

Understanding urban festival attendees' involvement in Hong Kong dragon boat festival

Felix Elvis Otoo, Cecilia Ngwira and Zandivuta Kankhuni

Abstract

Purpose – *The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of involvement, satisfaction and festival attachment on urban Dragon Boat Festival (DBF) attendees' future intentions.*

Design/methodology/approach – *Data were collected from 307 participants of the Hong Kong DBF using a survey instrument. Data was analysed using a series of analytical tools including factor analysis, structural equation modelling and bootstrap mediation.*

Findings – *Results indicate that festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction directly influenced future intentions with the DBF, but this was not the case for festival attachment. Consequently, satisfaction is a key puzzle piece for understanding why DBF attendees may not revisit despite a positive attachment to the DBF.*

Research limitations/implications – *The study draws implications for DBF promotion as an urban cultural event.*

Originality/value – *This study sheds light on the key drivers of attendees' future intentions among both residents and tourists to urban festivals. A noble contribution to knowledge in this regard is that attachment alone is not sufficient to induce loyalty among DBF patrons. Essentially, satisfaction is a vital element for repeat visits. The study also makes important distinctions in determining elements of attachment.*

Keywords *Involvement, Attachment, Events, Urban festival, Dragon boat, Hong Kong, Satisfaction, Future intentions, Mediation, COVID-19*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Introduction

Festival events have gained social and economic relevance in recent years as they contribute to the animation and social cohesion of a city, region or country (Adongo & Kim, 2018; Mair & Duffy, 2021). Festivals have grown immensely in terms of number, diversity and popularity (Li & Lin, 2016; Pope, Isely, & Agbetunsin, 2017) and are increasingly used as extensions of destinations' tourism products, communicating the culture and hospitality attributes to patrons (Adongo & Kim, 2018; Adongo, Kim, & Elliot, 2019; McCartney & Osti, 2007; McKercher, Mei, & Tse, 2006). More recently, tourists invest time and money attending festival events, and thus, destination managers now view festivals as tools to enhance the image of host regions while at the same time revitalizing the local economy (Lee & Hsu, 2013; Li & Lin, 2016).

The Dragon Boat Festival (hereafter DBF), as a point of reference, constitutes one of the major urban cultural events in the Asia Pacific region drawing a large crowd of local and international patrons. The DBF, as an ancient Chinese ritual commemorating the death of the Chinese poet Qu Yuan, is listed as a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage. Currently, DBF is organized in over 15 countries and regions including Taiwan, Macau,

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Vietnam, South Korea, Canada, the UK and Japan. In Hong Kong, the DBF is held annually as a modern international sports event (McKercher *et al.*, 2006; Sofield & Sivan, 2003). The Hong Kong DBF, thus, transitions from a cultural festival to an international urban sports event. With growing competition from similar events in Mainland China as well as other non-Asian countries, staging a satisfying and memorable festival that translates into loyal visitors is a major concern for organizers (Girish & Chen, 2017; Pookaiyaudom, 2019).

Empirically, however, gaps remain in the application of involvement in festival research. Firstly, many studies on festivals focus on visitor motivation and segmentation (Chang, 2006; Li, Huang, & Cai, 2009) and satisfaction and intention (Lee, Kyle, & Scott, 2012; Wong, Wu, & Cheng, 2014) to the neglect of establishing the interrelationships among these variables. Thus, the complexities associated with understanding the dynamics of festivals as events are not readily understood (Frost & Laing, 2015; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Kim, 2015). Secondly, the relationships among involvement, festival attachment and satisfaction remain unclear and inconclusive, if not contradictory. For example, there is a lack of consensus on the relationship between involvement and festival attachment (Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016; Fulthorp & Plunkett, 2019; Okayasu, 2021).

Furthermore, many festival studies have widely been conducted in rural settings (Chang, 2006; Frost & Laing, 2015; Li *et al.*, 2009) with only a notable few on urban festivals (Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Wong *et al.*, 2014). DBF is unique, as it cuts across different cultures and national boundaries with Hong Kong hosting one of the biggest DBFs (McCartney & Osti, 2007). With similar events being held in non-Mainland China destinations, competition to attract attendees is becoming keen. Thus, it is relevant and timely to investigate the influence of participants' involvement and its influence on future intentions.

One way of achieving festival attendees' satisfaction and positive intentions is through participant involvement. Although literature cites different dimensions of involvement, there is varying empirical evidence of its importance to tourists' experience (Lee & Beeler, 2009; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yen & Teng, 2015). For example, studies have found a relationship between involvement and satisfaction in travel services (Pritchard & Howard, 1993), recreation (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990), destination image (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), parks (Hwang, Lee, & Chen, 2005) and events (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Kim, Duncan, & Chung, 2015; Wong & Tang, 2016). Meanwhile, such evidence as applied to urban festivals remains scant.

Thus, this study aims to address the role of festival attendees' involvement in understanding festival attendees' behaviour and antecedents of visitor loyalty for festival destinations. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- examine the nature of festival attendees' involvement in DBF;
- examine the direct effects of festival attendees' involvement on festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions; and
- investigate the mediating roles of satisfaction and festival attachment on the relationship between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions.

For festival organizers, the understanding of antecedents of visitor loyalty may offer opportunities to improve festival attendees' involvement, satisfaction and festival attachment attributes as well as to market and promote Hong Kong as a preferred DBF destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

Literature review

Broadly, destination marketers aim to achieve a satisfied clientele among festival event attendees, given that there is a strong relationship between festival satisfaction and attendees' loyalty (Li & Lin, 2016; Stedman, 2002). To further understand the antecedents of

DBF, a research model was proposed to explore the causal relationships between festival attendees' involvement, festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions.

Conceptualization and application of involvement

Involvement has been defined as the level of psychological connection, opinions about personal relevance and the extent to which an individual is committed to an object, activity, place or experience (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004). Within the leisure and tourism context, involvement has been conceptualized as "an observable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or a product" (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997, p. 246). Involvement reveals the degree to which a person is devoted to an activity, product or experience (Khraim, 2018; Prayag & Ryan, 2012) resulting in holistic sensations (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990) as well as moderated attitudinal changes (Khraim, 2018). In the specific festival and event context, involvement encapsulates an individual's sense of personal relevance to and interest in a particular event (Wong *et al.*, 2014; Wong & Tang, 2016). Juxtaposing the above definitions, there is a common understanding that festival involvement is a psychological connection and personal engagement with cultural, historical or traditional attributes of a festival event (see Beckman, Shu, & Pan, 2020; Biswas, Deb, Hasan, & Khandakar, 2020; Yoo, Kitterlin-Lynch, & Kim, 2020).

Even though the broad concept of involvement has been studied in the tourism and hospitality literature (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yen & Teng, 2015), it has not been widely applied within the festival research context (Kim *et al.*, 2015). In festivals and events, involvement has been investigated in local food festivals (Choo, Park, & Petrick, 2022), app use at festivals (Li, Su, Hu, & Yao, 2019) and novelty-seeking in fireworks festival (Cheng, Chang, & Dai, 2015).

Meanwhile, measurements of involvement have not been consistent within the literature. For example, Laurent and Kapferer (1985) developed the consumer involvement profile inventory; Zaichkowsky (1985) developed the personal involvement inventory; and Mittal (1989) developed the Mittal involvement scale. Alternatively, other researchers used the construct of personal involvement (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Wong & Tang, 2016).

Among other studies, a three-factor solution constituting pleasure, centrality and self-expression as dimensions of involvement was adopted (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Kyle & Mowen, 2005; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Results from the studies reveal that involvement is a complex concept; the outcome of which may inhibit the interpretation of multifaceted data. The foregoing deliberation is supported by Funk *et al.* (2004), who noted that the multidimensionality of the involvement construct remains contestable. Various components of involvement do not uniformly apply to all individuals or contexts because components vary according to individual characteristics and/or activity. Summing this conundrum, Prayag and Ryan (2012) iterate that there is no standard scale with which to measure involvement in the tourism context.

Place attachment and festival attachment

Attachment reflects the emotional connection between an individual and the settings of a particular destination (Tsai, Yeh, & Huan, 2011; Dwyer, Chen, & Lee, 2019; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Among other things, festival attendees value the experience of attending a festival with other attendees, which creates and enhances friendships among the festival community. The enhanced friendships from the festival experience lead to attendees' attachment to the festival (Alonso-Vazquez, Packer, Fairley, & Hughes, 2018).

Place attachment is purported to induce a strong sense of security, trust and confidence, cheerfulness and a sense of destination identification (Tsai, 2012). Furthermore, place

attachment is a distinct marketing strength with the potential to exert an important impact on tourists' attitudinal loyalty and revisit behaviour while fostering emotional branding and experiential marketing (Han, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2019; Tsai, 2012). Place attachment reinforces the role of emotional bonding with places (Wang & Chen, 2015) as well as the intention to stay longer (Wang & Chen, 2015). Zhang, Huang, Green, and Qiu (2018) postulate that place attachment is an outcome of the festival event experience, which triggers emotional attachment from the attendees. In sports tourism events such as DBF, the people-place attachment is also acknowledged (Zhang *et al.* (2018).

However, much research on place attachment has focused on the connections between people and the physical environment rather than the non-physical space (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). For example, Alonso-Vazquez *et al.* (2018), Zhang *et al.* (2018) and Han *et al.* (2019) studied attendees' attachment to the destination as compared to the non-physical space such as an event (Tsaour, Wang, Liu, & Huang, 2019). Festivals allow attendees to experience a welcoming atmosphere, social exchanges, wide-ranging activities and well-appointed facilities (Kyle & Chick, 2007). Meaningful experiences with residents at a festival may enhance the attendees' attachment to the host, thereby reflecting festival attachment as a predictor of place attachment (Tsaour *et al.*, 2019). Thus, much as attachment reflects people's self-expression and attitude towards a target, festival attachment focuses on the connection to a temporal event, whereas place attachment focuses on the connection to the host place. Indeed, Kirkup and Sutherland (2017) suggest that spectators at an event can develop an attachment to the event itself. The current study focuses on festival attachment as our interest is on attendees' interaction with the DBF and not Hong Kong as the host place. The premise here is that place attachment arises as attendees become acquainted with DBF's attributes and values, which may, in turn, contribute to attendees' satisfaction (Ramkisson & Mavondo, 2014; Zhang *et al.*, 2018).

Relationship between festival attendees' involvement and festival attachment

Scarpi, Mason, and Raggiotto (2019) state that through events, individuals assign meaning and memories to places such that the self is reflected in the place and the place reflected in the self, thus creating attachment or even dislike of the place. Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus of positive meaning to place attachment (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Santos, Ramos, & Almeida, 2017). In a study on the 2012 London Olympic Games, Brown *et al.* (2016) found that spectators reacted positively to the environmental setting (place) while watching a sport with which they were highly involved. In study on a recreational event, Fulthorp and Plunkett (2019) found no relationship between involvement and attachment. In a context more related to festivals, Okayasu (2021) established sports event involvement as a predictor of participants' sense of attachment to the event. To sum, the literature identifies enduring involvement frequency of use, length of association, past experience, the proximity of destination, service interactions as some of the factors influencing festival attendees' attachment (Dwyer *et al.*, 2019; Prayag & Lee, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2018). Consequently, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1. Festival attendees' involvement has a positive influence on attachment to the DBF.

Relationship between involvement and satisfaction

The relationship between involvement and satisfaction is still a subject of much debate (Altunel & Erkurt, 2015; Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015). Whereas several studies (Hwang *et al.*, 2005; Lu *et al.*, 2015) have established a positive association between involvement and satisfaction, a different conclusion was reached by authors such as Prayag and Ryan (2012). Specific to the event/festival context, studies advance festival involvement as a prerequisite for satisfaction since festivals usually involve the active participation of attendees (Beckman *et al.*, 2020; Yoo *et al.*, 2020; Lee & Jan, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2019). Study

results indicate a positive link between involvement and other constructs such as satisfaction (Beckman *et al.*, 2020; Gao, Lin, & Zhang, 2020; Yoo *et al.*, 2020), repeat visitation (Lee & Beeler, 2009) and loyalty (Choo *et al.*, 2022). For example, a statistically significant relationship has been established between situation involvement and attendees' satisfaction in a fireworks festival (Cheng *et al.*, 2015) and in music festivals (Li *et al.*, 2019; Tsai *et al.*, 2011). In craft beer festivals, results indicate a positive relationship between personal involvement and satisfaction (Beckman *et al.*, 2020). Indeed, involvement is a critical determinant of festival attendees' behaviour (Cheng *et al.*, 2015; Choo *et al.*, 2022). On the contrary, Jurowski and Nickerson (2016) failed to establish a significant relationship between involvement in passive absorption activities (which included attending performing arts, special events, sporting events, festivals, etc.) and satisfaction.

Additionally, there is some evidence of place attachment acting as a mediator between festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction. For instance, Brown *et al.* (2016) report a partial mediation of place attachment on the relationship between festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction in the UK. Meanwhile, some studies (Hosany, Prayag, Van Der Veen, Huang, & Deesilatham, 2017) did not consider the mediating role of place attachment mainly because only full mediation was considered useful. Others developed path models where indirect effects were neglected (Scarpi *et al.*, 2019). Given the lack of uniformity in understanding the relationship between festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction, the following hypotheses are tested:

H2. Festival attendees' involvement has a positive influence on attendees' satisfaction with the DBF festival.

MH1. Festival attachment plays a mediating role between festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction with DBF.

Relationship between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions

Future intention is an important dependent construct that may accurately reflect actual behaviour (Lee & Beeler, 2009). The construct is usually operationalized by intention to recommend, intention to say positive things or intention to return. Future intention is also applied in the measurement of loyalty to a destination, especially in the context of actual or experienced tourists (Li & Lin, 2016; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Wong & Tang, 2016). Extant literature holds that high consumer involvement is responsible for personally important and pertinent purchases (Brennan & Mavondo, 2000; Kim *et al.*, 2015). Conversely, low consumer involvement leads to purchases that are not personally significant (Madrigal, Havitz, & Howard, 1992; Beckman *et al.*, 2020). In the festival context, involvement has been established as a precursor of behavioural intentions (Chang, Gibson, & Sisson, 2014; Choo *et al.*, 2022).

In light of the challenges confronting festivals, such as sponsorship, increased competition, changing regulatory policies and now travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attaining festival loyalty may help achieve long-term festival sustainability (Girish & Chen, 2017).

However, the relationship between involvement and future intentions seems varied. On the one hand, some studies have found no significant relationship between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions (Brown *et al.*, 2016). On the other hand, a significant and positive influence of festival attendees' involvement on future intentions was reported both in the general tourism setting (Lee & Chang, 2012) and the festival context (Choo *et al.*, 2022; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Wong *et al.*, 2014). Recognizing the importance of involvement as a predictor of festival attendees' future intentions, the organization of festivals has become a primary way of enhancing visitors' likelihood of return (Tsai *et al.*, 2011; Scarpi *et al.*, 2019). Given these inconsistencies in the literature, the current study seeks to further examine the relationship between festival involvement and future intentions.

[Altunel and Erkurt \(2015\)](#) established that satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between involvement and recommendation intention. In a study on public transit passengers, [Lai and Chen \(2011\)](#) found a mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between involvement and behavioural intentions. [Chang et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Beckman et al. \(2020\)](#) observed that satisfaction mediates the influence of involvement on future intentions. Thus, the hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H3. Festival attendees' involvement has a positive influence on future intentions to the DBF.

MH2. Satisfaction plays a mediating role between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions to the DBF.

Relationship between festival attachment and future intentions

At the destination level, [Prayag and Ryan \(2012\)](#) observe a positive relationship between place attachment and intention to recommend. Likewise, [Cheng and Wu \(2015\)](#), in their study of nature-based recreation, found a significant influence of place attachment on environmentally responsible behaviours. In the festival setting, there is an indication that place attachment is a significant predictor of intention to revisit ([Lee, Lee, & Park, 2014](#)). In contrast, [Lee et al. \(2012\)](#) noted a negative but significant relationship between place dependence and future intentions. [López-Mosquera and Sánchez \(2013\)](#) found that place dependence and affective place attachment have varying effects on intentions (measured as the willingness to pay and loyalty). [Prayag and Ryan \(2012\)](#) thus call for further studies exploring the relationship between place attachment and future intentions. In a related context, [Zhan, Luo, and Luo \(2020\)](#) established a significant relationship between exhibition attachment and future intentions (loyalty). Similarly, [Kirkup and Sutherland \(2017\)](#) hypothesized that event attachment has a positive influence on event future intentions. In their study, [Farnham, Brown, and Schwartz \(2009\)](#) established a positive relationship between event attachment and return intentions. Concerning festival attachment and future intentions, [Tsaour et al. \(2019\)](#) found a positive relationship between festival attachment and loyalty.

Meanwhile, satisfaction has been considered a key intervening variable between place attachment and future intentions ([Brown et al., 2016](#); [Lee et al., 2012](#); [Prayag & Ryan, 2012](#)). [Campón-Cerro, Alves, and Hernández-Mogollón \(2015\)](#) observed that satisfaction mediates the influence of place attachment on tourists' loyalty to rural destinations. However, [Brown et al. \(2016\)](#) could not establish a mediating effect of satisfaction on venue attachment and revisit intentions of Olympic Games spectators. For [Tsaour et al. \(2019\)](#), place attachment mediated the relationship between festival attachment and future intentions. To further understand these relationships, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

H4. Festival attachment has a positive influence on future intentions to the DBF.

MH3. Satisfaction plays a mediating role between festival attachment and future intentions to the DBF.

Relationship between satisfaction and future intentions

Festival satisfaction is defined as attendees' personal experiences of the festival constituting psychological feelings and emotional reactions emanating from the attendees' interactions with the host destination ([Baker & Crompton, 2000](#)). Thus, an attempt by destination managers to increase visitor satisfaction at festivals can result in increasing the return visit rate and visitor spending, attracting support for tourism development, and ultimately, overall profits ([Li & Lin, 2016](#)). Considering that other destinations across the world have embraced the DBF, it is imperative to understand how satisfaction can influence attendees' loyalty to the festival in Hong Kong.

Agyeiwaah, Otoo, Suntikul, and Huang (2019) state that in some cases, tourists' overall satisfaction is the most important determinant of revisit intentions. Indeed, some studies on festivals have established satisfaction as a positive indicator of future intentions (Girish & Chen, 2017; Lee, 2014; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Li & Lin, 2016). Hosany *et al.* (2017) established a positive relationship between satisfaction and future intentions among international tourists to Thailand. However, some scholars have failed to establish a positive relationship between satisfaction and future intentions (Chang *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, the hypothesis is stated as:

H5. Satisfaction has a positive influence on future intention to the DBF.

Relationship between festival attachment and satisfaction

Several studies have found place attachment to be a predictor of satisfaction (e.g. Brown *et al.*, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2012). For example, in a recent study among diaspora attendees to historical sites in Ghana, Otoo, Kim, and Styliadis (2021) found a positive relationship between diaspora tourists' place attachment and their intention to revisit. In a related context, Zhan *et al.* (2020) established a positive relationship between exhibition attachment and satisfaction. In contrast, other studies failed to establish a significant and positive relationship between place attachment and satisfaction. For instance, Lee and Allen (1999) found that tourists' destination satisfaction was not influenced by the tourists' attachment to the destination. Likewise, Lee *et al.* (2014) found no relationship between community attachment and satisfaction among community festival attendees. Given these divides, we postulate that:

H6. Festival attachment has a positive influence on satisfaction with the DBF.

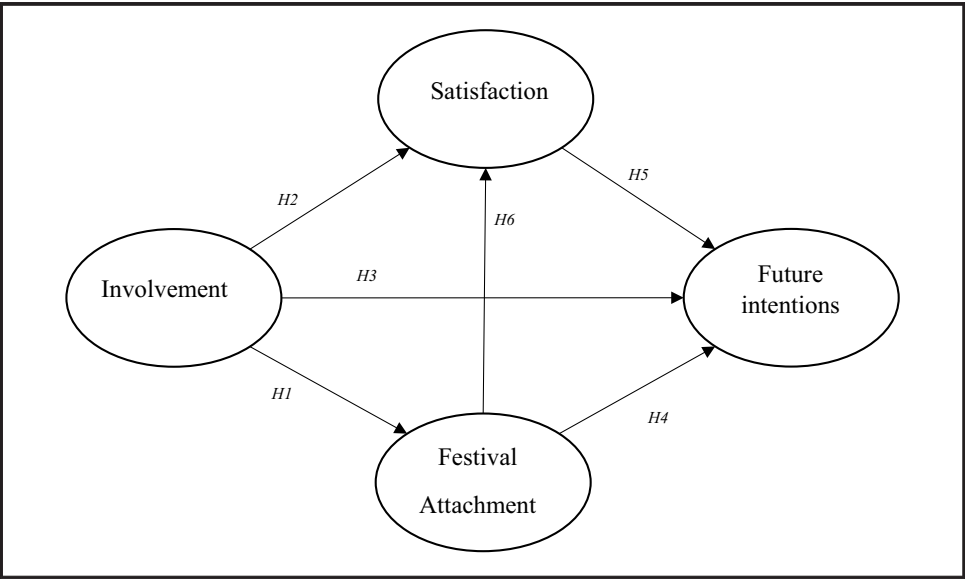
The conceptual model depicting the hypotheses is shown in Figure 1.

Method

Study context and site

DBF, or Tuen Ng in Cantonese, is an annual cultural sports festival hosted in Hong Kong in May or June. The Hong Kong DBF commenced in 1976 and is highly promoted by the

Figure 1 Proposed conceptual model



Hong Kong Tourism Board. Hong Kong hosts one of the largest DBFs (McCartney & Osti, 2007), and attracts people from all over the world, thus, serving to promote community values, ideologies, as well as symbolizing community identity. The boats are decorated with dragonhead prows and dragon tail sterns. According to mythology, this keeps alive community belief in dragons as guardians against evil water spirits (Sofield & Sivan, 2003).

The study was conducted at two locations, Stanley and Aberdeen, located on Hong Kong Island. Stanley is the main venue for the annual DBF. In 2018, the DBF attracted more than 30,000 spectators, 264 teams comprising 6,000 paddlers and 140 sponsoring companies (Kao, Chan, Law, Gurung, & Zheng, 2018; Hong Kong Tourism Commission, 2018). These indicators accounted for choosing Hong Kong for the study.

Measurement and scale

All measurement items were adopted from previous studies and revised for the current study. The festival attendees' involvement construct was measured with eight items including "I get pleasure from participating in DBF" and "I attach great importance to being part of DBF" (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; López, Virto, Manzano, & Miranda, 2018; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Huaman-Ramirez (2020) notes that, assessed against Gross and Brown (2006) multidimensional scale (i.e. risk importance, interest, pleasure, sign, risk probability) which is predicated on the scale by Laurent and Kapferer (1985), studies in marketing have established greater reliability of Zaichkowsky's (1985) unidimensional scale which seems to have an edge because it evenly includes emotional and cognitive items (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Thus, in festivals, Choo *et al.* (2022) advanced the use of involvement as unidimensional.

The debate on whether place attachment is unidimensional or multidimensional refuses to settle. In literature, authors have been left to choose between complex, multidimensional place attachment scales or unidimensional scales. On the other hand, some authors such as Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim (2010) used three items each to represent place dependence and place identity. Nonetheless, all approaches yield similar results (see Lewicka, 2010). For this study, we opted to present place attachment as a unidimensional construct (Alonso-Vazquez *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the festival attachment construct had four items including "DBF is part of me" and "DBF means a lot to me" (López *et al.*, 2018; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Tsaor *et al.*, 2019; Williams & Vaske, 2003).

The satisfaction construct was measured using four items including "Coming to DBF was a good choice" and "Overall I was satisfied with my decision to watch DBF" (Chen & Chen, 2010). The construct "future intentions" was measured using three items on recommendation, saying positive things and watching the DBF again (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements on festival attendees' involvement, festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions. The last part of the research instrument focused on sociodemographic features including sex, nationality, annual household income and education.

Data collection

The study used questionnaires to collect data. To avoid systematic bias and to reflect the internationality of the DBF, the questionnaires were provided in Mandarin, Cantonese and English. To check face validity, two Mandarin and two Cantonese-speaking PhD students were engaged to proofread the instrument. These were administered by eight field researchers who received training prior to the study. The approach was needful given the limited duration of the DBF event. Convenience sampling was considered suitable for this study for the following reasons: firstly, the absence of the sampling frame from which to

select participants randomly; and secondly, DBF is a one-day event, thus, rendering it difficult to know the particulars of the attendees in advance, and finally, it was difficult to draw study participants randomly in an open space (Agbabiaka, Omoike, & Omisore, 2017; Akhoondnejad, 2016; Kim, Choe, & Petrick, 2018; Stratton, 2021). Both domestic and international tourists were selected under the following conditions: firstly, respondents self-identified as being above 17 years; and secondly, participants were physically present at a DBF venue during data collection. Data were collected under the same conditions at the Stanley and Aberdeen venues 2 h into the event. Although 400 questionnaires were distributed on 7th June 2019, 307 were usable representing approximately 77% response rate (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Kline, 2011).

Data analysis

Usable questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social version 25 and Analysis of a Moment Structures version 25. The stages of analyses were four-fold: firstly, frequency analysis was undertaken to identify the characteristics of the respondents. Secondly, factor analysis using principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was conducted on the involvement items to determine the underlying dimensions. Thirdly, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the measurement model (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Fourthly, structural equation modelling (SEM) was conducted to test the conceptual model. Furthermore, using Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) and Preacher and Hayes (2004) prescribed method, bootstrapping was done to test the mediation effect of satisfaction and festival attachment on the relationship between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions. Thus, Preacher and Hayes (2004) proposed syntax for an alternative "bootstrap" test of the indirect effect was carried out. This approach has been considered superior to Sobel's test (Zhao *et al.*, 2010).

Results

Profile of respondents

The information regarding the demographics of the respondents is reported as follows: a little over half (53.75%) of the respondents were males. Close to two-thirds (62.2%) of the respondents were single. In terms of nationality, approximately 42% of the respondents were from Hong Kong, whereas about 41% were from Mainland China. The remaining sample (17%) was constituted by 21 individual nationalities including Germany, India, Indonesia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, South Africa and Switzerland. About 69% were college graduates and 28% were company employees. The annual household income was below US\$10,000 for 27% of the respondents and one in five earned incomes ranging from US\$50,000 to US\$69,999. Table 1 below presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Factor analysis, reliability and validity

Table 2 below shows the result of the factor analysis of the constructs used in the study, notably, festival attendees' involvement, festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions. Festival attendees' involvement represented the exogenous variable, while festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions represented endogenous variables. We conducted an exploratory factor analysis using PCA with varimax rotation to identify the dimensions of festival attendees' involvement, festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions. Each construct produced a single factor solution. Under PCA, manifest items are transformed into respective new variables that represent a useful dimension within a given data set (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2019).

Table 1 Demographic features of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Female	139	45.28
	Male	165	53.75
	Others	3	0.98
Marital status	Single	191	62.21
	Married	104	33.88
	Others	12	3.91
Age	20 s	139	45.28
	30s	100	32.57
	40s	32	10.42
	50s or older	36	11.73
Nationality/origin	Hong Kong	129	42.02
	Mainland China	125	40.72
	UK	12	3.91
	Canada	5	1.63
	Bangladesh	4	1.30
	France	4	1.30
	USA	4	1.30
	Others (15 other nationalities)	24	7.82
Educational level	Primary	4	1.30
	Middle/High school	77	25.08
	College/University degree	213	69.38
	Other	13	4.23
Household income	Less than US\$10,000	83	27.04
	US\$ 10,000–29,999	35	11.40
	US\$ 30,000–49,999	45	14.66
	US\$ 50,000–69,999	62	20.20
	US\$ 70,000–89,999	38	12.38
	US\$ 90,000–100,999	27	8.79
	US\$ 111,000 or above	17	5.54
Occupation	Company employee	86	28.01
	Own business	12	3.91
	Civil servant	16	5.21
	Agricultural/Fishery	3	0.98
	Professional	25	8.14
	Housewife	18	5.86
	Technician	9	2.93
	Sales service	5	1.63
	Education	51	16.61
	Retired	16	5.21
	Others	66	21.50

The communality of each item for the four constructs ranged from 0.50 to 0.83, which indicates that the factors accounted for 50% to 83% of the variances (Stevens, 2002). Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) test and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were conducted to assess the suitability of factor analyses to the festival attendees’ involvement construct. The KMO value was 0.81, and Bartlett’s test was significant at the 0.000 level ($\chi^2 = 613.78$, $df = 10$); both indicating the factorability of the matrices (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The item “I support research on DBF for its continuity” was removed as it failed to reach the 0.45 threshold (Lee *et al.*, 2014). The factor solution accounted for 51.6% of the total variance. Concerning internal consistency, the Cronbach’s alpha values of 0.83, 0.86, 0.93 and 0.89 for festival attendees’ involvement, festival attachment, satisfaction and future intentions, respectively, indicated the internal consistency of items in each construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 2 Results of PCA with descriptive statistics of model constructs

Factors and items	Communality	Factor loading	Mean	Std. dev.
Dragon Boat involvement				
Component 1: Involvement ($\alpha = 0.83$, eigenvalue = 2.58, explained variance = 51.60, grand mean = 3.72)				
inv3 I have a lot of interest in Dragon Boat Festival	0.77	0.88	3.77	0.92
inv1 I get pleasure from participating in Dragon Boat Festival	0.71	0.86	3.93	0.79
inv2 I attach great importance to being part of Dragon Boat Festival	0.70	0.82	3.62	0.92
Inv5 I participate in Dragon Boat Festival activities	0.50	0.67	3.89	1.11
inv4 Participating in Dragon Boat Festival is like giving a gift to one's self	0.56	0.65	3.37	1.09
Festival attachment ($\alpha = 0.86$, eigenvalue = 2.52 explained variance = 63.00, grand mean = 3.18)				
Att 1 Being at Dragon Boat Festival is important to me than elsewhere	0.53	0.90	3.06	1.05
Att 2 Dragon Boat Festival is part of me	0.78	0.90	3.06	1.05
Att 3 Dragon Boat Festival means a lot to me	0.79	0.85	3.29	1.08
Att 4 I feel a strong sense of attachment towards Dragon Boat Festival	0.60	0.73	3.32	1.11
Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.93$, eigenvalue = 3.05, explained variance = 76.33, grand mean = 3.90)				
Sat1 Coming to Dragon Boat Festival was a good choice	0.70	0.89	3.87	0.70
Sat2 Watching Dragon Boat Festival was a good experience	0.83	0.89	3.93	0.83
Sat3 I was happy with my choice to watch Dragon Boat Festival	0.80	0.91	3.89	0.80
Sat4 Overall, I was satisfied with my decision to watch Dragon Boat Festival	0.72	0.85	3.93	0.72
Future intention ($\alpha = 0.89$, eigenvalue = 2.20, explained variance = 81.70, grand mean = 3.92)				
Intent1 I feel like recommending Dragon Boat Festival to others	0.78	0.92	3.91	0.83
Intent2 I feel like saying positive things about the Dragon Boat Festival	0.79	0.92	3.94	0.83
Intent3 I would like to watch the Dragon Boat Festival in the future	0.62	0.88	3.89	0.94
Notes: KMO = 0.81; Bartlett's test = 613.78; $p < 0.000$				

Confirmatory factor analysis results

Before conducting SEM, CFA was conducted to confirm the 16 measurement variables representing four latent constructs. For this process, a sample size above 200 is preferable (Kline, 2011). Convergent and discriminant validity are integral for construct validation in CFA. Convergent validity is ascertained by inspection of standardized factor loading higher than 0.5, average variance extracted (AVE) equal or above 0.5 and composite reliability above 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Stevens, 2002). As shown in Table 3, standardized factor loadings for all constructs were greater than the recommended 0.50 threshold.

Further, fit indices including normed chi-square (χ^2/df statistic) between 1 and 3, comparative fit index (CFI) equal or higher than 0.8, root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) lower than 0.8 and Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) equal or above 0.8 are examined (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Kline, 2011). A goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of 0.8 is considered acceptable (Kline, 2011). The measurement model produced an overall good fit (GFI = 0.930, TLI = 0.969, CFI = 0.975 and RMSEA = 0.054). Furthermore, normed chi-square (χ^2/df) was also acceptable at 1.881.

For discriminant validity, the AVE of a construct must be higher than the maximum shared variance (MSV), and the square root of AVE values for each construct should be greater than the inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As evidenced from Table 4, both discriminant and convergent validity were proven. Furthermore, as shown in Table 5, using the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations method, all values were less than the 0.85 threshold, and thus discriminant validity was established (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Reliability was also attained as all constructs had composite reliabilities above the cut-off point of 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Structural equation modelling and hypothesis testing

After testing the measurement model with supported model fit, validity and reliability, a structural model is tested to identify if the hypothesized model is consistent with the data. For

Table 3 Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Manifest variables	Standardized factor loading	Unstandardized factor loading	SE	t-value
Inv1	0.68	0.77	0.09	8.81
Inv2	0.74	1.01	0.11	9.57
Inv3	0.90	1.23	0.13	9.63
Inv4	0.67	1.12	0.12	9.18
Inv5	0.60	1.00	N/A	N/A
Att1	0.61	0.74	0.07	10.80
Att2	0.87	1.05	0.06	16.46
Att3	0.89	1.00	0.07	16.77
Att4	0.78	1.00	N/A	N/A
Sat2	0.89	1.01	0.05	21.37
Sat3	0.82	0.94	0.05	18.20
Sat4	0.83	0.89	0.05	18.89
Sat1	0.89	1.00	N/A	N/A
intent2	0.86	0.96	0.05	20.79
intent3	0.78	0.98	0.06	17.44
intent1	0.91	1.00	N/A	N/A

Notes: SE: Standard error for unstandardized coefficient; reported factor loadings are significant at $p < 0.005$. Parameters are fixed at 1.0 for the maximum-likelihood estimation and *t-values* were not obtained (N/A) for those fixed at 1 for identification purposes

this task, maximum likelihood estimation was assessed. As with the test of the measurement model, fit indices are likewise assessed. The normed chi-square was acceptable at 1.52. CFI was acceptable at 0.986, while TLI was supported at .982. In addition, RMSEA indicated a good fit at 0.041. In terms of overall fit, GFI was acceptable at 0.95. Also, standardized root mean square (SRMR) indicated a good fit (0.039). Thus, the structural model revealed a sufficient level of predictive power to explain each dependent variable.

The significance level of this study is set at 0.05, and thus, an alternative hypothesis is accepted if the *p*-value on a structural path is lower than 0.05. A positive sign between two variables is indicative of a positive effect on the dependent variable. Altogether, six hypothetical relationships were tested. Table 6 presents the result of the path coefficients of the structural equation model. Five of the six direct hypothesized relationships were significant. Festival attendees' involvement was found to influence festival attachment, thus, *H1* was supported ($\beta = 0.70$; $p = 0.000$). Festival attendees' involvement strongly influenced satisfaction, thus, *H2* was supported ($\beta = 0.54$; $p = 0.000$). Statistical significance was noted for *H3* as festival attendees' involvement influenced future intentions ($\beta = 0.16$; $p = 0.005$). For *H5*, satisfaction was noted to significantly influence future intentions ($\beta = 0.70$; $p = 0.000$). Finally, there was support for *H6* at the 0.005 level as festival attachment influenced satisfaction ($\beta = 0.21$; $p = 0.005$). Further, the R^2 values used to predict satisfaction, festival attachment and future intentions were 0.49, 0.49 and 0.71, respectively, demonstrating that the structural model showed a sufficient level of predictive power to

Table 4 Composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity

Variables	CR	AVE	Mean	SD	MSV	Satisfaction	Attachment	Future intentions	Involvement
Satisfaction	0.92	0.73	3.90	0.80	0.69	0.86			
Festival attachment	0.87	0.63	3.72	0.73	0.49	0.59	0.80		
Future intentions	0.89	0.73	3.18	0.90	0.69	0.83	0.56	0.85	
Involvement	0.84	0.52	3.92	0.780	0.49	0.69	0.70	0.67	0.72

Note: All correlation coefficients were significant at 0.001 level

Table 5 Heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations

Variables	Satisfaction	Festival attachment	Future intentions	Involvement
Satisfaction	1			
Festival attachment	0.59	1		
Future intentions	0.81	0.57	1	
Involvement	0.71	0.75	0.71	1

Table 6 Path coefficients of the structural equation model

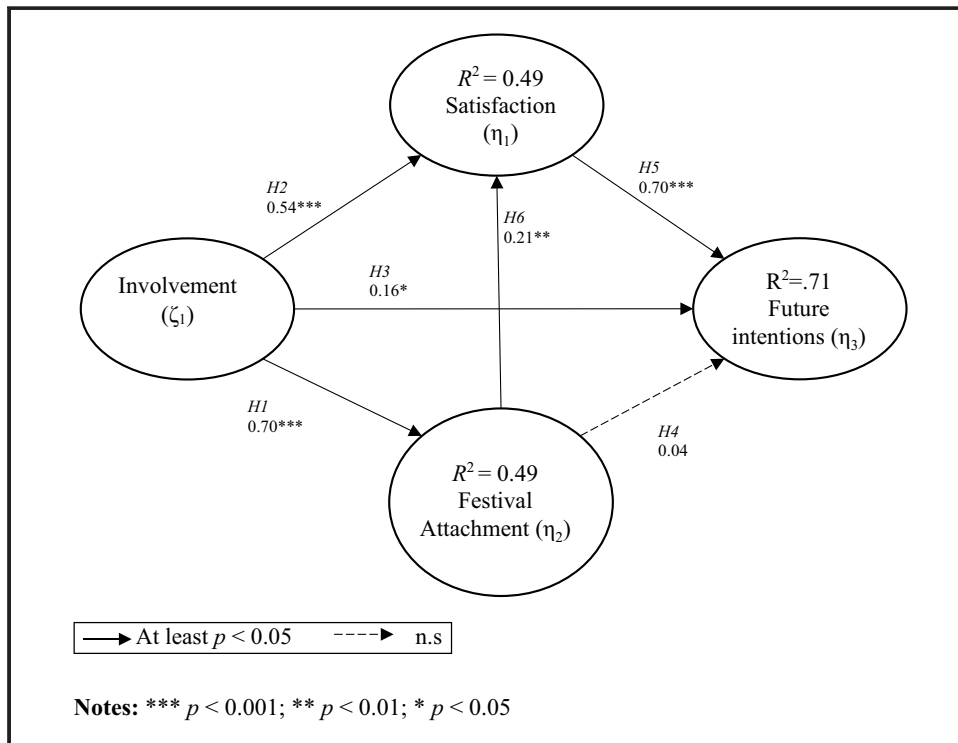
Latent variables		SRW	SE	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1 Involvement	→ Festival attachment	0.90	0.11	8.30	0.000***	Support
H2 Involvement	→ Satisfaction	0.63	0.11	5.96	0.000***	Support
H3 Involvement	→ Future intentions	0.18	0.08	2.23	0.026*	Support
H4 Festival attachment	→ Future intentions	0.03	0.05	0.61	0.540	Reject
H5 Satisfaction	→ Future intentions	0.66	0.06	10.56	0.000***	Support
H6 Festival attachment	→ Satisfaction	0.19	0.07	2.81	0.005**	Support

Notes: Standard regression weights (SRW); SE: Standard error for unstandardized coefficient; ***Significant at significant at $p < 0.001$; **Significant at significant at $p < 0.01$; *Significant at significant at $p < 0.05$

explain each endogenous variable via exogenous ones. Figure 2 gives a pictorial depiction of the structural model.

Test of mediating effects

To test the relevance of the alternative mediation effects within this study, three mediation hypotheses were tested using Baron and Kenny (1986). These are, (M1) the mediating

Figure 2 Structural equation model of Dragon Boat festival involvement antecedents

effect of festival attachment on festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction, (M2) the mediating effect of satisfaction on festival attendees' involvement and future intentions and (M3) the mediating effect of satisfaction on festival attachment and future intentions. Baron and Kenny (1986) mediation tool has four steps. Step 1: conducting a simple regression analysis between the independent variable and the dependent variable and establishing that the independent variable has a significant impact on the dependent variable. In the event that there is no significant impact, then there is no mediation. Step 2: conducting a simple regression analysis of the independent variable on the mediator. In this step, the independent variable must have a significant impact on the mediator. Step 3: conducting a multiple regression analysis between the independent variable, the mediator and the dependent variable. Here, the mediator must have a significant impact on the dependent variable. Step 4: the expectation is that if all conditions are satisfied, "the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third step than in the first step" (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011, p. 124). When the introduction of the mediator in the model invalidates Step 1, full mediation is established. Otherwise, there is partial or no mediation.

The mediation analysis established partial mediation for all the three hypothesized relationships as there was a decrease in the effect values of the independent variable on the dependent variable, yet remained significant with the introduction of the mediator in the model (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2005). It can be observed in Figure 3 that both *t*-test and beta values decrease for all multiple regression analyses, but the Sobel test results were significant. For example, in the first model, beta values decrease from Step 1 ($\beta = 0.61$; $t = 13.45$) to Step 2 ($\beta = 0.52$; $t = 12.83$) to step 3 ($\beta = 0.42$; $t = 7.27$).

Given the contested differences in approaches to mediation analyses, bootstrap was conducted to ascertain the differences in these statistical measures. The result, as presented in Figure 3, indicates that the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach was congruent with Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrap test, providing further backing for the existence of indirect relationships hypothesized in the current paper (Table 7).

Discussion

This section proceeds with a discussion of the socio-demographic features of DBF attendees and highlights the objectives of the study. Firstly, it has been identified, perhaps stereotypically, that activities requiring greater physical involvement are dominated by a young, single and male cohort (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Otoo & Kim, 2018). Consistent with this assertion, the findings of the study reveal a sample dominated by younger, single, male and low-income festival attendees. This suggests an opportunity for festival organizers to

Figure 3 Results of Baron and Kenny test

Variable	Constant	Beta	t-value	Sig.	VIF	R ²	F-test (sig.)
Mediation 1 = MH₁							
Step 1: Involvement → Satisfaction	1.39	.61	13.45	.000	1.00	.372	180.94(.000)
Step 2: Involvement → Festival attachment	.97	.52	12.83	.000	1.00	.351	164.68(.000)
Step 3: Involvement Festival attachment } → Satisfaction	.99	.42	7.27	.000	1.54	.476	137.89(.000)
	.41	.74	.000				
	Sobel test		$t = 3.580$; $p = .000$				
Mediation 2 = MH₂							
Step 1: Involvement → Future intentions	1.56	.63	12.71	.000	1.00	.347	161.76 (.000)
Step 2: Involvement → Satisfaction	1.39	.61	13.45	.000	1.00	.372	180.94 (.000)
Step 3: Involvement Satisfaction } → Future intentions	.76	.22	4.70	.000	1.59	.572	203.49 (.000)
	.60	12.67	.000				
	Sobel test		$t = 3.355$; $p = .001$				
Mediation 3 = MH₃							
Step 1: Festival attachment → Future intentions	2.02	.57	12.07	.000	1.00	.223	145.64 (.000)
Step 2: Festival attachment → Satisfaction	1.77	.53	10.98	.000	1.00	.385	190.78 (.000)
Step 3: Festival Attachment Satisfaction } → Future intentions	0.95	.18	3.76	.000	1.63	.562	194.82 (.000)
	.62	12.86	.000				
	Sobel test		$t = 3.592$; $p = .000$				

Table 7 Bootstrap results to test the significance of multiple mediation effects

<i>Indirect path</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>	<i>Direct effect</i>	<i>Indirect effect</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Involvement → Attachment → Satisfaction	0.039	0.309	0.514	0.147	0.036	Partial mediation
Involvement → Satisfaction → Future intentions	0.233	0.546	0.206	0.329	0.045	Partial mediation
Attachment → Satisfaction → Future intentions	0.026	0.248	0.054	0.135	0.037	Full mediation

increase patronage by developing special activities, particularly among the least engaged cohort such as older, married and female attendees. This category is notably more likely to be constituted by a segment interested in family-oriented activities.

Given past studies, different domains of involvement were postulated to influence post-consumption behaviours such as satisfaction and future intentions (Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2015). For this study, festival attendees' involvement was found to be important to festival attendees and was consistent with some previous studies (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Festival attendees' involvement, as applied here, depicts the degree of personal relevance of DBF regarding its utilitarian value to provide importance or meaning to attendees. It reflects the degree to which festival participants were aroused and showed interest in the event (Choo *et al.*, 2022; Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Wong *et al.*, 2015). The distinct items extracted under festival attendees' involvement reverberates Havitz and Dimanche (1997) thought that various patterns of involvement exist according to the leisure activity investigated. The festival attendees' involvement domain also reveals the importance of festival attendees' involvement to both visitors and residents, a virtue salutary to the sustainability of festivals (Adongo *et al.*, 2019; Scarpi *et al.*, 2019). In this study, festival attendees' involvement shows personal engagement with the DBF which is a cultural, historical or traditional festival event.

Regarding involvement and future intentions, the finding lends support to Choo *et al.* (2022), Gao *et al.* (2020), Lee and Beeler (2009), Scarpi *et al.* (2019) and Wong and Tang (2016), while contrasting Brown *et al.* (2016) and Prayag and Ryan (2012) who established no relationship between involvement and future intentions. It is interesting that in this study, a weak but significant relationship was established. This suggests that perhaps other mediatory factors could account for a better relationship. In this regard, we found that satisfaction accounts for some (partial) but not all the relationships between festival attendees' involvement and future intentions. This study suggests that although satisfaction is relevant for positive future intentions, it does not account for all the reasons associated with such a decision as far as involvement is concerned. This is contrary to prior studies which found an absence of its mediatory role (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Chang *et al.*, 2014) as well as those which supported a full mediation (Lee & Beeler, 2009; Lee & Chang, 2012; Wong *et al.*, 2014).

The findings further reveal that festival attendees' level of involvement with DBF affects festival attachment and satisfaction. This study also reveals that tourists' festival attachment partially mediates the relationship between festival attendees' involvement and satisfaction, suggesting that only some elements of festival attachment attributes explain satisfaction. Given that previous studies on the subject have presented different, even contradictory results (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Campón-Cerro *et al.*, 2015), this study is an important contribution to understanding the role of festival attachment in partly explaining satisfaction. For destination tourism authorities including the Hong Kong Tourism Board, such a finding is meaningful for identifying attributes of the DBF worthy of promotion.

Surprisingly, this study did not establish a relationship between festival attachment and future intentions. The findings suggest that although festival attendees could have some attachment to the DBF event, this does not result in positive future intentions to patronise the event again (Alonso-Vazquez *et al.*, 2018; Wang & Chen, 2015). This could be explained by

the fact that DBF is a single-day event and the short duration makes it difficult to build place attachment which in most studies has been established to be a precursor of future intentions (Brown *et al.*, 2016; Tsauro *et al.*, 2019). Also, due to the complex nature of the tourism industry and the novelty-seeking behaviours of the tourists, they may not return to the same destination despite being satisfied by its offerings (Li, Dai, Tang, & Chen, 2020). In further examining this effect, a test of mediation indicated that satisfaction is an important mediator between festival attachment and future intentions. Therefore, DBF organizers would have to institute programmes and packages which ensure attendees' satisfaction such as incorporating health and wellness campaigns (Yoo, Lee, & Lee, 2015). In a study of festival tourists, Kim (2015) highlighted that one of the strongest predictors of tourists' satisfaction is festival commercialization. Thus, souvenirs and other merchandise sales could go a long way in building a memorable festival experience among DBF attendees.

Theoretical and practical contributions

This study sheds light on the key drivers of attendees' future intentions among both residents and tourists. As it is not a given fact that residents will always return to a festival, the results elucidate how festival organizers can ensure repeat visitation from residents, thereby guaranteeing festival sustainability amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Chang *et al.*, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2015). Regarding tourists, previous studies reported that only a few visitors to Hong Kong are destination loyal (McKercher, Denizci-Guillet, & Ng, 2012). This owes to their novelty-seeking behaviour (Getz, 2010). Since this study examined loyalty specifically to the festival event, having highly involved and satisfied attendees would translate into patronization of similar events in the region. The study also makes important distinctions in determining elements of festival attachment. As per the findings, festival attendees may be attached to an event (in this case, DBF). However, such attachment does not translate to repeat visitation of the destination itself. Thus, future studies need to distinguish between festival attachment to a place and attachment to an event. As reported by Li and McKercher (2016), attachment is deeply personal, and attributes such as strong attachment to family's heritage tend to result in a focused return to a destination. Since most of the respondents in this study are of Chinese descent, a more focused marketing campaign could be targeted to them.

In responding to the calls to investigate other important antecedents of tourists' satisfaction across different festivals or locations, as well as to determine the complex nature of festival tourists' satisfaction and revisit intentions (Kim, 2015), this study explored the direct and indirect effects of satisfaction and attachment on future intentions. A noble contribution to knowledge in this regard is that attachment alone is not sufficient to induce loyalty among DBF patrons. Essentially, satisfaction is a vital element for repeat visits (Girish & Chen, 2017; Hosany *et al.*, 2017; Lee, 2014; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Li & Lin, 2016).

Practically, the study lays the premise for the identification of a suitable market segment for the DBF. While the findings reveal that a younger, male, single participant is more likely to engage in the DBF, there is much opportunity to target other segments including female, married and non-local participants. Besides the demographic characteristics, festival organizers should focus their marketing campaigns on behavioural characteristics (in this case, highly involved festival attendees) to attract and retain DBF attendees (Kim *et al.*, 2015).

The fact that non-Hong Kong residents collectively constituted more than half of the respondents is an indication of its attractiveness to outsiders. With its transition into a more urbanized and sophisticated modern destination, cultural and historical attributes of similar destinations as Hong Kong are perhaps better preserved with events such as the DBF. The meaningfulness of festivals to the preservation of values has been espoused in previous literature (Lee & Jan, 2021; Pookaiyaudom, 2019). Thus, from a managerial perspective,

destination managers and, indeed, festival organizers need to understand antecedents of festival attendees' future intentions and ensure that festival attendees are involved at any possible level with the event organization or running. Cognizant that some racing teams come from outside of Hong Kong, soliciting participants' or teams' views on how to organize upcoming events would ensure that members feel part of the event, as their suggestions are taken on board. For example, event organizers can reach out to racing teams through blogs, direct mailing, online communities and indeed debriefing sessions at the end of the DBF. In addition, festival organizers could organize programmes that could offer lessons on the meaning and history of the DBF (Choo *et al.*, 2022).

Furthermore, the large participation of outsiders in the DBF, particularly from China has important implications for marketing the event. The opportunity to diversify the attraction base of Hong Kong from a shopping and dining destination to a sports festival event destination is pushed by this finding. Thus, marketing efforts should be directed to Mainland China and neighbouring countries riding on the principle of familiarity of the event and cultural homogeneity as opposed to novelty for new markets (Otoo, Kim, & Choi, 2020; Otoo, Kim, Agrusa, & Lema, 2021). Since a significant number of attendees come from Mainland China which has similar cultures to Hong Kong, interactions with residents would help build a sense of pride through common cultural usage including language, food, religion, etc. This could be achieved through organizing parallel activities such as village tours and temple tours. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the festival attachment could be used as a tool in building a strong social identity among festival attendees, thereby linking the host place with attendees who are non-residents (Choo *et al.*, 2022).

Finally, as markets begin to open up mostly to COVID-19 vaccinated tourists, an opportunity presents itself to DBF organizers to emphasize "travel for health" in their marketing campaign, where DBF could be presented as a means of promoting wellness and fitness through boat racing activities. This would be one way of circumventing the psychological effects of quarantine and lockdowns brought by COVID-19.

Conclusion and suggestions for future research

In an era where an understanding of festival attendees' loyalty could make the difference for a successful urban destination, it seems self-evident that destinations will invest in investigating the complex dynamism of urban festivals. With the increasing complexity of today's festivalscape and the more dynamic transition of cultural festivals into international tourism events, the need to empirically test the causal relationships among these intangible psychological constructs is critical now more than ever. The primary goal of this study was to examine the nature of relationships between distinct types of festival attendees' involvement as antecedents of festival future intentions.

While this study offers a unique introspection of a festival event pertaining to urban and international nature, it is not without limitations. The participant base of the DBF in Hong Kong is diverse as it is constituted by a wide range of nationalities. Thus, a translation of the research instrument into other non-English and non-Chinese languages may have offered a different perspective into the nature of festival attendees' involvement in the festival. Also, there is a wide range of other constructs such as emotional experience, which have yielded few empirical examinations, the inclusion of which would have generated further theoretical understanding of involvement in festivals. Nonetheless, with this empirical examination of the subject, testing in other settings and contexts will be necessary to facilitate a more collective conclusion. Furthermore, given the insignificant results on the relationship between festival attachment and future intentions, future studies should further examine this relationship. The mediating role of place attachment on the relationship between festival attachment and future intentions could be explored. Finally, future research could also investigate the nature and dimensions of festival attachment and its antecedents and outcomes.

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