers and 48.8% were overnight visitors. While the majority of visitors were first-timers (64.6%), the opposite was true for residents wherein 67.1% of them were repeaters. For the aggregated group, 58.5% of the festival attendees were first-timers and 41.6% were repeaters.

Factor Analysis

Principal factor analysis with varimax rotation was used to identify factors for the 14 items mea-

Table 1
Sociodemographical Characteristics

	Visitors [No. (%)]	Residents [No. (%)]	Aggregated Group [No. (%)]
Gender			
Female	554 (57.8)	146 (61.9)	700 (58.6)
Male	404 (42.2)	90 (38.1)	494 (41.4)
Age			
18–25	168 (17.5)	53 (22.6)	221 (18.5)
26–39	322 (33.5)	97 (41.5)	419 (35.1)
40–54	261 (27.2)	54 (23.1)	315 (26.4)
55–60	103 (10.7)	15 (6.4)	118 (9.9)
61+	107 (11.1)	15 (6.4)	122 (10.2)
Education			
Less than high school	14 (1.5)	2 (0.9)	16 (1.3)
High school or equivalent	122 (12.7)	15 (6.4)	137 (11.5)
Bachelor's degree	399 (41.6)	94 (40.0)	493 (41.3)
Master's degree or above	425 (44.3)	124 (52.8)	549 (45.9)
Income			
Less than \$20,000	56 (6.4)	15 (7.1)	71 (6.5)
\$20,001–40,000	104 (11.9)	29 (13.6)	133 (12.3)
\$40,001–60,000	126 (14.5)	35 (16.4)	161 (14.9)
\$60,001–80,000	113 (13.0)	32 (15.0)	145 (13.4)
\$80,001–100,000	132 (15.2)	22 (10.3)	154 (14.2)
\$100,000+	340 (39.0)	80 (37.6)	420 (38.7)
Occupation			
Blue collar	50 (7.4)	5 (3.6)	55 (6.7)
White collar	469 (69.1)	109 (77.9)	578 (70.6)
Self-employed	13 (1.9)	1 (0.7)	14 (1.7)
Retired	71 (10.5)	7 (5.0)	78 (9.5)
Student	72 (10.6)	18 (12.9)	90 (11.0)
Unemployed	4 (0.6)	0 (0.0)	4 (0.5)

asuring perceived value and the four items measuring destination loyalty (Table 3). The analysis produced a clean factor structure with items loading on three appropriate factors. No items were deleted because of low loading scores. Reliability of the factors was examined using Chronbach's alpha. As shown, six items are loaded on factor 1 (the perceived social value) and eight items on factor 2 (the perceived emotional value). All four items measuring destination loyalty are cleanly loaded on factor 3. These three factors together account for 59.45% of the total variance, with standardized α value for each of them being 0.87, 0.84, and 0.88, respectively.

t-Tests for Equality of Means Between First-Timer and Repeaters

To answer the first question of this study, a set of *t*-tests was conducted for the visitor group, resident group, and aggregated group. As shown in

Table 4, for the visitor group and aggregated group, repeaters were significantly different from first-timers in all four variables. Specifically, repeaters were more likely than first-timers to have a higher level of perceived social and emotional values, to be more satisfied with their experience, and more loyal to the festival. However, repeaters and first-timers were not significantly different from each other in all these variables for residents.

Pairwise Comparisons of Different Festival Attendee Groups

To address the second question, multiple pairwise comparisons were conducted using ANOVA (Table 5). As shown, first-time visitors reported significantly lower perceived social value than repeat visitors ($p < 0.001$), first time residents ($p < 0.05$), and repeat residents ($p < 0.001$).

In contrast, repeat visitors were not significantly different from first-time residents and re-

Table 2
Trip Characteristics

	Visitors [No. (%)]	Residents* [No. (%)]	Aggregated group [No. (%)]
Main purpose			
Leisure/vacation	632 (64.3)	—	632 (64.3)
Visit family and relatives	261 (26.6)	—	261 (26.6)
Business	68 (6.9)	—	68 (6.9)
Others	22 (2.2)	—	22 (2.2)
Past experience			
First timers	636 (64.6)	79 (32.9)	715 (58.4)
Repeaters	348 (35.4)	161 (67.1)	509 (41.6)
2–5 times	285 (29.0)	118 (49.2)	403 (32.9)
6–10 times	34 (3.5)	20 (8.3)	54 (4.4)
More than 10 times	29 (2.9)	23 (9.6)	52 (4.2)
Length of stay			
Day attendees	489 (51.5)	—	489 (51.5)
Overnight attendees	460 (48.5)	—	460 (48.5)
Group size	3.6	3.1	3.5
Kids in the group			
Yes	285 (30.0)	50 (21.8)	335 (28.3)
No	666 (70.0)	179 (78.2)	845 (71.7)

Local residents were not required to answer the question “what was your main purpose/reason for visiting DC?” and the question about length of stay.

peat residents, who did not differ significantly from each other, either. Interestingly, this pattern appears for all other variables, with first-time visitors being less positive in their emotional value, less satisfied, and less loyal than repeat visitors, first-time residents, and repeat residents who were not significantly different from one another in these variables.

Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Values and Destination Loyalty

The overall satisfaction as a mediator between values and destination loyalty was examined for visitors (Tables 6), residents (Table 7), and the aggregated group (Table 8). The reduction of the beta coefficients for the two value dimensions that are significant in the first regression equation of each table when the mediator (overall satisfaction) is added indicates the presence of the mediation effect. As shown, in the case of the visitor group and the aggregated group, the standardized regression coefficients between the social value and emotional value and the dependent variable of destination loyalty are smaller when satisfaction is added to the regression equations. This is true for both first-time attendees and repeat attendees. This

indicates that overall satisfaction mediates the value–loyalty relationship for the visitor group and the aggregated group, regardless of the past experience. In terms of the resident group, overall satisfaction mediates the relationship between values and destination loyalty for repeat residents and residents as a whole. However, the mediation effect is not present for first-time residents. As shown in Table 7, for this group, while satisfaction is significantly related to destination loyalty, both social value and emotional value are not, nor are they significantly related to overall satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines the effects of past experience on perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty for the 2008 NCBF attendees. Such examination was conducted between and within the visitor group, resident group, and aggregated group. It was found that there were major distinctions between first-time and repeat visitors with the latter being more positive than the former in their perception of social and emotional values of the festival, more satisfied with and more loyal to the festival than the former. However, first-time and repeat residents did not differ significantly

Table 3
Perceptions Loadings and Subscales

Factor (Proportion): Scale Name & Items	Mean	SD	Rotated (Varimax) Factors		
			Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1: Perceived social value					
The festival promotes Washington, DC as a tourism destination	4.45	0.85	0.62	-0.01	0.47
The festival enhances the city's image	4.47	0.82	0.69	0.05	0.42
Cherry blossoms make the city more beautiful	4.75	0.68	0.81	0.06	0.20
Cherry trees/blossoms make the city a better place to visit	4.42	0.85	0.73	0.29	0.19
I am amazed at the beauty of the cherry blossoms	3.48	1.14	0.69	0.32	0.11
The cherry blossoms make the city unique	4.31	0.92	0.55	0.45	0.23
Factor 2: Perceived emotional value					
The beauty of the trees increases my love of nature	4.24	1.76	0.42	0.46	-0.12
The festival increases the pride of the city residents	3.99	0.95	0.41	0.50	0.25
The festival increases my knowledge about cherry trees	3.48	1.14	0.17	0.71	0.12
The beauty of the cherry trees increases my interests to learn more about the trees	3.39	1.09	0.12	0.73	0.08
The festival increases the identity of Washington, DC as the capital city of the US	3.83	1.08	0.14	0.56	0.38
The festival increases my desire to know about other people and cultures	3.41	1.06	-0.02	0.70	0.33
The festival increases my love of the city	3.76	0.98	0.18	0.55	0.54
Cherry blossoms symbolize the natural beauty of the capital city of the US	3.97	0.99	0.24	0.55	0.37
Factor 3: Destination loyalty					
The festival is worthy of visiting again	4.18	0.92	0.24	0.24	0.80
The cherry blossoms are worthy of visiting again	4.49	0.79	0.50	0.22	0.59
I will recommend the festival to my friends	4.20	0.93	0.23	0.27	0.76
I will recommend the cherry blossoms to my friends	4.49	0.80	0.53	0.24	0.56
Eigenvalues			7.86	1.73	1.11
% of variance			43.68	9.61	6.17
Cumulative %				53.28	59.45
Standardized Cronbach's α			0.87	0.84	0.88

Table 4
t-Test for Equality of Means Between First-Timers and Repeaters*

	Visitors			Residents			Aggregated Group		
	First-Timers	Repeaters	<i>t</i> -Value	First-Timers	Repeaters	<i>t</i> -Value	First-Timers	Repeaters	<i>t</i> -Value
Perceived social value	4.39 (<i>N</i> = 617)	4.55 (<i>N</i> = 337)	-3.59**	4.57 (<i>N</i> = 79)	4.65 (<i>N</i> = 157)	-1.47	4.41 (<i>N</i> = 696)	4.58 (<i>N</i> = 494)	-4.72**
Perceived emotional value	3.67 (<i>N</i> = 585)	3.84 (<i>N</i> = 320)	-3.14*	3.89 (<i>N</i> = 76)	3.88 (<i>N</i> = 155)	0.11	3.70 (<i>N</i> = 661)	3.85 (<i>N</i> = 470)	-3.35**
Overall satisfaction	4.17 (<i>N</i> = 612)	4.38 (<i>N</i> = 333)	-3.55**	4.41 (<i>N</i> = 76)	4.37 (<i>N</i> = 156)	0.42	4.20 (<i>N</i> = 688)	4.37 (<i>N</i> = 489)	-3.60**
Loyalty	4.24 (<i>N</i> = 602)	4.46 (<i>N</i> = 333)	-4.45**	4.54 (<i>N</i> = 75)	4.59 (<i>N</i> = 156)	0.97	4.26 (<i>N</i> = 677)	4.45 (<i>N</i> = 489)	-4.53**

Missing data are excluded from analysis by casewise deletion.

p* < 0.01, *p* < 0.001.

Table 5
Pairwise Comparisons of Different Festival Attendee Groups

Dependent Variables	Groups		Mean Difference (I - J)	SE	p	95% Confidence Interval	
	I	J				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Perceived social value	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	-0.16***	0.04	0.000	-0.24	-0.08
		First-time residents	-0.19*	0.07	0.013	-0.33	-0.04
		Repeat residents	-0.27***	0.06	0.000	-0.38	-0.16
	Repeat visitors	First-time residents	-0.02	0.08	0.760	-0.18	0.13
		Repeat residents	-0.10	0.06	0.084	-0.22	0.01
	First-time residents	Repeat residents	-0.08	0.09	0.351	-0.25	0.09
Perceived emotional value	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	-0.17**	0.05	0.002	-0.27	-0.06
		First-time residents	-0.21*	0.09	0.022	-0.40	-0.03
		Repeat residents	-0.20**	0.07	0.004	-0.34	-0.07
	Repeat visitors	First-time residents	-0.05	0.10	0.631	-0.24	0.14
		Repeat residents	-0.04	0.08	0.626	-0.18	0.11
	First-time residents	Repeat residents	0.01	0.11	0.927	-0.20	0.22
Overall satisfaction	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	-0.21***	0.06	0.000	-0.32	-0.10
		First-time residents	-0.24*	0.10	0.019	-0.44	-0.04
		Repeat residents	-0.20**	0.07	0.009	-0.34	-0.05
	Repeat visitors	First-time residents	-0.03	0.11	0.781	-0.24	0.18
		Repeat residents	0.01	0.08	0.873	-0.15	0.17
	First-time residents	Repeat residents	0.04	0.12	0.716	-0.19	0.27
Destination loyalty	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors	-0.23***	0.05	0.000	-0.33	-0.13
		First-time residents	-0.32***	0.09	0.000	-0.49	-0.14
		Repeat residents	-0.24***	0.07	0.000	-0.37	-0.11
	Repeat visitors	First-time residents	-0.09	0.09	0.341	-0.27	0.09
		Repeat residents	-0.01	0.07	0.920	-0.15	0.13
	First-time residents	Repeat residents	0.08	0.10	0.430	-0.12	0.28

The multiple comparisons based on estimated marginal means.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

from each other. In addition, first-time visitors were found to be consistently different from repeat visitors, first-time and repeat residents in perceived value, satisfaction, and destination loyalty while repeat visitors did not differ significantly from first-time and repeat residents. This study also found that overall satisfaction mediates the effect of the perceived value on destination loyalty for the visitor group, regardless of past experience. However, for the resident group, the mediation effect is present for repeat residents, but not for first-time residents. Thus, past experience affects the extent to which overall satisfaction mediates the relationship between values and destination loyalty for residents.

The findings discussed above endorse several previous studies in which satisfaction was found to mediate the relationship between perceived

value and intentions to revisit and recommend to others (i.e., Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Williams & Soutar, 2009). This study also endorses some other studies (i.e., Yuksel, 2000) in which repeat visitors were found to be more satisfied and loyal than first-timers.

While recognizing the similarities of findings between this study and previous studies, it should be noted that most previous studies did not separate visitor attendees from resident attendees or first-timers from repeaters when examining the relationships among perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral loyalty for a festival. Instead, aggregated data were analyzed as a whole in most of these studies. As reported in this article, past experience affects first-timers and repeaters in a different manner. It also affects visitor attendees and resident attendees differently with overall sat-

isfaction mediating the effect of perceived value on destination loyalty for repeat residents, but not for first-time residents. Thus, findings based on the aggregated group may not reflect the differences between visitors and residents or between first-timers and repeaters. It seems there is a tendency in the literature that researchers have noted this and have begun to examine first-time and repeat visitors separately (i.e., Lee et al., 2009; Morais & Lin, 2010).

The differences between first-time and repeat visitors have been explained in the literature from the perspectives of travel motivation and place attachment (i.e., George & George, 2004; Morais & Lin, 2010). Previous studies have found that first-timers were primarily motivated by seeking novelty while repeaters were interested in relaxation, socialization, and learning (Fluker & Turner, 2000; Lee et al., 2009). For example, Lee's et al. study on a medicine-related festival, The Punggi Ginseng festival, found that repeaters enjoyed time

and relaxation with their families and friends by participating in some experiential programs (e.g., Gensing dig-up). Although motivation was not examined in our study, it can be extrapolated from the literature that repeaters to the festival may also be more interested in the social aspects of the festival and also interested in learning more about the festival, including its history and culture. As a result, they may be more satisfied than first-timers.

Another plausible explanation for differences between first-timers and repeaters could be related to place attachment. George and George (2004) argued that "place attachment, composed of the two dimensions of place dependence and place identity, provides an explanation of tourist loyalty towards destinations at a far subtler level" (p. 54). Giuliani and Feldman (1993) also stated that a first-time visit to a festival/destination can only generate a surrogated conception about the festival/destination, its attractions, and services. Such conception can then be strengthened with repeat-

Table 6
Overall Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Perceived Value and Destination Loyalty (Visitors)

	Beta			t-Value ^a		
	First-Time Visitors	Repeat Visitors	Visitors	First-Time Visitors	Repeat Visitors	Visitors
Step 1: Predictors to mediator (value dimensions to satisfaction)						
Social value	0.388	0.418	0.402	9.65	7.14	12.27
Emotional value	0.327	0.263	0.305	8.13	4.49	9.31
Adjusted R ²	0.41	0.38	0.41			
F	199.37	97.78	310.39			
Step 2: Predictors to dependent variable (value dimensions to destination loyalty)						
Social value	0.493	0.517	0.503	14.13	10.34	17.83
Emotional value	0.338	0.294	0.326	9.70	5.90	11.54
Adjusted R ²	0.56	0.55	0.56			
F	356.86	191.15	573.49			
Step 3a: Mediator to dependent variable (satisfaction to destination loyalty)						
Overall satisfaction	0.763	0.761	0.766	28.86	21.28	36.53
Adjusted R ²	0.58	0.58	0.59			
F	832.96	452.81	1334.22			
Step 3b: Predictors and mediator to dependent variable						
Overall satisfaction	0.489	0.486	0.488	16.23	12.17	20.56
Social value	0.304	0.314	0.307	9.78	7.04	12.22
Emotional value	0.178	0.167	0.177	5.86	3.92	7.25
Adjusted R ²	0.70	0.69	0.70			
F	438.99	236.84	705.64			

^aAll t-values are significant at the 0.001 level.

ing visits. As a result, repeat visitors can develop a bond of attachment to a destination and are more likely to further explore the destination, and desire to revisit or bring others to the destination (George & George, 2004; Gitelson & Crompton, 1984). Morais and Lin (2010) found that repeat visitors tended to report higher levels of place identity and place dependence toward the destination in question. In our study, repeat visitors may have developed an attachment to the festival or even Washington, DC as a whole to the extent that is comparable to local residents. This similarity of place attachment between repeaters and local residents may help to explain why first-time visitors are significantly different from local residents while repeat visitors are not.

As with many other similar studies, this study is not without limitations. First, although the sample size in this study is fairly large, the sampling per se is not random, which may lead to biases

and errors. Second, findings reported in this study are based on surveys of 1 single year and may not be generalized to other years. Third, the festival is primarily featured by cherry blossoms and findings may not be applicable to other types of festivals. Fourth, the perceived value construct was developed by authors of this article with input from the NCBF Administration staff due to the lack of literature on tree-related festivals, which may limit its reliability and validity. Finally, the festival goers' experience with the festival may be negatively affected by other external factors such as service quality, weather, and the time of visit (i.e., during, before, or after the blossom peak period), which may affect their perceived value, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty.

Despite the limitations discussed above, this study has practical implications for the festival. First, because repeat attendees were more likely to revisit the festival than were first-time attendees

Table 7
Overall Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Perceived Value and Destination Loyalty (Residents)

	Beta			t-Value ^a		
	First-Time Residents	Repeat Residents	Residents	First-Time Residents	Repeat Residents	Residents
Step 1: Predictors to mediator (value dimensions to satisfaction)						
Social value	0.123	0.345	0.267	0.95	4.09*	3.78*
Emotional value	0.241	0.332	0.328	1.86	3.93*	4.64*
Adjusted R^2	0.08	0.36	0.28			
F	4.08	42.07	42.78			
Step 2: Predictors to dependent variable (value dimensions to destination loyalty)						
Social value	0.264	0.394	0.342	2.06*	5.07*	5.12*
Emotional value	0.176	0.357	0.335	1.38	4.59*	5.02*
Adjusted R^2	0.12	0.447	0.36			
F	6.11	59.61	61.78			
Step 3a: Mediator to dependent variable (satisfaction to destination loyalty)						
Overall satisfaction	0.673	0.692	0.693	7.78*	11.87*	14.53*
Adjusted R^2	0.45	0.48	0.48			
F	60.47	140.97	211.16			
Step 3b: Predictors and mediator to dependent variable						
Overall satisfaction	0.627	0.434	0.512	6.94*	6.28*	9.48*
Social value	0.198	0.231	0.201	1.98	3.14*	3.44*
Emotional value	.010	0.227	0.171	0.10	3.08*	2.87*
Adjusted R^2	0.48	0.57	0.55			
F	22.84	63.84	88.21			

* $p < 0.001$.

Table 8

Overall Satisfaction as a Mediator Between Perceived Value and Destination Loyalty (Aggregated Group)

	Beta			<i>t</i> -Value ^a		
	First-Timers	Repeaters	Combined	First-Timers	Repeaters	Combined
Step 1: Predictors to mediator (value dimensions to satisfaction)						
Social value	0.379	0.383	0.385	9.90	8.01	13.01
Emotional value	0.318	0.294	0.310	8.30	6.15	10.46
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.39	0.37	0.39			
<i>F</i>	206.53	137.44	359.89			
Step 2: Predictors to dependent variable (value dimensions to destination loyalty)						
Social value	0.493	0.471	0.488	14.72	11.26	18.90
Emotional value	0.322	0.323	0.325	9.62	7.72	12.61
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.54	0.52	0.54			
<i>F</i>	369.99	246.27	647.89			
Step 3a: Mediator to dependent variable (satisfaction to destination loyalty)						
Overall satisfaction	0.760	0.742	0.756	30.28	24.37	39.57
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.58	0.55	0.57			
<i>F</i>	917.05	594.05	1565.81			
Step 3b: Predictors and mediator to dependent variable						
Overall satisfaction	0.501	0.476	0.490	17.78	13.79	22.66
Social value	0.304	0.286	0.299	10.34	7.57	13.02
Emotional value	0.162	0.187	0.174	5.61	5.07	7.78
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.69	0.66	0.68			
<i>F</i>	475.17	295.46	803.71			

^aAll *t*-values are significant at the 0.001 level.

and the majority of visitor attendees of the festival were first-timers, the festival administration may need to develop some participatory programs that involve family, social interactions, and learning activities that may motivate first-timers to patronize again. Second, compared to first-time visitors, repeat visitors were more likely to value the festival's social and emotional benefits, which are closely related to the quality of the cherry blossoms and associated programs/events. Therefore, it is essential to maintain and increase the quality of the cherry trees and associated programs/events to maintain and increase the existing repeat customers who are significant reference source for others.

Future research needs to be conducted to longitudinally compare first-time and repeaters in the selected variables. In addition, it may be interesting to look at the attitudinal and behavioral changes as a result of appreciating the cherry blossoms, which are an important component of the

city's urban green tourism. For example, will the festival goers develop or reinforce more positive attitudes toward the environment or will they plant cheery trees in their own backyards and/or recommend others to do so as a result of visitation? Finally, external factors such as weather and time of visit, among others, should also be examined together with variables that have been typically examined in the literature (e.g., image, quality of service, and perceived value).

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