

## THE INFLUENCE OF FESTIVALS AND EVENTS ON TOURISTS' WILLINGNESS TO VISIT MADEIRA ISLAND

Érica VIEIRA <sup>1</sup>, Álvaro DIAS <sup>1,2\*</sup>, Mafalda PATULEIA <sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ISCTE-IUL, Av. das Forças Armadas, Lisbon, Portugal; erica\_catarina@hotmail.com (V.E.); Alvaro.Dias@iscte-iul.pt (D.A.)

<sup>2</sup> César Ritz College, Englisch-Gruss-Strasse, Brig-Glis, Switzerland; (D.A.); mafaldapatuleia@ulusofona.pt (P.M.)

<sup>3</sup> CETRAD - Intrepid Lab., Lusófona University, Lisbon, Portugal, Campo Grande, Lisbon, Portugal; mafaldapatuleia@ulusofona.pt (P.M.)

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**Abstract:** The present study aims to understand the impact of summer festivals and events in willingness to visit Madeira Island. Based on the theory of planned behavior and willingness to participate in festivals and events, it analyses the correlation of these factors in willingness to visit. Moreover, age is used as a moderator effect in willingness to participate to conclude the final impact in the intention to travel to this Island. After conducting a survey and analyzing the data collected, a new understanding on the theory of planned behavior in the tourism market was achieved. In this context, the social environment around the individual has proved to not influence the decision to visit the hosting destination. Additionally, the willingness to participate in summer festivals and events is found to be a factor motivating and directly affecting the decision to visit Madeira Island. Age plays a role in this decision, influencing the intention to attend specific types of events. Therefore, it moderates, consequently, the main object in this study. These findings are crucial to the tourism market since it enables a new strategic view that can be explored and used worldwide to attract more people to a destination. Festivals and events are a growing market, beginning to be conceptualized as a tourism product. Therefore, this study contributes to existing literature by exploring this phenomenon that attracts tourists and leverages regions. Furthermore, it supports the theory of planned behavior in the tourism context, providing new findings and developments.

**Keywords:** theory of planned behavior, willingness to participate, willingness to visit, Madeira Island, festivals and events, age, hosting destination, tourism market

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### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been changing the way we live. Connecting the 4 parts of the world seems easier throughout the past years. Travelling is now part of our lives, and it has become a growing market, bringing competition to the tourism industry (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). Tourism marketing has nowadays, more than ever, the challenge to innovate. Standing out from the several options demands different strategies. Although there are several tourist destinations, some are known and most requested. Madeira Island has been growing in this market, winning several awards as the best destination in Europe and in the world (Awards and Distinctions - Visit Madeira | Madeira Islands Tourism Board Official Website, n.d.). The Natural landscape seems to be the main reason why this island is highly chosen. However, in the last few years, different reasons seem to be gaining consideration. Between culture, traditions, nature, festivals and events, there are many ways to enjoy vacations on this island (Awards and Distinctions - Visit Madeira | Madeira Islands Tourism Board Official Website, n.d.).

Festivals and events are a common way of attracting tourists, known as a tourism product, all around the globe (Portugal et al., 2022). Some researchers defend that although it affects the length of stay, it does not hold the power of motivating alone the decision to travel to a specific destination (Portugal et al., 2022).

Analyzing the impact of these types of events on tourism destination seems to be important, since they can drive revenues and the local economy (Chang et al., 2022). Festivals have become part of the culture of each place that it occurs, attracting new and repeat visitors (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). These cultural experiences are more attractive to a younger target (Lee et al., 2008). Thus, it leverages and contributes to the local economy and cohesion (Yoon et al., 2010).

Some studies see distance as part of the determinants affecting travel motivation, behavior intention, and the activity the individuals engage when visiting a tourism destination (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). Therefore, in the national market, observing the main reasons why Portuguese tourists choose the island is also relevant, to analyze if events and festivals are attracting them to Madeira. It can lead to a better understanding of the way they behave and are willing to participate in festivals and events, choosing the island, instead of other foreign destinations. Thus, this study will focus on the perception of Portuguese young adults, aged between 18 to 34 years old, from Azores and Continental Portugal. A survey will be conducted and analyzed using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and PLS-SEM. The goal is to understand if people

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\* Corresponding author

are willing to visit the island, and if this motivation and intention can be affected by the willingness to participate in festivals and events, during summer. Madeira is known for its major festivals, like flower festival or New year's.

However, many of the summer events remain relatively unknown to tourists. These celebrations take place across the island, throughout the entire season, attracting people from every corner. Old or younger, locals have enjoyed these cultural and musical events for generations. This will create a new vision board of different strategies that the island can use to attract a higher age range of tourists, by using factors that already exist but are poorly communicated. Natural landscape, flower festivals and new years are appreciated and sought by older people. Thus, this study aims to answer the research problem of "if and how festivals and events affect willingness to visit Madeira Island for Portuguese young adults, aged between 18 to 34 years old". With this purpose the following research questions aim to be answered:

RQ1 - Can the willingness to visit Madeira Island be influenced and predicted by the Theory of Planned Behavior? RQ2 - What is the mediator effect of willingness to participate in festivals and events in willingness to visit Madeira Island, during summer? RQ3 - Does age moderate willingness to participate in festivals and events?

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Madeira Island has been winning several awards, including the world's leading island, given by the world travel awards (Awards and Distinctions - Visit Madeira | Madeira Islands Tourism Board Official Website, n.d.), during the past years. It resulted in an intensification in tourism, although the island has ever been known for being a huge and important tourist destination. This literature review will contextualize the research problem, analyzing topics like theory of planned behavior, willingness to visit and participate, festivals and events, event involvement and age.

### 1. Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

#### 1.1. TPB Definition

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a social-psychological theory that attempts to explain and predict human behavior, based on attitude towards behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Lu et al., 2021). It was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, after analyzing the prior theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1985), created by him and Martin, in 1967 (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). According to this theory, an intention is created, and a behavior is taken as a result. The author conceptualizes intention as the immediate motivational factor behind the behavior. Therefore, it works as a direct behavior predictor (Tama et al., 2020).

However, this is conditioned by the perceived control the individual holds on this behavior (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). Originally, perceived behavioral control was named as a moderate variable. In the theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), only attitude and subjective norms were responsible for predicting the behavior (Nguyen et al., 2023). However, later, it was considered as a variable with direct effect on intention (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). In the end, this theory perceives behavior because of a cognitive-intention-behavior framework. The cognitive factor englobes attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, and it influences the intention which consequently influences the behavior (Li et al., 2023). TPB has been used to study a wide range of behaviors like environmental, health, marketing, tourism and travel behavior (Lu et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023). It's usually used in the tourism context, to predict different intentions to travel, like visiting a destination more than once (Liu et al., 2021).

In this study, this theory will be applied, in the tourism sector, suggesting three hypotheses to the model (Liu et al., 2021). The goal is to investigate the impact of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in willingness to visit Madeira Island, during summer, when there are festivals and events. The components of the theory are seen as the components of intention, suggesting an interest in studying it (Tama et al., 2020).

##### 1.1.1. Attitude

Attitude toward the behavior refers to a person's overall evaluation of the behavior and its consequences, whether they think it is good, bad or neutral (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). Research shows an accurate relation between attitudes toward behavioral intention, being used to predict this last one (Li et al., 2023). It is also defined as a general and lasting evaluation of several topics, like objects and advertisements. The attitude is built from experiences, a surrounding people, like family, media, internet and marketing (Deng & Li, 2013). So, it's a combined construct, gathering the overall environment around the consumer. In this study, events will be hand by hand with the destination in tourists' minds, influencing the attitude towards the hosting place (Deng & Li, 2013). Other authors define attitude as an acquired predisposition to behave towards a particular object in a consistent, favorable or unfavorable manner (Deng & Li, 2013). It influences behavior intentions mainly by two aspects. First, it works like a motivational factor. It is capable of propelling or repelling consumer behavior. Second, they present a relatively stable correspondence with the behaviors they represent. It has been tested, in previous studies, the correlation between attitude and behavioral intentions towards a destination (Deng & Li, 2013).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H1:** Attitude has a positive impact on Portuguese young adults' intention to travel, when there are festivals and events

##### 1.1.2. Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are the result of people's perception on the option to perform or not a behavior, based on behavioral expectations, held by groups of reference they might have (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). It's an individual construct regarding the option of performing a behavior, in a social context (Pahrudin et al., 2021). Subjective norms are also defined as social influences that encourage or not an individual to perform a particular behavior (Liu et al., 2021). It can be seen as

the social pressure that guides an individual's behavior (Li et al., 2023). Consumer's intention process combines attitude towards behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Pahrudin et al., 2021). So, subjective norms are described by many authors as a determinant of behavioral intention (Li et al., 2023). There is empirical evidence that people are more probable to travel if the social group around them support this decision. Thus, subjective norms have a positive impact on the intention to travel (Nguyen et al., 2023). This study will apply subjective norms as the incentive and pressure, the people surrounding a participant, exert on the decision to visit Madeira Island. Aims to study the correlation between this construct and the intention to travel to this island, to participate in festivals and events during summer.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H2:** Subjective norms have a positive impact on Portuguese young adults' intention to travel, when there are festivals and events

### 1.1.3. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Lastly in the Theory of Planned Behavior, perceived behavioral control is the person's belief in their ability to perform the action, according to the amount of resources, abilities and other factors they own (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). Theoretically, it wasn't recognized as a variable with a direct effect on the intention. It performed as a moderator of attitude and subjective norms (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). Therefore, the intention of traveling and participating in festivals and events was not created by the perception and sense of capability. However, it was responsible for changing how and to which degree attitude and subjective norms influenced those intentions (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021).

Later, empirical studies proved the direct effect of perceived behavioral control in intention, becoming a variable like attitude and subjective norms. Past misunderstandings on this subject have been attributed to poor methodology at the time (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). Although researchers have been focusing mainly on the intention-behavior relation, influenced by perceived behavioral control, a positive effect was presented by many authors, in anticipating intention by the correlation between attitude and perceived behavioral control. When the perceived control is higher on the behavior, there is an increased significance in the relation between attitude and intention (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). The relation with subjective norms has been put aside, and defended as not important or inconstant, since it does not influence or it presents different results, in moderating perceived behavioral control (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021).

In sum, perceived behavioral control is defined as the perception an individual holds on the level of effort required to perform specific behavior, shaped by prior experiences and self-evaluation. It influences positively and directly the intention to behave, so, it affects the intention to travel (Aslan, 2023). Consequently, a hypothesis emerges:

**H3:** Perceived behavioral control has a positive impact on Portuguese young adults' intention to travel, when there are festivals and events

## 1.2. Willingness to Visit or Willingness to Travel

Natural landscape, weather and culture seem to be the three biggest reasons why Madeira is well known and visited. Willingness to visit (WTV) or willingness to travel (WTT) is an important concept to understand and develop marketing strategies to attract more tourists since it can measure how likely a person is to visit a destination, based on different factors. Several phenomena can influence this variant positively or negatively. Natural disasters, crime, crises, terrorism, political unrest or even health issues and security can determine how likely tourists are to choose a place to travel (Hao et al., 2021; Tri & Nguyen, 2024). People tend to visit cities and countries to explore new places, sightseeing the beautiful natural landscapes and frontage. Several are looking to relax and escape from the daily routines and stress, seeking for a quiet place to improve their physical and mental health (Hao et al., 2021).

Regardless of the reason, tourists are willing to travel based on their own intentions and on the perception, they hold about a country or city. Some cities rely on tourism as a key part of their economy (Lee et al., 2008). To contribute to the local economy, these destinations aim to attract new people but, more importantly, they foster repeat visitors. Some studies present positive advantages of this strategy, saying that it involves less costs than promoting and communicating with new visitors. Attracting new people can cost, according to prior research, five times more (Lee et al., 2008). However, in this study, attracting a new target is the final goal, since summer festivals and events are still growing in Madeira's tourism market. These types of events can promote a destination and contribute to the local economy (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Marketing strategies are the key success factor in terms of reaching the target aimed.

The literature indicates that new cultural experiences and variety are widely chased by first-time visitors, usually younger people, while relaxation motivates repeat visitors (Lee et al., 2008).

## 1.3. Festivals and Events

A festival is described as a celebration, with a specific theme, within a limited duration. The frequency of its occurrence can be annually or less, and it can consist of one or more events (Akhoondnejad, 2015). Festivals and events offer different benefits, including tangible and intangible aspects, to communities (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Hosting events can contribute to attracting and retaining people in a specific tourism destination, when organizers prioritize good service. Service quality is a concept defined as the overall perception that customers have regarding the organization and its services in terms of whether they consider them to be inferior or superior (Jeong & Kim, 2020). It brings up the construct of satisfaction. This has gained several definitions over the years. It was described as a two stages concept. Attribute satisfaction and information satisfaction combine consumers' subjective satisfaction, obtained by observing the performance, and the information they had upon the moment of choosing the purchased product (Yoon et al., 2010). Other authors describe

satisfaction as the psychological state, affected by prior expectations about the consumption experience (Yoon et al., 2010). Thus, satisfaction is the overall perception consumers gather during the entire purchase experience (Yoon et al., 2010). This mediates perceived quality, behavioral intentions and loyalty (Deng & Li, 2013; Al-Azzam et al., 2022). Several authors describe the economic impact events and festivals may have. Some argue that this may be used as a tourism product, attracting people worldwide. Others explain the impact only as a side factor, working together with different characteristics, being able to motivate longer and repeated visits instead of being self-sufficient to attract tourism (Portugal et al., 2022). Nonetheless, festivals and events are seen as a way to leverage tourism and motivate residents to attend, contributing to an economic expansion (Portugal et al., 2022). They work as a significant key change on the local economy and promote community cohesion (Yoon et al., 2010). The competition in this market has been growing across the world. Not only affected by the several events happening everywhere, all the time, but also by the other entertainment alternatives. The importance of understanding consumers' intentions, motivations, behaviors and perceived satisfaction is then explained. It is empirical for the event organizers to plan and work on a positive and effective marketing position and strategy (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014).

#### 1.4. Willingness to Participate

Willingness to participate (WTP) is a measure of how likely a person is to attend a particular festival or event, based on factors like interest, perceived value, accessibility and constraints. Tourist events can allow new experiences, creating a unique moment (Teixeira et al., 2019). The intention to participate is subjective and a result of different factors. Factors like incentive level, time and space limitations and triggering activities can change the intention among visitors. People create an expectation of what they would enjoy and like to see and feel (Ochoa & Revilla, 2023). According to prior research, the participation in festivals and events, in this study, is directly influenced by the real desire people hold to take part in such experiences. The habit is only created when there is already the desire (Liu et al., 2023). Therefore, this concept is subjective and results from the likelihood of participating in festivals and events in the future. Thus, this construct is confirmed and verified by several studies (Liu et al., 2023). Festivals are growing as a tourism segment, motivating visitors even during the off-season. This leverages the region where the event is hosted, bringing multiple benefits, like awareness (Kang et al., 2014). The present study tries to understand and predict the intention to travel to Madeira Island, when there are summer festivals and events. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H4:** Willingness to participate in festivals and events have a mediator effect in willingness to visit Madeira Island

#### 1.5. Event involvement and Age

Event involvement and age also dictate how likely people are to visit certain events and festivals. Involvement refers to the level of participation, engagement and relevance people have with an object or situation, regarding their needs, values and interests. It can be measured in a few ways, especially using the two main scales: personal involvement inventory and consumer involvement profile (Koo & Lee, 2019). Event involvement can also be calculated, within other ways, as how pleasure and interest it was or is perceived (Jeong et al., 2020).

Since the eighties, festivals have been growing in frequency, diversity and relevance. They are now recognized as part of cultural tourism, being an important tourism product (Akhoondnejad, 2015). They leverage tourism and promote the hosting city, boosting the local economy (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). Several studies emphasize the difference between attendants. Locals and non-locals tend to behave in different ways, especially in terms of buying patterns. Distance is then a variable influencing different factors like traveling motivation, behavior and the activity pursued (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). Two groups can be identified, first time visitors and repeat visitors. Repeat visitors tend to spend more time and money, indicating a higher level of loyalty. Both contribute to the performance and long-term viability of the event. Excitement, event novelty, singular and social experiences, entertainment, and personal involvement are among the key motivations to attend a festival (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). The motivation is known to be different depending on demographic and behavioral factors such as income level, place of residence, repeat attendance and age (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014).

Normally, event involvement is directly connected with age since individuals tend to follow a certain behavioral pattern that aligns with their life stage. As seen before, cultural experiences are more attractive to a younger target (Lee et al., 2008). Thus, events and festivals, depending on the type, music or environment, may attract specific age groups. Music festivals demand a study of the reasons behind people's intention to participate in such events. The success factors here are the segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) (Portugal et al., 2022). Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

**H5:** Age moderate willingness to participate in festivals and events, influencing willingness to visit Madeira Island

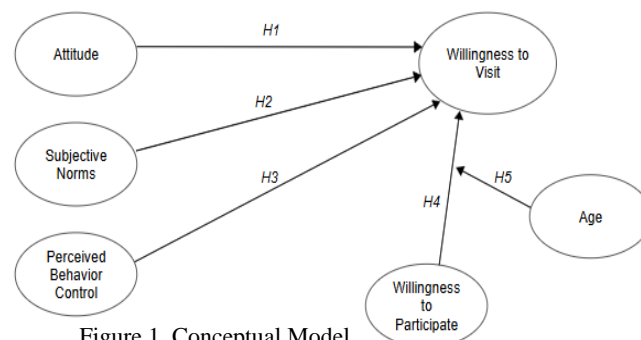


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

## 1.6. Conceptual Model

By collecting primary data for this study, different hypotheses were created, in order to test their veracity. In consequence, the following model was elaborated (Figure 1).

## METHODOLOGY

This deductive study was conducted with an exploratory research objective. It aims to answer the research questions, build upon definitions, conclusions and theories found in several studies.

A convenience sample was selected to apply a quantitative method, using a survey. It was conducted to Portuguese people aged between 18 to 34 years old, who are not from Madeira Island. A multi-group analysis was also implemented to investigate the significant differences between two generational groups, regarding the willingness to visit Madeira Island. The purpose was to conclude if they are willing to visit and participate in festivals and events, during summer.

Therefore, a survey was conducted using the Theory of Planned Behavior. This theory is used in studies as a way of predicting people's behavior (Harb et al., 2019). In this dissertation, it will be used to investigate the reasons influencing the willingness to visit Madeira Island and how it behaves, including festivals and events as an attraction and motivation. The goal is to determine the impact of festivals and events on people's behavior and willingness.

### 1. Sample

A questionnaire survey was conducted to a convenience sample, aiming to understand their behavior and willingness to participate in festivals and events in Madeira Island. The goal is to study how this island is perceived as a host of these events and how it can influence the decision of visiting a national destination, instead of a foreign one. A sample of 150 responses was gathered, all usable. Four group ages were analyzed. In the sample, 88 (59%) respondents were aged between 22 and 25 years old, 30 (20%) were aged between 26 and 30, 21 (14%) between 18 and 21 and 11 (7%) respondents were aged between 31 and 34 years old. Most respondents were women, around 103 (69%).

Regarding the region they're from, the majority are from Lisbon, around 66 (44%) of them. Santarém is the following city, with 16 (10,7%) respondents. With 14 (9,3%) respondents, Setúbal is next, followed by Porto with 11 (7,3%) respondents. The regions left have small groups, with under 10 (5%) respondents. The educational level shows that most of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, around 88 (58.7%). This is followed by a master's degree, with 39 (26%) respondents, then High School with 19 (12.7%) and finally, Doctorate degree with only 4 (2.7%) respondents. Within this sample, 60 (40%) respondents are students, 38 (25.3%) are working students, 50 (33.3%) are working and the minority are unemployed (2 – 1.3%). The perceived economic status is mainly medium, with 111 (74%) respondents. The minority is considered part of a high economic status, with only 11 (7.3%) respondents.

Among the respondents, 70 (47%) have never been to Madeira. From the ones who answered positively to this question (80 – 53%), 42 (52.5%) went only once, 12 (15%) went twice and 26 (32.5%) went three or more times. The reasons motivating the most the intention to visit Madeira are natural landscape (92.7%), gastronomy (68.7%), local attractions (62%) and weather (60%). The same question was asked about foreign destinations. Natural landscape (78.7%) and local attractions (74%) are again among the biggest reasons. Additionally, the majority also mentioned culture (78%) and the desire to visit different countries (71.3%). When questioned about their awareness on the summer festivals and events, happening in Madeira Island, the majority had a negative answer (89 – 59.3%).

Around 61 (40.7%) respondents said they were aware. From this group, the source of information was mostly through friends (68.9%), social media networks (52.5%) or visiting the Island (34.4%).

### 2. Measures

The survey was divided into four moments. First, a brief demographic analysis, to enable a description of the sample and to guarantee the target aimed for this study. The target was only Portuguese people, aged between 18 to 34, as mentioned before. The next section focused on understanding people's intentions to travel, how they behave and perceive Madeira Island as a tourism destination and a host for summer festivals and events.

To construct these questions, an extended version of Theory of Planned Behavior was used, since it helps to better explain travel intentions (Liu et al., 2021). In the subsequent sections, the focus was on willingness to participate in festivals and events and willingness to visit Madeira Island. It was crucial for this study to understand how Madeira Island is perceived as a tourist destination, and how many people are willing to participate in festivals and events, according to their age and event involvement. The variables on the conceptual model were elaborated with validated scales.

The survey was firstly made and shared in English. In a second moment, answering to a demand for a Portuguese version, a translation was made, maintaining the linguistic and psychological meaning (Hambleton et al., 2004). The items on the questionnaire were measured by using a Likert-scale (1 - Strongly Disagree to 7 - Strongly Agree).

#### 2.1. Attitude

Travelling intention starts with the beliefs and attitudes people hold. Attitudes are driven by positive or negative evaluations towards a specific behavior (Pahrudin et al., 2021).

It has a positive impact on visiting intention, thus, it helps predicting and studying how festivals and events influence willingness to visit Madeira Island (Pahrudin et al., 2021). This construct was measured with the following five adapted items (Liu et al., 2021): (1) I think Madeira Island is a good tourism destination; (2) I think festivals and events are a valuable factor to travel to Madeira Island; (3) I think it is interesting to participate in festivals and events in Madeira

Island, during summer; (4) I think is delightful to travel to Madeira Island, specially knowing there are summer festivals and events; (5) I'm willing to visit Madeira Island during summer, to participate in festivals and events.

## 2.2. Subjective Norms

The decision-making process involves mindsets and action phases. It starts with an inspired-by moment, moved, in some point, by deliberation (Dai et al., 2021). Choosing a destination can take some time and different variables. During this process, travelers pursue suggestions and opinions from the people around them, to create the intention to travel (Su et al., 2021). Therefore, this variable was evaluated by five items, adapted from Liu et al (2021).

The items are: (1) Most people that are important to me think I should travel to Madeira Island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events; (2) Most people who are important to me understand that I travel to Madeira Island during summer; (3) Most people whose opinion I value agree with me about travelling to Madeira Island, when there are summer festivals and events; (4) Most people whose opinion I value support that I travel to Madeira Island during summer, to participate in festivals and events; (5) Most of the people whose opinion I value recommend that I travel to Madeira Island during summer, to participate in festivals and events.

## 2.3. Perceived Behavioral Control

Theory of Planned behavior explains that when there is a high perceived behavioral control, the chance of individuals performing according to their behavioral intentions increase (Hagger et al., 2022). This concept is then a way of understanding travel intentions and furthermore, willingness to visit.

Four items were adapted from Liu et al (2021) and used to estimate this variable: (1) I have enough time to travel to Madeira Island during summer; (2) I have the desire to travel to Madeira Island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events; (3) I am confident that if I want, I can travel to Madeira Island during summer; (4) I feel there is nothing that prevents me from travelling to Madeira Island during summer if I want to.

## 2.4. Willingness to Participate

For this study, the basis is to understand if people want to participate and be involved in summer festivals and events. Only then can it be evaluated the desire and intention to visit places that are hosting this type of attraction, in this case, Madeira Island (Liu et al., 2023). To measure willingness to participate, the next three items were adapted from (Sharma & Klein, 2020): (1) I am willing to participate in Festivals and events; (2) I will probably participate in Festivals and events; (3) I am interested in participating in Festivals and events.

## 2.5. Willingness to Visit

As mentioned before, the willingness to visit is the ultimate result of several factors that influence this decision. Some studies concluded that tourists' satisfaction is part of this decision and is directly affected by recreation experiences (Zhang et al., 2022). The main question of this study is whether people are willing to visit Madeira Island, to participate in festivals and events. To understand and answer this construct, three items were adapted from Sharma & Klein (2020), for two different questions. In the first question, we tried to measure how willing people were to visit the island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events, in order to participate in those.

The items used were (Sharma & Klein, 2020): (1) I am willing to visit Madeira Island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events, in order to participate in those; (2) I will probably visit Madeira Island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events, in order to participate in those; (3) I am interested in visiting Madeira Island during the occurrence of summer festivals and events, in order to participate in those.

In a second question, we aimed to estimate how willing Portuguese people are to choose Madeira Island, instead of other foreign destinations, when festivals and events are part of the decision. The three items were then adapted (Sharma & Klein, 2020): (1) I am willing to visit Madeira Island instead of other foreign countries; (2) I will probably visit Madeira Island instead of other foreign countries; (3) I am interested in visiting Madeira Island instead of other foreign countries.

## 3. Data Collection

The questionnaire was elaborated and first distributed to five people. This step was crucial to gather feedback and improve the survey to enable a better understanding and accomplishment of the goal of this study.

As previously mentioned, in a first moment, it was shared only in English, since this is the language that this study is written. However, being the target Portuguese, a demand for a Portuguese version began to exist.

To address this problem, a translation was applied. Both versions were spread, several times, in different social media platforms, since it allows to reach a higher range of people, in different cities of Portugal. The duration of this survey was 1 year and 2 months (February 2024 to April 2025).

After collecting this primary data, it will be analyzed using a partial least squares-structural equation model. PLS-SEM is employed to uncover hidden patterns within the data and gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between variables (Pahrudin et al., 2021). PLS was chosen over the covariance-based model (CB-SEM), since it will be evaluated the correlation between more than one complex construct and to forecast and predict the essential ones, rather than studying independent constructs and data (Luo et al., 2022; Lam & Ryan, 2021). This will allow the exploration of different variables influencing willingness to visit Madeira Island and willingness to participate in festivals and events, in the Island. Secondary data will be gathered from the literature review in this study.

## RESULTS

### 1. Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, primary data was collected based on existing items and scales, to evaluate the variables in this study. To measure the correlations and interactions between those variables, partial least squares (PLS) were used, from structural equation modelling (SEM). This will allow a better understanding of the significance of the model, as well as an insight into the variable's relationships (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Multigroup analysis (MGA) will be conducted as well, to better investigate the correlation between age groups and the variables. The goal is to determine if age has a significant effect on the willingness to participate and consequently, on the willingness to visit. Multigroup analysis will be used in PLS-SEM (Cheah et al., 2023). Therefore, SmartPLS 3 software was used (Ringle et al., 2015). The analysis was divided into two moments. First, the validity and reliability of the measurements were tested and then the structural model.

### 2. Model validity and Results

The results analysis and interpretation started with a validation of the metrics and measurement model used in this study. The goal is to test the reliability, validity and quality of the model. Therefore, the indicators of reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity were applied (Hair et al., 2017).

The output shows that all the items used have standardized factor loadings higher than 0.7 (minimum value being 0.75) and all significant with  $p < 0.05$  (all at  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, the variables present evidence for the individual indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017). The values of the constructs Cronbach alphas and composite reliability (CR) were greater than 0.7, which confirms the internal consistency reliability (Table 1) (Hair et al., 2017). To evaluate convergent validity, three factors were tested and confirmed. First, as seen before, all items loaded at a minimum value of  $0.75 > 0.5$ , indicating their significance on their individual constructs. Second, all items presented a CR value greater than 0.70. Finally, all constructs show an average variance extracted (AVE) higher than 0.50, as seen in Table 1 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As for discriminant validity, Fornell & Larcker criterion was used, as well as heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion. In the first one, the AVE square root of each element (diagonal bold values in Table 1) must be higher than its greater construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This is verified in Table 1, as all constructs are proven to satisfy the criterion. The second criterion suggests that all HTMT ratios should be below a threshold value of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 1 demonstrates that this criterion is also verified and so it brings more evidence of discriminant validity.

Table 1. PLS: Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Correlations, and discriminant validity checks (Note: Diagonal Bold Numbers are the Square Roots of AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT ratios)

Latent Variables	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
(1) Willingness_Part	0,980	0,987	0,962	0,981	0,617	0,552	0,519	0,690
(2) Attitude_TPB	0,930	0,948	0,785	0,603	0,886	0,724	0,844	0,733
(3) PBC_TPB	0,862	0,902	0,697	0,546	0,687	0,835	0,756	0,700
(4) SubjectiveNorms_TPB	0,941	0,955	0,811	0,506	0,799	0,712	0,901	0,688
(5) W_visit	0,961	0,969	0,837	0,682	0,711	0,684	0,665	0,915

To proceed to an evaluation of the structural model, collinearity was first checked, by analyzing VIF values (Table 2) (Hair et al., 2017). This criteria is verified since all values are below the critical value 5 (highest one being 3.36), meaning that collinearity is not found in this study (Hair et al., 2017). The final evaluation focused on the structural model.

Table 2. PLS: VIF values

	VIF
Willingness_Part $\rightarrow$ W_visit	1,659
Attitude_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	3,360
PBC_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	2,317
SubjectiveNorms_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	3,219

It was assessed by using magnitude, sign and structural path coefficients; R squared values magnitude for each endogenous variable in the model, as a measure of the accuracy; and lastly, Stone-Geisser's Q squared values was applied as an indicator of predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). R squared coefficient for the endogenous variable of willingness to visit is 64.3%. This value is higher than 10% (Falk & Miller, 1992). Willingness to visit is the central variable in this study, since the others are all conducted and correlated to this one. Since the value is above 60%, we have great evidence that there is a strong explanatory influence of the predictor variables on this dependent variable. Q squared value also shows the predictive relevance of the model since it's higher than 0 (0.623).

Table 3. Structural model assessment

Path	Path coefficient	Standard errors	t statistics	p values
Willingness_Part $\rightarrow$ W_visit	0,342	0,086	3,978	0,000
Attitude_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	0,229	0,101	2,277	0,023
PBC_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	0,243	0,089	2,713	0,007
SubjectiveNorms_TPB $\rightarrow$ W_visit	0,136	0,094	1,441	0,150



Hence, this model and the variables present a strong validity and quality. Regarding the hypothesis, Table 3 presents the positive effect that attitude has on willingness to visit, influencing significantly this variable ( $\beta = 0.229$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ).

The same is verified in perceived behavioral control, as seen in the Table 3 ( $\beta = 0.243$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). On the other hand, subjective norms are not significantly influencing willingness to visit ( $\beta = 0.136$ ;  $p < n.s$ ). These results provide support to H1 and H3 but do not verify H2, from the theory of planned behavior. Willingness to participate has a significant and positive effect on willingness to visit ( $\beta = 0.342$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the H4 is supported. To test the moderate effect age has on willingness to participate and consequently on willingness to visit, bootstrapping was used in multigroup analysis (MGA) to assess the significance of the moderate parameter (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4 shows that  $p < 0.05$  for willingness to visit, indicating that age significantly affects willingness to participate, influencing positively willingness to visit. Thus, the model presents support to H5.

Table 4. Bootstrap MGA: Moderate effect of age (Ger0- 18-25; Ger1- 26-34)

Path	Difference (Ger0 – Ger1)	1-tailed (Ger0 vs Ger1)	p value
Willingness Part → W visit	-0,409	0,991	0,017
Attitude TPB → W visit	0,259	0,059	0,117
PBC TPB → W visit	-0,012	0,535	0,930
SubjectiveNorms TPB → W visit	0,108	0,286	0,572

## DISCUSSION

1. Theory of Planned Behavior as a predictor to the intention to travel and participate in summer festivals and events, in Madeira Island, influencing willingness to visit. The study shows that this theory is not fully sufficient to understand and predict willingness to visit Madeira Island. It was applied as a direct behavior predictor (Tama et al., 2020). Attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms are the three constructs supporting this theory (Lu et al., 2021). According to several studies, these are the three components of the cognitive factor that directly and positively influence the intention and, therefore, the behavior (Li et al., 2023). However, as seen previously, subjective norms do not significantly influence the model in this case. This indicates that the social context, regarding the people surrounding an individual, does not significantly influence their decision to travel and participate in summer festivals and events, on Madeira Island. According to the literature, subjective norms have a positive impact on the intention to travel, since people are more probable to travel if the social group around them support this decision (Nguyen et al., 2023). Thus, this study brings a new understanding on this subject, defending that social context does not work as a predictor of willingness to visit.

As for attitude and perceived behavioral control, it's been proved in this study, their predictor capability of willingness to visit. Attitude refers to the personal evaluation of the behavior, taking in consideration the perceived consequences of the act (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). It combines several topics like experiences and the environment around the person (Deng & Li, 2013). It's also described as a predisposition to behave (Deng & Li, 2013). In this model, attitude shows a positive impact in willingness to travel to Madeira Island, when there are summer festivals and events. This means that personal beliefs and desires of participating in summer festivals and events in the island significantly and positively influence willingness to visit. So, it proves again the correlation between attitude and behavioral intentions towards a destination (Deng & Li, 2013). Perceived behavioral control is the belief and perception an individual holds in the ability to perform an action, depending on factors like resources (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022).

The relation of this construct has been studied, especially along with attitude since it helps to predict the intention to behave. A positive effect was presented by many authors, in anticipating intention by the correlation between attitude and perceived behavioral control (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). This study brings evidence to this field, since it's proved that only attitude and perceived behavioral control influence significantly willingness to visit. Thus, it brings support that the way an individual perceives their ability to participate in summer festivals and events, in Madeira, influences their willingness to visit the island. Then, when people believe they can visit and participate in events in Madeira, they are more willing to visit the island, and so it affects the travel intention and decision (Aslan, 2023).

In sum, theory of planned behavior helps to predict the intention to travel to Madeira Island, when there are summer festivals and events, since two of the three constructs present a positive and significant effect on willingness to visit.

## 2. Willingness to participate in summer festivals and events influencing positively willingness to visit Madeira Island

The willingness to participate is a measure of how likely a person is to attend festivals and events (Teixeira et al., 2019). Festivals are becoming a tourism product, motivating visitors even during the off-season (Kang et al., 2014; Portugal et al., 2022). However, some studies defend that festivals and events only work aside with different factors, motivating longer and repeated visits instead of being self-sufficient to attract tourism (Portugal et al., 2022). In this study, there is evidence that willingness to participate in summer festivals and events is capable of influencing the willingness to visit Madeira Island. Therefore, it leverages the region where the event is hosted, bringing multiple benefits, like awareness, and attracting people to this tourism destination (Kang et al., 2014; Jeong & Kim, 2020).

Festivals are being recognized as part of cultural tourism (Akhoondnejad, 2015). The motivations to attend a festival differ on different factors like demographic and behavioral, such as place of residence and age (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). This study was conducted only with Portuguese people since distance influences different variables like traveling motivation, behavior and the activity pursued (Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). Considering that cultural experiences are more attractive to a younger target, this was the sample aimed (Lee et al., 2008). Therefore, the effect of age was tested in this model. Among people aged between 18 to 34, we could separate into two groups.



The first one is then aged between 18 to 25 and it belongs to generation Z. The other group is aged between 26 to 34 and are known as millennials. The results show that there is a significant and positive effect on willingness to participate in summer festivals and events. This means that age moderates this variable and, thus, it brings evidence that it is an influencing factor, consequently affecting the intention to visit the hosting destination. This can be explained with other studies since the type of event, music or environment can influence the age group of the attendants (Portugal et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

### 1. Theoretical Contributions

The present study brings knowledge and theoretical contributions to tourism marketing. It focuses on the effect of summer festivals and events in willingness to visit the hosting place. Theory of planned behavior, willingness to participate and age were taken in consideration to evaluate the correlations leading to the desire to visit Madeira Island (TPB, WTP and Age) (Ajzen, 1985; Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Lu et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023; Teixeira et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2023; Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014; Lee et al., 2008).

Previous research explained the prediction capability of intention using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022). This theory was applied in several contexts, including tourism (Lu et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023). It explains how attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control can predict the intention to behave. In the tourism area, it helps predict the intention to travel (Liu et al., 2021). In this study, it was applied as a predictor to the willingness to visit Madeira Island, during the occurrence of summer festivals and events. As seen in the results, only the subjective norms were considered not significant in explaining this correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that the attitude toward visiting the island and the perceived capability to perform the action influence significantly and positively the willingness to visit Madeira Island. Thus, a new understanding of this theory is found. In the tourism context, when there are summer festivals and events, theory of planned behavior is a good predictor of the intention to travel, however, the social environment around the individual does not play a part in this decision. For this reason, it refutes the theory that people are more probable to travel if the social group around them supports this decision (Nguyen et al., 2023).

The willingness to participate was also analyzed and proved to influence willingness to visit. The study brings evidence that when the desire to participate in summer festivals and events exists, the motivation to travel to Madeira Island is created. It presents theoretical support that festivals and events are part of cultural tourism and can be seen as an important tourism product (Akhoondnejad, 2015). Previous research defines these events as a factor motivating longer and repeated visits and not capable of attracting tourism by itself (Portugal et al., 2022). However, this paper provides empirical support that willingness to participate in summer festivals and events positively and significantly influences willingness to visit. Given this, we can conclude that festivals and events can influence and motivate tourists to visit a hosting place. They are a significant factor for the local economy and enough to leverage the region and attract people (Kang et al., 2014; Jeong & Kim, 2020).

Finally, age is also a component in this study that affects positively willingness to participate, consequently affecting willingness to visit. In a group of people aged between 18 to 34 years old, age moderates willingness to participate in summer festivals and events. The age is then a factor that affects the type of event, music or environment an individual attends (Portugal et al., 2022). Cultural experiences are more attractive to a younger target (Lee et al., 2008). This study brings evidence to this field, helping to prove that age can influence the intention to participate in festivals and events and, consequently, motivate or discourage the decision to visit a hosting destination.

### 2. Practical Implications

This study gathers more knowledge from marketing managers, tourism destinations and event organizers. It enables a new understanding of how people behave when there are summer festivals and events in a tourism destination.

The research shows that when there are summer festivals and events, an intention to visit the hosting place is created. Therefore, it presents a new business opportunity and an advantage to those that organize and take part in such organizations. They can use this knowledge to plan and execute an event or festival more suitable to a younger target. In consequence, marketing managers can direct a message to the target aimed, knowing their intentions and behaviors in these circumstances.

Furthermore, the governments of tourism destinations can forecast a new market or communicate a product that, perhaps, they already explore but are not fully leveraging its benefits. They can then understand how these events can affect the economy and the tourism market.

In sum, this study brings empirical evidence that festivals and events are a good tourism product. Therefore, it enables tourism destinations and event organizers to invest in this market and attract more people, leveraging economies and regions. Marketing managers have then an opportunity to communicate to a specific target, allowing higher revenues and awareness.

### 3. Limitations and Future Research

This study is helpful for many reasons, bringing more evidence and knowledge to the tourism market. However, it presented some limitations, since it focused on a small target. The research was concluded by analyzing a small group of Portuguese people aged between 18 to 34 years old. Moreover, only summer festivals and events were presented as a motivation to travel. Therefore, it is still somehow vague to conclude how festivals and events can influence the decision to visit a hosting destination. The sample size was a limitation in this study since the target was difficult to reach via online. Directing the survey to a specific group can be hard when there is a wide range of people accessing it.

Hence, for future research, a larger sample is suggested. Including more nationalities and age groups will bring more evidence to this study's conclusions. Additionally, adding different types of events and different times of occurrence will

increase value on the study. It will help predict intentions and behaviors in the tourism field, enabling destinations to forecast a new market or initiate new marketing strategies to attract more people.

Festivals and events are a growing topic, across the world, showing every day more importance and relevance. Studying how it affects different regions and ages is crucial to enable more understanding of this market.

Finally, this research provides a basis for subsequent studies and enhances regions to analyze new market opportunities through strategically planned festivals and events aimed at suitable audiences. It can boost local economies and tourism. Thus, for future research, it's also suggested to study different reasons motivating willingness to participate and visit, like festival type and destination image or including different theories that might help predict buying and purchasing behaviors. Furthermore, this thesis brings an opening to investigate how and to which degree festivals and events can work as a motivation and reason to repeat visitors, raising concepts like loyalty and satisfaction.

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