

Festival Gamification: Conceptualization and Scale Development

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Abstract : Although gamification has been concerned and applied in the tourism industry, limited literature could be found in tourism academy. Therefore, to contribute knowledge in festival gamification, it becomes essential to start by establishing a Festival Gamification Scale (FGS). This study defines festival gamification as the extent of a festival to involve game elements and game mechanisms. Based on self-determination theory, this study developed an FGS. Through the multi-study method, in study one, five FGS dimensions were sorted through literature review, followed by twelve in-depth interviews. A total of 296 statements were extracted from interviews and were later narrowed down to 33 items under six dimensions. In study two, 226 survey responses were collected from a cycling festival for exploratory factor analysis, resulting in twenty items under five dimensions. In study three, 253 survey responses were obtained from a marathon festival for confirmatory factor analysis, resulting in the final sixteen items under five dimensions. Then, results of criterion-related validity confirmed the positive effects of these five dimensions on flow experience. In study four, for examining the model extension of the developed five-dimensional 16-item FGS, which includes dimensions of relatedness, mastery, competence, fun, and narratives, cross-validation analysis was performed using 219 survey responses from a religious festival. For the tourism academy, the FGS could further be applied in other sub-fields such as destinations, theme parks, cruise trips, or resorts. The FGS serves as a starting point for examining the mechanism of festival gamification in changing tourists' attitudes and behaviors. Future studies could work on follow-up studies of FGS by testing outcomes of festival gamification or examining moderating effects of enhancing outcomes of festival gamification. On the other hand, although the FGS has been tested in cycling, marathon, and religious festivals, the research settings are all in Taiwan. Cultural differences of FGS is another further direction for contributing knowledge in festival gamification. This study also contributes to several valuable practical implications. First, this FGS could be utilized in tourist surveys for evaluating the extent of gamification of a festival. Based on the results of the performance assessment by FGS, festival management organizations and festival planners could learn the relative scores among dimensions of FGS, and plan for future improvement of gamifying the festival. Second, the FGS could be applied in positioning a gamified festival. Festival management organizations and festival planners could firstly consider the features and types of their festival, and then gamify their festival based on investing resources in key FGS dimensions.

Keywords : festival gamification, festival tourism, scale development, self-determination theory

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