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Oradea's Cultural Event Management: The Impact of the 'Night of the Museums' on Tourist Perception and Destination Brand Identity

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Abstract: Understanding how event quality influences destination identity and tourist satisfaction is crucial for creating memorable experiences and fostering positive perceptions of a destination. The 'Night of the Museums' event in Oradea, Romania, offers a unique cultural experience, but little research has been conducted to understand its impact on destination perception and tourist satisfaction. This study examines the relationship between event quality, destination identity, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions within the context of Oradea's Night of the Museums event. Four domains of event quality (visit quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment quality) are assessed for their impact on destination identity and tourist satisfaction. Results indicated that visit quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality significantly predicted destination identity, whereas interaction quality and the quality of the physical environment significantly influenced tourist satisfaction. Furthermore, positive event experiences increased the likelihood of tourists recommending the destination to others, which in turn significantly predicted the intention to revisit. These findings have implications for event organizers, destination management organizations, and policymakers seeking to enhance event quality, promote positive destination identity, and cultivate tourist satisfaction, ultimately leading to increased recommendations and revisitation.

Keywords: event quality; destination identity; tourist satisfaction; intention to recommend; intention to revisit

1. Introduction

Numerous tourists who wish to experience a destination's art, history, and culture visit museums, which are cultural institutions [1]. In recent years, numerous museums have created cultural events incorporating multimedia technologies, such as light and sound shows, to provide visitors with an engaging experience [2]. By attracting large crowds, especially younger generations, and families, these cultural events at museums can significantly impact a destination's tourism movement [1]. For instance, many people

attend the Louvre Museum's annual 'Nuit Blanche' event, which features light installations, dance and musical performances, and interactive exhibits. The quality of the cultural events and experiences offered by the museums is crucial to attracting more tourists [2–4]. High levels of visitor satisfaction and enjoyment can result from highly interactive events, employ cutting-edge technologies such as stunning visual effects, and offer an exciting atmosphere [1,5]. For instance, the 'Sound and Light' show at the Pyramids of Giza uses laser projections, surround sound, and a dramatic retelling of ancient Egyptian history to captivate audiences [4]. Such an immersive experience is praised by visitors for its high levels of entertainment and emotional impact [5].

When tourists have a meaningful and memorable experience at a cultural event, they are more likely to return and recommend the museum to others [6]. There is an increase in repeat visitation and word-of-mouth referrals at museums that offer visitors positive emotions through innovative attractions and enrichment activities [7]. However, the success of such cultural events in promoting tourism is impossible without establishing a strong and alluring destination brand identity [2,8]. The brand identity of the destination influences the visitors' expectations and perceptions of the museum and events. If the brand identity can convey a sense of innovation, entertainment, and superior quality, it will be significantly more effective at attracting tourist interest and attendance [9]. For instance, through large-scale museum initiatives and annual cultural festivals, cities such as Singapore and Barcelona have garnered a reputation for being culturally innovative hotspots. Their powerful brand identities entice swarms of tourists in search of new and exciting cultural experiences.

Although previous research has examined the impact of cultural events and brand identity on tourism separately, few studies have investigated their combined effects. A well-known brand can amplify the result of a high-quality cultural event, whereas a weak brand can diminish the potential of even the most successful events [10]. To achieve maximum tourism promotion, aligning brand identity with event offerings is crucial to generate synergy. Therefore, this study investigates how the brand identity of a destination and the quality of cultural events, as measured by visit quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment quality, influence tourists' perceptions and their intentions to revisit and recommend the museum. To examine the relationship between event quality, destination identity, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, this study employed a quantitative methodology. Specifically, data were collected through an online survey of visitors who attended the 'Night of the Museums' event in Oradea, Romania. The survey instrument measured respondents' perceptions of four domains of event quality (visit quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment quality), as well as destination identity, satisfaction, intention to recommend, and intention to revisit. Structural equation modeling was then utilized to assess the conceptual framework and test the hypothesized relationships among these variables.

By leveraging its Night of the Museums cultural event, the city of Oradea has the chance to enhance its reputation as a cultural center in Eastern Europe. Examining how Oradea can optimize the alignment between its brand identity and event quality will generate actionable insights for increasing tourism impact.

Key strategies may include promoting the city's particular cultural heritage and experimental spirit through creative offerings at the Night of the Museums; implementing visual branding tactics that reinforce the brand identity throughout visitors' cultural event experiences [10]; and soliciting feedback to ensure that events continue to improve in terms of quality and relevance for tourists [1]. For Oradea to achieve its tourism and cultural development objectives, managing brand identity and event quality as complementary rather than separate elements will be essential. Based on the presented arguments, the following are two possible research questions:

- How does the alignment between the brand identity of a destination and the quality of its museum events affect tourist satisfaction and behavior intentions?

- How can the city of Oradea optimize the compatibility between its brand identity and the quality of the Night of the Museums?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Museum Event Quality

The quality of cultural events held in museums has a significant impact on tourists' experiences and satisfaction levels [11]. Events include arenas where interactions between show-makers and consumers occur in the context of particular physical environments [12]. Event characteristics such as interactivity, utilization of technology, excitement, and physical environment can work in tandem to produce engaging experiences that delight visitors, or ineffective ones that underwhelm them [13]. Experience quality can be assessed by the implication of functional and emotional aspects in equal contexts [14]. By strategically optimizing essential event qualities, museums can significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and achieve cultural promotion and revenue generation objectives [15]. Various types of characteristics may exist in museums. For example, quality of a visit refers to the overall experience and pleasure of attending an event. Essential aspects of a high-quality visit include an enjoyable experience, clear rules, an exciting mechanism, and a good balance [16]. When museum events are designed to provide visitors with an engaging yet manageable experience, visitor satisfaction increases [16]. For instance, an event that uses interactive multimedia displays to present artifacts engagingly without being overly complex will have a higher visit quality. Cronin and Taylor [17] empirically illustrated that service quality could be considered as a predictor of visitor satisfaction.

In Lithuania, service quality management in the museums was examined using the SERVQUAL model [18]. The study findings revealed that the most important service quality dimensions were reliability, tangibles, and empathy. Reliability of services was a key driver of visitor satisfaction. In relation to the present study on the Night of the Museums event, these results highlight the need to ensure reliable and consistent event execution. Tangibles like the physical environment and visual appeal can also influence perceptions of quality and satisfaction. Finally, empathy, i.e., caring customer service, is important, aligning with the role of interaction quality in the current framework. This indicates that focusing on service reliability, the venue aesthetics, and visitor interactions could enhance event quality and satisfaction. Furthermore, Hume and Mort [19] utilized focus groups and SERVQUAL to assess museum service priorities, revealing key factors like cleanliness, staff demeanor and engagement. Gil and Ritchie [20] explored museum visitors' quality expectations, finding that tangibles and reliability were ranked highly across various visitor segments. Respondents valued factors like parking facilities, interior comfort, and exhibit quality. Taken together, these studies indicate that consistent service quality can increase perceived value and satisfaction for museum visitors. This further supports the need to examine event quality constructs like interaction quality and physical environment quality in the Night of the Museums context [19,20].

Moreover, interaction quality, social engagement, and community building are opportunities [21]. Interaction quality will improve at events by facilitating meaningful interactions between attendees, encouraging networking and collaboration, and fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment [22]. Museums that host events that genuinely allow visitors to interact with one another will be perceived as more socially rewarding [21], thereby increasing visitor satisfaction. For instance, an event that incorporates group activities and discussions around thought-provoking exhibits will enhance interaction quality [23]. In addition, outcome quality refers to the advantages and consequences of attending an event [24]. Events with higher-quality outcomes will achieve their intended objectives, provide valuable learning and professional development experiences, resources, and information, and exceed expectations [24,25]. When museums create events that inspire visitors and equip them with new knowledge and insights, tourists will find the experience extremely valuable and impactful, thereby increasing their contentment [26,27].

For instance, an event that includes expert presentations, skill-building workshops, and access to research materials will enhance the quality of the outcome.

Additionally, physical environment quality relates to the convenience, organization, and services an event venue provides [28]. Physical environment quality includes a comfortable and inviting venue, a practical layout, high-quality audio–visual equipment, appropriate temperature and lighting, and food and beverage services [29]. Visitors will feel more at ease and cared for at museums that host events in well-designed spaces with the appropriate amenities and facilities, thereby increasing their satisfaction [27]. For example, an event with spacious rooms, advanced audio–visual equipment, comfortable seating, and refreshments will have a high-quality physical environment [28]. In conclusion, the quality of the visit, the quality of the interaction, the quality of the outcome, and the quality of the physical environment shape museum event experiences that appeal to tourists and meet their needs and expectations [29]. When these characteristics are high, visitors will be profoundly satisfied and perceive the event as having enduring meaning, purpose, and value [30]. This demonstrates that event quality significantly impacts visitor satisfaction [27]. Based on the arguments, we hypothesize that:

H1a. *Higher levels of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event’s visit quality will lead to greater tourist satisfaction.*

H1b. *Higher levels of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event’s interaction quality will lead to greater tourist satisfaction.*

H1c. *Higher levels of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event’s outcome quality will lead to greater tourist satisfaction.*

H1d. *Higher levels of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event’s physical environment quality will lead to greater tourist satisfaction.*

2.2. Brand Identity and Tourist Satisfaction

The brand identity of a destination is the distinct collection of associations that represent its essence and core values [31]. Brand identity is based upon organizational identity theory [32]. According to Kapferer, brand identity is divided into exterior and interior identities [33]. Interior identity is related to a consumer’s self-image and the extent of emotional impact on the consumer, while the brand’s exterior identity is whether brand has become part of the relationship or culture. According to Robinson and Clifford [34], citizen welfare and visitor satisfaction are strongly affected by city or local community image. Barnes et al. [35] claim that brand experience can be studied from four aspects: sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Their study also reveals that the positive experience from a trip or any event in most cases fades away after six weeks [35]. Therefore, it is important to keep reminding the consumer about the brand.

Several studies have examined factors influencing tourist perceptions and satisfaction across major cities in Romania. Dumbrăveanu et al. [36] analyzed the Night of the Museums event held annually in Bucharest, Romania. Their study investigated how the event has developed over time to incorporate diverse cultural offerings and institutions beyond just museums. Surveys during the 2013 and 2014 events revealed that while the majority of attendees were local residents, an increasing number were domestic tourists interested in heritage and culture. The Night of the Museums provided a platform to showcase Bucharest’s cultural assets and inject tourist activity into the city. However, the event has not yet reached the scale or international attendee levels of similar events in other European capitals. The study demonstrates the potential of museum events to catalyze cultural tourism and enhance destination image, which can inform Oradea’s cultural programming aims. Muntean et al. [37] examined tourist satisfaction and loyalty for both foreign and domestic visitors in Bucharest. Their conceptual model assessed how

expectations, motivations, perceived authenticity, infrastructure, safety, emotions, and desire to extend their stay impacted satisfaction and loyalty intentions. Key findings were that tourists' motivation to lengthen their stay strongly influenced expectations and motivations. Also, destination safety did not significantly predict satisfaction. The research uniquely identified tourists' positive emotions as a mediator between satisfaction and loyalty. Sidonia and Cristina [38] focused on cultural tourism motivations and perceptions of Romanian destinations. Through a survey of Bucharest residents, they found cultural heritage and attractions were central to travel decisions for regions like the Centre Region with rich cultural assets. Key cultural motivators were identified as historical sites, art galleries, religious sites, museums, ethnic traditions, and performances. However, the research highlighted that multiple motivations beyond just culture, like relaxation or family, can influence destination choice [38]. In another study, tourist perceptions and satisfaction with Cluj-Napoca, an important cultural and business destination in Romania, was analyzed [39]. Through interviews and data analysis, the study identified key tourist segments and examined how Cluj-Napoca's offerings align with target profiles. Cultural tourism was a major focus given the city's heritage attractions. The research provided insights into tourist motivations and the image of Cluj-Napoca as a leading Romanian destination [39].

Establishing a powerful brand identity is essential for museums to attract visitors by creating a memorable and compelling brand image in their minds [40]. Destinations cultivate their brand identity through marketing communications, logos, taglines, and visitor experiences [31]. A recent article by Matwiejczyk [41] examined place-branding strategies for Polish cities, finding that destination marketing and experiences influenced brand identity formation. Other studies have also revealed connections between branding and satisfaction. Kladou et al. [42] discussed brand communication tools like logos, advertising, and public relations that can shape destination image. They emphasized consistency across touchpoints. Oliveira and Panyik [43] highlighted the need for authenticity in place branding to generate emotional connections. When branding truthfully reflects local heritage and culture, tourist satisfaction increases. Together, these studies reinforce the potential impact of relevant, authentic branding on satisfaction via destination image formation [41–43]. An attractive brand identity will signal to tourists the benefits and qualities they can expect, such as an educational yet entertaining experience, interaction with rare artifacts, and a sophisticated environment [44]. The qualities of museum events, such as visit quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, and physical environment quality, collectively shape the brand identity of host destinations by facilitating profoundly satisfying experiences that embody the brand essence [40].

For instance, an event with high-tech interactive exhibits, opportunities to socialize and learn from other attendees [45], valuable insights from experts, and upscale facilities will represent the destination brand identity centered on a culturally enriching, innovative experience. When museum events deliver consistent brand-aligned experiences, it reinforces the destination brand image of host destinations in the minds of visitors and increases their satisfaction [46]. In other words, high-quality museum events shape a strong, differentiated destination brand identity [46], increasing overall museum satisfaction. It is also hypothesized that a strong brand identity of destinations directly and positively affects the satisfaction of museum visitors [47]. When visitors perceive the brand identity of a destination as appealing, it piques their interest in attending events and raises their expectations for a pleasant and rewarding experience. Actually, not all visitors of the event could be described as tourists, because a significant part of them lived nearby, but we decided to involve only tourists, namely, people who came from other provinces or countries and were planning to stay more than 24 h. Tourists were assumed not to have assessment bias. Consequently, following are three hypotheses based on the arguments:

H2a. *Higher levels of visit quality of Oradea's Night of the Museums event will positively influence the destination brand identity from tourists' perspectives.*

H2b. Higher levels of interaction quality of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event will positively influence the destination brand identity from tourists’ perspectives.

H2c. Higher levels of outcome quality of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event will positively influence the destination brand identity from tourists’ perspectives.

H2d. Higher levels of physical environment quality of Oradea’s Night of the Museums event will positively influence the destination brand identity from tourists’ perspectives.

H3. A stronger destination brand identity of Oradea will positively influence tourist satisfaction.

Satisfied visitors with an enjoyable and meaningful experience that meets their brand-shaped expectations are more likely to recommend the museum to others and return in the future [2,7]. Positive word of mouth and intention to return are crucial outcomes for museums, as they can attract new visitors and generate repeat business [7]. For museums in Oradea, increasing tourist satisfaction by enhancing event quality and reinforcing brand identity can result in favorable behavioral outcomes such as word of mouth and intention to return. Tourists who had an engaging and rewarding experience are more likely to spread positive word of mouth through their social networks and connections if they are pleased with their expertise [48]. Their desire to share a positive experience drives word of mouth [7,49]. When tourists hear positive recommendations from reputable sources, their perceptions of the museums become more favorable, and they desire to visit them in person [50]. This increases the likelihood that museum visitors will return in the future. This supports the following hypotheses:

H4. Higher tourist satisfaction with Oradea’s Night of the Museums event will increase their positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

H5. Increased positive word of mouth regarding Oradea’s Night of the Museums event will increase tourists’ intentions to return.

Collectively, the above hypotheses can be summarized in Figure 1.

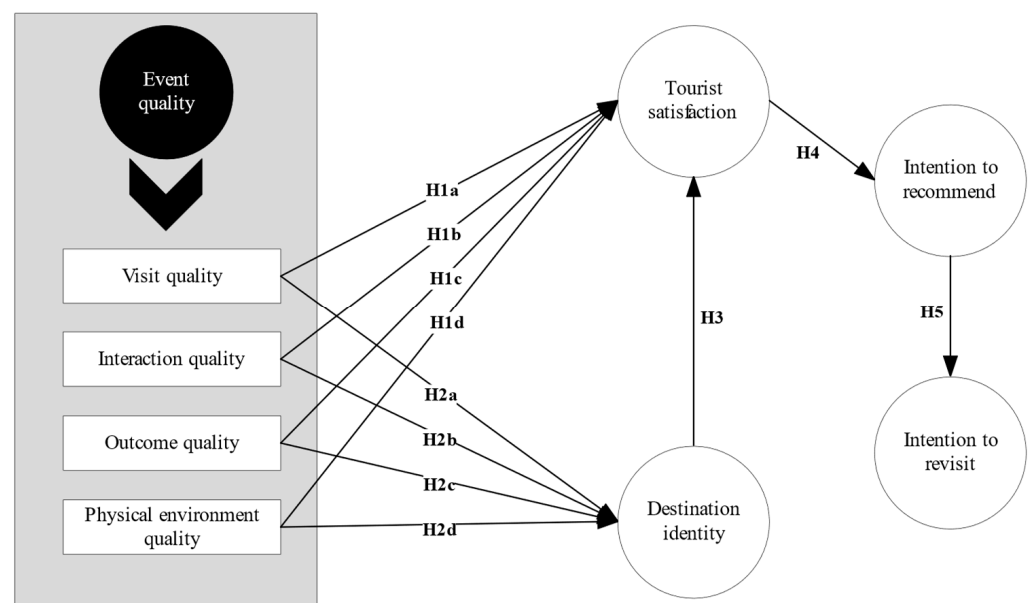


Figure 1. A framework of the study hypotheses.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Sample and Data Collection

The online survey was used as a means of data collection during the research. The advantage of this data collection method is that researchers can reach many people quickly and inexpensively. Designing and distributing surveys appropriately can be an effective tool for data analysis [51]. Data for the current study was collected using a convenient online survey of visitors who participated in the Night of the Museums event in Oradea, Romania, between June and July 2023. Museums in Oradea, a city located in Romania in a cross-border region inhabited by numerous minorities (Hungarian, Roma, German), are an important element of shaping identity for all residents of a multicultural city. Therefore, the case of “Night of the Museums” in Oradea is important for shaping attitudes of tolerance and supporting ethnic identity and cultural diversity. The organizers identified visitors who had registered in advance for the event as the target population for the study. By inviting only registered participants, the selection criteria ensured respondents had direct experience attending the event and could provide valuable insights into their perceptions and satisfaction.

While an online survey allows reaching a large sample, survey response rates are typically low. In this study, only a tiny percentage of registered visitors to the Night of the Museums completed the survey, limiting the generalizability of the results. To address this limitation and gain additional perspectives, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a subset of 10 visitors who attended the event.

This case study of the Night of the Museums event in Oradea was chosen for several reasons. As a unique large-scale cultural attraction, examining visitors’ experiences and perceptions of this event could provide insights into other destinations. Oradea was selected because the municipality invested significant resources into cultural programming, yet visitor satisfaction has not been comprehensively evaluated. Understanding the event’s impact could help inform strategy to optimize cultural tourism outcomes. Therefore, examining visitor perceptions of an iconic event in this city serves a vital research purpose.

The survey link was electronically distributed by the organizers via email to around 150 registered participants both before and after the event. A total of 118 valid responses were received, indicating a response rate of about 78.6%. While this response rate is modest, it is not uncommon for online surveys and was considered adequate to analyze key constructs related to visitors’ experiences. The online survey collection method had several advantages. By distributing the survey via email, the organizers were able to reach a large number of potential respondents with minimal cost and effort. The electronic format also allowed participants to complete the survey at a convenient time, which likely contributed to the satisfactory response rate. Additionally, utilizing a secure online survey platform maintained the anonymity of respondents’ data and ensured the confidentiality of their responses.

The research also employs structural equation modeling to investigate relationship among variables. Structural equation modeling enables researchers to simultaneously model and assess the complex relationships among multiple dependent and independent variables. The method is widely used in survey analysis. It has several advantages including the possibility of studying complex patterns among the constructs, the analysis of structural relationships.

3.2. Construct Measures

Participants were invited to complete a self-administered survey that assessed their perceptions and experiences during the Night of the Museums event in Oradea. The survey included items measuring visit quality, interaction quality, outcome quality, physical environment quality, tourist satisfaction, destination identity, intention to recommend, and intention to revisit. The visit quality domain included items assessing the overall enjoyment, challenge, clarity of rules, excitement, and balance of the visit experience. Interaction quality covered perceptions of meaningful interactions, networking, collaboration, inclusivity, and welcoming atmosphere. Outcome quality measured the event’s ability

to achieve objectives, provide learning, impact development, offer useful resources, and exceed expectations. Physical environment quality examined the comfort, organization, audio–visual amenities, lighting, temperature, and food services of the venue. Destination identity items gauged feelings of community, connection to local culture, appreciation of attractions, belonging, and cultural learning. Tourist satisfaction items evaluated overall experience satisfaction, entertainment value, service quality, organization, and transportation. Intention to recommend was reflected through gauging the likelihood to recommend the event to others, on social media, and for vacations. Finally, intention to revisit incorporated interest in returning for future events, vacations, and to further explore attractions. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” More details about the items and domains of the used survey are provided in Table 1. The survey also collected demographic information from participants, including age, gender, education, and employment status. The survey was administered online using a secure survey platform, and participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

Table 1. The survey used for data collection in the current study.

Scale	Item Code	Item
Visit quality	Vis_Q_1	The overall experience was enjoyable.
	Vis_Q_2	The visit was challenging but not frustrating.
	Vis_Q_3	The rules were clear and easy to understand.
	Vis_Q_4	The mechanism of the visit was exciting.
	Vis_Q_5	The visit was well balanced.
Interaction quality	Interact_Q_1	The event facilitated meaningful interactions with other attendees.
	Interact_Q_2	The event provided opportunities for networking.
	Interact_Q_3	The event encouraged collaboration and teamwork.
	Interact_Q_4	The event fostered a sense of community and inclusivity.
	Interact_Q_5	The event had a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
Outcome quality	Outc_Q_1	The event achieved its intended objectives.
	Outc_Q_2	The event provided valuable learning experiences.
	Outc_Q_3	The event had a positive impact on my professional development.
	Outc_Q_4	The event provided useful resources and information.
	Outc_Q_5	The event exceeded my expectations.
Physical environment quality	Phys_Q_1	The event venue was comfortable and inviting.
	Phys_Q_2	The event was well-organized and easy to navigate.
	Phys_Q_3	The audio–visual equipment was of high quality.
	Phys_Q_4	The temperature and lighting were appropriate.
	Phys_Q_5	The event had effective food and beverage services.
Tourist satisfaction	Sat_1	Overall, I was satisfied with my experience visiting Oradea during the Night of the Museums event.
	Sat_2	The event met my expectations in terms of entertainment value.
	Sat_3	The quality of services (e.g., accommodation, dining) in Oradea during the event was satisfactory.
	Sat_4	The level of organization for the event was satisfactory.
	Sat_5	The transportation arrangements in Oradea during the event met my expectations.
Destination identity	Ident_1	I felt a strong sense of community spirit during my visit to Oradea for the Night of the Museums event.
	Ident_2	The event made me feel more connected to the people and culture of Oradea.
	Ident_3	My visit to Oradea for the Night of the Museums event enhanced my appreciation for the city’s attractions and amenities.
	Ident_4	I felt like I was part of a special group of people while attending the Night of the Museums event in Oradea.
	Ident_5	My visit to Oradea for the Night of the Museums event helped me learn about the history and culture of the city.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Scale	Item Code	Item
Intention to recommend	Recom_1	I would recommend Oradea as a travel destination to my friends and family.
	Recom_2	I am likely to recommend Oradea specifically for other events.
	Recom_3	I would recommend Oradea for a vacation to anyone looking for a relaxing experience with cultural and natural attractions.
	Recom_4	I would recommend Oradea for similar or other events.
	Recom_5	I am willing to share my positive experience in Oradea with others on social media or travel forums.
Intention to revisit	Revis_1	I would consider revisiting Oradea as a travel destination in the future.
	Revis_2	I am likely to revisit Oradea specifically for other events.
	Revis_3	I would revisit Oradea for a vacation to experience more of what the city has to offer.
	Revis_4	I would revisit Oradea for similar or other events.
	Revis_5	I am interested in returning to Oradea in the future to explore more of the city's cultural and historical attractions.

3.3. Statistical Analysis

The data analysis was conducted utilizing RStudio (R version 4.3.0). Categorical data were summarized in terms of frequencies and percentages. To model the constructs employed in the study, a partial least squares structural equation modeling technique with bootstrapping was employed. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. To address the underlying assumptions of Cronbach's alpha, which assume equal indicator loadings, rhoC values were also used to express composite reliability [52], while rhoA was utilized as an additional conservative measure of internal consistency [53]. Convergent validity was evaluated by employing the average variance extracted (AVE), which assesses the extent to which each domain can converge to explain the variances of the indicators [54]. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square roots of AVE to the correlations between different constructs and by utilizing the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations [55]. The bootstrapped structural model employed a 1000-bootstrap method [56], and the results are reported as beta coefficients with their respective 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs). Statistical significance was indicated by a *p*-value of <0.05.

4. Results

4.1. Characteristics of the Respondents

We analyzed data of 118 participants in the current study. More than a half were females (60.2%) and employed (57.3%). Participants aged 18 to 30 years represented 42.4% of the sample, and 49.2% of respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Parameter	Category	N (%)
Gender	Male	47 (39.8%)
	Female	71 (60.2%)
Age	Below 18 years of age	9 (7.6%)
	18–30	50 (42.4%)
	31–40	24 (20.3%)
	41–50	23 (19.5%)
	51–60	7 (5.9%)
	61 and older	5 (4.2%)

Table 2. Cont.

Parameter	Category	N (%)
Education	Primary	11 (9.3%)
	Vocational	2 (1.7%)
	Secondary school	47 (39.8%)
	Higher	58 (49.2%)
Employment status	School student	15 (12.8%)
	Higher education student	27 (23.1%)
	Employed	67 (57.3%)
	Unemployed	2 (1.7%)
	Old-age pensioner/disabled pensioner	6 (5.1%)

4.2. Results of the Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

In the bootstrapped model, five items were insignificantly loaded to their respective constructs. These included two items in the visit quality domain (Vis_Q_2 and Vis_Q_4), one item in the interaction quality domain (Interact_Q_3), one item in the outcome quality domain (Outc_Q_3), and one item in the physical environment quality domain (Phys_Q_5). The final bootstrapped model showed excellent reliability indicators (Figure 2 and Table 3). Mean bootstrap factor loadings were significant for all items (>0.50), and the rhoC and rhoA values were adequate (>0.70) [52,53]. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients varied from 0.711 to 0.878. Notably, the AVE values ranged from 0.517 to 0.673, indicating that the domains accounted for at least 51.7% of the variance observed in the indicators comprising each respective domain [54].

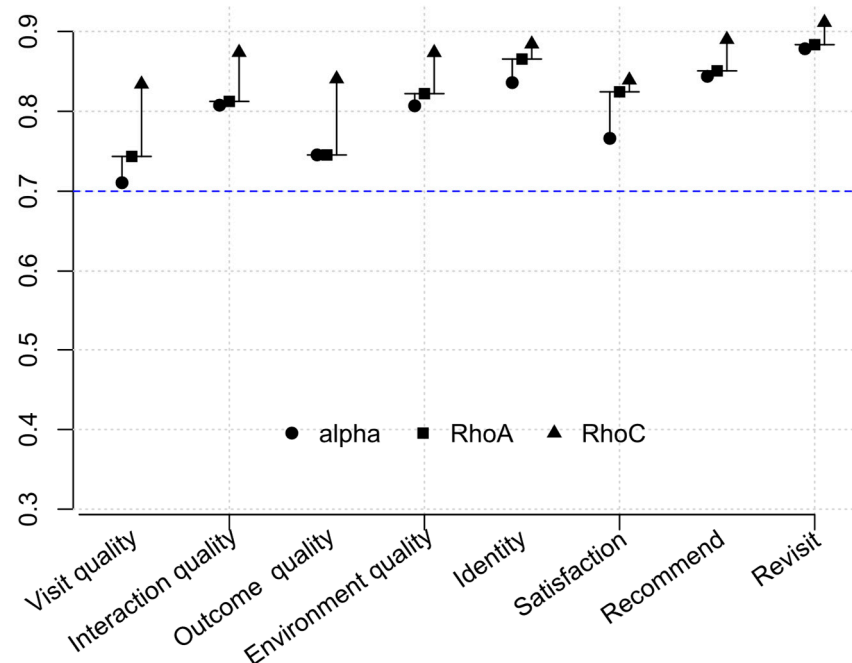


Figure 2. Results of the reliability indicators of the used constructs. The blue dashed line represents the 0.7 threshold above which reliability indicators are valid.

Table 3. Convergent validity and construct reliability.

Domains/Items	BFL	VIF	alpha	rhoC	rhoA	AVE
Visit quality			0.711	0.834	0.744	0.627
Vis_Q_1	0.795	1.436				
Vis_Q_3	0.709	1.409				
Vis_Q_5	0.838	1.325				

Table 3. *Cont.*

Domains/Items	BFL	VIF	alpha	rhoC	rhoA	AVE
Interaction quality			0.808	0.874	0.812	0.634
Interact_Q_1	0.848	2.254				
Interact_Q_2	0.782	2.210				
Interact_Q_4	0.807	1.838				
Interact_Q_5	0.726	1.461				
Outcome quality			0.745	0.841	0.745	0.570
Outc_Q_1	0.765	1.874				
Outc_Q_2	0.798	2.157				
Outc_Q_4	0.797	1.603				
Outc_Q_5	0.641	1.224				
Physical environment quality			0.807	0.873	0.822	0.634
Phys_Q_1	0.818	1.191				
Phys_Q_2	0.858	2.366				
Phys_Q_3	0.798	1.626				
Phys_Q_4	0.695	1.434				
Destination identity			0.836	0.884	0.865	0.609
Ident_1	0.779	1.712				
Ident_2	0.861	2.514				
Ident_3	0.796	1.854				
Ident_4	0.572	1.329				
Ident_5	0.851	2.197				
Tourist satisfaction			0.766	0.839	0.824	0.517
Sat_1	0.653	1.579				
Sat_2	0.854	2.118				
Sat_3	0.565	1.511				
Sat_4	0.837	1.874				
Sat_5	0.615	1.774				
Intention to recommend			0.844	0.890	0.851	0.620
Recom_1	0.752	1.732				
Recom_2	0.811	2.132				
Recom_3	0.840	2.248				
Recom_4	0.853	2.279				
Recom_5	0.666	1.444				
Intention to revisit			0.878	0.911	0.883	0.673
Revis_1	0.835	2.368				
Revis_2	0.851	2.758				
Revis_3	0.768	1.981				
Revis_4	0.855	2.349				
Revis_5	0.774	1.640				

VIF: variance inflation factor; Alpha: Cronbach's alpha; BFL: Bootstrapped factor loading; AVE: average variance extracted.

4.3. Outcomes of the Discriminant Validity

In terms of assessing discriminant validity, the square roots of the average variance extracted (AVE) were compared to the shared variance between constructs, as indicated by the inter-domain correlations. As depicted in Table 4, the square roots of AVE were found to be greater than the correlations between domains. Moreover, the bootstrapped heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) values, along with their corresponding 95% confidence intervals (CIs), did not surpass the threshold of 1, as reported in Table 5. This finding reinforces the confirmation of discriminant validity [55].

Table 4. Outcomes of the discriminant validity.

Parameter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Visit quality	0.792							
2. Interaction quality	0.438	0.796						
3. Outcome quality	0.454	0.604	0.755					
4. Environment quality	0.367	0.420	0.588	0.797				
5. Identity	0.496	0.590	0.619	0.500	0.780			
6. Satisfaction	0.450	0.579	0.572	0.578	0.566	0.719		
7. Intention to recommend	0.311	0.496	0.411	0.283	0.592	0.533	0.787	
8. Intention to revisit	0.248	0.421	0.343	0.287	0.610	0.467	0.652	0.820

The square roots of AVE are on the diagonal and inter-domain correlations are in the lower triangle.

Table 5. Outcomes of the bootstrapped HTMT.

Relationship	T Stat.	B-HTMT Values (95% CI)
Visit quality → Interaction quality	5.40	0.577 (0.375 to 0.779)
Visit quality → Outcome quality	4.64	0.645 (0.362 to 0.894)
Visit quality → Environment quality	3.55	0.493 (0.224 to 0.748)
Visit quality → Identity	4.58	0.618 (0.348 to 0.875)
Visit quality → Satisfaction	5.48	0.568 (0.377 to 0.768)
Visit quality → Recommend	2.80	0.403 (0.163 to 0.683)
Visit quality → Revisit	2.94	0.324 (0.153 to 0.530)
Interaction quality → Outcome quality	8.05	0.758 (0.564 to 0.932)
Interaction quality → Environment quality	3.88	0.517 (0.250 to 0.766)
Interaction quality → Identity	8.09	0.699 (0.508 to 0.847)
Interaction quality → Satisfaction	7.13	0.729 (0.500 to 0.910)
Interaction quality → Recommend	4.62	0.575 (0.295 to 0.783)
Interaction quality → Revisit	3.42	0.485 (0.202 to 0.742)
Outcome quality → Environment quality	6.41	0.747 (0.498 to 0.960)
Outcome quality → Identity	9.30	0.755 (0.577 to 0.903)
Outcome quality → Satisfaction	7.23	0.720 (0.513 to 0.911)
Outcome quality → Recommend	3.93	0.518 (0.280 to 0.773)
Outcome quality → Revisit	3.47	0.426 (0.212 to 0.663)
Environment quality → Identity	4.55	0.591 (0.338 to 0.849)
Environment quality → Satisfaction	7.11	0.715 (0.499 to 0.896)
Environment quality → Recommend	2.67	0.349 (0.132 to 0.610)
Environment quality → Revisit	2.88	0.337 (0.147 to 0.589)
Identity → Satisfaction	5.51	0.657 (0.415 to 0.883)
Identity → Recommend	5.87	0.683 (0.439 to 0.892)
Identity → Revisit	7.74	0.696 (0.510 to 0.870)
Satisfaction → Recommend	5.84	0.602 (0.388 to 0.787)
Satisfaction → Revisit	4.67	0.513 (0.306 to 0.719)
Recommend → Revisit	5.94	0.750 (0.484 to 0.972)

4.4. Structural Model

Results of the structural path indicated that the destination identity was significantly predicted by three domains of the event quality, including visit quality ($\beta = 0.195$, 95%

CI = 0.001 to 0.433, $p = 0.044$), interaction quality ($\beta = 0.275$, 95% CI = 0.076 to 0.430, $p = 0.001$), and outcome quality, as well as tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.276$, 95% CI = 0.066 to 0.462, $p = 0.004$). Only two domains of event quality significantly influenced tourist satisfaction, including the interaction quality ($\beta = 0.258$, 95% CI = 0.024 to 0.481, $p = 0.023$) and the quality of the physical environment ($\beta = 0.295$, 95% CI = 0.022 to 0.555, $p = 0.023$). Destination identity did not influence tourist satisfaction. However, satisfaction was an antecedent predictor of tourists' intention to recommend ($\beta = 0.533$, 95% CI = 0.291 to 0.703, $p < 0.0001$), which in turn predicted the intention to revisit the destination ($\beta = 0.652$, 95% CI = 0.458 to 0.839, $p < 0.0001$, Table 6).

Table 6. Results of the structural models.

Path	T Value	B (95% CI)	p	Hypothesis	Result
Visit quality → Satisfaction	1.037	0.109 (−0.095 to 0.340)	0.151	H1a	NS
Interaction quality → Satisfaction	2.021	0.258 (0.024 to 0.481)	0.023	H1b	Supp
Outcome quality → Satisfaction	0.764	0.101 (−0.121 to 0.393)	0.223	H1c	NS
Environment quality → Satisfaction	2.018	0.295 (0.022 to 0.555)	0.023	H1d	Supp
Visit quality → Identity	1.717	0.195 (0.001 to 0.433)	0.044	H2a	Supp
Interaction quality → Identity	3.063	0.275 (0.076 to 0.430)	0.001	H2b	Supp
Outcome quality → Identity	2.665	0.276 (0.066 to 0.462)	0.004	H2c	Supp
Environment quality → Identity	1.241	0.152 (−0.064 to 0.418)	0.109	H2d	NS
Identity → Satisfaction	0.802	0.149 (−0.224 to 0.493)	0.212	H3	NS
Satisfaction → Recommend	5.206	0.533 (0.291 to 0.703)	<0.0001	H4	Supp
Recommend → Revisit	6.377	0.652 (0.458 to 0.839)	<0.0001	H5	Supp

CI: confidence interval; Supp: supported; NS: Not supported.

5. Discussion and Limitations

Tourists' brand experiences affect their decision making process significantly [57]. Brand design, packaging, communication, and environment directly influence consumers on a subconscious level, triggering specific behavioral responses [58]. The relationship between quality dimensions and destination identity has long been established. The current study reported a relationship between three quality domains, namely visit quality ($p = 0.044$), interaction quality ($p = 0.001$), and outcome quality ($p = 0.004$), with destination identity (Table 4). These findings were consistent with the findings by multiple prior research papers [59–64]. First, Jin et al. [60] and Yamaguchi et al. [59], reported a positive association between event quality and destination image. Similarly, Moon et al. [61] found that destination image is positively influenced by perception of event quality, especially intangible factors. As for the interaction quality, Yang reported a positive association between interaction quality and image destination [62]. According to Yang [62], the quality of interactions is heavily influenced by sociable incidents, which shape tourists' cognitive image and, ultimately, influence the affective image of a destination. When it comes to outcome quality, Kim et al. [63] reported a significant association between the quality of information, which is part of outcome quality, with the destination image. In addition, Santana and Gosling emphasized that tourist experience is strongly influenced by the destination image [64]. Although some studies reported positive associations between physical environment qualities such as perceived atmosphere [65], quality of transport [66], infrastructure and facilities [67], destination safety and cleanliness [65,67], and the clean atmosphere with destination image [67], the current study did not report a significant association of the destination identity with the physical environment quality factors (Table 6). In their systematic review about measuring the service quality, Hartwig and Billert [66] argued that there are multiple models and tools utilized by researchers to measure service quality dimensions which can explain the variations in the study results that assessed the relation between service quality and other variables.

Competitive destinations must strive to achieve high tourist satisfaction since it has a significant impact on tourists' choice of holiday destination, and their future visits. The current study reported both the quality of interaction and the quality of environment

to be associated with higher satisfaction among tourists, with $p = 0.001$ and $p = 0.023$, respectively (Table 6). In their study to assess the impact of multiple quality dimensions on customer satisfaction, Joon and Kim [67] reported interaction quality as a significant influencer on the customer satisfaction. Joon and Kim [67] explained that understanding the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is essential, as it affects customer experience and perception. Another study by Mustelie-Puig et al. [68] reported a significant influence of customer satisfaction on both service satisfaction and overall tourist satisfaction. They added that the overall satisfaction among customers is directly associated with the intention to revisit the destination [68]. As for the environmental quality, Zulvianti et al. reported a significant association between environmental quality, measured by perceived environmental value, and tourist satisfaction [69]. Nevertheless, they argued that environmental quality association with tourist satisfaction is mediated by sustainability tourism development [69]. In another paper, Naidoo et al. [70] found that destination attributes associated with physical environment quality, such as a peaceful environment, temperature, and weather, were more well perceived by tourists compared to other variables, and had an impact on the overall perception of tourists on the destination and its image [70]. Zalejska-Jonsson and Wilhelmsson also explained that happiness and satisfaction are directly influenced by the quality of the environment as it affects individual health and wellbeing; however, they argued that the level of satisfaction can vary between people depending on individual and building characteristics [71].

Similar to destination identity and satisfaction, tourists' intention to recommend and to revisit a destination has been linked with their perception of a specific destination [72–74]. Intentions to revisit were positively linked with tourists' experience, satisfaction, and the destination identity in a recent study [75]. Considering the effects of these variables on individual perception, developing an understanding of the tourist perception represents a significant part of establishing the organizational strategy for future editions of any event [76–78]. According to Preko et al. [79], museums offer tourists both tangible and intangible experiences that can impact service quality and tourist satisfaction, and thus their behavior and intentions to revisit. The current study supports this finding, as we reported a significant relationship between tourists' satisfaction and recommendations and between recommendations and revisit intentions (Table 6). Moreover, Santana and Gosling explained that people who recommend a specific destination are more likely to revisit the destination [64]. This finding was consistent with the findings from our study, which reported a significant association between the destination recommendation variable and the intention to revisit ($p < 0.0001$). It is worth mentioning that Wang et al. found that the effects of destination-perceived quality are stronger for first-time visitors compared to later visits [80]. This underscores the need to conduct studies that assess the service quality impact on tourists upon their revisits rather than on newcomers.

When it comes to study limitations, the current study utilized a questionnaire as a data collection method, which increases the chances of response error. In addition, the lack of studies that assess the impact of quality dimensions and other variables on tourists' perception in a museum setting have slightly impacted the discussion part in the current study, and thus, we recommend conducting further studies that assess these associations in similar settings, and investigate the effect of multiple mediating variables that can mediate these relationships. Importantly, a limitation of the current study is the relatively modest sample size obtained through the survey methodology. While the 78.6% response rate for the online survey was satisfactory, the total number of valid responses analyzed was 118 participants. A larger overall sample would strengthen the conclusiveness and generalizability of the results. The limited sample size may have constrained the ability to detect small effects or completely accurately estimate the strengths of relationships between constructs. This is a common challenge for survey research restricted to a single event instance. For future research, deploying the survey to a larger target population, if possible across multiple event iterations, and adding an interview component would allow for collection of a larger dataset and mixed methods analysis.

Although the results of the study did not reflect how the different quality dimensions assessed relate to Oradea's brand identity, particularly in the context of the Night of the Museums event, prior research supports associations between event/service quality, satisfaction, and destination image/identity [56–63]. High-quality interactions, outcomes, and environment positively influenced visitors' perceptions of Oradea's identity as a cultural tourism destination (Table 4). Specifically, memorable social experiences and informative interactions could help shape cognitive and affective brand associations [61].

To better optimize identity compatibility, Oradea should focus on delivering consistently high-quality engagements and improvements across physical, staff, and program areas perceived by visitors as needing attention [64–70]. For example, addressing infrastructure, wayfinding, or crowding issues could enhance perceptions of environmental quality and satisfaction [66,69]. Strengthening educational components and sharing Oradea's history/culture more meaningfully may additionally cultivate cognitive and affective bonds with the city brand [62,63]. Monitoring and learning from visitor feedback on quality domains and branding impacts will be essential to refine strategic alignment over time. Doing so could reinforce Oradea's reputation management and cultural product competitiveness through a memorable Night of the Museums experiences [71,75,76,79,81].

6. Conclusions and Future Implications

6.1. Conclusions

Considering its role in a destination's survival and its impact on multiple levels, tourist perception is among the most investigated topics in tourism. Tourist perception and satisfaction at any event are influenced by several factors, and these factors can be influenced by a variety of factors as well. The current study reported a significant association between visit quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality domains on the destination identity. In addition, interaction quality and environment quality were directly associated with tourist satisfaction. Satisfied tourists were also more likely to recommend the destination to others, and with more intentions to revisit the same event in the future. Unlike previously reported associations, the relationship between satisfaction and destination identity with some of the quality domains were not significant.

It is therefore essential to assess the impact of specific factors and their domains, as well as the interrelation between these factors. In addition, developing effective marketing and operational strategies requires the collaboration of destination marketers, planners, and managers on all levels. Event organizers should focus on improving visit quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality. By ensuring that these aspects are well-executed, they can positively influence destination identity. This may involve investing in resources to enhance the visitor experience, providing engaging interactions, and delivering desirable outcomes. Furthermore, attention should be given to the quality of the physical environment where the event takes place. Creating an appealing and comfortable setting can significantly contribute to tourist satisfaction. Event organizers should consider factors such as aesthetics, cleanliness, accessibility, and comfort to create a positive atmosphere. Focusing on the destination identity, destination management organizations can work on promoting the unique aspects and cultural identity of the destination through events like the Night of the Museums. By highlighting the distinctive features, historical significance, and cultural heritage of Oradea, they can strengthen the destination's identity and appeal to tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences.

6.2. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several key contributions to theory on event quality, destination branding, and tourist behavior. By investigating the relationships between event quality domains, destination identity, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, the research expanded theoretical knowledge on how memorable event experiences can shape brand image and drive outcomes. The findings empirically validated the ability of visit quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality to positively influence destination identity. This aligns with

branding theories which propose that consistent, engaging brand experiences shape identity by creating meaningful associations in consumers' minds. Furthermore, the results supported satisfaction as a driver of vital post-purchase behaviors like intention to recommend and revisit. This builds on theoretical frameworks linking satisfaction to loyalty and relationships. Although destination identity did not directly predict satisfaction, this study provided an initial conceptualization of related constructs, which can guide future research to refine theoretical linkages. Overall, the research advanced understanding of strategies to align event quality with destination branding for maximum impact.

6.3. Managerial Implications

The results have several key practical implications for event organizers and destination managers in Oradea. Firstly, the findings suggest that event organizers should devote special attention to enhancing visit quality, interaction quality, and outcome quality when managing the Night of the Museums event. By focusing on the visitor experience, engagement opportunities, and learning value, they can shape perceptions of Oradea's cultural offerings. Secondly, the destination management organization should promote the distinctive features, heritage, and traditions of Oradea through branding strategies and partnerships with events like Night of the Museums. Strategic branding reinforced by memorable events can strengthen Oradea's identity as an authentic cultural destination in the minds of tourists. Thirdly, visitor satisfaction can be improved by ensuring high-quality interactions between staff, tourists, and local residents, as well as providing comfortable and visually appealing physical environments. Higher satisfaction can translate to positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat visitation. Finally, targeted marketing campaigns highlighting Oradea's cultural assets, incentives to share experiences, and personalized promotions based on visitor preferences may encourage future revisitation.

6.4. Place-Specific Implications

The current study's findings have place-specific implications that reflect Oradea's distinctive territorial context. Situated in western Romania, Oradea has a rich cultural heritage encompassing medieval architecture, artisanal crafts, diverse cuisines, and music. Applying the insights from this research within Oradea's local environment can enrich event experiences and strengthen destination branding. For instance, interactive Night of the Museums exhibits showcasing Oradea's history, landmarks, and multicultural communities could allow tourists to connect with place identity. Regional partnerships incorporating local businesses, artists, and cuisines would also authentically represent Oradea. Marketing initiatives tailored to domestic Romanian tourists represent another opportunity. Enhancing walkability and transit access could improve the visitor experience and perception of Oradea's offerings. Additionally, other cultural events in Oradea can apply learnings around interaction and outcome quality to better engage residents and visitors. Grounding the research implications locally will help Oradea solidify its brand identity as an emerging Romanian cultural hub.

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