

## HOW CONSUMERS' NEED FOR VARIETY AND SOCIAL CONSUMPTION INFLUENCES FESTIVAL PATRONAGE AND SPENDING

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This article investigates the influence of motivational goals such as variety seeking and social consumption on consumers' patronage and spending at craft beer festivals. In doing so, we develop and test a number of hypotheses by examining information collected via means of a survey questionnaire proposed in 2017 to visitors of a large beer festival in the UK. Findings of our analysis unveil how cognitive engagement affects individuals' behavior with regard to responding to and financially engage with beer festivals. Results also identify cognitive engagement as an important mediator of the effects related to variety seeking and social consumption. From a managerial perspective, findings reveal important attributes affecting consumers' drivers towards craft beers, contributing to understand which dimension of consumer engagement influence their behaviors. Overall, the study provides fresh empirical evidence in terms of identifying and recognizing consumers' behaviors with regard to defining future trends in the craft beer sector.

**Key words:** Variety seeking; Cognitive engagement; Patronage and spending;  
Craft beer festivals

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### Introduction

The number of breweries in the UK has increased significantly in the past decades, with businesses passing from just about 140 to more than 2,000 between 1980 and 2018 (British Beer & Pub Association, 2019; Cabras & Bamforth, 2016). This impressive growth has considerably widened the variety of beers in the country, expanding the range

of brands and spectrum of tastes available to British consumers to levels never seen before (Cabras, 2018).

The recent rise in *craft breweries* and *craft beers*, with the term “craft” defining a nonindustrially brewed and mostly locally marketed beer, is not exclusive to the UK. Many studies in recent literature examine craft beer markets in different countries, mainly in Europe (e.g., Poelmans, 2018,

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in Belgium; Karagiannis et al., 2017, in Germany; Garavaglia, 2018, in Italy), and North America (e.g., Francioni-Kraftchick et al., 2014; Tremblay & Tremblay, 2005, in the US; Plummer et al., 2005, in Canada). However, researchers so far have focused mainly on themes such as craft beer economies and supply chains (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018), marketing strategies (Cabras & Bamforth, 2016), and consumers' profiling (Dunn & Wickham, 2014; Francioni-Kraftchick et al., 2014).

As a result, little is still known about other important aspects of craft beers in relation to consumers' choice and behaviors. In particular, there is a paucity of studies addressing beer-related events such as beer festivals (Cabras et al., 2020). This paucity is surprising in light of the fact that craft breweries, particularly small ones, frequently build up their success onto consumers' appreciation for products' local provenance. In the UK, this emphasis on geographical origins tends to characterize craft breweries, shaping their business and marketing strategies. British craft breweries still supply the bulk of their production to pubs within a range of a few miles and do heavily rely on market fairs and beer festivals to promote their beers in view of developing marketing and business opportunities.

As beer consumers tend to search for new experiences, the variety in tastes displayed by craft beer satisfy such quest for unfamiliar flavors (Aquilani et al., 2015), and beer festivals provide consumers with manifold opportunities to try and taste different ranges and qualities of beers. Likewise, beer festivals provide breweries with powerful platforms to showcase their beer portfolios in view of widening their customer base. However, there is a gap in knowledge about how the high variety offered at beer festivals serves as an effective attractor for craft beer consumers, and/or whether other motivational drivers might influence their decisions of visit such events.

The study presented in this article aims to fill this gap by investigating the influence of motivational drivers such as variety seeking and social consumption on consumers' patronage and spending at beer festivals. We address the following research questions: How does cognitive engagement influence attendance to beer festivals? What is the role of social consumption on variety seeking on individuals' behavioral patronage at these events? And what

influences financial choices made by participants while attending beer festivals?

In doing so, we develop and test a set of hypotheses by examining information collected via means of a survey questionnaire proposed in 2017 to visitors of the Knavesmire Beer Festival, a 4-day event held on annual basis at York and arguably one of the largest beer festivals in the UK. The festival showcases a wide range of variety of craft beers; approximately 500 different craft beers and 100 different ciders were offered during the event considered for this study. The survey, conducted by interviewing visitors on festival premises, generated more than 1,000 responses. These provided us with a robust platform to apply structural equation modeling in order to verify how cognitive engagement affects respondents' patronage and spending behaviors.

The article comprises of five sections, including this brief introduction. Section two provides the theoretical background that forms the basis of our investigation, including an overview of the relevant literature and studies used to define our research hypothesis. Section three presents the research methodology, while section four illustrates results gathered from the data analysis. Section five discusses findings by highlighting both theoretical and managerial implications associated with our study and providing conclusions.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### *Setting the Context: Beer Festivals in the UK*

Although studies investigating beer festivals and beer-related events is still reduced, they are within the wider tourism and hospitality literature among those addressing gastronomic festivals in general. These studies address beer festivals in terms of tourism and economic development (Francioni-Kraftchick et al., 2014; Herrmann & Herrmann, 2014; Lee & Arcodia, 2011) and, to a lesser extent, place branding (Cabras et al., 2020; Xiao & Smith, 2004).

In the UK, beer festivals are a tradition, although the number of these events has spiked in recent years. By examining several sources in the public domain and mainly provided by CAMRA, it is estimated that around 800–1,100 beer festivals were organized across the UK in 2014 alone (British

Beer & Pub Association, 2019). Cabras (2018) indicated that the organization of most of the beer festivals in the UK are completely self-funded and entirely run with the support of volunteers. On top of that these events function as a tourist attraction and a recent study by Cabras et al. (2020) demonstrated that nonlocal visitors are the largest contributors to the local economy not just at the actual festival side but due to accommodation and dine out expenditure. Hence, these festivals are a great asset for most communities. However, festivals are only on for a very limited time (Suomi et al., 2020) in a highly competitive environment (Mossberg & Getz, 2006); they must attract enough sponsors, volunteers, and visitors (Caves, 2000; Getz & Andersson, 2010). In such a risky business environment with growing competition of festivals appearing in every city, it is crucial to get a better understanding around consumer motives and how to entice them to revisit.

*Intrinsic Motivational Variable: Variety Seeking and its Impact on Patronage and Spending*

Variety seeking (VS hereafter) can be defined as the consumers' need for excitement, uniqueness, newness, and curiosity that explain product switching (Baltas et al., 2017; Roehm & Roehm Jr., 2010) and brand switching (Koschmann & Sheth, 2018; Sang et al., 2018). The concept of VS was firstly introduced to the marketing literature in 1992 (Van Trijp & Steenkamp, 1992). VS is mostly investigated within the marketing literature in relation to branding and associated product choices such as multichannel shopping behavior (Kwon & Jain, 2009) and its derived satisfaction (Olsen et al., 2015; Sang et al., 2018). Other studies also investigate VS and its effect on factors such as sleepiness (Huang & Dong, 2019), romantic relationships (Huang & Dong, 2019), and control (Yoon & Kim, 2018).

Wayne and Ridgway (1984) and Kahn (1995) emphasized the importance of VS in view of explaining purchase behaviors, distinguishing between *directed VS* and *derived VS*. Directed VS defines consumers' desire for new and novel products driven by the need to pursue new and unfamiliar stimuli (Mukherjee et al., 2017), such as excitement (Rubio et al., 2019), uniqueness (Gullo

et al., 2019; Ratner & Kahn, 2002), and risk taking (Huang & Dong, 2019). Derived VS defines product switching as a result of decision strategy (e.g., based on price), situational variables (promotion), normative variables (group pressure), dissatisfaction, and problem solving (Hoyer & Ridgway, 1984; Olsen et al., 2015; Wayne & Ridgway, 1984). This study will be focusing on directed VS as it is relevant for examining consumers' internal drive to try something new in the beer festival context.

Majority of the existing literature argues that the pursue for uniqueness and newness (i.e., directed VS) may lead consumers to nonloyal behavior (Ashley et al., 2011; Chen et al., 2016). However, other studies have found that consumers frequently switch from one brand to the next, but they are loyal to the same product category, meaning consumers displaying loyalty to a product category while executing variety seeking behavior within that product category (Gyte & Phelps, 1989). In the same notion Arifine et al. (2019) had a close look at the level of VS and its link to loyalty and found that customers were loyal to more than one brand within the same product category, which is called multibrand loyalty. This phenomenon of multibrand loyalty has also been identified within the tourism industry where this is known as experiential loyalty, meaning tourist are loyal to more than one style of holiday such as beach, outdoor, or luxury trips (McKercher et al., 2012).

Such multibrand loyalty and experiential loyalty could also apply to visitors of craft beer festivals. These types of events contain multiple brands from specific product categories. Beer consumers may be motivated by their variety-seeking need to attend to such events for a specific type of experience in this case around craft beer tasting. Therefore, it is hypothesized that in our study:

**H1:** VS has a positive impact on Patronage.

The link between VS and spending in festival events has attracted limited research with inconsistent findings. For example, while Sharma et al. (2010, 2014) found no significant relationship between VS and spending on shopping trips, Jin et al. (2015) and Taylor et al. (2018) did find a link between VS and spending. According to Jin et al. (2015), consumers born between 1946 and

1964 (baby boomers) tend to seek a wider variety of menu options and to spend larger amounts of money when dining out compared to consumers in other age bands (e.g., Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2015). Due to this lack of research and the inconsistent results in the existing literature, this study will aim to get a better understanding of the impact an intrinsic motive like VS has on consumers' behavior—specifically; we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H2:** VS has a positive impact on Spending.

*Extrinsic Motivational Variable:  
Social Consumption and its Impact  
on Patronage and Spending*

Social connection between people can influence consumers' choice. In marketing, this notion of social connection is integral to the reference group theory: when individuals get together to form social connection with family and friends, they feel the pressure to impress other group members with their choices for goods (Cocanougher & Bruce, 1971), displaying an urge to compare themselves to others in the same group (Steinhoff & Palmatier, 2016). Gilbert et al. (1995) indicated that this urge to conduct social comparisons can happen in a conscious but also unconscious manner; moreover, comparisons can go either direction, favorable or unfavorable, within the same group. Therefore, reference group effects and social comparisons have an impact on consumers' consumption and behavior according to the above research. Past studies have also shown that in social settings consumers are more likely to be influenced by price-quality attributes due to the social connection with others (Jeong et al., 2019; Wakefield & Inman, 2003), because they want to create a good impression (Bearden & Etzel, 1982) and this behavior is explained by the need for belonging (Leipämaa-Leskinen et al., 2012). Hence, depending on the individuals needs to impress others and the need to compare oneself spending to others, this might lead to lower price sensitivity in individuals. Thus, this study developed the following hypothesis:

**H3:** Social Consumption has a positive impact on Spending.

The link between social consumption and patronage is underresearched when it comes to the event literature. However, it has been briefly covered in the overall tourism literature. A study by Kim et al. (2017) has shown how online communities can have a positive impact on elderly individuals' loyalty towards online travel agencies. Also, a study by Temerak (2019) assessed that if individuals feel they fit into a scene like a resort, this feeling of fit will have a positive effect on their patronage, because there is a positive experience in which they can identify with the others and enjoy the experience even more. This positive feeling consequently leads to an increased likelihood that the individual will return to the resort. Stylos and Bello (2019) have also demonstrated how the social activity of traveling in groups has a positive impact on patronage of tourist destinations.

To get a clearer understanding to what extent social consumption might impact event patronage and due to the above studies proposing a positive relationship, we hypothesize that:

**H4:** Social Consumption has a positive impact on Patronage.

*The Mediation Effect of Cognitive Engagement on the Relationship Between Motivational Factors (VS and Social Consumption) and Behavioral Factors (Patronage and Spending)*

Cognitive engagement means to what extent an individual is seeking product item-related information (Eigenraam et al., 2018; Jahn et al., 2018). If individuals are less cognitively engaged they might reflect less on their experiences reduced reflection resulting in their future experience becoming a short-term memory that might generate inaccurate recollections (Bingham et al., 2007). In marketing, high levels of cognitive engagement led to consumers' intensified evaluated response to a product or service (Higgins & Scholer, 2009; Spielmann & Mantonakis, 2018) and can have a favorable outcome for an event (Kharouf et al., 2020) or brand (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). A previous study by Walker et al. (2006) supported the above argument and demonstrated a significant relationship between motivational factors and cognitive behavior but did not include the behavioral factors as we intend to include in this study. Other studies by Pilottie et al. (2017) and Fredricks et

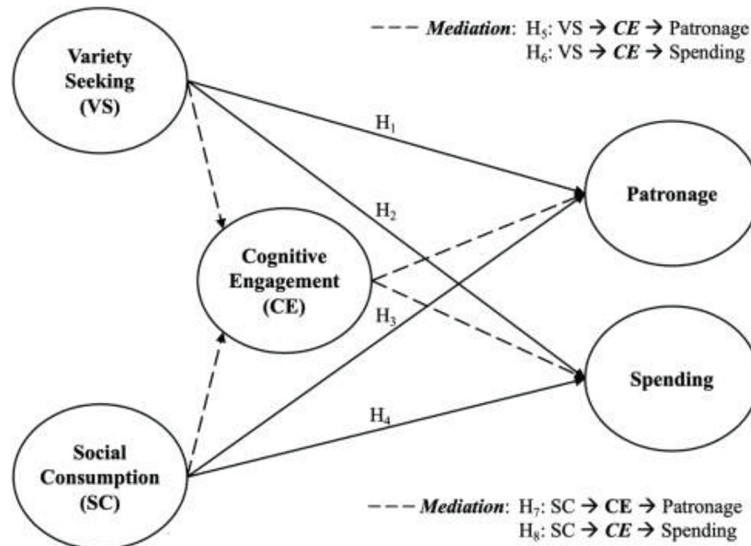


Figure 1. The theoretical framework.

al. (2004) focused more on the cognitive engagement and behavioral outcome. Only very few studies have looked into the relationship between VS, cognitive engagement, and subsequent behavior.

Individuals tend to seek variety for the purpose of satisfying their stimuli for newness and uniqueness, pursuing a cognitive stimulus at the same time (Chowdhury et al., 2009). Similarly, consumers exposed to more choice than a single option only tend to sharpen and refine their cognitive engagement with a given product. Positive cognitive engagement provides consumers with an incentive to shop more, leading to consumers patronage (Spence et al., 2014; Tafarodi et al., 2002). Therefore, to assess the mediation effects of cognitive engagement between VS, consumers patronage, and spending when attending a beer festival; we formulate the following hypotheses:

**H5:** Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the impact from VS to Patronage.

**H6:** Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the impact from VS to Spending.

Social consumption also provides an incentive for exchanges with peers with regard to consuming a given product or engaging with a specific brand. Consumers who are highly engaged with given products are more likely to share this experience

with peers who are close to them, such as family or friends (Gambetti & Graffigna, 2010); and highly engaged consumers are usually more committed towards a specific product and its marketing (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2014).

Cognitively engaged consumers pay low attention to other stimuli and information: being highly engaged in a given activity or initiative makes processing other information very hard for individuals (Lee & Faber, 2007). Likewise, cognitive engagement seems to have a positive mediating effect between social consumption and consumers spending behavior (Ahn & Back, 2018). Therefore, we formulate the following two hypotheses:

**H7:** Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the impact from Social Consumption to Patronage.

**H8:** Cognitive Engagement positively mediates the impact from Social Consumption to Spending.

The above hypotheses are depicted in the theoretical framework in the first figure (Fig. 1).

## Methodology

### Sample and Data Collection

For the present study, the research population includes consumers who are involved in craft beer

consumption. The sample was selected at the 9th Knavesmire Beer Festival (KBF) at York in Northern England in September 2017. The festival is a 4-day event entirely run by volunteers, mostly members of the local CAMRA branch. It is arguably one of the largest of its kind in the UK, and showcases a wide range of variety of craft beers. There were approximately 500 different craft beers and 100 different ciders offered during this festival.

Data were collected by means of a convenience sample intercept survey conducted by structured interviews by a team led by the first and second authors at the festival's premises during its full 4 days. Participants were invited by random interception to take part in the survey with a printed questionnaire containing the measurement item statements and some demographic questions. Research ethics approval for the data collection was granted to the first author prior to the data collection. Participants were debriefed about the research project and were free to withdraw from the interview without giving reasons as specified in the research ethics approval. Each interview took approximately 10 min. No incentive was provided. In total, 1,123 responses were collected. Of these, 60 were excluded due to incompleteness, leaving 1,063 usable responses, which accounts for approximately 10% of about 10,380 visitors recorded at the festival.

### Measures

The measurements of the research constructs were based on adapting established scales in the literature. Variety seeking was measured by adapting Van Trijp and Steenkamp's (1992) eight-item VARSEEK scale as its usability is evidenced in previous studies in similar contexts such as food and beverage consumption (Mak et al., 2017; Marshall & Bell, 2004) and wine choices (Olsen et al., 2015). For the present study, the word "food" in VARSEEK was replaced with "drink" and "craft beer." The "Conscious Attention" subscale of Vivek et al.'s (2014) Customer Engagement scale was adapted for measuring Cognitive Engagement in the present study. Vivek et al. (2014) define Conscious Attention as the "degree of interest the person has or wishes to have in interacting with the focus of their engagement" (p. 407). This is consistent with our focus on consumers' cognitive

engagement. The "Conscious Attention" subscale consists of seven items. The first four items are behavioral manifestations and the last three items are reflections of cognitive manifestations. Hence, to measure our Cognitive Engagement, we have adapted the last three items by adding the words "craft beer" ("Anything related to craft beer grabs my attention," "I like to learn more about craft beer," and "I pay a lot of attention to anything about craft beer").

To measure Social Consumption, we have adapted the three-tier subscale of "Social Connection" from Vivek et al.'s (2014) Customer Engagement scale by adding the word "craft beer" in the items. Vivek et al. (2014) defined social connection as "enhancement of the interaction based on the inclusion of others with the focus of engagement, indicating mutual or reciprocal action in the presence of others" (p. 407). This is consistent with our concept of social consumption in the context of the present study. All these scales were rated by the 5-point Likert-type scaling (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Patronage was measured by the participant's self-reported total number of visits to the CAMRA festival, which was coded in three bands (1 = 1 visit, 2 = 2–3 visits, 3 = 4 and more visits). Spending was measured by the participant's self-reported volume of spending in sterling pounds at the current festival in eight bands (<10, 10–15, 15.01–20, 20.01–25, 25.01–30, 30.01–40, 40.01–50, >50.01). Both were treated as categorical measures for the analysis.

## Analysis and Findings

### Sample Demographics

The sample ( $N = 1,063$ ) comprised of mainly UK citizens (89.3%). Approximately 62% respondents were male, 30% were female, and 8% were unspecified. Among the respondents 44.4% were attending the KBF for the first time while the rest 55.6% were returning visitors. Details of the sample demographics are displayed in Table 1.

### Evaluation of Measures

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén,

Table 1  
Sample Demographics

	Frequency (%)
<b>Age</b>	
NA	21 (2.0%)
18–25	198 (18.6%)
26–35	387 (36.4%)
36–45	202 (19.0%)
46–55	131 (12.3%)
56–65	84 (7.9%)
>65	40 (3.8%)
Total	1,063 (100%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	317 (30%)
Male	657 (62%)
Unspecified	89 (8%)
Total	1,063 (100%)
<b>Patronage</b>	
First time	472 (44.4%)
2–3 visits	222 (20.9%)
4 or more visits	369 (34.7%)
Total	1,063 (100%)

1998–2018) with the sample data ( $N = 1063$ ) to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales for the constructs except the categorical measures of Patronage and Spending. All the scales were specified in a measurement model in the CFA and was estimated by the maximum likelihood (ML) estimator with covariance matrices. The model fit was judged by consideration of multiple indices and cut-off values recommended in the literature: Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)  $\leq 0.06$ , the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI)  $\geq 0.95$ , comparative fit index (CFI)  $\geq 0.95$ , and

standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)  $\leq 0.08$  (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

An initial assessment revealed unsatisfactory model fit due to poor item performance from the first, second, fourth, and seventh (a reverse-worded item) items of the Variety Seeking (VARSEEK) scale. After inspecting both CFA parameter results and the semantic meanings of the items, it was considered appropriate to remove these poor items and retain the third, fifth, sixth, and eighth items, which accurately capture the conceptual domain of Variety Seeking. The first item of social consumption also appeared to be a source of the poor model fit. Hence, this item was removed. The results from assessment of the respecified measures for the constructs satisfied the model-fit criteria despite the significant chi-square value:  $\chi^2(24) = 115.477, p = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.060$  (90% CI 0.049, 0.071), CFI = 0.986, TLI = 0.978, SRMR = 0.027.

The standardized factor loadings and other parameter estimates of the scales are displayed in Table 2. It is noticeable that the standardized factor loadings are all significant and the magnitude values are all above 0.796. Items' residuals are all consistently low (less than 0.366). The  $R^2$  values exhibit adequate account for each item (above 0.634). The CR (composite reliability) and AVE (average variance extracted) demonstrate satisfactory values (0.891–0.903 for CR and 0.700–0.812 for AVE). All these results demonstrate the measures' adequate convergent validity and reliability.

Furthermore, discriminant validity of the scales was assessed following Fornell and Larcker's

Table 2  
Factor Loadings and Parameter Estimates of the Measurement Scales

Constructs	Scale Items (1 = <i>Strongly Disagree</i> , 5 = <i>Strongly Agree</i> )	Factor Loadings	Residual Variance	$R^2$
<b>Variety seeking</b> (CR: 0.903, AVE: 0.700)				
VS3	I think it is fun to try out craft beers one is not familiar with.	0.796	0.366	0.634
VS5	I like to drink unusual craft beer.	0.833	0.306	0.694
VS6	Craft beers on the menu that I am unfamiliar with make me curious.	0.872	0.240	0.760
VS8	I am curious about craft beer products I am not familiar with.	0.845	0.286	0.714
<b>Cognitive engagement</b> (CR: 0.891, AVE: 0.731)				
CA1	Anything related to craft beer grabs my attention.	0.844	0.287	0.713
CA2	I like to learn more about craft beer.	0.827	0.316	0.684
CA3	I pay a lot of attention to anything about craft beer.	0.892	0.204	0.796
<b>Social consumption</b> (CR: 0.896, AVE: 0.812)				
SC2	I enjoy craft beer more when I am with others.	0.939	0.118	0.882
SC3	Craft beer is more fun when other people around me drink it too.	0.861	0.258	0.742

Table 3  
Discriminant Validity of the Scales

	Variety Seeking	Cognitive Engagement	Social Consumption
Variety seeking	0.700 ( <b>0.837</b> )		
Cognitive engagement	0.551	0.721 ( <b>0.855</b> )	
Social consumption	0.488	0.533	0.812 ( <b>0.901</b> )

Note. Correlations are below the diagonal, and AVE estimates and square roots (in bold parentheses) are presented on the diagonal.

(1981) method that requires the square root of the AVE for each of the constructs to exceed the corresponding correlations between the corresponding constructs. As Table 3 exhibits, the square roots of the AVE values for the constructs exceed the corresponding constructs' correlations. Hence, there is evidence of discriminant validity between the constructs. Overall, the results from the CFA of the respecified scales demonstrate satisfactory reliability and validity of the measures for the constructs. Hence, these measures were used for testing the theoretical framework.

Testing the Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework was tested by using the structural equation modeling method using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2018) with the sample data ( $N = 1063$ ). Because the dependent variables “Patronage” and “Spending” are categorical latent variables, the model was estimated by the weighted least squares method (estimator = WLSMV in Mplus). The model was first assessed with its full paths without mediation. The model fit indices were satisfactory according to the aforementioned criteria despite the significant chi-square

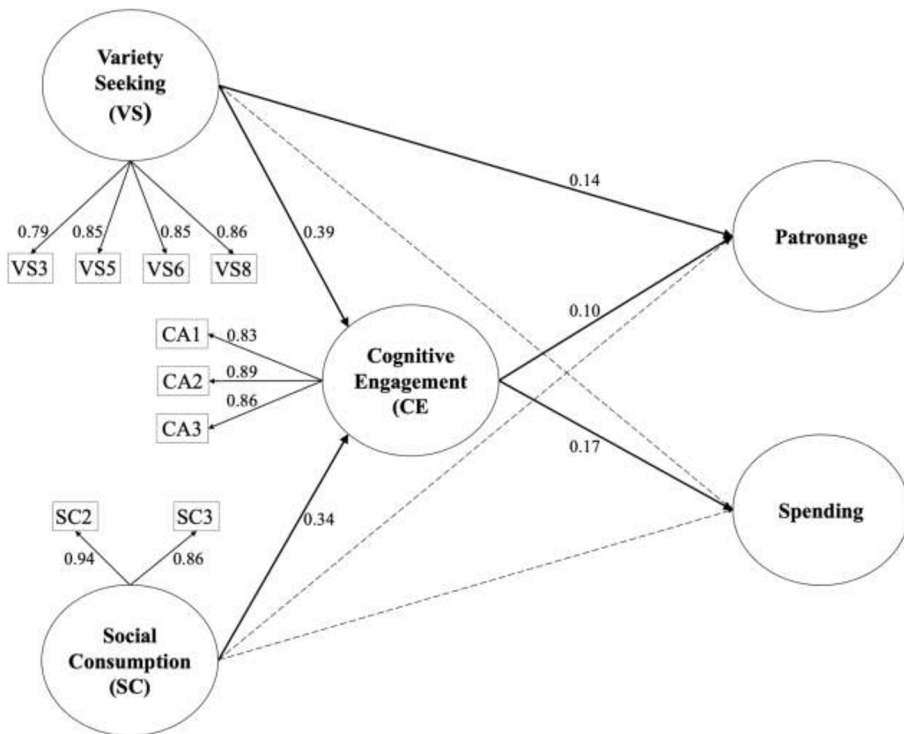


Figure 2. The structural model results.



Table 4  
Hypothesis Test Results

Hypotheses	Results
H1	Variety Seeking has a positive impact on Patronage. Supported
H2	Variety Seeking has a positive impact on Spending. Rejected
H3	Social Consumption has a positive impact on Patronage. Rejected
H4	Social Consumption has a positive impact on Spending. Rejected
H5	Cognitive Engagement mediates the impact from Variety Seeking on Patronage. Supported (full mediation)
H6	Cognitive Engagement mediates the impact from Variety Seeking on Spending. Supported (full mediation)
H7	Cognitive Engagement mediates the impact from Social Consumption on Patronage. Supported (full mediation)
H8	Cognitive Engagement mediates the impact from Social Consumption on Spending. Supported (full mediation)

value:  $\chi^2(37) = 103.958$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , RMSEA = 0.041 (90% CI 0.032, 0.051), CFI = 0.959, TLI = 0.959, and SRMR = 0.020. However, three paths revealed nonsignificant coefficients: Social Consumption  $\rightarrow$  Patronage ( $-0.035$ ,  $p = 0.451$ ), Variety Seeking  $\rightarrow$  Spending ( $-0.058$ ,  $p = 0.451$ ), and Social Consumption  $\rightarrow$  Spending ( $-0.012$ ,  $p = 0.776$ ). The model was reassessed by fixing these nonsignificant paths (shown in dotted lines in Fig. 2). The results demonstrated improved model fit:  $\chi^2(37) = 78.681$ ,  $p = 0.0003$ , RMSEA = 0.030 (90% CI 0.020, 0.040), CFI = 0.976, TLI = 0.968, SRMR = 0.021. Figure 2 displays the standardized estimates including the measurement factor loadings and path coefficients (the dotted lines indicate nonsignificant paths).

To test for the mediation of Cognitive Engagement, the bootstrap method (Preacher & Hays, 2008; Zhao et al., 2010) was employed via Mplus 8.4 using 10,000 bootstrapping resamples with bias-correct 95% confidence intervals. A mediation effect is confirmed when a confidence interval (CI) excludes zero for the indirect effect. Our results show that the CI values exclude zero for all the indirect effect paths, hence demonstrating significant mediation effects of Cognitive Engagement. Specifically, Cognitive Engagement partially mediates [95% CI (0.003, 0.075)] Variety Seeking's effect on Patronage (H5) given that there is a direct effect from Variety Seeking on Patronage.

An interesting result is that Cognitive Engagement fully mediates [95% CI (0.038, 0.100)] Variety Seeking's effect on Spending (H6) despite the nonsignificant path from Variety Seeking to Spending. In other words, although there is no direct effect from Variety Seeking to Spending, an indirect effect is emerged from Variety Seeking to Spending via Cognitive Engagement. Similarly, despite there is

no direct effect from Social Consumption to Patronage, Cognitive Engagement fully mediates [95% CI (0.002, 0.067)] the effect from Social Consumption to Patronage (H7). In other words, although there is no direct effect from Social Consumption to Patronage, an indirect effect is emerged from Social Consumption to Patronage via Cognitive Engagement. In the same fashion, Social Consumption's effect on Spending is fully mediated by Cognitive Engagement [95% CI (0.033, 0.087)] (H8) as there is no significant direct effect of Social Consumption on Spending. This suggests that despite there is no direct effect from Social Consumption to Spending, an indirect effect from Social Consumption to Spending is emerged via Cognitive Engagement. The test results of the theoretical framework are summarized in Table 4. Demographics (gender and CAMAR membership) were included in the analysis as covariates. The results show that they have no significant effect on either patronage or spending. For parsimony, detailed results are not presented.

## Discussion and Implications

The theoretical contribution of this research is fourfold. First, considerable research attention has been given to the various individual and motivational variables that can influence individuals' visits to beer-related events (e.g., Dunn & Wickamm, 2014; Francioni-Kraftchick et al., 2014). Cognitive engagement, a psychological state of individuals (Walker et al., 2006), although bears substantial impact on individuals' behavior (Fredricks et al., 2004; Pilotti et al., 2017), has attracted little research attention in marketing and individual patronage to events until this research. The findings of this research unveil that cognitive engagement

determines how individuals behaviorally respond to and financially engage with beer festivals. In addition to providing new insights into individuals' patronage to festival events in general, the investigation presented in this research also opens a new avenue for future research.

Second, by considering the effect of the prominent intrinsic (VS) and extrinsic (social consumption) motivational goals and cognitive characteristics, findings of our investigation identify individuals' cognitive engagement as an important mediator of the effects related to social consumption and VS. This conceptualization, incorporating both motivational and behavioral models, represents an original contribution to the literature concerned individuals' behavior at festival events. Specifically, the extant behavior-oriented models focus on the important influence of individual differences in demographics, affection, and characteristics (Franklyn & Badrie, 2015; Wood & Kinnunen, 2020) on festival event patronage. Motivation-oriented models emphasize and reveal the effect of motivational goals of individuals (Francioni-Kraftchick et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drivers, such as variety, socialization, and escape, have been identified (e.g., Kim et al., 2010). However, these sources of influence have been previously investigated separately in literature, leaving a knowledge vacuum concerning the underlying mechanisms defining the relationship between motivational goals, VS, and social consumption, respectively, and behavior. By integrating two sources of influence such as motivational goals and cognitive characteristics, the cognitive engagement mediational model we elaborated in this research proves useful and valuable with regard to explaining variations in individuals' levels of patronage within festival events.

The third contribution is attributed to the real-time patronage data this research captured. Although most previous studies mainly gathered behavioral intention data (e.g., Lee et al., 2017) or obtained data adopting scenario-based approach (e.g., Li et al., 2018), this investigation collected live patronage data in the field, at a festival event to be specific. In addition, differing to most existing studies this research assessed both behavioral patronage to festival events and individuals' actual spending. The findings of this investigation bring substantial contribution to the

understanding of individuals' actual behavior related to beer festival and similar events, which are characterized by high ecological validity.

Fourth, the findings of this research also enrich motivation literature through providing empirical evidence of direct (VS) and indirect effect (VS and social consumption) on festival patronage. Extant literature has argued that VS has negative impact on individuals' loyalty (e.g., Ashley et al., 2011) since variety seekers' intrinsic motivation is characterized by the need of tasting uniqueness and experiencing newness. However, this research suggests a significant and positive impact of VS on event patronage. Diverging for existing findings, the finding of this research highlights the effect of variety seeking is context specific.

Results gathered from this research offer a few actionable practical implications. Practitioners need to be mindful of visitors' motivational goals and associated direct and indirect impacts on patronage to festival events. Specifically, festival events created to serve target visitors' intrinsic goals, such as variety seeking specifically, would increase footfalls (but not spending). Nevertheless, efforts invested in catering visitors' extrinsic goals, such as social consumption, would not improve footfalls or spending directly. Therefore, from a communication perspective, to achieve desirable marketing outcomes, promotional messages could be designed to project variety of offerings within festival events and social benefits of attending, and, at the same time, to encourage potential visitors' cognitive engagement with product offerings. Although event markers often focus on the former two promotional messages, the latter element of communication is critically important, if not more important, because the more visitors cognitively engage with the product offerings, the more likely they would visit the event and spend on the products. In addition, variety and social appeals would only result in financial gains to the event organizer and the participating businesses when visitors are cognitively engaging with the product offerings. As our findings provide valuable insights in relation to cognitive engagement in terms of willingness to visit and engage with beer festivals, they contribute to understand the mechanisms behind consumers' decisions to visit and engage with such events. Acquiring more knowledge and control about these mechanisms

represent a crucial aspect not only in relation to the craft beer sector, but most importantly for the tourism and hospitality industry in general.

### Limitations

Although our study provides fresh empirical evidence and an original contribution to the field of marketing, we are also aware that our analysis presents two main limitations.

First, cognitive engagement, the central concept in this research, refers to consumers' regulating attention and effort, relating new information to existing knowledge, and actively monitoring comprehension (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). This research does not differentiate types of cognitive engagement, for instance active and superficial cognitive engagement, which were identified and tested in previous research (e.g., Meece et al., 1988). Active cognitive engagement means cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies indicative of self-regulated process, whereas superficial cognitive engagement stands for cognitive strategies adopted with minimal effort expenditure. These two distinct types of cognitive engagement differ primarily in terms of willingness of devotion and utilization of cognitive capacity. Research has shown that individuals adopt different cognitive strategies depending on their needs, competencies, and the demands of the situation (Lemaire, 2010). The salience of different cognitive strategies can, in turn, influence individuals' behavior and financial commitment (Agarwal & Mazumder, 2013).

Second, the cognitive engagement mediational model tested in this research solely considered the effects of two prominent motivational drivers, namely VS and social consumption. Individuals attending festival events are driven by various motivational intrinsic and extrinsic goals, such as experience, leisure, and escape (Kim et al., 2010).

Aside these two limitations, data of this research were collected from one event based on a specific product, namely craft beer. This occurrence affects the generalizability of our findings.

### Conclusion

This research used structural equation modeling to test the validity of a cognitive engagement

mediational model to explore and conceptualize the influence of distinct motivational goals such as VS and social consumption on individuals' behavioral and financial patronage at beer festivals. We identified behavioral patronage by using individuals' number of visits, whereas financial patronage was captured by using individuals' actual spending occurred during the Knavesmire Beer Festival at York. The results of our analysis suggest that cognitive engagement has substantial influence on both behavioral patronage and spending behavior, and that the relative strength of cognitive engagement is associated with different individuals' motivational drives, namely VS and social consumption goals.

The analysis also confirmed the mediating role of cognitive engagement. Specifically, cognitive engagement fully mediated the effect of VS on spending behavior but exerted partial mediation on the relationship between VS and behavioral patronage examined at the festival event considered in this study. In contrast, the influence of social consumption on both spending behavior and behavioral patronage was fully mediated by cognitive engagement.

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