Negotiating with Authenticity to Ensure Sustainability of Traditional Cultural Festivals: Residents’ Perspectives about Macao’s Drunken Dragon Festival

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Abstract: The present study examines the three perceptual factors (cultural, economic, and social) that affect residents’ attitude towards transformation in the search for sustainability. Macao’s Drunken Dragon Festival, China’s intangible cultural heritage, was used as the case. Self-administered surveys were conducted on 378 resident festival participants in 2015 and 692 residents (both participants and non-participants) in 2017. The results show that regardless of previous experiences of participating in the festival, those who perceive more strongly about its cultural values tend to have positive attitudes towards its transformation, which may involve a loss of objective authenticity. Those who perceive more strongly that the festival is exclusive and does not embrace diverse participants are more likely to support its transformation. However, such a perception does not lead to their belief that diverse groups of people should be incorporated into the festival. Only among the non-participants from the sample collected in 2017, the perception that this festival provides economic benefit is associated with positive attitudes towards transforming and incorporating diverse groups of participants. This study provides insight into understanding the residents’ common and differentiated attitudes with regards to how much transformation is necessary to ensure sustainability of a local traditional cultural festival.

Keywords: Drunken Dragon Festival; Macao; resident perception; cultural festival; intangible cultural heritage

1. Introduction

In recent years, the value of a local traditional cultural festival as a representable visualized form of intangible heritage has gained interest [1–3]. Light has been shed on the multi-faceted roles of various local traditional cultural festivals and their dynamics, which may affect the sustained value of the festival to the stakeholders involved. Recently, complications both in conflict and cooperation have occurred involving the sustainability of traditional cultural festivals as a manifestation of intangible heritage, especially those which have been historically embedded into a community [4]. Understanding the attitudinal and behavioral pattern of the stakeholders is expected to elucidate the search for the sustainability of various cultural festivals.

Among the core issues that stakeholders face to sustain traditional cultural festivals and safeguard the intangible heritage elements associated with them have been commercialization, touristification, or festivalization [5]. On the one hand, scholars have believed that commercialization and touristification may increase the tourist inflow and popularize the festival, thus assisting its economic sustainability, as well as other factors. On the other hand, they have also illustrated the risks of lost authenticity...
caused by commercialization [5]. Similarly, many cases have been reported about how festivalization involves negotiation of authenticity [6–8]. In balancing these, it has been widely acknowledged that investigating the stakeholder groups involved with events and festivals in general [9,10] and traditional cultural festivals in particular [11] provides valuable insight into how they put meanings to each element of a cultural festival and how they desire to associate them with the festival [12].

Among them, residents, one of the key stakeholders, have been approached to capture their perceptions towards mega-events [13–16], annual tourism events [17] as well as their temporal variations [18], and individual differences [19]. Perceptions of the events and festivals have been approached mainly from cultural and socioeconomic aspects [20,21]. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the conflicting opinions or agreements on commercialization, touristification or festivalization [22–25], stakeholder involvement, and the loss of authenticity by scrutinizing the residents. Such scrutiny is expected to help to understand how the residents think about the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the festival. Moreover, it would predict their reactions to the transformation of the cultural festival.

The Drunken Dragon Festival (DDF), also known as the Drunken Dragon and Lion Dance Gala, is one of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage elements of the People’s Republic of China. Although the festival has maintained its local significance in Macao, the continuous efforts to diversify Macao’s tourism offerings are posing complex challenges to the maintenance of the festival’s traditional roots [26].

Acknowledging the volatile nature of the casino industry, the Macao government has been trying to diversify its tourism offerings. One of the efforts to do so has been to utilize traditional festivals and events as tourism resources [27]. Ironically, the utilization of traditional festivals and events as tourism resources is not always possible without certain modifications to them, and this raises questions about the threat to their authenticity [4]. Depending on how individuals perceive how to ensure such multi-faceted sustainability and their receptivity to tourism development of this traditional cultural element would vary. Furthermore, different stakeholder groups are expected to accept such transformation differently, the participating and non-participating residents being among them [26]. It is crucial to identify the conditions for the tendency to support such transformation of the traditional cultural festivals.

The purpose of the present study was to identify which aspects of the perception towards a local traditional cultural festival predict those who are likely to have positive attitudes towards enhanced publicity, which may harm cultural sustainability yet would assist the sustainability of the festival and the tourism industry of Macao. Specifically, this study focused on how the residents’ perceptions about the Drunken Dragon Festival are associated with their attitudes towards the transformation of the festival and whether or not they differ by previous participating experiences.

In discussing the authenticity of this festival, this study refers to objective authenticity [28]. There certainly is a consensus among scholars in heritage management and tourism that other views such as constructivist and existentialist approaches complement the concept of objective authenticity. Such complementary views reflect that the elements that form authenticity are not fixed or based on absolute criteria; instead, they reflect that what is socially accepted or perceived as authentic could be the outcomes of negotiation by diverse stakeholders or could be the transgressed self that individuals experience in the liminal space [29]. However, authenticity still commonly refers to its objective aspects of whether or not an object or a cultural experience, including festivals and rituals, are formed and enacted based on the tradition by the members of the community who uphold the culture; a generic definition of authenticity connotes that which is original, genuine, or real [28,30]. In this case, as a local traditional cultural festival, at least some elements that form genuineness and historical integrity exist. How the festival takes place in terms of time and the cultural space are two such examples. This is supported by Imon’s [26] argument that when it comes to the Drunken Dragon Festival, tourism development may have involved diversifying the festival venues and time, and it may have caused the community members to perceive such diversified ways of re-enactment as “inauthentic” [26].
1.1. Drunken Dragon Festival

The Drunken Dragon Festival in Macao is a festival of the Macao Fresh Fish Traders’ Association, an association of fishmongers in the city. It was listed as Macao’s Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009 and on the list of National Intangible Cultural Heritage of China in 2011. The festival is believed to have originated in the Zhongshan county of the Guangdong province many years ago to celebrate a cure from a plague from which a village was suffering. The cure consisted of drinking the blood of a large snake that was killed by the villagers by cutting it into three pieces [26]. The main event of the festival is held annually on the eighth day of the fourth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, which is also the Buddha’s birthday.

The current format of the festival includes four major components: a feast on the festival’s eve for which only the association members and their families prepare and attend a dinner (Figure 1); a Taoist ritual at one of the oldest temples of Macao—the Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple (also known as Kuan Tai Temple)—to initiate the festival on the morning of the festival day (Figure 2); a procession of the Drunken Dragon Dance performance that starts at the Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple and continues at all the major markets and places associated with fish selling in different parts of the city (Figure 3); and distribution of longevity rice (also known as “Dragon Bowl Rice”)—a rice-based dish prepared by the association members—to the public at the Mercado Almirante Lacerda (Red Market) and Complexo Municipal do Mercado de S. Domingos (St. Dominic’s Market) (Figure 4). Among the four components, the Drunken Dragon Dance draws the most attention of the public and tourists. In this dance, the performers, who are also association members, use wooden dragon pieces, drink alcohol, and make dance movements that mimic a drunk person.

Figure 1. Community feast on the eve of the festival.

Figure 2. Initiation ceremony at the Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple.
Markets with a sizable presence of fresh fish sellers are the centers of the main festival-related activities, while the religious initiation ceremony takes place at the Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple located in front of Mercado de S. Domingos Municipal Complex (St. Dominic’s Market). In addition to the Mercado Almirante Lacerda (Red Market) and the Mercado de S. Domingos Municipal Complex (St. Dominic’s Market), celebrations are also held at the Mercado de Municipal de S. Lourenço (St. Lawrence Market), Mercado Municipal do Bairro Iao Hon (Iao Hon Market), and Mercado Municipal do Patane (Patane Provisional Market).

Like other traditional festivals, DDF has undergone a few transformations in the past in which new elements were added to the festival or certain practices were changed. Prior to the 1980s, the celebrations were held only on the Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple grounds. Gradually, various other markets also joined the festival (see Figure 5 for locations). The name of the festival also changed several times. Initially, it was known as Buddha’s Festival. After a ten-year pause during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the celebrations restarted and the festival was renamed to Fish Industry Solidarity Day. Later, in 1986, the festival was renamed the Drunken Dragon and Lion Dance Gala. At the time of the inscription on the Macao Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2008, the Lion Dance portion was dropped and the current name was adopted [31].

Figure 3. Drunken Dragon Dance on Macao streets.

Figure 4. Longevity Rice distribution to the public.
In an effort to increasingly promote the festival to a wider public and to accommodate the need for tourists, the location for the initial ceremony, as well as the route for the Drunken Dragon Dance, has been adjusted recently [26]. However, the festival reflects the typical pattern of what such a type of festival represents, as McKercher, Mei, and Tse [33] pointed out, in that it presents challenges in involving tourists for the local cultural experience because of the periodic and transient nature of the cultural festival as well as the spatial constraints of the festival venues. As the Drunken Dragon Festival is held only once a year for only two days, including the longevity rice feast on the evening of the day before the main festival day and the festival activities on Buddha’s Birthday, it is hard for tourists to adjust their visiting schedule solely to participate in this festival only. Furthermore, the festival programme does not currently cater to tourists because the main participants are residents, and the focus of the current form of the festival still is the resident participants. It is also not convenient for tourists with limited knowledge about the festival to be fully involved with it because of a lack of guidance and information available. Furthermore, despite the recent transformation of the festival venue to touristic places, the places where the festival has been held are local living spaces, mostly markets and a temple (i.e., Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple), which were not designed solely to host this festival.

1.2. Traditional Local Cultural Festivals and Their Transformation

Traditional cultural festivals, which aim for community celebrations as reminders of social and religious values, aim at social cohesion and development rather than revenue generation by attracting external participants [34]. Truly, enhancing the festival image and the destination image has been designated as the role of cultural festivals [35]. Nevertheless, they are characterized more importantly as a visualization of culture, which assists the sustainability of the heritage [36]. More specifically, the values of local traditional cultural festivals are multi-faceted. Earlier academic understanding focused on their roles as the vehicle of the tradition and the core element for preserving a culture. Recently, with the paradigm shift in understanding their value, the focus has been switched to the
core actors and the community surrounding them, rather than the formality of the festivals—their procedures, times, and venues—and their cultural importance. The paradigm shift has enabled people-oriented views, which has enhanced practicality in holding the festivals by focusing on benefitting the society [36].

In particular, the increasing demand for the cultural festivals as the tool for social cohesion through citizen participation and for tourism promotion has raised new issues as to the acceptable level of transformation when holding a cultural festival. In other words, different opinions may persist on how much commercialization and touristification [22–25], which may involve the dilution of objective authenticity, are acceptable. Residents’ attitudes towards the sustainable development of local festivals often are discussed within the context of stakeholders’ perceptions and attitudes towards holding festivals as a tool for tourism development and their effects on individuals’ lives [37]. The Drunken Dragon Festival also has faced its transitional challenges when the Macao Government Tourism Office, with support from the Macao Foundation, became involved in the original festival and attempted to promote this festival by organizing performances in new places not associated with its traditional meanings [26,38]. Such a transformation mainly aimed to ensure the sustainability of Macao as a tourism destination rather than to focus on the cultural viability of this festival. Despite its rapid identity change, no academic investigation of the stakeholders’ attitudes towards this transformation has been done on this case.

Specifically, opinions may vary on holding live performances, one of the elements of a cultural festival, in irregular occasions to entertain a wide range of audience, and the Drunken Dragon Festival is not free from this issue. Such live performances are normally characterized as unique and non-repetitive. Performances uniquely seen throughout the cultural festivals are not reenacted year-round. Those may only be reproduced, especially with recent technological development, with CDs or videos, which may lead to commercialization of such performances [36]. However, with the recent phenomenon of festivalization of cities and omnivorous spending of leisure time, festivals have been adjusted spatially and temporally to cater to the simultaneous consumption of leisure time and cultural experience [39]. The Drunken Dragon Festival also has gone through the adjustment of time and space of the performances and the rituals. Traditionally, Sam Kai Vui Kun Temple is where the initiation ceremony has been held; recently, an official ceremony started to be held at Senado Square, one of the iconic tourist attractions in Macao, where additional ceremonial components such as a separate praying ceremony are included [26]. Furthermore, the Drunken Dragon Dance started to be held elsewhere other than at the original festival venues for promoting other events in Macao and Macao’s tourism. Previous studies partially reported concern from the organizers’ perspectives of losing authenticity and cultural sustainability with such a transformation [26]; however, the residents’ attitudes towards such a transformation have not been disclosed in previous studies.

In addition to the spatial and temporal transformation of the cultural festival, the level of inclusiveness of the general public may cause its identity change. The level of openness to those who are not regular participants of the festivals, such as local visitors and international tourists, affects the way the festival is organized [40]. Particularly, it determines the degrees of commercialization and touristification, which may cause an identity shift of the festival. Some studies have revealed that festival participants valued their expression of cultural identities, and they expressed positivity in that people from other cultures in the society showed interest by attending the festivals [34]. The results imply that some stakeholders perceive a cultural festival as an opportunity to involve other residents within the society as well as the tourists. Karabag, Yavuz and Berggren [37] also pointed out the role of the festivals as enhancing community cohesion at the local level and yielding economic sustainability by involving tourists.

On the other hand, some other residents who regularly participate in the festival and consider the festival as a manifestation of their own cultural heritage may not support the transformation of the festival caused by the level of public involvement that, in turn, may result in the loss of objective authenticity. Such negative attitudes are commonly found among local residents in the context of
heritage preservation in general [41,42], yet studies in this topic specifically about local heritage festivals that take place in the urban cultural space, where it is easy to involve the general public for tourification, have been scarce. The current study fills in the research gaps by understanding residents’ attitudes towards such social inclusiveness. It further explores such attitudes in relation to perceptions in two different periods of time and across two different groups.

### 1.3. Conditions Affecting the Attitudes towards the Transformational Development of Local Festivals

#### 1.3.1. Perception of the Drunken Dragon Festival as the Reflection of the Local Cultural Identity

The cultural value of a traditional cultural festival has long been a core indicator for the success and the sustainability of the festival as well as its contribution to the culture of the society [36]. Obviously, although the Drunken Dragon Festival is known to reflect the local cultural identity, the strength of such a perception, especially the perception of how much the Drunken Dragon Festival reflects the core value of the local culture and that of how much the festival can represent Macao’s traditional cultural value, may vary by individuals. Those who strongly perceive the cultural value may have the tendency to desire to support its development to ensure sustainability of the festival, accepting transformation of its essence. Specifically, those who strongly perceive the importance of the cultural value of the Drunken Dragon Festival are expected to support its development and would desire to increase its popularity, awareness, and participation through promotion and increased exposure to diverse stakeholders and by holding events more frequently in more diversified venues. Hypotheses 1 and 2, as null hypotheses, are thus stated as follows.

**Hypothesis 1.** Perception about the cultural function of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its transformation.

**Hypothesis 2.** Perception about the cultural function of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its public involvement.

#### 1.3.2. Perceived Economic Benefit of the Drunken Dragon Festival

Many festivals are promoted to ensure economic sustainability of the festivals and the region in the long run. The economic benefits of a cultural festival have long been another justification for sustaining and safeguarding the festival. The focus of the source of income has been external (i.e., the influx of tourists and the increase of external sponsorship) rather than internal (i.e., financial contribution from the festival organizers), thus financially benefitting the local community through the increased revenue from the festival [43].

Economic concerns emerged from an economic crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. In order to sustain local traditional cultural festivals and to persuade stakeholders to continue the festival, techniques to measure the financial impacts have been emphasized. Although the accurate measurement of financial impact has been questioned, it has been utilized, along with the measurement of demands, visitor satisfaction, and behavioral outcomes as an alternative to counteract the criticism that cultural festivals waste money [36].

Stakeholders’ positions are expected to differentiate how they perceive economic benefits. A difference in the perception is expected not only by stakeholders (i.e., organizers vs. local participants vs. tourists) but also within the same group of people; the local resident group is the focus in this study. In the case of the Drunken Dragon Festival, it is expected that the participants perceive differently about the current role of the festival in bringing economic benefit to those who are involved and to Macao. Participants with a different perception about the economic impact of the festival would have different attitudes with regards to how to develop this festival. Specifically, those who highlight the economic benefit that the Drunken Dragon Festival can bring to the society are expected to have positive attitudes
towards its promotion and exposure to a wider audience to ensure economic sustainability of the festival. Hypotheses 3 and 4, as null hypotheses, are thus stated as follows.

**Hypothesis 3.** Perception about the economic benefit of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its transformation.

**Hypothesis 4.** Perception about the economic benefit of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its public involvement.

1.3.3. Perceived Social Functions of the Drunken Dragon Festival

One of the differentiated features in characterizing the local traditional cultural festival from others is the extent to which it incorporates diverse participants, including non-local residents, residents not closely involved with the festival, and tourists. Most extant studies on local festivals have dichotomized the view of incorporating participants—residents and tourists. In fact, the societal layers of incorporation in the process of developing and transforming the local festival are multi-faceted. The literature focusing on the social functions of a cultural festival has addressed the role of intercultural understanding [44]. Enhanced interactions and understanding of people from different cultural backgrounds through local cultural festivals are found not only from the resident visitors but also among the organizers [40,45].

As the Drunken Dragon Festival has rapidly changed its characteristics in terms of how much it is promoted to external participants, local participants’ perception about how much the festival currently incorporates people from diverse backgrounds is likely to vary. It is also expected that the current perception about the extent to which the Drunken Dragon Festival incorporates diverse members of the society and has social function accordingly affects their attitude about how much the festival should incorporate more diverse people and should be more open to tourists and the public by allowing the exposure of the festival in different locations and occasions. It is expected that those who perceive that the festival still fails to incorporate diverse participants would have a positive attitude towards the transformational development of the festival to incorporate more diversified participants. Hypotheses 5 and 6, as null hypotheses, are thus stated as follows.

**Hypothesis 5.** Perception about the social incorporation of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its transformation.

**Hypothesis 6.** Perception about the social incorporation of Drunken Dragon Festival is not significantly associated with the attitudes towards its public involvement.

This study, incorporating the hypotheses, proposes the Model of Residents’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Transformational Development of a Cultural Festival, which is illustrated in Figure 6.
Two rounds of questionnaire surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2017. For the study in 2015, the survey was conducted on festival participants only. In 2017, both the participants and the non-participants were approached to track any potential change of the festival participants and to additionally investigate the latter. The years 2015 and 2017 were timely for conducting surveys on this topic for the following reasons. First, 2015 was the year when the Macao Government Tourism Office started to highlight the regional festivals and events for its tourism promotion [46]. Secondly, there had been efforts for the festival organizers to promote the festival slightly differently while maintaining the authentic components of the festival and the years 2015 and 2017 were characterized with two special events held during the festival period. In 2015, delegates from diverse Chinese origins participated in the festival to perform their own variations of dragon dances. In 2017, the festival organizers collaborated with 17 museums in Macao to celebrate the International Museum Day by holding ceremonies at one of the most important venues for the Drunken Dragon Festival, reenacting a few festival elements and holding special exhibition on 3 May [47]. It was deemed relevant to investigate if the participating residents’ perceptions and attitudes were consistent over the two years and also to explore further the potential differences in the pattern among the residents who had a lack of first-hand experience with the festival. In 2015, the survey was conducted on 25 May 2015, on the date of the longevity rice distribution. Twelve Cantonese-speaking local college students majoring in heritage management were hired to approach the local participants of the Drunken Dragon Festival. Specifically, festival participants who were waiting in line for longevity rice collection were the main targets. Those standing around the waiting line were also identified as potential survey participants. Considering the situation for data collection and the majority of the respondents, surveyors read out the questions in Cantonese and marked the participants’ oral responses rather than asking the participants to fill out the questionnaires themselves.

The targeted number of respondents was based on the estimated number of visitors to each of the three sites for the longevity rice distribution in the previous year. Considering the number of observed variables in the model and considering the conventionally acknowledged sample size for Structural Equation Modelling, the targeted sample size was 400—150 in the Mercado Almirante Lacerda (Red Market), 150 in the Mercado de S. Domingos Municipal Complex (St. Dominic’s Market), and 100 in the Mercado Municipal do Bairro Iao Hon (Iao Hon Market).

**Figure 6.** Model of Residents’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Transformational Development of a Cultural Festival.

2. Materials and Methods

Two rounds of questionnaire surveys were conducted in 2015 and 2017. For the study in 2015, the survey was conducted on festival participants only. In 2017, both the participants and the non-participants were approached to track any potential change of the festival participants and to additionally investigate the latter. The years 2015 and 2017 were timely for conducting surveys on this topic for the following reasons. First, 2015 was the year when the Macao Government Tourism Office started to highlight the regional festivals and events for its tourism promotion [46]. Secondly, there had been efforts for the festival organizers to promote the festival slightly differently while maintaining the authentic components of the festival and the years 2015 and 2017 were characterized with two special events held during the festival period. In 2015, delegates from diverse Chinese origins participated in the festival to perform their own variations of dragon dances. In 2017, the festival organizers collaborated with 17 museums in Macao to celebrate the International Museum Day by holding ceremonies at one of the most important venues for the Drunken Dragon Festival, reenacting a few festival elements and holding special exhibition on 3 May [47]. It was deemed relevant to investigate if the participating residents’ perceptions and attitudes were consistent over the two years and also to explore further the potential differences in the pattern among the residents who had a lack of first-hand experience with the festival. In 2015, the survey was conducted on 25 May 2015, on the date of the longevity rice distribution. Twelve Cantonese-speaking local college students majoring in heritage management were hired to approach the local participants of the Drunken Dragon Festival. Specifically, festival participants who were waiting in line for longevity rice collection were the main targets. Those standing around the waiting line were also identified as potential survey participants. Considering the situation for data collection and the majority of the respondents, surveyors read out the questions in Cantonese and marked the participants’ oral responses rather than asking the participants to fill out the questionnaires themselves.

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In 2017, another round of data collection was conducted on both participants and non-participants. Data were collected in the four biggest local wet markets—183 (26.3%) in the Mercado Almirante Lacerda (Red Market), 163 (23.6%) in the Mercado de S. Domingos Municipal Complex (St. Dominic’s Market), 193 (27.9%) in the Mercado Municipal de S. Lourenço (St. Lawrence’s Market), and 154 (22.3%) in the Mercado Municipal do Patane (Patane Provisional Market). A few festival venues along with other local markets were included to collect responses among the non-participants. The sample collected in 2017 was divided into two groups—the participants and the non-participants. The participants were defined as those who had participated in the festival after the transformation of the festival by active government involvement promoting the festival in 2013. The non-participants were defined as those with no participation experience or those who had participated before 2013. The data collection method in 2017 had commonalities with the one in 2015 in that potential respondents were approached by the surveyors on the street for both cases. While it is important to note that sampling methods were not perfectly consistent, both methods were deemed appropriate, with limitations. In 2015, the researchers learned that not all the festival participants waited in line to collect the longevity rice. Although it was deemed efficient to approach potential survey respondents during their waiting time, failing to approach other festival participants who did not collect the longevity rice was identified as a limitation for this sampling method. As a result, a conventional mall-intercept data collection method was adopted in 2017 [48]. In addition, it was deemed more appropriate to classify the residents based on their first-hand experience for the last several years after the government’s promotion of this festival rather than on their participation in 2017 only. Those who had experienced the festival in recent years were assumed to have formed knowledge and attitudes towards the festival relatively more concretely than non-participants. Telephone or email surveys on similar topics from previous studies have supported that it is accepted to measure perceptions and attitudes towards the festival based on the respondents’ accumulated experience [49]. The main purpose of data collection in 2017, therefore, was not to compare the temporal change to predict future trends but to explore the difference across the three groups and to discuss commonalities and differences in the structural paths, thus yielding implications on how to negotiate authenticity by considering the three perceptual components.

The questionnaire used in 2015 and 2017 was initially developed in English and then was translated into Chinese. Its Chinese translation was closely reviewed again by two of the bilingual authors and another Macao resident to make sure that the translated questionnaire would be easily understood by laymen. The two-page survey questionnaire included an introductory paragraph and screening questions to exclude those who were not living in Macao. A set of perceptual items capturing the Drunken Dragon Festival’s cultural, economic, and social aspects were included for measurement. Items for cultural aspects were modified from Getz [50,51], Gursoy, Kim, and Uysal [52], Wood [53], and Vong and McCartney [54]. Items for economic aspects were adopted from Vong and McCartney [54] and Getz [51]. Lastly, items for social aspects were modified from Gursoy, Kim and Uysal [52]. Three questions were asked about the attitude towards transforming the festival. Questions measured the level of acceptance/rejection of celebrating the Drunken Dragon Festival at non-original sites, such as locations other than the traditionally celebrated settings, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and other tourist venues. The next three questions asked about the attitudes towards incorporating additional various participants and tourists in its celebration. The last section concerned demographic information, including gender, age, mother tongue, religion, occupation, and educational level. Questions asking perceptions and attitudes were measured with 7-point Likert-type scale items, spanning from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Structural Equation Modelling with IBM AMOS 24.0 (IBM, United States) was used in order not to lose variation of the indicators measuring the three perceptual and two attitudinal constructs. Considering its robustness to multivariate normality, Maximum Likelihood estimation was used for parameter estimation. Considering the power and its relatively big sample size, the significance was tested rigorously, at the alpha level of 0.01.
3. Results

3.1. Demographic Profile

For both samples, few missing values were found in the entire dataset, and responses with more than one missing value were deleted list-wise. For the sample collected in 2015, after deleting cases with missing values and multivariate outliers, the sample size for the final analysis was 358. For the sample in 2017, among a total of 701 responses, 692 completed responses without missing data were used for data analysis.

For the samples in 2015 and in 2017, the respondents were fairly evenly distributed across different demographic variables. Among the respondents from 2015, 133 (35.2%) were male and 245 (64.8%) were female. About a quarter (25.7%) of the respondents were below 24 years of age, 18.2% of the respondents were between 25 and 34, 15.9% were between 35 and 44, 14.8% were between 45 and 54, and 14.3% were between 55 and 64. The remaining 10.8% of the respondents were above 65. Most of the respondents (92.9%) identified Cantonese as their mother tongue. Although the Drunken Dragon Festival has Buddhist and Taoist affiliations, the majority of the survey participants (63.2%) responded that they did not have a religious faith, while 26.7% identified themselves as Buddhists. Among the respondents from 2017, 284 (41.0%) were male and 408 (59.0%) were female. Of the respondents, 21.8% were below 24 years, 20.2% between 25 and 34, 18.9% between 35 and 44, 17.9% between 45 and 54, 13.3% were between 55 and 64, and 7.8% above 65. Most of the respondents (90.0%) identified Cantonese as their mother tongue. Similarly to the sample from 2015, the majority of the respondents (59.1%) did not have a religious faith, and 30.2% identified themselves as Buddhists. A key demographic profile for the two samples is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the samples.

|               | 2015 n = 378 |       | 2017 n = 692 |       |
|---------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Gender        |              |       |              |       |
| Male          | 133          | 35.2  | 284          | 41.0  |
| Female        | 245          | 64.8  | 408          | 59.0  |
| Age           |              |       |              |       |
| 15–24         | 97           | 25.7  | 151          | 21.8  |
| 25–34         | 70           | 18.5  | 140          | 20.2  |
| 35–44         | 60           | 15.9  | 131          | 18.9  |
| 45–54         | 56           | 14.8  | 124          | 17.9  |
| 55–64         | 54           | 14.3  | 92           | 13.3  |
| 65 or above   | 41           | 10.8  | 54           | 7.8   |
| Mother tongue |              |       |              |       |
| Mandarin      | 14           | 3.7   | 54           | 7.8   |
| Cantonese     | 351          | 92.9  | 623          | 90.0  |
| Others        | 13           | 3.4   | 15           | 2.2   |
| Religion      |              |       |              |       |
| No religion   | 239          | 63.2  | 409          | 59.1  |
| Buddhism      | 101          | 26.7  | 209          | 30.2  |
| Taoism        | 6            | 1.6   | 20           | 2.9   |
| Christianity  | 17           | 4.5   | 54           | 7.8   |
| Others        | 15           | 4.0   | 0            | 0     |
| Education     |              |       |              |       |
| Primary or below | 97      | 25.7  | 138          | 19.9  |
| Secondary     | 190          | 50.3  | 283          | 40.9  |
| Tertiary      | 91           | 24.1  | 271          | 39.2  |

3.2. Model Specification and Identification

The Model of Residents’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards the Transformational Development of a Cultural Festival (Figure 6) was specified and identified with confirmatory factor analysis with the
sample collected in 2015 and was tested with the sample from 2017. Three variables about resident perceptions—cultural, economic, and social—and two attitudinal variables—transformation and public involvement—were all specified as first-order constructs. Five measurement items were used as indicators for the perception about the cultural role, two items were used to measure the perceived economic role, and three items were for perceived social functions. Three items were used for attitudes towards transformation, and lastly, three items were used to measure attitudes towards social involvement. The items were adopted and modified from studies about residents’ perceptions and attitudes, especially in the event settings and in Macao [55–57]. (See Table 2 for details.) As there were two measurement items for the economic perception, unstandardized factor loadings for both of the measurement items were fixed to 1 in order to keep its conceptual specification and to lose less variation by averaging the two items. Based on the modification index from AMOS, one covariance between two error variances of the two items measuring the perception about the cultural aspect was added to the model.

### Table 2. Standardized loadings of the measurement items.

| [Label] Items | Sample Collected in 2015 | Sample Collected in 2017 |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| [PC] PERCEPTION-CULTURAL | | |
| [PC1] The DDF reflects my cultural identity. | 0.600 | 0.808 | 0.871 |
| [PC2] The DDF reflects Macao’s culture. | 0.827 | 0.574 | 0.232 |
| [PC3] I feel that the DDF maintains local traditions. | 0.794 | 0.817 | 0.824 |
| [PC4] DDF enriches Macao’s culture. | 0.699 | 0.625 | 0.853 |
| [PC5] I think the DDF meets the needs of the society to celebrate its culture. | 0.554 | 0.448 | 0.655 |
| [PE] PERCEPTION-ECONOMIC | | |
| [PE1] The DDF brings economic benefits to Macao. | 0.909 | 0.347 | 0.593 |
| [PE2] The DDF brings economic benefits to the place where it is celebrated. | 0.909 | 0.801 | 0.825 |
| [PS] PERCEPTION-SOCIAL | | |
| [PS1] The DDF is not participated by the entire Macao society. | 0.544 | 0.780 | 0.705 |
| [PS2] The general public does not participate in the DDF. | 0.808 | 0.728 | 0.666 |
| [PS3] The DDF does not bring different people together. | 0.519 | 0.814 | 0.767 |
| [AT] ATTITUDE-TRANSFORMATION | | |
| [AT1] I have no problem with the DDF being held at other locations. | 0.794 | 0.780 | 0.705 |
| [AT2] I have no problem if DDF performances are held in UNESCO World heritage sites. | 0.899 | 0.719 | 0.752 |
| [AT3] I have no problem if DDF performances are held at tourist venues. | 0.706 | 0.878 | 0.845 |
| [API] ATTITUDE-PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT | | |
| [AP1] I think the DDF should encourage participation of people living in Macao with different cultural backgrounds. | 0.748 | 0.582 | 0.796 |
| [AP2] I would like more tourists to participate in the DDF. | 0.756 | 0.655 | 0.670 |
| [AP3] I think the DDF should get external support instead of being held independently by the community organizers. | 0.743 | 0.568 | 0.625 |
3.3. Model Fit and Parameter Estimation

3.3.1. Participant Samples from 2015 and 2017

Parameter estimation was done based on the covariance matrix of the observed variables. Datasets from the two time frames all showed acceptable Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) [58]. Deletion of indicators for the variables was minimized in order to test the applicability of the model to resident participants, non-resident participants, and other groups of people who might be tested in future studies.

For the sample collected in 2015, the fit indices ($\chi^2 = 231.679$, $df = 98$, $\chi^2/df = 2.364$, CFI = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.062) indicated a good fit of the 2015 data with the model [59]. For the sample collected in 2017, the sample size for the final analysis among the recent participants (i.e., those who had participated in the festival at least once for the past five years) was 441. The fit indices showed a marginally acceptable fit of the data with the model ($\chi^2 = 356.821$, $df = 98$, $\chi^2/df = 3.641$, GFI = 0.904, CFI = 0.869, SRMR = 0.079, RMSEA = 0.077). Standardized and unstandardized path coefficients are displayed in Table 3. The significance in structural paths was consistent across the two samples. In specific, the results showed that the stronger perception about the cultural function of the festival is significantly associated with attitudes towards transformation (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.347$, $B = 0.538$, $p < 0.001$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.181$, $B = 0.299$, $p = 0.002$). Thus, the null hypothesis of H1 was rejected. In addition, the cultural perception was significantly associated with the attitude towards social incorporation of diverse actors among the participants (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.482$, $B = 0.582$, $p < 0.001$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.582$, $B = 0.485$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the null hypothesis of H2 was rejected.

| Path | Participants in 2015 | Participants since 2013 | Non-participants since 2013 |
|------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| H1 PC -> AT | $0.347$ | $0.383$ | $0.101$ | $<0.001$ | $0.181$ | $0.299$ | $0.097$ | $0.002$ | $0.272$ | $0.890$ | $0.337$ | $0.008$ |
| H2 PC -> API | $0.482$ | $0.382$ | $0.088$ | $<0.001$ | $0.582$ | $0.485$ | $0.074$ | $<0.001$ | $0.562$ | $1.767$ | $0.549$ | $0.001$ |
| H3 PE -> AT | $0.049$ | $0.043$ | $0.050$ | $0.384$ | $0.073$ | $0.078$ | $0.060$ | $0.198$ | $0.417$ | $0.390$ | $0.068$ | $<0.001$ |
| H4 PE -> API | $0.079$ | $0.054$ | $0.040$ | $0.170$ | $0.160$ | $0.087$ | $0.034$ | $0.010$ | $0.374$ | $0.336$ | $0.061$ | $<0.001$ |
| H5 PS -> AT | $0.202$ | $0.321$ | $0.105$ | $0.002$ | $0.191$ | $0.250$ | $0.078$ | $0.001$ | $0.335$ | $0.387$ | $0.092$ | $<0.001$ |
| H6 PS -> API | $0.086$ | $0.106$ | $0.080$ | $0.181$ | $0.070$ | $0.047$ | $0.041$ | $0.258$ | $0.168$ | $0.186$ | $0.080$ | $0.019$ |

The perception about the economic impact of the festival was not significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.049$, $B = 0.043$, $p = 0.05$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.073$, $B = 0.078$, $p = 0.198$). Thus, the null hypothesis of H3 failed to be rejected. Similarly, the perception about the economic impact of the festival was not significantly associated with the attitude towards the involvement of diverse actors (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.079$, $B = 0.054$, $p = 0.170$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.160$, $B = 0.087$, $p = 0.010$), failing to reject the null hypothesis of H4.

The perception about the social exclusiveness of the festival was significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation of the festival (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.202$, $B = 0.321$, $p = 0.002$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.191$, $B = 0.250$, $p = 0.001$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of H5 was rejected. On the other hand, this social dimension of resident perception was not significantly linked to the attitude towards involving diverse actors in the process of development (2015 sample: $\beta = 0.086$, $B = 0.106$, $p = 0.181$; 2017 sample: $\beta = 0.070$, $B = 0.047$, $p = 0.259$). Thus, the null hypothesis of H6 failed to be rejected. (See also Figure 7).
was significantly associated with attitude towards transformation and public involvement; however, the perception about the cultural function of the festival was not significantly associated with attitudes towards transformation across the two samples among the festival participants based on the numbers in Table 3. Similarly, the perception about the economic impact of the festival was not significantly associated with the attitude towards flexible programming and positive attitudes towards public involvement among the non-participant samples from 2017 was significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation (β = 0.272, B = 0.890, p = 0.008) and public involvement (β = 0.562, B = 1.767, p = 0.001). Thus, the null hypotheses H1 and H2 were rejected. The societal perceptual dimension was significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation, not significantly towards public involvement across the two samples among the festival participants based on the results that among the perceptual constructs, the cultural dimension had more positive attitudes towards flexible programming and public involvement since 2013. The fit indices indicated a marginally acceptable model fit (χ² = 280.856, df = 98, χ²/df = 2.866, GFI = 0.881, CFI = 0.886, SRMR = 0.111, RMSEA = 0.086). Standardized and unstandardized path coefficients are displayed in Table 3. Consistently with the participant sample, the stronger perception about the cultural function of the festival was significantly associated with attitudes towards transformation (β = 0.372, B = 0.890, p = 0.008) and public involvement (β = 0.562, B = 1.767, p = 0.001). Thus, the null hypotheses H1 and H2 were rejected.

Differently from the festival participant samples, the perception about the economic impact of the festival for the festival non-participant samples from 2017 was significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation (β = 0.417, B = 0.390, p < 0.001). Thus, the null hypothesis of H3 was rejected. Similarly, the perception about the economic impact of the festival was not significantly associated with the attitude towards the involvement of diverse actors (2015 sample: β = 0.374, B = 0.336, p < 0.001).
rejecting the null hypothesis of H4. The perception about the social exclusiveness of the festival was significantly associated with the attitude towards transformation of the festival ($\beta = 0.335$, $B = 0.387$, $p = 0.092$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of H5 was rejected. On the other hand, the social dimension of resident perception was not significantly linked to the attitude towards involving diverse actors in the process of development among the non-participants ($\beta = 0.168$, $B = 0.186$, $p = 0.019$). Thus, the null hypothesis of H6 failed to be rejected at the significance level of 0.01. The results are illustrated in Figure 7.

4. Discussion

The results indicate that among the festival participants, those who valued the cultural role of the Drunken Dragon Festival had more positive attitudes towards flexible programming and scheduling of the performances and the rituals and towards involving diversified participants. Interestingly, among the festival participants, the perception of the economic benefit of the Drunken Dragon Festival was not an important predictor of the attitude about the flexibility of the festival events and transformation to involve a wider range of participants. The results imply that for festival participants, the economic potential of this festival would not lead them to support its commercialization and tourism development. Instead, they are likely to be cautious about pursuing economic benefit from the festival without considering other factors. On the other hand, the perception about the economic benefit was an important predictor among the non-participants. This is probably because the economic benefit of the festival itself to the community is not seriously visible to the resident participants and hard to measure by the organizers with the current approach to organization. There is no direct way of generating revenues in this case because traditional ways of yielding economic benefits through the festival—charging entrance fees, selling items at vendors, and selling longevity rice or souvenirs—are not applicable to this festival.

Although the relationship of economic perception and the attitude towards transformation was not significant among the festival participants, the positive regression coefficient could imply that those who acknowledge the festival’s economic benefit still may tend to think that its benefit can be enhanced by involving diverse participants and getting external sponsorship, and they would be bothered less with sacrificing objective authenticity in terms of the place and the time that the festival is held or re-enacted. Non-participants, without first-hand experience of the festival, might have a limited understanding of the characteristics of the festival, and they may generally think that if the festival has the potential to benefit the local economy, it is desirable to enhance such opportunities by holding related performances and increasing the exposure of the festival elements to the general public in diverse venues and by incorporating diverse participants.

Moreover, the results imply that festival participants who perceive that the current form of the Drunken Dragon Festival is not open to the wider audience are likely to be positive about holding festival-related events in non-festival periods in more diverse venues, but such a perception does not lead to the notion that the festival should be more open to the public nor that the festival should invite a wider audience and participants for further developing the festival. The results show that residents—both participants and non-participants—may support relatively strongly the passive inclusion of external groups by holding some parts of the festival at the tourist venues during non-festival periods, but they still may consider this festival itself as one to be celebrated mainly for locals.

5. Conclusions

Festivals and events are significant not only as core contributors to sustainable tourism [60] but also as core expressions of intangible cultural heritage [36]. This study highlighted one of the critical issues that a traditional cultural festival is likely to face—residents’ attitudes towards its transformation and involvement of diverse participants to ensure the sustainability of the festival. Macao’s Drunken Dragon Festival was used as a case because it is a representable example that has been undergoing
rapid transformation in recent years with the involvement of the governmental tourism department. It is crucial to understand residents’ perceptions and attitudes facing such touristification and the pressure to hold a more decontextualized performance of this festival.

This study shows that those who highlight the cultural value of the festival may support transforming it and sacrificing its authenticity. Such results may be counterintuitive because those who are concerned about the cultural value of the festival may emphasize that the cultural value can be sustained only if the traditional festival keeps its original form. However, this study suggests that the residents who participate in such local community festivals, acknowledging its cultural value, are likely to think that its sustainability can be ensured by enhancing its exposure to the wider audience, thus involving more participants from inside and outside the society. In addition, the study suggests that residents who acknowledge the value of the cultural contribution of a local traditional festival may think that its commercialization and touristification as well as wider support is a way to ensure the sustainability of such festivals.

The results, revealed from the examination of the residents participating in this local traditional cultural festival, reflect the change in paradigm of the notion of sustaining and safeguarding intangible heritage through festivals. Rather than preserving the functionality and the procedures to sustain the community cultural festival, it may be more crucial to be people-oriented and facilitate the participants’ convenience rather than sticking to the (objectively) authentic forms of the festival. This can be accomplished by diversifying supporters, enhancing exposure to the tourists by expanding the venues and times for the elements of the festivals, such as rituals and performances, and accordingly enhancing practicality. Such a direction conforms to the notion by del Barrio, Devesa and Herrero [36] that the sustainability of the cultural festival should eventually be for the people who are involved rather than for the festival itself.

Another contribution of this study is that it found evidence of consistent patterns of perception—attitude relationships in the context of a local traditional cultural festival. The two datasets collected among festival participants in 2015 and 2017 consistently showed the perception towards cultural values as an important predictor of the two attitudinal variables while the perception towards economic benefits was not a significant predictor consistently for both samples.

In addition, this study is important in that it provided evidence of understanding differentiated perception—attitude patterns of participants and non-participants—by showing that the perception towards the economic benefit is important among the non-participants only. The Macao government, which is in charge of providing legal and policy guidance about the heritage management and tourism, and the festival organizers and other related stakeholders need to consider such a differentiated pattern across two different resident groups when they seek better ways of incorporating residents’ opinions of how much to accept transforming and diversifying tourism development by utilizing such cultural heritage. Specifically, this study shows that non-participants were more positive about commercializing and touristifying this intangible heritage element if the festival were to contribute economically to the region.

Therefore, festival organizers and the government need to involve the non-participants differently than the participants by informing that economic sustainability may not be the primary condition to attain the sustainability of this festival in order for non-participants not to push the organizers to commodify or convert it to a tourist attraction in a rush. On the other hand, the festival participants who perceive more strongly that this festival brings economic benefits would not push this festival to be exposed to a wider audience and negotiate authenticity carelessly and rapidly. They also would consider publicizing festival elements not merely as a tool to generate revenues by utilizing it as a tourism resource. Instead, their intention to negotiate with authenticity would also quite strongly originate from their cultural pride and the perception that the festival is still exclusive and not well known. These culturally or socially driven motivations to publicize the festival, which the participants support, would contribute to balanced sustainable management of this festival, although festival stakeholders still should communicate continuously to achieve an acceptable level for negotiating
objective authenticity. In sum, in leveraging this festival and other traditional cultural resources in diversifying the region’s tourism offering in order to make Macao the World Centre for Leisure, the study implies that the participating residents are more culturally and socially driven, rather than economically, in doing so. The government should have more long-term strategies to avoid rapidly commercializing and touristifying the festival in order to better negotiate with authenticity and to achieve balanced rather than economically driven sustainability.

This study focused on general patterns of the residents and thus, the study warrants future investigation about potential differentiated patterns by groups with different demographic and behavioral characteristics. In addition, as the focus was on the residents, follow-up studies that investigate the opinions of other groups of people involved in the festival, especially the organizers and the tourists, are required.

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