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POST-PANDEMIC FESTIVAL TOURISM: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF TRAVEL CONSTRAINTS AND HEDONISM ON DESTINATION ATTACHMENT AND REVISIT INTENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, comprehending the psychological motivators of festival tourism has gained significant importance. This study investigates how surmounting leisure limitations improves hedonistic experiences, cultivates place attachment, and influences plans to revisit among participants of Malaysian festivals. Utilising Place Attachment Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, the study applies Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to data gathered from 500 participants through targeted online platforms. Findings indicate that overcoming travel limitations substantially enhances hedonic pleasure, hence reinforcing emotional connections to festival locations and elevating the probability of return visits. Hedonism moderates the impact of restrictions on attachment and intentions to revisit, but temporal distance diminishes the hedonic influence on revisitation as time progresses. In contrast, travel motivation did not significantly influence the relationship between hedonic attachments. These findings underscore the necessity of creating accessible and emotionally impactful festival experiences to maintain tourist engagement and destination loyalty in the changing context of post-pandemic tourism.

KEYWORDS: Festival Tourism, Hedonism, Destination Attachment, Revisit Intention, Tourist Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Festivals are acknowledged as vital elements of the tourism offering, serving as cultural exhibitions and strategic instruments for economic growth and place branding in both developed and emerging nations (Getz & Page, 2014; Mair & Weber, 2019). In 2019, the worldwide events and festivals industry was valued at nearly USD 1,100 billion, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.2% from 2021 to 2028 (Olivia, 2024), underscoring their increasing importance in the global tourist landscape. Globally recognised events like the Edinburgh Festival, contributing £313 million annually to Scotland's economy (VisitScotland, 2023), and the Rio Carnival, generating over USD 700 million for Brazil's local economy (Fonseca, 2022), exemplify how festivals serve as significant platforms for cultural exchange and visitor participation. Although the economic contributions of festivals are extensively documented, scholarly discussions predominantly emphasise attendance motivations and financial impacts (L. Pereira et al., 2021; Getz, 2008), frequently neglecting the exploration of deeper psychological mechanisms—specifically, the interplay of constraints, emotional responses, and destination attachment in influencing post-visit behaviours (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020). An ongoing discussion exists regarding the degree to which festivals act as key motivators for travel. McKercher et al. (2006) discovered that merely 20% of tourists regarded festivals as the primary motivation for their visit, indicating that festivals may not independently drive visitation but rather serve as complementary or symbolic elements within a more extensive travel narrative (B. K. Lee et al., 2012; Mair & Weber, 2019; McKercher et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these dynamics. The global event industry had an anticipated loss of USD 145 billion in 2020 due to extensive cancellations, border closures, and public health restrictions (Allied Market Research, 2024). This disruption substantially transformed travel behaviours and risk perceptions (Karl et al., 2020), engendering new psychological barriers and reconfiguring how individuals assess leisure and social experiences (Chan, 2021). Following this crisis, festivals have resurfaced as emblematic venues for emotional reconnection, cultural resilience, and public rejuvenation; however, our comprehension of the factors influencing festival participation—especially in contexts characterised by limitation and uncertainty remains inadequate. A significant gap is the influence of travel restrictions on festival tourist

behaviour. The Leisure Constraints Model (Crawford et al., 1991) has traditionally classified barriers into intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural categories; however, its application to festival contexts is limited, particularly in post-pandemic settings characterised by heightened financial insecurity, health concerns, and mobility limitations. Research has frequently concentrated on general leisure pursuits (Hinch et al., 2005; Jackson & Ahuja, 2016), hence leaving unresolved enquiries regarding the manifestation and negotiation of restrictions within the emotionally intense, high-stimulation context of festivals. A 2021 PwC survey indicated that 45% of prospective travellers identified financial and logistical limitations as their main reason for not attending festivals that year, highlighting a behavioural shift that necessitates further empirical investigation. A burgeoning corpus of study indicates that surmounting such limits may not detract from the tourism experience but rather enhance it. Research indicates that overcoming obstacles might enhance hedonic value, resulting in increased enjoyment, satisfaction, and emotional significance (Jian et al., 2021; W. K. Tan & Huang, 2020). These dynamics correspond with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, in which constraint navigation (stimulus) modifies affective states (organism), ultimately influencing behavioural intents (response). However, empirical research on the role of constraint resolution on hedonic experiences, and the subsequent effects of these experiences on place attachment and loyalty, is still scarce within the realm of festival tourism. Hedonism, defined as the pursuit of pleasure and sensory gratification (Grappi & Montanari, 2011), has been associated with satisfaction, repeat visits, and brand loyalty in tourism contexts. Nevertheless, the majority of studies regard hedonism as a singular predictor, rather than investigating its role in mediating more intricate behavioural processes, such as those stemming from constraint navigation and emotional attachment (Fathillah & Vengadasamy, 2020; Gedecho et al., 2023). Furthermore, place attachment—characterized as the emotional connection individuals establish with a particular locale (Altman & Low, 2012; Tasci et al., 2022)—is typically linked to extended visits or historical tourism; nonetheless, its emergence during brief, episodic occurrences like festivals remains inadequately comprehended. Although certain studies have utilised Place Attachment Theory in the context of recurring events (Kim et al., 2018; Peng & Chen, 2019), there is a dearth of research investigating how hedonic responses during

temporal events evolve into profound emotional connections and intentions to revisit, particularly within varied socio-cultural environments. This study gap is especially prominent in Malaysia, where the convergence of diversity, tourism strategy, and post-pandemic recovery makes the festival space both distinctive and insufficiently examined. Malaysia yearly hosts more than 200 festivals encompassing its Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Indigenous communities, including *Thaipusam*, Chinese New Year, *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*, and the George Town Festival. These events not only represent the nation's cultural diversity but also function as essential components of national tourism plans. As per Tourism Malaysia (2023), festivals constituted more than 30% of domestic tourism marketing strategies in the nation's post-pandemic recovery plan. The "Cuti-Cuti Malaysia" campaign and the Tourism Recovery Plan 2022–2024 have clearly identified festivals as essential instruments for reinstating domestic travel confidence and fostering socio-cultural unity (Ministry of Tourism, 2023). Despite their strategic significance, less study has investigated how Malaysian festival attendees mentally interact with restrictions, derive hedonic value, and establish destination attachments in this swiftly changing environment. This study seeks to analyse the intricate relationship among leisure restrictions, hedonism, location attachment, and aspirations to revisit within the setting of Malaysia's post-pandemic festival tourism. This research, based on Place Attachment Theory, Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), examines how overcoming constraints increases hedonic enjoyment, fortifies emotional connections to the festival destination, and affects tourists' intentions to revisit. The study also examines two significant moderating variables: travel motive, which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations, and temporal distance, which considers how the deterioration of emotional memory over time may diminish the possibility of revisiting. This study addresses these theoretical and empirical gaps, resulting in three significant contributions. Initially, it reconceptualises travel limitations not solely as obstacles but as stimulants for enhanced psychological involvement. Secondly, it establishes hedonism as a primary emotional mechanism connecting arduous experiences to destination attachment. Third, it situates these dynamics within Malaysia's multicultural festival economy, offering culturally informed insights and policy-relevant consequences. The study seeks to enhance both

scholarly discourse and the strategic priorities of destination marketing organisations and tourist planners striving to reconstruct durable, emotionally impactful tourism experiences in a post-pandemic context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Theoretical Underpinning

This research investigates the relationship among leisure restrictions, hedonism, destination attachment, and intentions to revisit, based on Place Attachment Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model. These theories combined provide a comprehensive framework for comprehending the psychological and behavioural processes that influence festival participation and loyalty, as depicted in Figure 1 (Research Framework).

Place Attachment Theory, articulated by Altman & Low (2012), elucidates the manner in which individuals establish emotional connections with certain locales via cognitive, affective, and behavioural mechanisms. In festival contexts, these connections are strengthened by favourable experiences, rendering the destination more significant to participants. Empirical research, including studies by Yüksel & Yüksel (2001) and Isa et al. (2020), demonstrates that place attachment substantially increases intentions to revisit and loyalty. The emotional ties created by festivals enhance these connections, promoting future attendance. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by Deci and Ryan (1985), offers a paradigm for comprehending how intrinsic drives, such as hedonism, influence behaviour. Self-Determination Theory asserts that satisfying the psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances satisfaction and motivation. In the realm of festivals, hedonistic experiences not only augment immediate gratification but also cultivate enduring emotional bonds with the location (Neuhof et al., 2020). Studies by Su et al. (2020) further emphasise that when festival experiences coincide with inner motives, they deepen destination attachment and enhance the likelihood of return visits. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model, proposed by Mehrabian and Russell in 1974, elucidates the impact of environmental stimuli on interior states and behaviours. This study posits that leisure limitations serve as cues that, when surmounted, can augment the hedonic value of the festival experience. Studies by Jian et al. (2021) and Sun et al. (2022) indicate that

surmounting restrictions enhances enjoyment and fortifies destination connection, resulting in increased intentions to revisit.

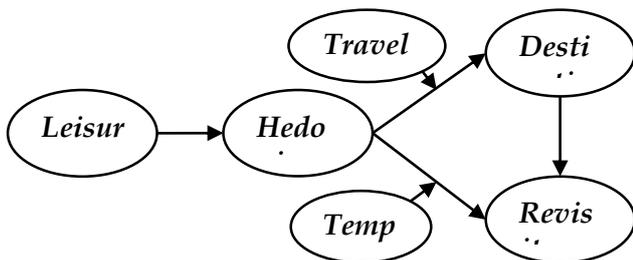


Figure 1: Research Model.

The integration of Place Attachment Theory, SDT, and the S-O-R Model is novel, offering a comprehensive approach to understanding festival attendees' behaviors by blending emotional, motivational, and behavioral perspectives. This holistic framework provides deeper insights into how leisure constraints and hedonism contribute to destination attachment and revisit intentions. The study's innovative approach not only advances theoretical understanding but also offers practical guidance for event organizers and destination marketers. By understanding these dynamics, practitioners can better design festivals to enhance satisfaction, emotional connection, and loyalty. The relationships and theoretical connections are visually summarized in Figure 1 (Research Framework).

2.2. Hypothesis Development

2.2.1. The Impact of Leisure Constraints on Hedonism

Leisure restrictions, including time, expense, and accessibility, are generally regarded as impediments to festival participation (Hillman et al., 2021). Nevertheless, surmounting these limitations can paradoxically amplify the hedonic enjoyment obtained from the festival experience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, factors like as health apprehensions and travel restrictions profoundly impacted intentions to attend festivals (C. Li et al., 2023). Notwithstanding these obstacles, festivals have persisted in offering avenues for social identity, fulfilment, and emotional experiences (Portugal et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2019). The changing dynamics of festival experiences, especially in the digital era, are underscored by the impact of performance expectancy and hedonic incentive on mobile device use during festivals (Van Winkle et al., 2019). In light of this setting, it is posited that:

- **H1.** Leisure Constraints positively influence Hedonism.

2.2.2. The Relationship between Hedonism and Revisit Intentions

Hedonism has been shown to exert direct and beneficial effects on intentions to revisit in many situations, such as entertainment venues (Luo et al., 2021) and culinary festivals (Mahdzar, 2019). Hedonistic encounters augment memorable tourism experiences, hence reinforcing inclinations to revisit (Tiwari et al., 2021). In particular circumstances, such as metal festivals, hedonism directly and indirectly affects the intention to revisit (Nugroho et al., 2022), highlighting its essential role in attendees' return intentions (Wu et al., 2020). This association is additionally corroborated by research on food and wine festivals (W. Lee & Kwon, 2021) and prominent festivals (Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2019), wherein hedonism acts as a forerunner to satisfaction assessment and future plans. Consequently, it is postulated that:

- **H2.** Hedonism positively influences Revisit Intention.

2.2.3. Hedonism as a Predictor of Destination Attachment

Hedonism is recognised as a significant precursor in augmenting festival attachment, which in turn fortifies place attachment and loyalty (Tsaur et al., 2019). The emotional bonds established through pleasurable experiences at festivals enhance location attachment, a vital predictor of future behaviours, including plans to revisit (Gautam, 2022). Furthermore, hedonic values are crucial indicators of place connection and attitudes towards pro-environmental behaviour and support for tourism (Y.-K. Lee et al., 2021). Research on food and wine festivals indicates that experiential components, particularly hedonistic factors, enhance visitors' sense of community, event identification, and commitment to the venue (Lefrid & Torres, 2021). Moreover, hedonic motivation is intricately associated with engagement in gastronomy tourism and festivals (Macedo & Gosling, 2019). Consequently, it is suggested that:

- **H3.** Hedonism positively influences Destination Attachment.

2.2.4. The Role of Destination Attachment in Revisit Intentions

Research has consistently shown that destination attachment significantly influences festival participants' intentions to return. This link is influenced by various aspects, such as festival quality (Yulianto, 2021), attendee happiness (Nguyễn-Phú et

al., 2020), and destination image (Jin et al., 2020). Place attachment has been identified as a crucial predictor of revisit intention (Pradhan et al., 2023), with certain research indicating it may also moderate the link between destination image and revisit intention (Nam et al., 2022). Furthermore, prior experiences and participant satisfaction are essential in shaping them (Imanda & Anandya, 2020). The notion of festival attachment, originating from place attachment, is suggested as a multidimensional construct that includes festival identity, affect, reliance, and social connection. These factors substantially affect plans to revisit (Al-Azzam et al., 2022). These findings collectively emphasise the intricate interplay of factors influencing festival attendees' intentions to revisit and show the need of cultivating robust destination attachment. Consequently, it is posited that:

- **H4.** Destination Attachment positively influences Revisit Intention.

2.2.5. *The Mediating Role of Hedonism*

Hedonism has been recognised as a significant precursor to festival attachment, which in turn affects place attachment and loyalty (Tsaur et al., 2019). Hedonic values enhance travellers' experiences and their intents to revisit, especially in entertainment destinations (Luo et al., 2021). Furthermore, hedonism functions as a precursor for the assessment of happiness and future goals in celebratory circumstances (Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2019). Travel restrictions, typically regarded as obstacles, might paradoxically foster nostalgia and strengthen attachment to destinations (Jian et al., 2021). This indicates that whereas limitations may initially impede involvement, they can also enhance emotional ties to the destination if surmounted. Furthermore, festival pleasure has been shown to strongly affect multiple aspects of place attachment (Gautam, 2022). Hedonism significantly mediates the link between structural restrictions and behavioural intentions, as structural constraints can adversely impact attachment (Yamashita & Hallmann, 2020). In extreme athletic events, site attachment influences the connection between self-enhancement and inclinations to revisit (Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021). Hedonism has been shown to directly and indirectly affect intentions to revisit through memorable tourism experiences and satisfaction (Luo et al., 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022; Tiwari et al., 2021). Festival attachment, influenced by hedonism and several factors, may result in heightened place attachment and loyalty (Tsaur et al., 2019). Emotions and perceived values impact the association between

dramaturgical aspects and the intention to revisit (Wu et al., 2020). Additionally, elements such as fear of missing out (FOMO), flow experience, and festival satisfaction substantially influence intentions to revisit (K.-L. Tan et al., 2023). The event image, influenced by direct experience and social interaction, can transfer to the city image and affect the intention to revisit (H. Li et al., 2020). Liminal experiences at festivals, especially those associated with hedonism, have been demonstrated to influence tourist satisfaction (Rodríguez-Campo et al., 2019). These findings underscore the significance of pleasurable experiences in influencing plans to revisit. In light of these data, the subsequent hypothesis are posited:

- **H5.** Hedonism mediates the relationship between Leisure Constraints and Destination Attachment.
- **H6.** Hedonism mediates the relationship between Leisure Constraints and Revisit Intention.

2.2.6. *The Moderating Role of Travel Motivation*

Studies demonstrate that hedonism is a significant precursor to festival attachment, which subsequently enhances place attachment and loyalty (Tsaur et al., 2019). This link underscores the significance of pleasure and delight in cultivating robust emotional connections with a festival and its corresponding destination. The relationship between hedonistic experiences and emotional attachment highlights the need of cultivating pleasant, pleasurable experiences for festival participants to strengthen their loyalty and bond with the place. Travel motivation is a significant component influencing tourists' perceptions of destinations, frequently mediated by destination image (V. Pereira et al., 2019). Cultural variations and particular travel incentives, such as the pursuit of knowledge, substantially influence event participation, particularly within cultural contexts (Yan & Halpenny, 2019). Hedonic and utilitarian values are essential for forecasting place attachment and attitudes towards festivals (Y.-K. Lee et al., 2021). These observations indicate that travel motivation may affect the extent to which hedonism influences destination attachment, with motivations determining the intensity of attachment developed during festival experiences. Moreover, studies indicate that gender may influence the relationships among motivation, perceived value, satisfaction, and electronic word-of-mouth intentions among festival participants (Ahn et al., 2020). This suggests that personal and demographic variables may influence

individual experiences and responses to festivals. Furthermore, location attachment and life satisfaction have been demonstrated to moderate the association between festival motivation and subjective well-being (Thirugnanasambantham *et al.*, 2023). These data underscore the intricate relationship among motivation, attachment, and festival experiences, resulting in the subsequent hypothesis:

- **H7.** Travel Motivation moderates the relationship between Hedonism and Destination Attachment.

2.2.7. *The Moderating Role of Temporal Distance*

Hedonism has been shown to enhance revisit intentions both directly and indirectly via memorable tourism experiences and satisfaction (Nugroho *et al.*, 2022; Tiwari *et al.*, 2021). The quality of the festival, encompassing program content and convenience, influences intents to revisit by moulding the destination's image (Yulianto, 2021). Emotional involvement and satisfaction are essential predictors of attendees' likelihood to return to a festival (Hermann *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, both use and non-use values might affect behavioural intentions, with significant distinctions noted between first-time and recurrent visits (Mahadevan, 2020). The stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model has been utilised to elucidate the determinants of revisit intentions, with marketing techniques and motivation functioning as stimuli, while positive emotions and satisfaction act as mediators (W. Cheng *et al.*, 2020). The time of the festival experience—whether recent or distant—may affect the extent to which hedonism influences the inclination to return. The notion of temporal distance may serve a significant moderating function, influencing how recent or distant recollections of pleasurable events inform future intentions. Consequently, it is posited that:

- **H8.** Temporal Distance moderates the relationship between Hedonism and Revisit Intention.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a meticulously structured methodology, integrating previously validated scales to assess the suggested constructs: Leisure Constraints, Hedonism, Revisit Intention, Destination Attachment, Travel Motivation, and Temporal Distance. Each component was evaluated using items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The choice to

implement a 5-point scale was driven by the necessity for simplicity and clarity, facilitating ease of response and uniformity in data collecting across varied respondent groups. The leisure constraints construct was defined through three dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural restrictions. Intrapersonal limitations were assessed using a three-item scale derived from Crawford *et al.* (1991) and Dale & Ritchie (2020), emphasising personal issues, including safety concerns, that impede travel behaviour. Interpersonal limitations, reflecting the impact of social interactions on travel choices, were assessed using a three-item scale derived from Chen *et al.* (2013) and Hughes *et al.* (2021). Structural constraints were evaluated using a four-item scale derived from Huber *et al.* (2018), Mei & Lantai (2018), and Smith (1994), focussing on external impediments including financial restrictions and logistical obstacles. Hedonism was evaluated using a five-item scale derived from Grappi & Montanari (2011) and Tsaour *et al.* (2019), aimed at measuring the degree of pleasure, enjoyment, and sensory gratification experienced by participants during the festival. The intention to revisit was assessed using a three-item scale derived from Zhang *et al.* (2018), concentrating on respondents' willingness and probability of returning to a festival destination in the future. The concept of destination attachment was assessed using a fourteen-item scale derived from Xu & Zhang (2016), which examined various dimensions, including destination identity, reliance, and both affective and social connections. This extensive scale was selected to represent the intensity of emotional and psychological bonds that participants experience with the festival venue. Travel motivation was defined using a six-item scale derived from Yan & Halpenny (2019) and Y.-K. Lee *et al.* (2021), encompassing both hedonic and utilitarian factors that affect festival attendance. Ultimately, temporal distance was evaluated utilising a four-item scale modified from Trope & Liberman (2003) and Patrick & MacInnis (2006). This scale assessed the influence of perceived time since the festival experience on respondents' memory recall and subsequent behavioural intentions.

3.1. *Scale Validation and Pre-testing*

A pilot research was done with a limited sample of 30 respondents to ascertain the cultural relevance and validity of the measures within the Malaysian setting. The pilot study sought to evaluate the reliability and understanding of the modified scales. Items deemed ambiguous or culturally incongruous were amended or eliminated. Reliability coefficients

(Cronbach's alpha) were computed for each construct, validating the internal consistency of the scales prior to the initiation of comprehensive data collecting.

3.2. Sample Size and Data Collection

This study aimed for a total sample size of 500 respondents. The sample size was established according to the criteria for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and to guarantee enough statistical power for identifying medium to large effect sizes. A prevalent guideline for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) indicates a requisite sample size of 200 to 300 respondents, contingent upon the model's complexity (Hair & Sarstedt, 2019). The sample size of this investigation surpasses the threshold, guaranteeing the robustness and generalisability of the results. Data were gathered through an online survey conducted using Google Forms. The poll was methodically disseminated across specified social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, primarily within travel, tourist, and festival-related groups and pages in Malaysia. These platforms were chosen for their extensive reach and significant involvement with the target population, guaranteeing access to a varied and pertinent sample. A purposive sample method was utilised to choose individuals who had recently encountered travel restrictions and engaged in festival tourism, in accordance with the research goals. Quota sampling was employed to improve the sample's representativeness by establishing quotas for essential demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and income level, to accurately reflect the wider population of Malaysian festival attendees. This dual sampling method sought to reduce selection bias and provide a diverse and representative sample. Participants were initially requested to specify a particular destination they had visited and to which they had a profound connection. They were subsequently directed to complete the questionnaire with this objective in consideration, ensuring that their responses were contextually anchored in their personal experiences. This study did not necessitate formal ethical approval according to the regulations of the researchers' linked institutions during the data collection period. All procedures involving human volunteers complied with ethical standards in accordance with the principles established in the Declaration of Helsinki. Participation was completely optional, and informed agreement was secured from all respondents before the survey began. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and data were

collected and maintained in accordance with data protection regulations. No personally identifiable information was documented, and participants maintained the ability to withdraw at any stage of the survey procedure.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data analysis was executed with SmartPLS 4 to undertake Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which is particularly adept at examining intricate models that incorporate mediation and moderation effects. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was selected for its capacity to meticulously evaluate the interrelations among the constructs and to examine the presented hypotheses. Before doing SEM analysis, descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS 20 to furnish a detailed overview of the sample characteristics. To mitigate potential common method bias, both Harman's single-factor test and a comprehensive collinearity study were conducted. The findings demonstrated the absence of considerable common technique bias, hence affirming the data's dependability. SmartPLS 4 was utilised to validate the research model and examine the hypotheses, concentrating on the intricate interrelations among leisure restrictions, hedonism, revisit intention, destination attachment, travel incentive, and temporal distance. The analysis encompassed both direct impacts and the evaluation of mediation and moderation effects, guaranteeing a comprehensive investigation of the suggested model. The stringent methodological framework employed in this study yields significant insights into the determinants of festival tourism in Malaysia, presenting both theoretical contributions and practical ramifications for destination marketing and management.

4.1. Demographic of the Respondents

The demographic attributes of the respondents offer significant insights into the population sample for this study on festival tourism in Malaysia. The gender distribution indicates a little female majority (53%) relative to males (42%), aligning with trends suggesting that women may exhibit a greater propensity to engage in social and cultural studies. The age distribution is predominantly concentrated in the 28-37 years cohort (38%), succeeded by the 18-27 years cohort (22%), signifying that most respondents are within their prime working and socialising years—demographics generally most engaged in festival attendance. The sample exhibits educational diversity, with 36% possessing a Bachelor's degree, 26% holding a Diploma, and 28%

having completed only high school education (SPM). This indicates a diverse population with varied educational backgrounds, perhaps affecting the types of festivals attended and the reasons for involvement. The employment status is primarily comprised of employed workers (66%), with lesser proportions of self-employed (9%) and students (14%). This distribution indicates that the sample predominantly comprises working people, who are presumably equipped with both the financial resources and the social impetus to engage in festivals. The income distribution corresponds with Malaysia's economic stratification: 22% in the lower B40 group, 18% in the upper B40, 40% in the M40 category, and 20% in the T20 group. The diverse income distribution is essential for comprehending

how economic issues affect festival attendance, since individuals in higher income brackets (M40 and T20) are more inclined to possess discretionary income for such activities. The residence location indicates that a majority of respondents reside in urban areas (54%), which reflects Malaysia's significant urbanisation rate, while 36% are from suburban areas and 10% from rural areas. The predominance of urban dwellers is anticipated, as they generally possess superior access to festivals. The ethnic distribution reflects Malaysia's national demographics, comprising 57% Malays, 27% Chinese, and 11% Indians, so providing a representative perspective on the cultural diversity within the sample, which is essential for examining cultural influences on festival attendance.

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	210	42%
	Female	265	53%
	Other	10	2%
	Prefer not to say	15	3%
Age	18-27 years	110	22%
	28-37 years	190	38%
	38-47 years	120	24%
	48-57 years	55	11%
	58 years and above	25	5%
Educational Background	High school or equivalent (SPM)	140	28%
	Diploma	130	26%
	Bachelor's degree	180	36%
	Master's degree or higher	50	10%
Employment Status	Employed	330	66%
	Self-employed	45	9%
	Unemployed	35	7%
	Student	70	14%
	Retired	20	4%
Monthly Income	Less than MYR 2,500 (Lower B40)	110	22%
	MYR 2,501 - MYR 5,249 (Upper B40)	90	18%
	MYR 5,250 - MYR 7,500 (Lower M40)	100	20%
	MYR 7,501 - MYR 11,819 (Upper M40)	100	20%
	More than MYR 11,820 (T20)	100	20%
Residence Location	Urban	270	54%
	Suburban	180	36%
	Rural	50	10%
Ethnicity	Malay	285	57%
	Chinese	135	27%
	Indian	55	11%
	Other	25	5%
How many festivals did you attend in the past year?	1-2	190	56%
	3-5	110	32%
	More than 5	40	12%
What is your main reason for attending festivals?	Entertainment	180	36%
	Cultural experience	160	32%
	Socializing	110	22%
	Other	50	10%

Concerning festival attendance, the majority of respondents participated in 1-2 festivals in the previous year (56%), but a smaller proportion visited

3-5 festivals (32%) or more than five festivals (12%). This indicates that although festival attendance is prevalent, regular participation is very infrequent,

largely affected by variables such as time and expense. The principal motivations for visiting festivals were entertainment (36%) and cultural experience (32%), with socialising (22%) also playing a notable role. This signifies that festivals fulfil several functions for participants, encompassing recreation, entertainment, cultural enhancement, and social interaction.

The demographic profile offers an in-depth insight of the sample's characteristics, facilitating a

thorough examination of how various demographic factors affect festival attendance, preferences, and behaviours. The sample's diversity increases the relevance of the findings for different parts of the Malaysian community, providing insights that might boost both academic knowledge and practical applications in festival tourism management.

4.2. Measurement Model

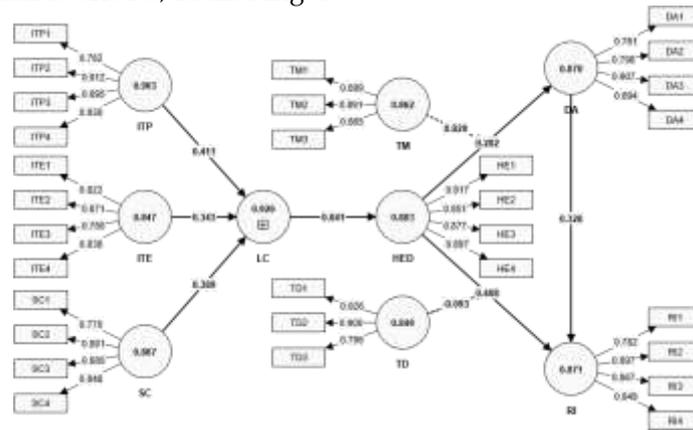


Figure 2: Measurement Model Illustration.

The measurement model statistics presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide a comprehensive evaluation of the constructs used in this study, including key metrics such as factor loadings, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity indices. These metrics are essential for assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model.

Figure 3: Measurement model illustration.

As shown in Table 2, the factor loadings for all items exceed the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating that each item is a strong indicator of

its respective construct (Hair et al., 2019). The VIF values, which range from 1.606 to 4.116, are well below the critical value of 5, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern in this model (Kline, 2015). Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.847 to 0.926, and Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.897 to 0.937, both of which surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming the internal consistency of the constructs (Nunnally, 1978). The AVE values, ranging from 0.555 to 0.778, also exceed the 0.50 benchmark, indicating adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2: Measurement Model Statistics.

Construct	Items	OL	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
DA	DA1	0.761	2.550	0.870	0.907	0.710
	DA2	0.798	2.844			
	DA3	0.907	3.117			
	DA4	0.894	2.780			
HED	HE1	0.817	1.861	0.883	0.920	0.742
	HE2	0.851	2.257			
	HE3	0.877	2.559			
	HE4	0.897	2.832			
ITE	ITE1	0.822	1.902	0.847	0.897	0.687
	ITE2	0.871	2.373			
	ITE3	0.780	1.659			
	ITE4	0.838	2.006			
ITP	IIP1	0.782	1.744	0.903	0.933	0.778
	IIP2	0.912	3.660			
	IIP3	0.895	3.133			

	ITP4	0.930	4.116			
LC				0.926	0.937	0.555
RI	RI1	0.782	1.868	0.871	0.912	0.722
	RI2	0.897	2.785			
	RI3	0.867	2.742			
	RI4	0.849	2.418			
SC	SC1	0.770	1.606	0.867	0.910	0.716
	SC2	0.881	2.509			
	SC3	0.880	2.560			
	SC4	0.848	2.246			
TD	TD1	0.926	2.992	0.849	0.908	0.767
	TD2	0.900	2.308			
	TD3	0.796	1.827			
TM	TM1	0.899	2.566	0.862	0.916	0.784
	TM2	0.891	2.502			
	TM3	0.865	1.871			

Discriminant validity was assessed using both the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion (FLC), as shown in Tables 3 and 4. The HTMT values for all construct pairs are below the threshold of 0.90, confirming that the constructs are distinct from one another (Henseler et al., 2015). Specifically, the HTMT values range from 0.167 to 0.833, with the highest being between TM and RI

(0.833), still well below the critical value. The FLC analysis (Table 4) further confirms discriminant validity by showing that the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal elements) is higher than the correlation with other constructs. For instance, the square root of AVE for DA (0.842) is greater than its highest correlation with another construct (HED, 0.655).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT).

	DA	HED	ITE	ITP	RI	SC	TD	TM	TD x HED	TM x HED
DA										
HED	0.690									
ITE	0.636	0.818								
ITP	0.665	0.813	0.652							
RI	0.707	0.804	0.830	0.742						
SC	0.683	0.829	0.729	0.824	0.823					
TD	0.346	0.415	0.333	0.399	0.459	0.451				
TM	0.768	0.811	0.736	0.829	0.833	0.831	0.406			
TD x HED	0.192	0.338	0.292	0.364	0.372	0.355	0.167	0.351		
TM x HED	0.334	0.487	0.288	0.422	0.466	0.465	0.318	0.559	0.474	

The Destination Attachment (DA) construct demonstrates strong factor loadings, with DA3 and DA4 having particularly high loadings (0.907 and 0.894, respectively), indicating that these items effectively capture the essence of destination attachment. Hedonism (HED) also shows high reliability, with loadings ranging from 0.817 to 0.897, reflecting the construct's robustness in measuring the

pleasure and sensory enjoyment associated with festival experiences. The Revisit Intention (RI) construct, with loadings from 0.782 to 0.897, and the Intention to Participate (ITP), with loadings from 0.782 to 0.930, both exhibit strong predictive capabilities, which are crucial for understanding future behavior in the context of festival tourism.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (FLC).

	DA	HED	ITE	ITP	RI	SC	TD	TM
DA	0.842							
HED	0.655	0.861						
ITE	0.580	0.710	0.829					
ITP	0.633	0.728	0.574	0.882				
RI	0.663	0.710	0.714	0.658	0.850			
SC	0.636	0.764	0.625	0.726	0.714	0.846		
TD	0.339	0.368	0.289	0.353	0.404	0.391	0.876	
TM	0.708	0.763	0.632	0.735	0.743	0.805	0.356	0.885

The measurement model statistics indicate that the constructs used in this study are both reliable and

valid. The HTMT and FLC results confirm that the constructs are distinct from each other, supporting the structural model's capacity to accurately test the hypothesized relationships. In conclusion, the statistics presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4 provide strong evidence that the constructs in this study are robust, reliable, and valid for examining the relationships between leisure constraints, hedonism, destination attachment, and revisit intentions in the context of festival tourism. These findings align with best practices in structural equation modelling, ensuring that subsequent analyses will yield

meaningful and credible insights (Hair et al., 2019).

4.3. Structural modelling and discussion

The structural modelling results provide a detailed understanding of the relationships among the constructs in the study, with the model fit statistics summarized in Table 5 and the structural model statistics presented in Table 6. These results help to validate the hypothesized relationships and provide insights into the predictive power and significance of the paths in the model.

Table 5: Model Fit Statistics.

	R ²	R ² adjusted	Q ² predict	RMSE	MAE
DA	0.534	0.531	0.529	0.691	0.516
HED	0.708	0.708	0.706	0.545	0.376
RI	0.603	0.599	0.621	0.619	0.437

The R-square values indicate that the model explains a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variables. Specifically, the model explains 53.4% of the variance in Destination Attachment (DA), 70.8% in Hedonism (HED), and 60.3% in Revisit Intention (RI). These R-square values, combined with the adjusted R-square and Q²predict values, suggest that the model has strong predictive

accuracy, particularly for HED, which has the highest R-square (0.708) and Q²predict (0.706) values. The Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) and Mean Absolute Error (MAE) values are relatively low across all constructs, indicating that the model's predictions are reasonably close to the actual data points, further supporting the model's robustness.

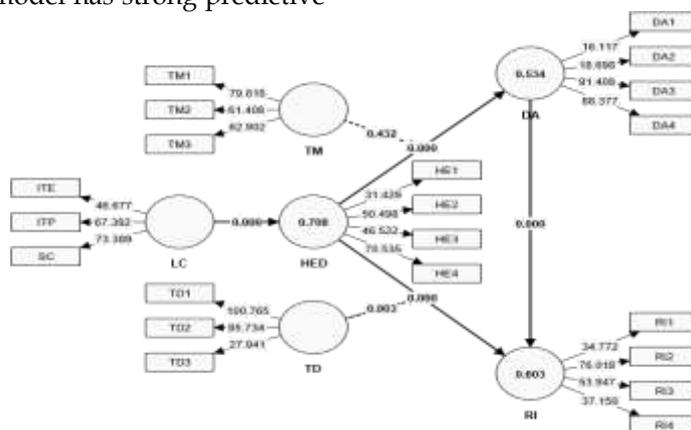


Figure 4: Structural Model Illustration.

The structural model reveals a series of significant and theoretically coherent relationships, affirming the study's integrated conceptual framework and offering nuanced insight into the dynamics of post-pandemic festival tourism in Malaysia. Notably, the strong positive association between leisure constraints and hedonism ($\beta = 0.842, f^2 = 2.430$) suggests that the act of overcoming logistical, financial, or interpersonal barriers heightens the affective intensity of festival experiences. This aligns with the *Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model* (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), where the resolution of negative stimuli (constraints) triggers enhanced

emotional states (hedonic arousal), which in turn shape behavioral responses. In the context of COVID-19-induced restrictions, festivals became symbolic spaces of regained freedom, transforming previously mundane pleasures into deeply meaningful emotional episodes—a phenomenon also supported by pandemic-era findings on scarcity-induced pleasure amplification (Jian et al., 2021).

The path from hedonism to revisit intention ($\beta = 0.408, f^2 = 0.216$) confirms prior assertions that pleasurable experiences are foundational to tourism loyalty (Luo et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2021). However, this study moves beyond instrumental

conceptualizations of hedonic value by illustrating how such enjoyment is not merely an outcome but a mediating mechanism. Specifically, hedonism bridges the effect of overcoming leisure constraints on both destination attachment ($\beta = 0.237$) and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.343$), suggesting that affective gratification derived from overcoming adversity generates more than just transient satisfaction—it fosters symbolic place meanings and behavioral persistence. This supports *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that intrinsic motivations, such as joy and stimulation, fulfil core psychological needs and lead to deeper commitment outcomes.

The significant impact of hedonism on destination

attachment ($\beta = 0.282, f^2 = 0.070$) reinforces the central role of emotional intensity in forming place bonds. In festival contexts—particularly those characterized by multisensory stimulation, community interaction, and identity expression—the experiential environment serves as fertile ground for emotional anchoring. This is congruent with *Place Attachment Theory* (Altman & Low, 2012), which contends that affective experiences embedded in specific physical and social contexts foster enduring symbolic associations. Importantly, in Malaysia’s multiethnic setting, where festivals often function as both leisure and identity rituals, such bonds are likely to be intensified by cultural resonance and collective celebration (Isa et al., 2020).

Table 6: Structural Model Statistics.

Hypothesis Path	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	f ²	Support
H1 LC -> HED	0.842	0.844	0.019	45.306	0.000	2.430	Yes
H2 HED -> RI	0.408	0.414	0.054	7.586	0.000	0.216	Yes
H3 HED -> DA	0.282	0.284	0.053	5.330	0.000	0.070	Yes
H4 DA -> RI	0.328	0.325	0.056	5.838	0.000	0.152	Yes
H5 LC -> HED -> DA	0.237	0.240	0.046	5.109	0.000		Yes
H6 LC -> HED -> RI	0.343	0.350	0.048	7.176	0.000		Yes
H7 TM x HED -> DA	0.029	0.025	0.037	0.790	0.432	0.003	No
H8 TD x HED -> RI	-0.093	-0.091	0.030	3.046	0.003	0.041	Yes

The direct effect of destination attachment on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.328, f^2 = 0.152$) is also theoretically robust, underscoring the motivational potency of emotional bonds in shaping behavioral intentions. However, this study advances the discussion by situating such bonds within a *constraint-hedonism-attachment* chain. That is, the experience of “earning” pleasure through constraint navigation imbues destinations with personal significance, thereby transforming temporary festival sites into emotionally salient anchors of memory and identity.

The mediating role of hedonism offers critical conceptual value. It demonstrates that emotional elevation is not merely a response to stimuli but a transformative lens through which festivalgoers evaluate destinations. This pathway helps clarify why constrained experiences can yield deeper satisfaction than unconstrained ones—a dynamic observed in studies of nostalgia, flow, and meaning-making (Biswas et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2022). In short, constraint negotiation serves as a psychological intensifier of pleasure, which, when situated in culturally and socially meaningful spaces, deepens place attachment and repeat visitation likelihood.

Unexpectedly, Hypothesis 7—predicting the moderating effect of travel motivation on the hedonism–destination attachment relationship—was not supported ($\beta = 0.029, p = 0.432, f^2 = 0.003$). While prior literature often links motivation to destination bonding (V. Pereira et al., 2019), its absence here warrants theoretical reflection. One plausible explanation lies in Malaysia’s socio-cultural milieu, where festival participation is often driven by hybrid motives that blend hedonic, communal, and identity-affirming intentions. In collectivist cultures, motivations may be more homogenized across individuals due to shared norms and community expectations (Yan & Halpenny, 2019). Thus, the experiential affordances of festivals—such as sensory immersion, emotional resonance, and group enjoyment—may override individual motivational distinctions. Furthermore, when the festival’s symbolic content (e.g., national unity, religious celebration, or cultural heritage) aligns with hegemonic values, the variance explained by idiosyncratic motivations diminishes (Haque et al., 2024).

By contrast, the significant moderating effect of temporal distance (H8: $\beta = -0.093, p = 0.003, f^2 = 0.041$)

introduces a critical temporal dimension to the hedonic-loyalty relationship. As time elapses, the affective salience of hedonic experiences fades—a finding consistent with *temporal construal theory* (Trope & Liberman, 2003), which posits that distant experiences are encoded in less vivid, more abstract terms. This temporal decay of emotional memory implies that while hedonic intensity may drive immediate revisit intentions, its influence weakens without reinforcing stimuli (Haque et al., 2022). This insight has strategic implications: destination marketers and festival organizers must employ memory reactivation techniques—such as digital storytelling, targeted post-event content, and community engagement campaigns—to preserve the emotional trace and extend the behavioral influence of peak experiences (Umesh et al., 2023).

Taken together, the findings offer a refined understanding of how festivals function as emotionally charged environments where constraint navigation enhances gratification, which in turn facilitates place attachment and loyalty. This interplay is particularly salient in post-pandemic Malaysia, where leisure participation has regained symbolic significance as an expression of resilience, belonging, and identity continuity. From a policy perspective, the study underscores the need to view festivals not just as entertainment venues, but as cultural infrastructures that can rebuild emotional capital and restore tourism flows. Enhancing access through transport subsidies, inclusive programming, and barrier-reducing strategies can amplify the hedonic yield of participation. Moreover, embedding cultural narratives into festival design can intensify emotional engagement and transform temporary attendance into enduring loyalty.

4.4. Implications of this study

4.4.1. Theoretical Implications

This study's findings provide significant theoretical implications for Place Attachment Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, enhancing our comprehension of their operation within the realm of festival tourism.

This study emphasises that hedonistic experiences during festivals are crucial in establishing robust emotional connections to a destination, according to Place Attachment Theory. The study indicates that these encounters markedly improve attachment to the site, thus affecting the probability of return visits. This indicates that place attachment can be swiftly cultivated through profound, pleasant experiences, contradicting the

conventional perspective that it predominantly stems from prolonged interactions with a site. The research highlights the significance of emotional, social, and experiential aspects in comprehending tourism behaviour dynamics, especially how hedonic elements can rapidly foster strong attachments in brief settings such as festivals.

The study offers empirical evidence supporting Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by demonstrating that intrinsic motivations, such as the pursuit of pleasure, are fundamental factors influencing festival participation and destination attachment. Self-Determination Theory asserts that satisfying psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances satisfaction and motivation. This research expands Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating that the intrinsic incentive to pursue pleasure not only augments immediate gratification at festivals but also fortifies enduring emotional bonds with the destination. The research indicates that surmounting leisure restrictions can amplify the satisfaction of intrinsic needs, hence augmenting the beneficial effects on destination attachment and the propensity to return.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model is substantiated and refined by the findings, which demonstrate how environmental stimuli, including leisure restrictions and festival experiences, affect interior states such as hedonism and subsequent behaviours like destination attachment and intents to revisit. The research indicates that surmounting leisure limitations acts as a crucial catalyst that amplifies hedonic experiences, resulting in heightened emotional attachment and an increased propensity to repeat the destination. Furthermore, the finding that temporal distance influences the correlation between hedonism and revisit intention introduces a new facet to the S-O-R paradigm, underscoring the significance of timing. Research indicates that the proximity of the festival experience to the present enhances its influence on future behaviour, hence underscoring the temporal dynamics that affect tourism behaviours.

This study enhances the theoretical framework of Place Attachment Theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model by offering empirical evidence about the influence of hedonism, leisure constraints, and temporal factors on destination attachment and intentions to revisit. These insights enhance our comprehension of the psychological and behavioural mechanisms underpinning festival tourism and provide significant guidance for future study within

these theoretical frameworks.

4.4.2. *Practical Implications*

This study's findings provide several practical implications for festival organisers, destination marketers, and tourism policymakers seeking to improve tourist experiences, cultivate destination loyalty, and increase repeat travel.

The considerable influence of hedonistic experiences on location attachment and intentions to revisit indicates that festival organisers ought to emphasise the creation of exceptionally pleasurable, sensory-enriched experiences for participants. This may entail augmenting the entertainment value, cultural depth, and general atmosphere of festivals to optimise the enjoyment and fulfilment experienced by attendees. By emphasising the hedonistic elements of the festival, organisers can enhance emotional connections between participants and the site, hence augmenting the probability of return visits.

The influence of leisure limitations on hedonism suggests that addressing and alleviating these obstacles can improve the entire festival experience. Enhancing the accessibility of festivals regarding cost, time, and convenience can substantially increase the enjoyment participants get from the event. Festival organisers and destination marketers ought to implement flexible pricing, enhance transit choices, and furnish comprehensive information regarding event logistics to mitigate perceived obstacles. Facilitating attendance enables organisers to improve overall satisfaction and emotional engagement with the venue.

The study's results regarding the moderating influence of temporal distance underscore the necessity of sustaining engagement with festival attendees post-event. Given that the beneficial impact of hedonistic experiences on intentions to repeat wanes over time, destination marketers ought to devise tactics to maintain the festival experience's novelty in the participants' consciousness. This may entail further messages, including newsletters, social media engagements, or virtual events that reinforce participants' favourable experiences. Moreover, providing early-bird discounts or exclusive content for previous participants may sustain their engagement and promote return visits.

The study highlights the necessity for tourism policymakers to endorse festivals as essential catalysts for destination loyalty and economic development. Policymakers can enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of festivals by investing in infrastructure and services that alleviate

leisure limitations, such as upgrading transport networks and providing sufficient housing alternatives. Furthermore, acknowledging the significance of festivals in swiftly cultivating place attachment, policymakers ought to regard festivals as strategic instruments for destination promotion and community advancement.

This study indicates that enhancing hedonistic experiences, minimising participation barriers, and sustaining post-festival engagement can substantially elevate visitor satisfaction, fortify destination attachment, and augment the probability of repeat visits for festival organisers and destination marketers. These tactics not only improve the visitor experience but also promote the long-term success and sustainability of festival tourism.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION AND CONCLUSION

Future research can expand upon the findings of this study by investigating other viable paths to enhance theoretical understanding and practical significance in festival tourism. One significant avenue involves disaggregating festival categories—such as cultural, musical, religious, and gastronomic festivals—to investigate whether the affective pathways and behavioural results shown here differ by event genre. Diverse festivals invoke unique sensory, symbolic, and communal dynamics, which may influence the translation of leisure restrictions and hedonic experiences into destination attachment and plans to revisit. Comparative analyses of festival typologies could elucidate whether the intensity or framework of these associations is peculiar to individual events, thereby offering more customised guidance for festival design and marketing.

Secondly, demographic segmentation warrants further examination. This study utilised a nationally representative sample; however, future research should rigorously investigate how factors such as age, gender, income level, and ethnic-cultural background influence the relationships among restrictions, hedonism, and attachment. For instance, younger demographics may emphasise social connectivity and the pursuit of novelty, while older individuals may be more swayed by familiarity, safety, or cultural significance. Examining this variability may facilitate the creation of micro-targeted festival tactics that directly address various audience segments in culturally diverse environments such as Malaysia.

The temporal dynamics of place attachment warrant longitudinal investigation. This study highlighted temporal distance as a significant

mediator that reduces the impact of hedonism on revisit intentions; future research should utilise longitudinal or panel designs to examine the evolution of emotional connections throughout repeated festival participation (Haibao & Haque, 2023). Repeated exposure to a destination through festivals may cultivate enhanced attachment, as well as identity investment and communal belonging—concepts that might be analysed using sophisticated modelling frameworks like latent growth analysis or experiential trajectory mapping.

A fourth path entails examining post-festival interaction tactics that mitigate the diminishing impact of time on intentions to revisit. Digital interventions—such as follow-up emails, online memory sharing, or gamified loyalty programs—may be evaluated for their efficacy in extending hedonic memory salience and strengthening emotional connections. Experimental research could examine whether hybrid or immersive virtual festival experiences maintain or perhaps augment place attachment among participants who are physically or temporally removed from the real event. Such research would not only enhance existing theory but also provide pragmatic answers for festivals constrained by fiscal or public health considerations.

The non-significant moderating effect of travel incentive identified in this study necessitates more refined theoretical exploration. Future study may investigate if experience quality, emotional regulation, or social connectivity serve as alternative moderators, especially in collectivist societies where individual motivational orientations may be less distinct (Ahmed et al., 2022). Qualitative or mixed-methods studies may effectively reveal nuanced motivational schemas that regular survey instruments cannot readily capture.

This study offers new insights into the psychological framework of festival tourism, namely how overcoming leisure limitations increases

hedonic value, reinforces place attachment, and promotes plans to repeat. The results affirm that emotionally enriching, pleasure-oriented experiences are essential for both immediate gratification and the establishment of lasting connections to a place. The study illustrates that restrictions might function as affective amplifiers instead of plain obstacles, so recontextualising a typically negative concept into a potentially positive influence on tourism behaviour.

The mitigating influence of temporal distance highlights the transient quality of hedonic memory and the need for ongoing engagement measures to preserve destination prominence. Festival organisers and destination marketers must extend their focus beyond the event to create ongoing engagement ecosystems—utilizing digital content, social media, and community narratives to convert transient enjoyment into enduring loyalty.

This study theoretically advances Place Attachment Theory by demonstrating that short-term, emotionally intense events can foster attachment similarly to extended exposure to a location. It further enhances Self-Determination Theory by framing hedonism not merely as an intrinsic drive, but as a mediating factor that connects challenge (constraint) to psychological fulfilment. The study presents a modern enhancement of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model by integrating temporal and motivational moderators into its emotional-behavioral framework.

This study establishes a foundation for future research that incorporates affective science, experience marketing, and cultural psychology, as festivals adapt to global disruptions, digital advancements, and changing tourist values. The findings underscore the necessity for more resilient, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent festival strategies that can adapt to the evolving demands of post-pandemic tourists while promoting sustainable tourism development.

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APPENDIX (MEASUREMENT ITEMS)

Construct	Item Code	Measurement Item	Source
Leisure Constraints (LC)			
Intrapersonal Constraints	ITP1	I am concerned about my safety when attending festivals.	Crawford et al. (1991); Dale & Ritchie (2020)
	ITP2	My personal fears or anxieties prevent me from attending festivals.	
	ITP3	I often feel that my personal issues (e.g., stress, health) hinder me from attending festivals.	
Interpersonal Constraints	ITE1	I have difficulty attending festivals because my friends or family are not interested.	Chen et al. (2013); Hughes et al. (2021)
	ITE2	It is challenging for me to attend festivals when I cannot find someone to go with.	
	ITE3	My social obligations often prevent me from attending festivals.	
Structural Constraints	SC1	Financial limitations prevent me from attending festivals.	Huber et al. (2018); Mei & Lantai (2018); Smith (1994)
	SC2	I find it difficult to attend festivals due to the cost of travel and accommodation.	
	SC3	Logistical issues, such as transportation, prevent me from attending festivals.	
	SC4	The time required to attend festivals is a significant barrier for me.	
Hedonism (HED)	HE1	I attend festivals because they provide me with a lot of pleasure.	Grappi & Montanari (2011); Tsaour et al. (2019)
	HE2	I enjoy the sensory experiences (sights, sounds, tastes) that festivals offer.	
	HE3	Participating in festivals is an exciting experience for me.	
	HE4	I feel a great sense of enjoyment when attending festivals.	
Revisit Intention (RI)	RI1	I am likely to revisit this festival destination in the future.	Zhang et al. (2018)
	RI2	I intend to return to this festival destination next time it is held.	
	RI3	I will make an effort to revisit this festival destination.	
Destination Attachment (DA)	DA1	I feel a strong connection to this festival destination.	Xu & Zhang (2016)
	DA2	This festival destination is a significant part of my life.	
	DA3	I am emotionally attached to this festival destination.	
	DA4	I would be sad if I could not visit this festival destination again.	
Travel Motivation (TM)	TM1	I attend festivals to experience something new and different.	Yan & Halpenny (2019); Y.-K. Lee et al. (2021)
	TM2	Festivals provide an opportunity for me to relax and escape from daily routines.	
	TM3	My desire to learn and explore motivates me to attend festivals.	
Temporal Distance (TD)	TD1	The time since I last attended this festival affects how well I remember the experience.	Trope & Liberman (2003); Patrick & MacInnis (2006)
	TD2	The further in the past my last festival experience was, the less likely I am to revisit.	
	TD3	My intention to revisit is stronger if the festival was recent.	