

# KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS OF THE ARTISANS, CRAFTSMEN AND VISITORS WHO PARTICIPATE IN CULTURE FESTIVALS: THE CASE OF NORTHERN CYPRUS<sup>1</sup>

## CONHECIMENTOS E OPINIÕES DOS ARTESÃOS, ARTESANATOS E VISITANTES QUE PARTICIPAM DOS FESTIVAIS DE CULTURA: O CASO DO NORTE DE CHIPRE

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**Abstract:** Festivals, cultural and artistic activities in Northern Cyprus are organized as shopping, exhibition, and sports events, and depending on the increase in the number of tourists visiting the region, they make a very important contribution to cultural and economic development, promotion, and the lively transfer of culture by people coming together. These benefits of festivals, while increasing the commercial activities of the people of the region and the development of the region in every sense, also fulfill a very important function in increasing tourism investments in the island. Organizers, local people participating in these festivals and visitors from different regions play critical roles in the effective service and development of local festivals for these purposes. Through the questions prepared in this study, the knowledge and opinions of the craftsmen, artisans and visitors participating in different festivals in Northern Cyprus will be revealed. Thus, it will be determined how in that regard conscious are the artisans, craftsmen and visitors, who occupy a very important place in the organization of the festivals. In addition, based on the data obtained, the suitability of the festivals for the purpose will be revealed and recommendations will be made for their further development.

**Keywords:** Festival. Northern Cyprus. Tourist. Artisans. Craftsmen. Cultural transfer.

**Resumo:** Os festivais, atividades culturais e artísticas no Norte de Chipre são organizados como eventos comerciais, de exposição e desportivos e, dependendo do aumento do número de turistas que visitam a região, dão um contributo muito importante para o desenvolvimento cultural e económico, a promoção e a transferência animada de cultura por pessoas que se reúnem. Estes

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benefícios dos festivais, ao mesmo tempo que aumentam a actividade comercial das gentes da região e o desenvolvimento da região em todos os sentidos, cumprem também uma função muito importante no aumento dos investimentos turísticos na ilha. Os organizadores, a população local que participa nestes festivais e os visitantes de diferentes regiões desempenham um papel fundamental no serviço eficaz e no desenvolvimento de festivais locais para estes fins. Através das questões elaboradas neste estudo, serão revelados os conhecimentos e opiniões dos artesãos, artesãos e visitantes que participam em diferentes festivais no Norte de Chipre. Assim, determinar-se-á até que ponto estão conscientes nesse sentido os artesãos, artesãos e visitantes, que ocupam um lugar muito importante na organização dos festivais. Além disso, com base nos dados obtidos, será revelada a adequação dos festivais ao fim a que se destinam e serão feitas recomendações para o seu futuro desenvolvimento.

**Palavras-chave:** Festival. Norte do Chipre. Turista. Artesãos. Artistas. Transferência cultural.

## 1. Introduction

Cultural festivals have vital importance especially for island countries which expect revenue from tourism. While the cultural festivals, which are traditionally held in certain periods each year and named after any product grown in the region, are effective in promoting the relevant region, they are also an important source of income for the artisans and craftsmen in the regions where they are held. Festivals are seen as a basic tool for development and economic growth, especially in underdeveloped rural areas (Karadağ & Dalgın, 2021: 940). In addition, it is an undeniable fact that a lively cultural transfer takes place, especially through the artisans and craftsmen taking part in these festivals, and that these festivals should be supported by all segments of the society in terms of the sustainability of cultural transfer. Festivals, which serve as a means of transmission in the sharing and transfer of local and social cultural elements to future generations, and the change and development of the social structure in society, have considerable place and importance (Atak & Tatar & 2017: 1399).

Cultural festivals, which bring together people from almost every region in the country and tourists who come to visit the country, are a very important part of the entertainment culture. They also contribute to the formation of social peace and an environment of love-respect by ensuring the integration of individuals who make up the society. The large number of cultural festivals organized accelerates the socialization processes of individuals in the society. Thus, the aforementioned festivals play a very important role in the shaping of social memory and the continuity of societies.

In these festivals, cultural transfer takes place intensively because people from all walks of society gather together and artisans-craftsmen take an active part in such events. Local administrations (municipality – headman) and NGOs play an active role in the organization of these festivals. Local governments contribute to the country's tourism and economy thanks to these cultural festivals that they organize and make traditional. At the same time, as we have mentioned, festivals actually contribute to the development of the country by serving to preserve and, in a sense, to transmit the culture in a lively manner.

As in every country, there are many festivals in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which play a role in the promotion of natural and cultural values, are organized locally and are called by the name of a product specific to that region. Festivals can be organized by focusing on special days or cultural elements of the region, or they can be organized by focusing only on a single product (Şengül & Genç, 2016: 80). These types of activities also reflect the spirit of their region; thus, they contribute to the fact that the product and the festival they are named after will be remembered with that region in the future and become a symbol for the relevant region (Dalgın, Atak & Çeken, 2016: 1180). It can be claimed that some of the mentioned festivals held in Northern Cyprus have international reputation. Güzelyurt Orange Festival, which is organized in July, Yeniboğaziçi Pulya (Flake Bird) Festival and Lefke Walnut Festival held in August, have become traditional in Northern Cyprus and are organized on the same days and dates every year. These festivals receive intense attention from the tourists coming to the island. Such festivals organized in the world and in Cyprus emerge as cultural, artistic, shopping, exhibition and sports activities (Özgürel, Alan & Bingöl, 2015: 115). These festivals make very important contributions to the cultural and economic development of the relevant region and to the promotion of the area, depending on the increase in the number of tourists coming to the region.

Local governments undertake the most effective role and organizational duties in the organization of cultural festivals in Northern Cyprus. However, local people, artisans-craftsmen and visitors participating in these festivals have a very important role in the realization of these activities. In order to ensure the development and continuity of the festivals, it is necessary to understand the factors that determine the reaction and attitude of the local people and thus gain their support. In the same study, the researcher stated that the success and continuity of the festivals depend on the support of local people as well as the participation of local actors (municipality, public institutions, community leaders, etc.) in planning and implementation (Sert, 2017: 31).

In this paper, we present the knowledge and opinions of artisans-craftsmen and visitors participating in various festivals in Northern Cyprus. We believe that these views of artisans-craftsmen and visitors will contribute to the more effective organization of cultural festivals on the island and the elimination of related deficiencies.

## 2. Methodology

The population of the study consists of the local people living in the areas where festivals are organized in Northern Cyprus. Considering that the mentioned festivals can have social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts on the local people, the mentioned regions were chosen as the study area. Convenience sampling method was used in the study, which is a sampling method where everyone who answers to the questionnaire is included in the study. The survey was applied by personally visiting the mentioned regions. 20 questionnaires were eliminated due to incompleteness and errors, and evaluations were made based on a total of 50 (25 craftsmen+25 visitors) questionnaires.

### *Data collection technique and tool*

In the study, the survey technique was used to collect the data to be obtained from the sample. In creating the survey, the opinions of two experts working in culture and folklore were taken. The sample size of 50 units was sufficient to make the necessary analyses in such a study. The statements were given with the options “I Absolutely Agree”, “I Agree”, “I am Undecided”, “I Disagree”, and “I Strongly Disagree” on the 5-point Likert scale. The findings obtained were shown as frequency and percentage in both tables and then evaluated and analyzed according to the purpose and subject of the research.

## 3. Results

In this study, in which the opinions and information of artisans-craftsmen and visitors regarding cultural festivals were consulted, quite remarkable results were obtained.

Table 1. Knowledge and Opinions of Artisans-Craftsmen Participating in Northern Cyprus Cultural Festivals on These Festivals

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Cultural festivals disrupt the daily lives of the village/city people.	N	-	-	-	14	11	
	%	-	-	-	56	44	%100
The historical texture of the village/city is eroded during the cultural festivals.	N	-	-	-	13	12	
	%	-	-	-	52	48	%100
Garbage and waste produced during cultural festivals cause discomfort and pollute the environment.	N	-	6	6	11	2	
	%	-	24	24	44	8	%100
Cultural festivals positively affect the image of the village/city.	N	2	22	1	-	-	
	%	8	88	4	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals bring different cultures together.	N	1	16	8	-	-	
	%	4	64	32	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals contribute to our economy as well as that of the people living in the village/city.	N	6	18	1	-	-	
	%	24	72	4	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals increase the quality of life of people living in the village/city.	N	3	14	8	-	-	
	%	12	56	32	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals are a source of entertainment for people living in the region where they are held.	N	20	5	-	-	-	
	%	80	20	-	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals help children learn about their own culture.	N	1	19	5	-	-	
	%	4	76	20	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals are generally held successfully in Northern Cyprus.	N	4	17	4	-	-	
	%	16	68	16	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals throughout the island are very well advertised.	N	1	17	7	-	-	
	%	4	68	28	-	-	%100
I find the activities organized within the scope of cultural festivals sufficient.	N	2	14	9	-	-	
	%	8	56	36	-	-	%100
I am very glad to participate in cultural festivals.	N	10	14	1	-	-	
	%	40	56	4	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals also contribute to Northern Cyprus tourism.	N	4	13	7	1		
	%	16	52	28	4	-	%100
I will do my best to increase participation in cultural festivals.	N	16	9	-	-	-	
	%	64	36	-	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals are especially effective in keeping the handicrafts and crafts of Cyprus alive.	N	18	7	-	-	-	
	%	72	28	-	-	-	%100
	N	17	8	-	-	-	

I think that cultural festivals are especially effective in keeping the food and beverage culture of the region alive.	%	68	32	-	-	-	%100
I think that local governments take the lead in the organization of cultural festivals.	N	24	1	-	-	-	
	%	96	4	-	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals contribute to the formation of social memory.	N	1	14	9	1	-	
	%	4	56	36	4	-	%100
I think that local people play a very important role in the effective organization of cultural festivals.	N	21	4	-	-	-	
	%	84	16	-	-	-	%100
I think that statesmen give cultural festivals due importance.	N	1	15	8	1	-	
	%	4	60	32	4	-	%100
	%	-	44	44	12	-	%100

It was seen that the artisans and craftsmen who participated in the survey agreed that the festivals in question did not disrupt daily life, nor did they damage the historical structure of the city/village. Although the participants think that the festivals in question do not harm the environment, when the results are carefully examined, it is seen that there are some problems in this regard. Participants expressing that the local festivals held in Northern Cyprus positively affect the image of the village/city, also think that these festivals bring different cultures together, contribute to the economy, increase the quality of life, are a source of entertainment, fulfill a very important function in cultural transfer, and are held successfully throughout the island.

It was observed that majority of the participants thought that the mentioned festivals were well advertised, but 7 people neither agreed nor disagreed to that statement. On the other hand, it was also seen that although a majority of the participants thought that activities conducted within the scope of the festivals were adequate, 9 participants were undecided about that question.

The artisans and craftsmen who participated in the survey stated that they were glad to participate in these festivals, that they wanted the participation in these festivals to increase, that the said festivals also contributed to tourism, and that they were effective in keeping the handicrafts and crafts, as well as food and beverage culture alive. In addition, it has been observed that the participants are aware of the fact that the public, along with local governments, play a very important role in the organization of these festivals. In general, a significant portion of the participants stated that the festivals in question contributed to the formation of social memory. On the other hand, it was observed that 9 people were

undecided on this issue and 1 person gave a negative answer. Although a significant part of the artisans and craftsmen participating in the survey stated that statesmen attach importance to these festivals, it is quite remarkable that 8 people were undecided in this regard and 1 person gave a negative answer to this question.

Table 2. Knowledge and Opinions of Visitors Participating in Northern Cyprus Cultural Festivals on These Festivals

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Cultural festivals disrupt the daily lives of the village/city people.	N	1	-	1	14	9	
	%	4	-	4	56	36	%100
The historical texture of the village/city is eroded during the cultural festivals.	N	1	-	1	15	8	
	%	4	-	4	60	32	%100
Garbage and waste produced during cultural festivals cause discomfort and pollute the environment.	N	-	9	7	8	1	
	%	-	36	28	32	4	%100
Cultural festivals positively affect the image of the village/city.	N	-	22	2	1	-	
	%	-	88	8	4	-	%100
Cultural festivals bring different cultures together.	N	1	13	10	1	-	
	%	4	52	40	4	-	%100
Cultural festivals contribute to our economy as well as that of the people living in the village/city.	N	5	20	-	-	-	
	%	20	80	-	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals increase the quality of life of people living in the village/city.	N	-	20	4	1	-	
	%	-	80	16	4	-	%100
Cultural festivals are a source of entertainment for people living in the region where they are held.	N	19	6	-	-	-	
	%	76	24	-	-	-	%100
Cultural festivals help children learn about their own culture.	N	3	16	4	2	-	
	%	12	64	16	8	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals are generally held successfully in Northern Cyprus.	N	1	15	8	1	-	
	%	4	60	32	4	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals throughout the island are very well advertised.	N	-	10	12	3	-	
	%	-	40	48	12	-	%100
I find the activities organized within the scope of cultural festivals sufficient.	N	2	15	4	3	1	
	%	8	60	16	12	4	%100
I am very glad to participate in cultural festivals.	N	10	14	1	-	-	
	%	40	56	4	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals also contribute to Northern Cyprus tourism.	N	3	16	5	1	-	
	%	12	64	20	4	-	%100

I will do my best to increase participation in cultural festivals.	N	13	9	3	-	-	
	%	52	36	12	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals are especially effective in keeping the handicrafts and crafts of Cyprus alive.	N	13	9	3	-	-	
	%	52	36	12	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals are especially effective in keeping the food and beverage culture of the region alive.	N	15	7	2	1	-	
	%	60	28	8	4	-	%100
I think that local governments take the lead in the organization of cultural festivals.	N	21	4	-	-	-	
	%	84	16	-	-	-	%100
I think that cultural festivals contribute to the formation of social memory.	N	1	16	4	4	-	
	%	4	64	16	16	-	%100
I think that local people play a very important role in the effective organization of cultural festivals.	N	14	10	1	-	-	
	%	56	40	4	-	-	%100
I think that statesmen give cultural festivals due importance.	N	-	11	11	3	-	
	%	-	44	44	12	-	%100

A significant portion of the visitors who participated in the survey think that these festivals do not disrupt daily life and damage the historical structure of the city/village; however, 9 festival visitors who participated in the survey stated that these festivals polluted the environment and 7 participants remained undecided, which is quite intriguing. The participants, who think that the local festivals held in Northern Cyprus positively affect the image of the village/city, also emphasized that these festivals brought different cultures together. However, 10 participants remained undecided on this issue. Visitors think that festivals contribute to the economy, increase the quality of life, are a source of entertainment, fulfill a very important function in cultural transfer, and are generally successfully organized in Northern Cyprus; however, a question mark was observed in 8 of the visitors who participated in the survey about how successfully the festivals were organized.

It was observed that majority of the participants had doubts about how well the mentioned festivals were advertised. 12 of the participants said that they neither agreed nor disagreed, while 3 participants gave a negative answer. On the other hand, while the participants found the activities carried out within the scope of the festivals to be sufficient to a large extent, it was found that 4 people had a negative view of this substance. The visitors who participated in the survey stated that they were glad to participate in these festivals, that they wanted the participation in these festivals to increase and that the said festivals also contributed to tourism and were effective in keeping the handicrafts and crafts as well as food and beverage culture alive. In addition, it has been observed that the participants are



aware of the fact that the public, along with local governments, play a very important role in the organization of these festivals. In general, a significant part of the participants stated that the festivals in question contributed to the formation of social memory. On the other hand, it was observed that 4 people were undecided on this issue and 4 people gave a negative answer. While 11 of the visitors who participated in the survey were undecided about the importance of statesmen to these festivals, 3 people gave a negative answer to this question. The fact that only 11 of the visitors responded positively to this article shows that the issue in question should be evaluated.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study, where the knowledge and opinions of artisans, craftsmen and visitors as regards cultural festivals organized in Northern Cyprus are evaluated, significant conclusions have been reached. When the obtained data are compared, it can be seen that artisans, craftsmen and visitors usually gave similar answers. In this context, it can be claimed that both participant groups have a positive view as regards these festivals and that they wanted these festivals to be organized in the island. In addition, the answers showed that there are some issues that both participant groups want to attract attention to. Especially the fact that they stated that environmental pollution started during the festivals in question shows that some precautions should be taken in this regard. Kişioğlu and Selvi, on the other hand, underlined a similar point in their study titled “The Impact of Local Events on the Destination Image of Tekirdağ: An Evaluation for Local Stakeholders” and argued that such local activities increased environmental pollution. It is witnessed that the artisans, craftsmen and visitors who participated in the survey agreed that the organized cultural festivals positively affect the image of the village, contribute to the economy of the people, increase the quality of life, become a source of entertainment, and also contribute to cultural transfer. In their paper titled “Evaluation of Isparta Region Festivals in the Context of Cultural Tourism and Economy”, Göde and Yiğit argued with a similar discourse that locally organized cultural festivals made contribution to the economy. Similarly, Atak, Tatar and Tunaseli in their article titled “The Place and Importance of Festivals in the Formation of Cultural Heritage: An Evaluation of Fethiye Music Village”, emphasized that local festivals are an important source of entertainment. In the study titled “The Role of Festivals in Carrying Local Culture from Tradition to the Future” co-authored by İmran Gündüz

Alptürker and Hakan Alptürker, it was underlined that the young and old generations come in contact at the festivals, they have fun together, and thus the transfer of culture from generation to generation is ensured. In addition, especially the visitors who participated in the survey think that the mentioned festivals should be better advertised. Both groups believe in general that the activities conducted within the scope of the festivals are adequate, and they think that these festivals contribute to tourism and that local festivals play a very important role in keeping food and beverage culture and handicrafts alive. In their study titled “The Role of Local Food Culture in Rural Tourism: Balıkesir”, Bozok and Kahraman emphasized that tourists who attend the festivals and taste local cuisine will want to revisit the region. It was observed that the participants from both groups participating in the survey were generally knowledgeable about local festivals. Emphasizing that local governments and the public play a very important role in the organization of the said festivals, the participants expect more support from the statesmen in this regard. In their co-authored work titled “Festivals as a Tool in Local Development: Munzur Culture and Nature Festival”, Özgürel, Alan and Bingöl also emphasized that local governments lead the organization of cultural festivals and the local people undertake important tasks in this sense.

In every part of the world, cultural festivals are extremely effective in the transfer of local culture from the past to the future in a lively manner; they also allow for the people to come together and socialize, and are evaluated as a means of entertainment and celebration. Several cultural festivals are being organized in different parts of Cyprus with different names and contents with the support and participation of the local people and governments. These cultural activities, which reshape the cultural identity for future generations and ensure fraternization for the transfer of traditional knowledge, also mean the preservation of cultural memory and tradition. Cultural festivals are also of great importance in terms of ensuring the continuity of cultural elements that develop communities into nations. In this context, it has also been determined in the article that cultural festivals as a means of transmission in the cultural preservation process have a much more important meaning than merely being a commercial activity.

## Recommendations

First of all, the number of local festivals organized in Northern Cyprus should be increased and their promotion should be made in a wider media. In addition, more measures should be taken for environmental cleaning on the days of festivals. The activities included in the festivals should be diversified and it should be ensured that they differ from region to region.

More support should be provided by the states to the cultural festivals, which fulfill a very important function in the provision of cultural transfer, and local governments should be encouraged in this sense.

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