

Perceived Festival Quality and Revisit Intention of Chinese New Year Festival among Generation Z

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Abstract

This research investigates the perceived quality of Chinese New Year festivals in Malaysia from the perspective of Generation Z attendees. By employing quantitative surveys and the FESTPERF scale, the study explores various aspects of festival quality, including accessibility, facilities, ambiance, festival experience, entertainment program, food quality, staff, information, and technology experiences. The findings reveal a strong correlation between perceived festival quality and revisit intentions among Generation Z. Specifically, the study demonstrates that a positive festival experience, characterized by factors such as atmosphere and innovative technology, significantly influences Generation Z's desire to return to future events. These insights offer valuable recommendations for festival organizers seeking to enhance their events and attract a larger young audience.

Keywords:

Festival quality, visitor satisfaction, revisit intention, food festival, Generation Z.

1 Introduction

Festivals have frequently served as a means of overcoming geographical distances between individuals and groups of people on place identification by enhancing a sense of place-belonging for both the host community and the participants (Finkel & Platt, 2020). Among the festivals, cultural festivals can be viewed as both historical heritage and cultural heritage because they bring people together, display, and reinterpret a cultural tradition (Del Barrio et al., 2012). Chinese New Year is the worldwide and biggest celebration of the Chinese community. Chinese New Year food festival will be organized annually in different countries to celebrate the festive. These food festivals introduce visitors to traditional ethnic foods, local foods, and international cuisine (Payini et al., 2020) and offer an extensive range of sensory experiences for visitors while engaging with a place and its people (Chang & Yuan, 2011). This cultural celebration encourages community engagement and exhibits Chinese tradition and custom, especially for the younger generation for cultural preservation.

The need to understand Generation Z behaviors and characteristics is required in festivals, as they have distinctive characteristics, preferences, attitudes, and value systems (Jayatissa, 2023; Vidya Jha, 2021). Generation Z refers to a group of people that were born during the late 1990s and early 2000s, or between 1997-2012 (Eldridge, 2024). Soon, Gen Z will surpass other generations, becoming an emerging consumer of the cultural festival or special event environment. It is important to know their preferences, attitudes, behaviors, and other variables that can influence their attendance at cultural festivals.

Therefore, a study on the behaviors and reasons that Gen Z attending a Chinese New Year food festival is needed to meet the changing demand of Gen Z. This study will focus on the perceived festival quality and examine the factors that affect Gen Z's willingness to return to the Chinese New Year food festival in Malaysia, ensuring the cultural connection and the success of the festival with Gen Z's attendance. This study also aims to give insights to festival organizers, vendors, and the event industry to create engaging and culturally enriching experiences that meet the distinct needs of Generation Z.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Chinese Cultural Festival in Malaysia

Cultural festivals can be seen as both historical and cultural heritage, as they unite communities, showcase, and reinterpret traditional practices. These festivals offer opportunities for cultural enrichment, allowing attendees to learn about and experience the traditions and customs of the host location and other cultures (Rivetti et al., 2024). The growing awareness of the cultural significance of festival locations has further enhanced the sense of place and belonging.

In Malaysia, the cultural significance of festivals is particularly evident due to the nation's rich diversity. With a variety of ethnic groups, the country celebrates numerous vibrant cultural festivals that attract both locals and tourists alike (Hassan, 2014). Malays, Chinese, Indians, and indigenous communities each observe festivals rooted in religious and cultural traditions, such as Hari Raya, Chinese New Year, Deepavali, and Thaipusam (Muhammad et al., 2010). These celebrations not only honor heritage but also strengthen social bonds and contribute to economic development.

Among the Chinese community, festivals such as Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival, and Chap Goh Meh are celebrated with traditional activities like lion dances, dragon dances, and the Chingay procession. The lion dance, in particular, is believed to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck and prosperity (Sang Seong, 2015). These festivities offer a platform for people of various ethnicities to come together and celebrate cultural diversity (Lee et al., 2017).

2.2 Perceived Festival Quality

Festivals play a crucial role in tourism growth due to their cultural, economic, and social benefits for surrounding communities (Wu & Ai, 2016). According to Lee et al. (2008), theme-based festivals such as those centered on music or heritage, offer visitors unique experiences through authentic food, music, and crafts, as well as entertainment like local story quizzes. These festivals not only provide entertainment but also boost the local economy in the host regions (Mohi et al., 2013).

Baker and Crompton (2000) identified four key aspects of festival quality: general features (festival characteristics), specific entertainment elements, information sources like printed programs and information booths, and visitor comfort amenities. Additionally, Lee et al. (2008) outlined seven dimensions of festival quality, including festival programs, staff service, facilities, food, souvenirs, convenience, and the availability of information. These dimensions are often used to evaluate the quality of rural festivals, focusing on program content, facilities, souvenirs, food, and information (Yoon et al., 2010). These five factors were confirmed in later research by Lee et al. (2011), who found that festival quality positively impacts visitor satisfaction and loyalty. As a result, festival quality significantly influences visitor experience, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions toward the event.

Cole and Chancellor (2009) examined three primary aspects of festival quality: program, entertainment facilities, and entertainment quality, suggesting that a well-structured program enhances the overall visitor experience. Their findings showed that factors such as location, products, convenience, hospitality, and programs positively affect festival value, satisfaction, and trust, all of which contribute to festival loyalty (Pai et al., 2021).

Visitors at a cultural food festival can engage in these experiences by tasting local food, enjoying performances, and learning about the culture and customs through the event's programming. These interactions allow visitors to immerse themselves in local culture and gain a deeper understanding of its history through activities like food

preparation and cultural demonstrations (Ding & Lee, 2017). As such, experiences arise from the services staged at festivals. Cole and Illum (2006) also emphasized that the quality of the visitor experience is directly influenced by service quality.

2.3 Festival Experience and Visitor Revisit Intention

Festivals are characterized by social interaction, connecting people to events, and serving as community celebrations that honor the customs and culture of a particular group. The "experience economy" provides a useful framework for helping festival organizers better understand the preferences of festival attendees, and it has been applied to evaluate visitor experiences at festivals (Culha, 2020; Manthiou et al., 2014).

The festival quality framework has been widely used to examine factors affecting visitors' intentions to return (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Choo et al., 2016; Yoon et al., 2010). Research shows that festival quality has a direct positive effect on visitor satisfaction and indirectly influences their behavioral intention to revisit the festival or location. An integrated framework of festival loyalty explores how festival quality impacts loyalty intentions, as studied through models of festival loyalty (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Tanford & Jung, 2017).

The concept of "festivalscape," which refers to the overall atmosphere experienced by festival attendees, has been used in festival research to underscore the significance of intangible aspects (Lee et al., 2007). Four key festivalscape dimensions—atmosphere, exposition quality, people interaction, and collateral services—are known to significantly influence visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Studies by Troisi et al. (2019) and Cole and Chancellor (2009) revealed that festivalscape elements such as programs, facilities, and entertainment quality play a crucial role in shaping visitors' experiences and their willingness to return, with emotions having a strong impact on repeat visitation. Visitor experiences can lead to positive behavioral intentions, such as word-of-mouth recommendations and increased customer loyalty (Cole & Illum, 2006; Troisi et al., 2019). Additionally, Mason and Paggiaro (2012) demonstrated that satisfaction mediates the relationship between festivalscape attributes, behavioral intentions, and the willingness to recommend the festival to others.

Research has consistently confirmed the positive impact of visitor satisfaction on revisit intention (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Chen & Chen, 2010; Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). Positive word-of-mouth, recommendations, repurchase intention, and a higher tolerance for price increases are all commonly used to measure loyalty or behavioral intention (Mohi et al., 2013; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

3 Methodology

3.1 Sampling

This research focuses specifically on university students aged between 18-27, born from 1997 to 2006. This group represents a distinct segment of the population—Gen Z, who are emerging consumers with unique characteristics and behavioral patterns that

differ from previous generations. Given the study's objectives, this narrow focus on a specific age group justifies a lower sampling size. By honing in on this defined group, the study can provide more accurate insights into the behaviors of Gen Z visitors to food festivals. The decision to focus on university students also provides a relatively homogeneous sample, which is advantageous when examining behavioral patterns. Since these students are likely to share common characteristics, such as age, education level, and lifestyle, a smaller sample size can still yield valid and reliable results. A homogenous sample reduces variability, allowing the study to detect meaningful patterns and relationships within the data without requiring a larger number of participants. Convenience sampling was applied in this study with 200 visitors of Generation Z university students who have visited the Chinese New Year food festival in Malaysia.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

There are 5 sections in the questionnaires, which include sections A, B, C, and D. In section A, there are demographic questions that include gender, age, race. In section B, there are the trip characteristics of the visitors such as day of visit, travel companions, group size and first timer. In section C, there are 17 statements will be asked about the perceived festival quality of the Chinese New Year food festival. Lastly, section D focuses on revisit intention of Gen Z visitors. The use of an ordinal measurement scale or Likert-type questions includes (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree, respondents need to rate it based on their view and perspective.

3.3 Data analysis

The SPSS software is used for the data analysis, assessing the variables of this study statistically. In this study, the descriptive analysis was implemented to obtain the result of demographic background from the respondents. Pearson's correlation analysis was used for analyzing the relationship between perceived festival quality and revisit intention. Linear regression also was used to understand the relationship between those two variables.

4 Findings

4.1 Socio-demographic and trip characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic data analysis of the respondents. The total number of respondents to the questionnaire is 210, consisting of Generation Z in Malaysia. For the respondents, 148 of them are female, which amounts to 70.50% of the respondents, and the rest of the 62 respondents are male, comprising 29.50% of the total respondents. This shows that female respondents were dominant in this study.

Table 1: Socio-demographic and trip characteristics

Items	Frequency (N=210)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	148	70.5
Female	62	29.5
Race		
Chinese	137	65.2
Malay	53	25.2
Indian	16	7.6
Others	4	1.9
Day of visit		
Weekday	23	11.0
Weekend	187	89.0
Travel companion		
Family	101	48.1
Friend	105	50.0
Alone	4	1.9
Group Size		
1 to 3 persons	77	36.7
4 to 6 persons	112	53.3
7 to 9 persons	20	9.5
More than 10 persons	1	0.5
First time visit		
Yes	24	11.4
No	186	88.6

This study revealed that five distinct races participated in the data collection. The Chinese racial group accounts for the majority of the 210 respondents with 137 respondents (65.20%). There are 53 Malay respondents, accounting for 25.20% of the total. There are 16 respondents identify as Indian, accounting for 7.60% of all respondents, and other ethnicity, accounting for 1.90% of all respondents respectively.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents had visited the food festival on the weekend with the number of 187 or 89.00% while 23 of the respondents, or 11.00% of them had visited the food festival on weekdays. Besides that, there were 3 categories of companions to be identified which were family, friends, and just me. It shows that there is a minor difference of 4 on the companions with friends and family, with exactly half of the number of respondents, 105 people (50.00%) had visited with friends and

101 people (48.10%) had visited with their family. There were only 4 people or 1.9% visited the food festival alone.

In this study, the group size has been divided into 4 categories, including 1 to 3 persons, 4 to 6 persons, 7 to 9 persons, and more than 10 persons. This study shows that more than half of the respondents, 112 of them (53.30%) visited with 4 to 6 people in a group, followed by 77 respondents (36.70%) visited with 1 to 3 persons, and 20 respondents (9.50%) visited with 7 to 9 persons respectively. There was only 1 person who visited the food festival with a group of more than 10 persons.

The questionnaires distributed also investigated the first-time visitors or repeated visitors to the Chinese New Year food festival. This study shows that most of them are repeat visitors and have visited such food festivals before with the figure of 186 respondents, equivalent to 88.60%, while 24 of the respondents, or 11.40% are the first time to visit and participate in the Chinese New Year food festival.

4.2 Perceived Festival Quality

Table 2 presents the list of descriptive statistics on the perceived festival quality factor of the Generation Z towards the Chinese New Year food festival in Malaysia. The mean is ranked from high to low. The results indicated that most respondents viewed the perceived festival quality factor as favourable. Festival atmosphere had the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 4.43$; $\sigma = 0.524$) and spacious or sufficient parking area had the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.23$; $\sigma = 0.805$). The Cronbach's Alpha for perceived festival quality was $\alpha = 0.836$, which is between 0.8 and 1, considered as good and acceptable (George and Mallery, 2003).

The festival atmosphere is shaped by both tangible and intangible attributes, while tangible attributes contribute a higher impact on loyalty than intangible ones as suggested by Molina-Gómez et al. (2021). Tangible aspects include the entertainment program, convenience access and facilities, and food had demonstrated the positive connection between quality and loyalty through this study.

The study revealed that Generation Z highly values the integration of innovative technologies at festivals, ranking it among the key factors influencing their perception of event quality. This finding suggests that organizers can significantly enhance attendee satisfaction and generate additional revenue by strategically incorporating advanced technological solutions (Hassan & Hashim, 2024). By offering cutting-edge features and experiences, festivals can differentiate themselves in a competitive market and cater to the evolving expectations of younger demographics.

Table 2: Perceived Festival Quality

Perceived Festival Quality	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D. (σ)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Festival atmosphere	4.43	0.524	0.836
Integrated innovative technologies	4.29	0.486	
Cultural performances	4.29	0.524	
Convenient location	4.18	0.485	
Program organization	4.15	0.451	
Friendly staff	4.04	0.441	
Clear program schedule	4.04	0.441	
Food variety	4.02	0.522	
Program variety	4.02	0.526	
Food tastes	4.00	0.479	
Social interaction opportunities	3.98	0.587	
Signage	3.96	0.457	
Festival layout	3.94	0.470	
Sense of belonging	3.87	0.572	
Restroom availability	3.77	0.630	
Clean festival site	3.64	0.658	
Spacious or sufficient parking area	3.23	0.805	

Next, Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics on the visitors' revisit intention of the Chinese New Year food festival. The statement "I will keep attending the festival" has the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 4.39$, $\sigma = 0.655$). This indicates the strongest commitment to future attendance among the items surveyed. In contrast, the statement "I will recommend the festival to my friends and neighbours" has the lowest mean ($\bar{x} = 3.99$, $\sigma = 0.540$), suggesting a slightly lower level of recommendation compared to other items.

Overall, the table reflects positive revisit intentions towards the festival. The mean scores range from 3.99 to 4.39, indicating generally high levels of commitment and satisfaction among respondents. The standard deviations suggest that responses are relatively consistent, with some variation in the level of commitment and recommendation. The Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.747$, where provided, demonstrates good internal consistency across the items, highlighting reliable positive attitudes towards revisiting the festival.

Table 3: Revisit Intention

Revisit intention	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D. (σ)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
I will come to the festival again next year.	4.25	0.507	0.747
If had to decide again I would choose to attend the festival again.	4.25	0.504	
I will keep attending the festival.	4.39	0.655	

I will spread positive word-of-mouth about the festival.	4.07	0.504
I will recommend the festival to my friends and neighbours.	3.99	0.540

In Table 4, the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.617 indicates a strong positive correlation between Perceived Quality (PQ) and Revisit Intention (RI). The significance value of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), meaning that higher perceived quality is strongly associated with a greater intention to revisit.

Table 4: Relationship between Perceived Quality and Revisit Intention

Test				
Correlation	Pearson Correlation			Sig. (2-tailed)
PQ -> RI	0.617**			0.000
Regression	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	p-value
PQ -> RI	0.617	0.381	127.915	0.000

Note: PQ: Perceived quality, RI: Revisit Intention

In Regression analysis, the Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.617$) suggests that for every one-unit increase in perceived quality, the intention to revisit increases by 0.617 units. The R² value of 0.381 indicates that 38.1% of the variance in revisit intention is explained by perceived quality. The F-value of 127.915 with a p-value of 0.000 shows that the regression model is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), meaning it reliably predicts revisit intention based on perceived quality.

The result show that success of a festival hinges on providing a quality experience that fosters repeat visitation. Research consistently demonstrates a strong correlation between perceived quality and revisit intentions. A well-crafted festival program, a fundamental component of quality, significantly influences visitor perceptions and drives positive behavioural outcomes. As Lee et al. (2007) emphasize, a meticulously planned program enhances festival value and cultivates positive intentions.

Beyond the program, entertainment quality emerges as a key predictor of revisit intentions. Consistent with Tanford and Jung (2017), Bruwer and Kelley (2015) find that engaging entertainment significantly influences return visits. Moreover, Akhoondnejad (2016) and Lee et al. (2011) underscore the importance of perceived quality and value in encouraging repeat attendance. By delivering a superior experience, festivals can enhance visitor loyalty and foster enduring relationships.

Additional factors influencing loyalty include accessibility, food offerings, and convenience. As Dalgıç and Birdir (2020) highlight, these elements contribute to the overall festival experience and can significantly impact visitor satisfaction. For instance,

a festival that is easily accessible by public transportation or offers ample parking is more likely to attract repeat visitors. Similarly, a diverse selection of high-quality food options can enhance the overall experience and encourage return visits. Finally, convenience factors such as clear signage, well-organized layout, and efficient ticketing processes can contribute to a positive festival experience.

To ensure the continued success of Chinese New Year food festivals, organizers must prioritize delivering exceptional quality in all aspects of the event, from the program and entertainment to accessibility, food offerings, and convenience. By focusing on creating a memorable and enjoyable experience for visitors, organizers can cultivate a loyal customer base and ensure the long-term viability of the festival.

5 Conclusion

This study explored perceived festival quality factors that significantly impact revisit intention among Generation Z. High scores were given to all variables related to the entertainment program quality, suggesting that the programs and activities were satisfactory. The festival atmosphere received the highest scores in perceived festival quality, reflecting a positive assessment by visitors.

Additionally, the study found that experiential innovativeness, particularly in terms of technology experience, was highly rated. The festival successfully incorporated online payment systems or e-wallet services and digital boards displaying program content. Staff and food were also highlighted as strong points of the festival and should be maintained in the future. However, the adequacy of facilities, such as parking areas, received the lowest ratings, indicating a need for improvement to enhance festival quality and visitor satisfaction. The cleanliness of the festival site also requires monitoring to maintain high standards. Despite this, visitors still expressed a willingness to return to the festival, spread positive word-of-mouth and recommend the festival to others. As a result, this study shows that perceived festival quality has a significant impact on their likelihood of returning or loyalty towards the festival.

Visitors' expectations are shaped by word-of-mouth, previous experiences and pre-festival marketing, which cover aspects like food quality, entertainment, setting, and overall experience. The perceived festival quality includes the authenticity and diversity of cuisine, cultural performances, event program, and atmosphere. By understanding visitors' needs and expectations, organizers can create more fulfilling experiences, increasing satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits. Additionally, this study aims to better understand how these factors relate to satisfaction and revisit intention, helping to meet attendees' needs and expectations.

The findings of this study have practical implications. The cleanliness of the festival site and adequate facilities, such as spacious parking and toilets, are also crucial for visitor perception of the festival's quality. When attendees find the program or activities interesting and applicable to their needs, they are more likely to be satisfied with the event. By prioritizing festival quality, event organizers can significantly enhance the

likelihood of visitor retention for future events. Incorporating technology features, such as embracing an online payment system, use of digital board and establishing an app for festival activities and programs, can also enhance visitors' satisfaction and create a more pleasant event experience.

This study also faced some limitations. One of the limitations of this study is its narrow scope, as it focused solely on Generation Z university students attending the Chinese New Year food festival. Incorporating diverse demographic groups and utilizing advanced data analytics could provide real-time insights into visitors' perceptions of festival components affecting their loyalty.

6 About the author

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