

## **TRADITIONAL FOLK EVENT WITH NATIONAL IMPORTANCE: THE IMPACT OF VISITORS' AGE**

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### **Abstract**

In the context of the cultural tourism, this paper focuses on the traditional folk event with national importance that is held in the Czech Republic and its name is Porta. The aim is to assess characteristic traits and satisfaction of two age categories of Porta's visitors. Through the realised research among visitors, the importance of segmentation was proved. Hence, it is crucial to focus on getting to know the visitors and their motivation. In addition to that, cultural events are also important for local government. According to the officials of local government, where this event is held, such events are able to attract visitors to the particular locality. However, they have only limited opportunities how to support these events (especially from the financial viewpoint).

**Keywords:** Cultural tourism; music festival, age categories of visitors, Czech Republic

## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is defined by many authors: Gúčik (2010); Batta (2000); Buhalis & Darcy (2011). The majority of authors divide tourism through various viewpoints; their definitions differ very often; we can compare e.g. Hesková et al. (2011); Ryglová, Burian & Vajčnerová (2011) in the Czech literature or Lickorish & Jenkins (1997) in the foreign literature.

Cultural tourism is one of the very often defined types that is described as a movement of individuals because of culture reasons: e.g. study tour, art performance, culture excursion tour, travel to festivals and other events, visit of historic buildings, journeys in order to see nature, folklore, art or carnivals (Kesner et al., 2008). Cultural tourism covers all aspects of travelling and people can learn about various ways of life and thinking (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012). In many cases, it is perceived as a tool for understanding amongst nations, it helps to remove xenophobia, racism and other preconceptions (Vitáková, 2007; Inkson & Minnaert, 2012). According to many opinions, cultural tourism shows an increasing trend for the future (Gelder, Robinson, 2009). The single term culture is defined as a collection of patterns that relate to behaviour, art, belief and other products of human activities and thoughts that are characteristic for the given society and are transferred in the society (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). In the broadest sense of word, culture provides a complex of materials and symbolic

sources that are probably infinite (Robinson & Picard, 2006). There are also many interpretation of the concept of festivals (Bottyán, 2015).

Besides the offer in forms of various attractions and cultural events in the whole system of tourism (Kaspar, 1975), the role of subject of tourism is important. Some theories present that 35-70 % of tourists can be marked just as cultural tourists (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The participants of tourism meet their social and cultural needs (Ivanovic, 2008). Cultural tourists can be divided according to various viewpoints; the division according to the engagement of participants depending on the perception of culture can be considered as the most important one. Tourists are segmented into the following groups: purposeful cultural tourist, sightseeing cultural tourist, serendipitous cultural tourist, casual cultural tourist and incidental cultural tourist (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

Music festivals of various genres belong to the really favourite products of cultural tourism in the Czech Republic. The term music festival can be characterised as a series of performances that is held on the certain place and inspired by the single theme, such as national music, modern music or support of a meaningful performing artist. It can also have a form of a competition for composers or performing artists (Richards, 2001). The popularity of festivals rocketed after the year 1969 when the legendary festival called Woodstock Music & Art Fair held (Perone, 2005). In the Czech Republic, the music festival called Porta can be considered as the oldest one – it was realised in the year 1967 for the first time (Kotíková, 2013). In the destination of the Czech Republic, many festivals appeared after the change of the political regime in 1989; on the other hand, many of them got into the serious financial troubles in the last years and finally were shut down because of the high competition (Švec, Slabá, Solarová, 2015).

Services connected with spending free time are the primarily offered products that are defined e.g. by Jakubíková et al. (2012) or Horner & Swarbrooke (2003). From the general marketing point of view, service is defined by Kotler & Keller (2012) as “any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything”; Oriška (2010) adjusts it for the area of tourism. It arises through the transformation of prospective cultural source into something what the visitor can utilise (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The type of customers strongly differs according to the kind of music. While classical music, jazz, and opera festivals are associated with higher-educated and upper-class audiences, popular and folk music festivals are targeted to middle-class audiences (Gibson & Connell, 2005). The age of festivals’ visitors is also very important for organizers. Besides the provided services, location plays a crucial role in the tourism

(Navrátil et al., 2013). Festivals that are a part of cultural tourism, take place in the Czech Republic in the country environment, however, festivals hold on the castle courtyards or gardens are also favourite (Navrátil, Kučera, Pícha, White Baravalle Gilliam & Havlíková, 2015).

Music festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism and boosting the regional economy (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003). Despite the indisputable importance and heterogeneity of activities that are connected with them, the existing research studies concentrate mainly on two issues. The first group of research studies focus on economic and social impacts (Getz, 1997; Edwards, Moital & Vaughan, 2004) and the second group deals with the motivation and preferences of participants (Kim, Uysal & Chen, 2002, Van Zyl & Botha, 2003; Mason & Beaumont-Kerridge, 2004). And primarily textbooks deal with the realisation of festivals (McKay, 1996; Adler, 2011).

Many of studies confirm the impact of festivals on the destination image improvement, tourism and economic development (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Giving festivals has a positive influence on the local economy; if the destination is involved, it has also its importance for local entrepreneurs (Richard & Wilson, 2004; Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). Festival participants get to know places that they would not normally visit. Hence, festivals are often considered as an opportunity for turning the attention to the particular destination (Prentice & Andersen, 2003). Felsenstein & Fleischer (2003) claim festivals are used as a means of supporting tourism and regional development all over the world.

This study deals with the oldest summer music festival in the Czech Republic – its name is Porta. Porta is the Czech competitive music festival focused on folk, folk-rock, country, western, Irish and bluegrass music. It was established in Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic), in 1967. The festival came through a not easy evolution during nearly half of a century, also through changes of political regime in the Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic. For Porta, it is typical the unique organisational structure: there are regional rounds and winners from these rounds continue to the final. The final takes place in the compound of nature theatre, in the touristically attractive area that is situated near the capital of the Czech Republic. The competition is based on traditions: some of rituals have been still in existence from the very beginning of the festival, but of course, the festival is adapting to the new environment. It gives a valuable opportunity for starting music groups of presenting themselves in front of approximately two-thousand-people audience. That means, Porta belongs to smaller music festivals, but it has become popular with both audience and performers thanks to its tradition and uniqueness. This music festival is characteristic of its

audience that is comprised of listeners to the above mentioned kinds of music. Porta does not belong to festivals that have troubles with problematic behaviour of visitors – the reason is that mainly “older” generation listens to the above mentioned kinds of music. And thanks to visitors’ engagement with nature protections and walking, this music festival does not have problems with unwanted phenomena such as alcohol, narcotics/drugs or mess after the festival.

Organizers in the Czech Republic are nowadays dealing with economic issues of the events. Their effort to attract the greatest number of visitors as possible cases has not been effective in many and it has even led to the cancelation of a number of the festivals.

The aim of this paper is to assess characteristic traits and satisfaction of two age categories at the traditional music event.

## **METHODS**

### **Questionnaire and data collection**

Data concerning behaviour and preferences of music festival visitors were collected during the spring and summer 2015 at the regional rounds and they were also collected at the final where most questionnaires were obtained. The number of distributed and answered questionnaires copied the number of visitors in the particular rounds. Hence, it is possible to say that questionnaires were obtained from the whole Czech Republic because there were sixteen regional rounds all over the Czech Republic and then the final. Totally 451 questionnaires were obtained but some of them were filled incorrectly so after elimination of these incorrectly filled questionnaires, there remained 407 questionnaires. These questionnaires were divided into two categories in age order; the boundary age was the age of thirty. In the age category to thirty years old, there were 66 respondents, in the age category from thirty years old, there were 431 respondents.

In the first section of the questionnaire, following kinds of data were found out: the number of repeated visits, visit's frequency, the length of stay, the source of information, the distance from the place of the permanent address to the venue, accompanying and preferred means of transport that were used for travelling to the music festival. The loyalty of visitors that is crucial both for organizer of the music festival and for local government, was found out through one question concerning just the loyalty to the mentioned music festival. Next question was aimed at the distance that visitors underwent in order to arrive at the music festival: there were six different choices (from “resident” (= local inhabitant) to “distance of

121 kilometres and more”). The offered ways of transport in the questionnaire were following: “car”, “train”, “bus”, “bicycle” and the last option was “without transport” (because the music festival is visited also by residents). The next question was focused on ways of accommodation – the choices were “hotel” “pension”, “campsite (in tent)”, campsite (caravan, camper van)”, or “without accommodation”. The next explored aspect that is essential for the management of the mentioned music festival, for the local government and for other participated subjects as well, was the matter of accompanying to the music festival – the choices were “alone”, “with family members”, “with boyfriend/girlfriend”, or simply “with friends”. In the first section of the questionnaire, the motivation for attendance at the music festival was also examined – the choices were “program at the music festival”, “action”, “presence of friends and family members”, “opportunities for entertainment besides the program”, “relaxation”, or “atmosphere of the place”. Since the music festival is a competitive show, one of the possible motivations was also “support to performers”, because for many of them, it is often their first performance for larger audience.

In the second section of the questionnaire, the satisfaction with particular provided services in every venue was found out. Services that were provided only at several venues were not included in the questionnaire. The visitors' satisfaction was measured by means of the 5-point Likert scales (1 = the highest satisfaction, 2 = satisfaction, 3 = indecision, 4 = dissatisfaction, 5 = the highest dissatisfaction). The assessed services were accommodation, catering, social base (restrooms, shower rooms), organizing service, providing information and finally evaluation of atmosphere and environment.

In the end of the questionnaire, there were some questions focused on segmentation criteria such as age of respondents and their gender.

It is also important to note that structured interviews with officials of local government in spots where the festival was held were the next method of data obtaining. Since the event is held within all the Czech Republic, fifteen officials were contacted; nine of them were willing to respond. The interviews were primarily aimed to the impacts of the event on the environs.

### **Data processing**

Differences were tested for categorical variables through the chi-square goodness-of-fit test. During statistical analysis, questionnaires were divided into two parts. In the case of ordinal variables (grading), one way ANOVA with Tukey's post-hoc test for unequal N was used instead of t-test. The reason for it was the fact that both categories were considerably

unbalanced because of the different numbers of respondents, and post-hoc test is “more effective” statistical method than the t-test.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In both age categories, no difference in proportion of gender was found out (Pearson Chi-square: .042963; d.f. = 1;  $p = .835794$ ). It means further results are not encumbered through different numbers of women and men in the sample.

### **Attendance, transport and staying at the event**

With regard to the further development of the music festival, the findings of visitors' loyalty belong to the most crucial one. This loyalty was found out through the question focused on the number of visits in previous years. The age category has unambiguous influence on the loyalty towards the music festival (Pearson Chi-square: 44.6793; d.f. = 4;  $p = .000000$ ). The majority of visitors in the younger age category have been at the music festival for the first time. On the other hand, the repeated attendance (three times and more) is significantly higher in the older age category.

Since the music festival is held on different venues several times a year (single rounds of the competition), the attendance during the whole year was also monitored. Visitors, who have been visited only the particular event, predominate in the younger age category unambiguously. In the older age category, representation of those visitors who have visited at least two events during the examined year is significantly higher. This statistical significance is also valid for the case of visiting three and four events (Pearson Chi-square: 49.6287; d.f. = 5;  $p = .000000$ ).

With regard to the travelled distance it is possible to sum up that the music festival has higher spatial importance for the older age category. This age category travels significantly more from further distances (more than 80 kilometres) than the younger age category. For the younger age category it is typical they travel in distances up to 20 kilometres (Pearson Chi-square: 15.7306; d.f. = 5;  $p = .007657$ ). This finding is confirmed also through the used means of transport. There is the most noticeable difference in using train in order to come to the event – in the older age category, train is more favourite than in the younger age category. The younger age category uses a car in order to come to the event more often (Pearson Chi-square: 16.1645; d.f. = 5;  $p = .006390$ ).

In the case of accommodation, there was identified a significant difference between both age categories, mainly in the matter of accommodation in tents – this kind of accommodation

is significantly more popular in the older young category (Pearson Chi-square: 11.8615; d.f. = 4;  $p = .018411$ ). As for the accommodation possibilities, there was no significant difference in comparison with expectation. The difference in accommodation in tents is compensated through the number of local visitors – they dominate in the younger age category.

Both age categories significantly differ in the matter of accompanying (Pearson Chi-square: 31.6830; d.f. = 4;  $p = .000002$ ). In the older age category, they are unambiguously accompanied by bigger group of their friends. In contrast to this, the younger age category is accompanied by their girlfriend/boyfriend, alternatively by their family members.

### **Motivation for visiting and satisfaction with the event**

The difference in motivation for visiting music festival is the most statistical significant variable (Pearson Chi-square: 73.6696; d.f. = 7;  $p = .000000$ ). In the young age category, their visit is motivated with the attendance of their family members or friends and another motivational factor for them is also an effort to support performers. In the older age category, the main motive is the program of the event. As for the source of information, there was not found out any significant difference between both age categories (Pearson Chi-square: 12.6245; d.f. = 6;  $p = .049401$ ).

The satisfaction with partial aspects of staying was significantly different between both age categories – the case apart was catering (there was no difference). In the other aspects, the satisfaction of the older age category was distinctively higher than the satisfaction of the younger age category (see Tab. 1).

**Table 1** Differences in satisfaction with partial aspects at the music festival for younger and older age category

Item	Younger age category (mean)	Older age category (mean)	F	p	p (post-hoc)	Adjusted R2
Accommodation	2.63	1.76	32.451	0.000	0.000	0.101
Catering	2.11	2.00	1.007	0.316	0.438	0.000
Facilities	2.29	1.92	11.353	0.001	0.009	0.025
Organizers	2.74	1.91	55.385	0.000	0.000	0.118
Information	2.77	1.82	75.480	0.000	0.000	0.155
Environment	2.38	1.25	159.318	0.000	0.000	0.281
Ratio quality/price	2.71	1.68	95.128	0.000	0.000	0.188

Source: Own processing.

### **Results from the structured interviews with officials of local government**

Most of the asked officials from cities, where the music festival is held, have welcomed this event and they have mentioned its benefits both from the economic and social point of view. As a disadvantage, they have very often mentioned the invasion of normal life in the venue for the music festival, higher traffic and then higher demands for parking places; alternatively there are full means of public transport, especially trains. It corresponds with results from the questionnaires – the most often used means of transport were a car and a train. Answers to a question aimed at the importance of the event for public life have been slightly different; however, the following opinion has predominated: similar events contribute to the development of the local cultural life, but more visitors from distant places should be reached by organizers and it will be perfect if the visitors of the music festival spend more time at the venue because then local entrepreneurs can exploit all the opportunities that the visit of a guest, who is not a local inhabitant, brings them.

As assumed, the survey revealed significantly different motives and preferences among visitors within the two studied age categories. The audience of the festival is characterized by the predominance of the older age category of visitors; the absence of the younger age category can be related to the fact the majority of respondents visits the music festival in the long term and repeatedly. That predominance can be caused by the unpopularity of this musical genre among younger people and with the identified differences between the younger and older generation. As mentioned above, the older age category of visitors predominates and logically, the offer of services is tailored to them.

It can be argued, the adjustment of services for the older visitors may attract new visitors from the older age category. This may be the way how to increase the attendance of visitors at present. However, this way seems to be problematic from the long-term perspective.

In the younger age category, there are visitors, who come very often to accompany performers; alternatively they come with family members or to accompany an older person.

In both age categories, new visitors have a relation with the event; i.e. they are not random visitors. In the younger age category there are predominantly such visitors who visit only one part of the programme of the event and the latter takes place in proximity to their permanent address. Their satisfaction with all aspect of the music festival is significantly lower than in case of the older age category.



## CONCLUSION

Since the music festival is a traditional event, it has already a loyal audience among the older generation. To prevent the future disappearance of the festival, it is firstly desirable to attract the younger generation of potential visitors. The performed music style is, however, not very popular with young people in the Czech Republic. A possibility suggests itself to broaden the festival's program and to add some genres that are popular with young people. Many music festivals in the Czech Republic that had been oriented to a specific genre in the past tried later to broaden their program. However, some of them were not able to overcome the decrease of their visitors and as already mentioned in the introduction, some festivals with longer tradition disappeared. The program should be sensitively composed with regards to the contemporary visitors as well as to the potential younger audience that could partially originate from the wider family and acquaintances of those visitors. Then, it would be recommended to use the regular – mainly old visitors who are loyal to the brand and their evaluation is positive. This statement is supported with the above presented research results and also by Leenders (2010) whose findings are similar: brand equity aspects such as image, festival atmosphere associations, and (anticipated) emotions are most important for loyalty. Because of the long-time history and the well-known brand, it is possible to plan an efficient marketing communication that is supported with positive references. The importance of music festivals' brand is mentioned by Leenders (2010), or O'Reilly, Larsen, Kubacki and Larsen (2013).

The survey revealed significant differences in the willingness to come to the music festival from a distance. The older generation is significantly more willing to undertake a longer way and this generation mainly goes by train. For this generation, the train is a traditional means of transport in the Czech Republic and it is used for arriving to the recreation sites and music festivals' venues. It is connected with the tradition of hiking movement that is typical for the area of the Czech Republic from the twenties of the last century.

In order to attract younger visitors, it is crucial to count with the fact that the typical visitors come by car. Hence, it is necessary to prepare adequate possibilities for their arrival and parking. In reality, the national final round that is the culmination of the contest, takes place in the area of the Forest Theatre where the possibilities for parking are really very limited. This situation can be resolved only by parking in a higher distance from the venue and so visitors must walk to the venue. It can be recommended to the organizers to make the way more attractive, e.g. through placing some panels with photos from the previous music

festivals or with information about performers. According to another survey among 50 visitors of the final round, 80% of respondents would welcome it.

When evaluating the overall satisfaction, the significant difference in overall satisfaction between younger and older visitors is visible (excluding catering). In order to sustain the project, it is necessary to reach the younger segment of visitors through better conditions and offered program. Then the organizers have to change some attributes of the music festival. These changes (e.g. improving access roads into some compounds or ensuring larger parking space) are connected with relatively high financial demands and other barriers as well, for instance no possession of estates, suitable for music festivals. Then it is necessary to rent them. In the summary, a traditional festival could try to find a new and younger audience for the performed music genre; it can invent and test some innovative ventures in order to make the program more special and attractive for younger audience, maintaining at the same time the origin esprit of the festival; the offered services should be reconsidered to better meet the needs of both the traditional and new audience; the effort should be made also to get an improved hospitality and related services, such as parking, accommodation, etc. The second possibility is not to react to the new trend and to try to satisfy the preferences of the older age group of visitors. However, it is a genre music festival with the longest tradition in the Czech Republic, it has an established brand and that is why this solution would be short-sighted. It means this kind of unique events would have no chance for further development in the Czech Republic.

Cultural events are also important for local government. Although this issue was not the subject of the questionnaire, it was confirmed through the structured interviews with officials of local government where these events are held in different time periods during one year. It was found out these officials are aware such events are able to attract visitors to the particular locality. However, they have only limited opportunities how to support these events (especially from the financial viewpoint).

It has followed from the structured interviews that the officials of local government will be glad if the visitors of the music festival stay for a longer time. However, music events last usually for one or two days. According to the organizers of the regional rounds, there is no potential for additional broadening because the trend in the number of the competing music bands is approximately in a half of all venues slightly decreasing and at the second half of the venues it is stagnating. It means it is not possible to extend the offer in this way. The prolongation of the event would be possible only through inviting guests that would significantly raise the costs of organizing the event. The solution could lie in greater

cooperation of local entrepreneurs, local government and regional organizers – then the visitor of the music festival could stay longer and so contribute to the development of tourism in the particular area. However, this is not possible without the activity of other entrepreneurs.

It is possible to sum up the music festivals' perception is changing significantly. Based on the authors' experience in organizing similar events, at the turn of the millennium, most visitors expected provisional facilities in the form of a spacious meadow, they watched the event from the ground, slept in tents and had limited sanitary facilities. Now, visitors prefer perfect facilities and the requirements for the quality of catering (in our case, it was evaluated similarly across age categories) and accommodation change significantly. Instead of a tent city, more and more visitors expect an opportunity to overnight in hotels or pensions.

For determination of specific possibilities for further development, it would be necessary to make additional studies that would reveal specific preferences and opportunities how to satisfy the visitors' requirements. From the general point of view, it is important to think about the changing preferences of music festivals' visitors and about the festivals that can be potentially threatened in the future. It is important to realize that festivals have a meaningful role not only in the area of entertainment, but also in preserving cultural heritage (mainly genre festivals). The role of such events should be reconsidered in the context of cultural changes in the society, changes in consumer behaviour, new possibilities for leisure time, etc.

Both from the perspective of the organizers and the visitor, the development of services and the development of the event are important – the visitor must have a reason why to come next year and the organizer needs a loyal visitor.

Based on the findings and own experience, it can be said the perception of spending leisure time and providing associated services have been significantly changing in the last years in the Czech Republic. Tourists' demands, including visitors of music festivals, increase. Requirements of music festival's participants have been changing; the importance of the use of individual transport is growing and the equipment of accommodation as well as security is becoming a priority for many visitors when choosing which festival to visit. Festival organizers, irrespective of the festival kind, are aware of the growing concerns of the potential visitors: the bigger event, the bigger concerns. The proximity of a car park and the proximity of an accommodation facility belong to the visitor's requirements which were not their priority in previous years. The demands for food quality and variety (e.g. vegetarian meals or low-fat meals) are significantly growing. Many of the above mentioned requirements burden the budgets of the festivals organizers significantly which is in contrast with the visitors disapproval of increasing entrance fees.

In the 1990s, festivals in the Czech Republic were the important events – there were only few festivals and visitors travelled to the venue from the whole Czech Republic. Porta was the only festival at the regional level – this festival culminates with a big concert of winners from regional rounds. At the turn of the millennium, many local events were held, but many of them do not exist anymore. Only the very good festivals remain; however, their visitors do not return. It is given by a huge range of leisure activities that have arisen in recent years and that are competing against festivals. Further, there is a lower willingness of potential visitors to spend money and also a competition of cultural events, organized by cities and financed partially or fully from public funds, where visitors do not have to pay any entrance fee.

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