

An Essay on the Impact of Cultural Festivals on Territorial Development: A Comparative Study of the Essaouira Gnaoua Festival and the Tan-Tan Moussem

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Abstract:

This paper analyzes the multidimensional impact of cultural festivals on territorial development, using a quantitative comparative analysis of Essaouira Festival and Tantan Moussem in Morocco. Based on the hypothetico-deductive approach, the survey of 1,338 stratified samples of local actors took place. Statistical analysis with SPSS was used and relationships were tested using Student's t-tests, ANOVA and linear regressions with $p < 0.05$ significance level. The findings show a very high degree of significance yet asymmetry of territorial externalities. The Essaouira Festival acts as a globalized economic and technological catalyst, maximizing international tourism through territorial marketing. Conversely, the Tantan Moussem functions as a sociocultural and political anchor, distinguishing itself through heritage promotion, social cohesion, and perceived environmental sustainability. At the theoretical level, this research validates classical models such as growth pole and social capital theories within a North African context. At the managerial level, it highlights the need for tailored strategies that reconcile international reach, community engagement, and ecological sustainability. While acknowledging certain limitations, such as the reliance on perception based data and a cross sectional methodology, future research should incorporate objective macroeconomic indicators and longitudinal approaches to fully assess the long-term territorial footprint of cultural events.

Keywords : Territorial development; cultural festivals; intangible heritage; territorial attractiveness; cultural tourism; Morocco; Essaouira; Tan-Tan.

Classification JEL : O11, R1, Z11, R5

Paper type : Empirical Research

Introduction

In the context of the growing globalisation process and increased interspatial competition, sustainable and balanced development of territories is currently considered one of the most important objectives for public policy making and research. In the last few decades, the concept of regional development has radically changed from focusing exclusively on quantitatively measured economic growth to strategically using identity based intangible resources. Among the latter, cultural economics occupies a dominant position. Cultural activities, including festivals, have ceased to be perceived solely as leisure related practices; rather, they have been theorised as complex territorial tools and useful means of public policy making that have the potential to create multidimensional externalities, including economic, social, cultural, environmental, political, and technological ones.

It is well known from academic literature that such events have the potential to develop local ecosystems through the mechanism of multipliers, foster social capital formation, conserve intangible heritage, and increase regional attractiveness by means of place branding. Cultural events present an important resource for cities suffering socio spatial marginality and scarcity of material assets.

The dynamics of cultural asset valorization hold considerable strategic significance for developing nations such as Morocco that aim to use the strong regional identities that they possess. To adapt to the pressures of globalization, the public policies in Morocco have relied heavily on festivalization as a strategy that would help in the process of decentralization and territorial cohesion.

There remains a vital lacuna in the current literature regarding the interplay between such territorial contingencies. Although the process of attracting events has been well documented in the case of Western cities or studied through the framework of an individual single case study, the field lacks any meaningful multidimensional comparative study. The current literature does not offer any comparative analysis that can explain the different way in which the spillovers occur asymmetrically between the different types of events in an emerging nation. The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the impact of two famous events in Morocco the Essaouira Gnaoua Festival and the Tantan Moussem on the development of the respective territories where they take place. Despite their similar prestige by being listed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, the events contrast in terms of their morphology. The Essaouira Gnaoua Festival represents a hybrid, highly internationalized model aimed at maximizing global tourism flows and place-marketing effects. Conversely, the Tantan Moussem operates as a fully-fledged heritage event, deeply rooted in the preservation of a complex socio-cultural, nomadic, and tribal legacy. This drastic structural difference provides an ideal experimental setting to answer the following central research question: To what extent do the cultural festivals of Tantan and Essaouira contribute to the development of their host territories, and how do these contributions vary across local contexts?

Therefore, a comparative analysis is conducted, showing the territorial effects of both festivals and the specific mechanisms, success factors, and logics of development that each model entails.

The purpose of this paper is to make a three fold contribution to science. Firstly, theoretically we add to the body of knowledge on Event Studies and cultural economics by offering an asymmetric perspective to conduct comparative regional analysis. Secondly, we bring to the table unique comparative datasets on the Moroccan event landscape a region that still stays under explored by leading international journals. Thirdly, we give public policy makers and cultural managers a practical tool to design their event governance policies taking into account their territories' vulnerabilities and endogenous capacities.

Structure of the article is divided into four parts. Firstly, we will introduce the theoretical framework that integrates the approaches used in cultural economics and territorial engineering in order to develop research hypotheses. Secondly, we will describe the methodology that was used in our two case studies. Thirdly, we will discuss the results of our cross analysis that reveal the divergences found and the interpretations of these results in the context of current literature.

2.Literature review

2.1. Territorial development: A multidimensional objective of contemporary development.

Development is one of the main objectives of public policies and territorial dynamics and is a profound mutation in terms of theoretical and paradigmatic nature. In the past, and with the influence of W.W. Rostow's (1960) pioneering modernization theories, this concept was taken for granted and directly linked with economic growth. It was a quantitative phenomenon, a phenomenon of capital accumulation and industrialization; mechanical improvement of the ways of living; Rostow said, "it is possible to classify all societies, from an economic point of view, into one of five stages of growth. However, this approach has been shown to be insufficient due to the fact that sociospatial inequalities remain. The theoretical basis of this challenge is the work of François Perroux (1964), who formally distinguished between growth and development and defined development as "the combination of mental and social changes within a population that enable it to grow its overall real product cumulatively and sustainably. Building on this deconstruction, Amartya Sen's (1999) vision posited a humanistic vision of progress which is measured in terms of "capabilities", based on the idea that "development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that individuals enjoy". At the same time, the interspatial competition intensified, which led to the emergence of territorial development. This dynamic is based on collective agency, which can be defined as follows: "The territory is no longer a passive geographical receptacle but a social construction [...] which is the result of the specification of resources by the local actors" (Bernard Pecqueur, 2005). In this theory, the cultural dimension is on the verge of becoming a strategic resource. The cultural goods and services are of a dual nature, they are worth both economically and culturally and cannot be reduced to either of these (David Throsby, 2001), thus, they are essential for providing competitive differentiation.

Territorial development is not limited to economic growth but is, rather, a multidimensional process that results from mobilizing specific resources from local areas (Torre, Wallet, 2020). For this dynamic to be operationalized, territories need instruments which can, at the same time, address challenges related to economic, social and identity issues (Pecqueur, Talandier, 2022). It is in this context of strategic valorisation of the intangible heritage that the cultural events become complete (Richards, 2022). This makes it important to examine the impact of the events and understand how they can break out of their first recreational dimension to become real powers of public action and social cohesion (Négrier and dajkoune, 2020), which brings us to our second reflection: cultural festivals as levers of territorial development.

2.2. Cultural Festivals as levers of territorial development

2.2.1. The multidimensional contributions of festivals to territorial development

Today, cultural festivals play a central role in territorial development projects undertaken by public and institutional actors, and their significance is relevant in various ways. They are more than just recreational events, they are complex territorial mechanisms, which can generate multidimensional externalities. This conceptual change coincides with a rejuvenation of the theories of development that give significant importance to the cultural economy and intangible resources. As Pecqueur (2005) emphasizes, today's territories do not distinguish themselves

through a physical or industrial legacy, but above all through their cultural heritage, symbolic charm, and innovation potential. In this sense, the festival events actively engage in this logic of differentiation and make the specificity of local cultures a true instrument of integrated development.

Economic contributions of festivals.

The economic dimension has been one of the most studied effects in the literature concerning cultural festivals. Genuine economic catalysts could be seen as festivals, as demonstrated by the work of Getz (2010), which indicates that festivals have the potential to stimulate local activities through increased spending by visitors, temporary jobs created and tourism related services developed in the fields of tourism, catering, transport and handicrafts.

Festivals, therefore, create direct, indirect, and induced economic spillovers.(Négrier, Djakouane, 2022) confirm that this revitalization has become more complex, now encompassing new forms of cultural entrepreneurship and experiential tourism. In this logic, there is a new way of considering festivals as tools for economic diversification of territories and improvement of their attractiveness inside the national and international tourism system(Richards,2022).

This could be explained by the growth pole theory of Perroux (1955). This perspective holds that certain economic or cultural activities have positive externalities that help to stimulate other sectors, thereby having spillover effects on their territorial environment. In particular, the theories of the New Economic Geography (Krugman, 1991) also support this analysis, as cultural activities are an important factor behind the spatial clustering of economic activities and the development of new forms of territorial attractiveness(campigotto ,2020). Then festivals become a tool of place marketing and can be used to reinforce the territory's presence and competitiveness in a globalizing world.

Social contributions of festivals:

Beyond their economic impacts, festivals contribute to the social cohesion and the territorial social capital. Cultural activities are opportunities to meet, interact, and participate collectively. As the research of Putnam (2000) on Social capital revealed, social capital is developed through collective activities, which help build social bonds, mutual trust, and community involvement. In this sense, festivals are involved in strengthening social relationships within the local community through interculturalism, civic engagement and social integration.

The festivals are also a factor in developing a sense of belonging to the territory. They strengthen population territory ties by mobilizing the local traditions, cultural practices, and the symbols of locality identity. In this perspective, social development approaches consider festivals as instruments for social inclusion that can valorize local communities, decrease some of the territorial exclusion and enhance community dynamics.

However, recent critical research in the sociology of events (Jepson & Clarke, 2022) highlights that this consensual, even romantic, vision tends to obscure the power asymmetries characteristic in “festivalization”. The production of social capital is not assured, and without improper management, the inclusion of local communities must be continue artificial or unable to avoid territorial rejection (Richards,G. Jarman, D 2021).

Therefore, the actualization of positive social externalities depends on various factors. As was recently shown in an analysis devoted to the governance of participatory sevents (Ziakas, 2013), the actual social effect of a festival can depend on its institutional foundation. It is vital to introduce participatory governance models to achieve the goal of minimizing territorial exclusion and improving community dynamics.

Cultural and heritage contributions:

Cultural festivals are also key to the protection, transmission, and valorization of a territory's intangible heritage. Different concepts of contemporary cultural economics consider culture as a strategic resource for territorial development that can generate economic, symbolic and identity value at the same time (Throsby, 2001).

In this conceptual framework, festivals are involved in protecting local traditions, art practices, know how and spatial cultural expressions. They also play a role in passing on cultural heritage to the next generation and preventing cultural homogenisation as a result of globalisation.

Florida (2002) demonstrates that cultural and creative activity complements the attractiveness of territories by creating territories that are good places to be innovative, creative, and differentiated. Then festivals become tools with which to construct territorial images and the symbolic valorisation of local spaces.

Thus, festivals can serve as tools for building a territorial image and making its spaces symbolically valuable. As stated by Pecqueur (2005), whose assumptions have been further developed by recent studies on territorial innovation (Torre & Wallet, 2020), current territories are no longer distinguished only by their tangible or productive endowment but rather by their cultural legacy and innovative ability. Therefore, festivals are one of the means of achieving this differentiation through making use of cultural specificity in order to create drivers of development (H1).

Environmental contributions of festivals:

Since Donald Getz's pioneering research on Event Studies, the environmental aspect has increasingly become part of the study of cultural events in the framework of sustainable development. Festivals are "true social catalysts," as researchers Judith Mair and Jennifer Laing write: They can really help to raise ecological awareness in a population, to promote the adoption of responsible practices, and to boost the value of the natural heritage of a host territory.

But there are also important analyses, like those by Andrea Collins and her team on the ecological consequences of transitory events. This group of researchers points out the negative external effects of festivals due to the spatiotemporal aggregation of tourist flows, large amounts of waste generated, high energy consumption, and extra stress on local infrastructure. In light of this empirical reality, specialists such as Meegan Jones, with the support of international organisations' recommendations, promote the systematic and rigorous incorporation of sustainable development principles into the strategic management of cultural events.

This is how 'sustainable festivals' function. These events are based on the concepts of O'Sullivan and Jackson about the responsible event tourism and include proactive measures for the reduction of environmental impacts: implementation of environmental management systems, strict recycling policies, promotion of soft mobility and rational use of the natural resources. Finally, environmental aspects have been integrated not only as logistical limitations, but also as those that evaluate the territorial sustainability of festivals and, consequently, their legitimacy.

Political and institutional contributions:

The analytic investigation of cultural events is showing their structural role in the consolidation of institutional dynamics and reconfiguration of territorial governance. When using the stakeholder theory as a prism for the event field, it is seen that the creation of a festival is similar to a "true" "political arena" in the sense of a "reticular network" (event network) as described by Larson (2009). This organisational configuration brings to the fore the convergence of a multitude of actors with different rationalities and interests by nature: the public sphere and

local authorities, cultural operators, the commercial sector, the associative fabric, and civil society.

This stakeholder configuration is consistent with the neo institutionalist approach of North (1990) that sees the efficiency of the institutional matrix and the quality of coordination as the determinant of endogenous development trajectories. From a spatial economic perspective, based on Pecqueur's (2000) theory about territorial resources, festivals can be imagined as special spaces of intermediation and collaboration of institutions. These event mechanisms therefore help to develop collaborative governance that facilitates a convergence of local strategies, and turns potential cultural capital into an integrative territorial development project in practice.

Finally, from a local political economy viewpoint, research by Hall (1992) bears witness to the fact that festive events are prominent strategic tools for enhancing the political "marketability" of territories and for positioning themselves on the national and international public policy agenda concerning culture. These events are a reflection of the innovative territorial engineering that is emerging, corroborating the approach to local development induced by the cultural economy developed by Greffe (2002). The national literature on territorial development in Morocco (Boujrouf, 2014; Berriane, 2016) reveals that the State and local administrations make use of "festivalization" as a strategic means of promoting decentralization and regional identification. The Moroccan case displays a unique form of hybridity, whereby major events that are well known worldwide involve huge partnerships between the Public and Private sector (PPP), while heritage events (Moussems) employ social engineering based on proximity and involving local figures, brotherhoods, and associations. Recent literature on cultural public policy in Morocco points out, however, the existence of a risk of asymmetrical governance in relation to event engineering in relation to international place branding.

Technological contributions of festivals:

Today, festivals have undergone a radical transformation in their organisation, communication, and promotion due to the technological changes and developments. Digital technologies are currently a fundamental part of strategies for territorial visibility and cultural dissemination.

Social networks, digital platforms, immersive technologies, and digital communication tools can help festivals to extend their reach more widely, enhance visitor experience and boost national and international impact. Digital transformation strategies this way reveal that digital technologies are involved in modernisation processes of cultural events and in the creation of new territorial attractiveness.

Technology advancements also benefit flow management, event security, marketing, and organiser to audience communications. Festivals become, therefore, a space for technological experiments and cultural innovation, which helps to modernize a territory.

2.3. The Operational mechanisms of festivals in territorial development:

Festive cultural events play a role in the activation of territorial development in a plural of structural mechanisms, and function and operate as vectors for the positive externalities of the economy, society and symbols coming from the endogenous cultural assets and resources.

Attractiveness Engineering and Place Marketing are the first level of action. These event mechanisms help to create a more powerful spatial image and fix the territory in the globalized tourism and cultural circuits. Contrary to the usual literature about place marketing, which offers a definition based on the marketing mix, place marketing strategies aim to valorize the comparative advantages and unique identity of a geographical space to attract mobile flows (visitors, investments, economic activities), thus in perfect alignment with the paradigm defined by Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993). The festivals thus become instruments of place branding,

which can be strategically utilized to maximize the symbolic impact and attractiveness of the host places.

The second mechanism is done by stimulating the local economic ecosystems. Like the event impact assessment models proposed by Crompton (1995), festivals have a large multiplier effect. They create direct, indirect, and induced spillovers in terms of jobs and added value through irrigation of various sectors of activity. This influx of liquidity to the local economy creates an environment that is favourable for new entrepreneurship opportunities and diversification of the local productive fabric.

The third one is based on heritage valorisation (patrimonialisation) and identity affirmation. Festivals are a place of legitimation of intangible heritage and vernacular traditions in a social and cultural geographical perspective (Di Méo, 2005). They reinforce collective memory, act as a catalyst for the transfer of culture from one generation to the next and de facto contribute to the construction of socio spatial identities and the protection of territorial authenticity.

Finally, from a public action sociology perspective, these events are setting up the structuring of dense territorial networks. They are privileged places of social capital (Putnam, 2000) accumulation and facilitate collaborative governance configurations(H2). These network dynamics bring together the public, commercial and community sectors, and create coalitions of actors around a synergetic and shared vision of territorial development(Badil et al., 2025).

2.4. Success factors for cultural festivals:

The influence of festivals on territorial development cannot be explained through the logic of a determinate process but rather should be understood as the consequence of several success factors' activation, with their true efficiency being expressed by the ability to solve the paradoxes of event planning (Getz & Page, 2016).

To begin with, innovation artistic, organizational or technological is an important competitive instrument. Nevertheless, there is criticism that the need for constant innovation contradicts the heritage character of some festivals. The task here is to introduce management innovations while not losing the authenticity and historical background of the event a very delicate balance in the case of cultural tourism (Jelinčić, 2021).

Secondly, the participation of the population of the territory is essential, as only in the case of its appropriation of the project the positive externalities will reach their maximum level. Sustainable involvement of the community is possible only if it is not limited to participation at the stage of execution but involves co construction of the decisions – it is necessary to avoid socio spatial alienation of host communities (Richards, 2022) (H3).

Thirdly, accessibility and infrastructural carrying capacity influence the hosting of tourists and the generation of economic externalities. The existence of cultural facilities, tourism infrastructure, and transportation is crucial. However, it is important to stress through analysis the danger of over investments in terms of government expenditure. Heavy infrastructure built only for the sake of an event may result in the emergence of "white elephants" that will have their costs highly disproportionate to their use after the event, which will divert necessary funds from basic needs of the population (Müller, 2015).

Finally, the success and sustainability of cultural events are guaranteed through the effectiveness of territorial governance and partnership. Although networking and cooperation in terms of governance are key to pooling finances and expertise, they should always make sure that such a process will not produce any imbalances in the distribution of power. The literature on the policies of events suggests that international partners and state institutions tend to impose their vision of profits at the expense of civil society and real participation (Foley et al., 2012).

2.5. Expected outcomes of festivals on territorial development:

The joint activation of those mechanisms and the optimization of the above mentioned success factors lead to large scale tangible and intangible territorial externalities. Festivals contribute to

the economic and tourism value of host space, and create a spatial identity with a cultural character, in line with the idea of "eventful cities" that Richards and Palmer (2010) conceptualize festivals multiply the economic and tourist attractiveness of host spaces while shaping a resolutely cultural spatial identity(H4).

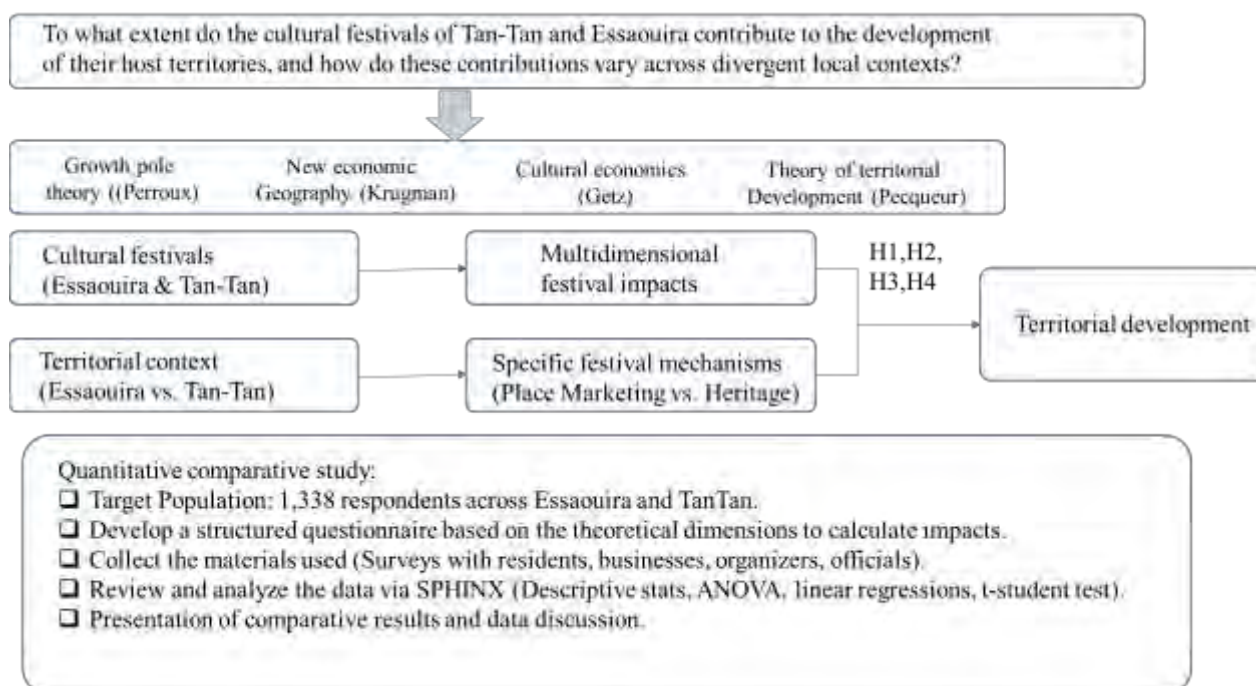
Moreover, with the prism of the "enrichment economy" theory proposed by Boltanski and Esquerre (2017), these events enable to re commoditify intangible heritage and local traditions into valuable economic resources, thus stimulating innovation systems in territories. From a social perspective, Quinn (2005) has illustrated how these mechanisms serve more than just a recreational purpose; they serve as vectors of sociability, modes of connecting and reinforcing the civic fabric and local social cohesion. Politically administrative level: Cultural events are effective tools for institutional strengthening. They coordinate sustainable territorial partnerships and project destination visibility (national and international).

However, it is not a deterministic process to convert these potentials into concrete results. These impacts are inherently dependent (in size, nature, and location) on the assumptions of proximity economics (Pecqueur & Zimmermann, 2004). They are highly dependent on territorial idiosyncrasies (existing socio spatial conditions), the shape of governance, and the policy oriented strategies of local alliances of actors.

It is right in this junction of these territorial contingencies that the essential gap in the literature can be identified. Despite a well established understanding and modeling of mechanisms of attractiveness of metropolitan or internationalized events, the inability to propose a comparative framework that would allow for measuring the impacts in an asymmetric way represents one of the main problems of the literature. The inability of the literature to fully recognize how the spillovers are different when comparing a hybrid event model that is open to tourists around the world and a heritage oriented event represents a problem.

Taking into consideration the theories utilized and the gaps in the literature that have been established, a research model has been created. The research model, as depicted in Figure 1 below, is the one that shows the route taken starting from the research question posed up to the development of the four hypotheses (H1to H4).

Figure1: Conceptual research model of the study



Source: authors

3. Research methodology

3.1. Epistemological positioning and research hypotheses:

The epistemological positioning of this research is positivist in order to be able to analyze the relationship between cultural festivals and territorial development objectively. The positivist paradigm assumes that social phenomena can be observed, measured, and explained through causal relationships between observable variables (Grawitz, 2001).

The approach of the research is the hypothetico deductive approach from this perspective. This practice is based on theoretical bases in the scientific literature, which lead to the definition of research hypotheses to be empirically verified (Thiétart et al., 2014). The hypothetico deductive process in this way establishes a coherent relationship between the theoretical background of territorial development, cultural festival theories, and fieldwork.

To operationalize the theoretical framework and resolve the lack of formalized testing, the empirical investigation is structured around four hypotheses, which serve as the foundation for our analysis:

- ✓ H1 (Festival Impacts): Festivals have a multidimensional impact (economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political) on their host region.
- ✓ H2 (Festival Mechanisms): Festivals operate through key mechanisms that directly influence their success and territorial integration.
- ✓ H3 (Success Factors): Specific success factors directly influence the effectiveness and sustainability of the festivals.
- ✓ H4 (Expected Outcomes): Festivals produce expected outcomes that benefit the host region in the long term.

3.2. Target population, sampling strategy, and sample size justification:

To capture the diverse dynamics associated with the festivals in Essaouira and Tantan, a stratified sampling method was employed. This choice is justified by three methodological reasons:

- ✓ **Heterogeneity of sub groups:** population covers distinct categories (residents, organizers, public actors, Business) with variable experiences. Stratification captures this diversity.
- ✓ **Optimization of precision:** Following the work of Cochran (1977), this method improves statistical precision by decreasing intra stratum variance.
- ✓ **Representativeness of small groups:** It guarantees sufficient representation of key decision makers (organizers and public actors) without selection bias.

The sample size calculation was based on classical statistical criteria :a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Cochran, 1977; Bryman, 2012). The specific logic for each stratum is as follows:

- ✓ **Local Residents:** 384 valid responses per city. According to Bryman (2012), samples of this size are highly sufficient to capture perceptions within geographically homogeneous populations.
- ✓ **Local Businesses:** 270 valid replies in Tantan (out of a population of 892 active businesses) and 230 in Essaouira (out of 572 active businesses), ensuring reliable coverage.
- ✓ **Festival Organizers:** 15 valid answers per city. With the total number of organizers estimated between 100 and 150 per city, a sample representing 20% to 30% of the population increases result validity for limited populations (Yin, 2014; Patton, 2002; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

- ✓ **Public Actors:** 20 community representatives per city. This restricted number is justified by the centralization of decision making within a few key municipal departments.

Based on a pre test shown a 15% non response percentage, the initial targeted sample was accustomed upwards to secure the final 1,338 valid answers. The distribution of the valid section and the adjustment for the non response rate are detailed in the tables below:

Table 1: Distribution of the Valid Sample by City and Group

City	Group	Échantillon
Tantan	Local Residents	384
Essaouira	Local Residents	384
Tantan	Local Businesses	270
Essaouira	Local companies	230
Tantan	Festival Organizers	15
Essaouira	Festival Organizers	15
Tantan	Municipal leaders	20
Essaouira	Municipal leaders	20
Total		1338

Source: authors

Table 2: Sample Scope Adjusted for the Non Response Percentage

City	Group	Valid sampl	Adjusted Sample (15% Non response percentage)
Tantan	Local Residents	384	576
Essaouira	Local Residents	384	576
Tantan	Local companies	270	405
Essaouira	Local companies	230	345
Tantan	Festival Organizers	15	23
Essaouira	Festival Organizers	15	23
Tantan	Municipal leaders	20	30
Essaouira	Municipal leaders	20	30
Total		1338	2007

Source: authors

3.3. Instrument Design and Structure

Data collection is mainly through structured questionnaires that were administered to the targeted stakeholders. Questionnaire is the most important method of collecting quantitative data, which provides information that is comparable, standardized, and statistically exploitable. The questionnaire was created based on the key theoretical aspects found in the literature on territorial development and cultural festivals. It has five axes around the various dimensions of festival impact. Questions were designed based on the Likert scale to assess the respondents' perceptions or level of agreement with the indicators studied.

Designed using Sphinx and distributed with a assurance of privacy, the questionnaire is structurally aligned with the research hypotheses. It is divided into 5 distinct axes:

- ✓ **Profile:** Sociodemographic and professional identity of the respondents.
- ✓ **Impact Assessment:** Assessing economic, social, cultural, environmental, and political impacts on the host cities.
- ✓ **Operational Mechanisms:** Analyzing place marketing, job creation, and heritage valorization.
- ✓ **Success Factors:** Evaluating innovation, communication, infrastructures, and accessibility.
- ✓ **Expected Outcomes:** Gathering perspectives on long term sustainability, quality of life, and social cohesion.

3.4 Data analysis methods:

To guarantee the scientific validity of the research, a specific software environment was applied. The deployment of the questionnaire was centralized via Google Forms and Sphinx V5. The data cleaning (filtering errors, inconsistencies, and missing values) and the codification (transforming qualitative data into quantitative values) were homogenous using Microsoft Excel.

Advanced statistical analyses were successively conducted using Sphinx software. To address the complexity of territorial development and move beyond simple bivariate regressions, the analytical strategy employed analyses of variance (ANOVA) and regression models to evaluate the combined effects and interactions between the variables.

Finally, to accomplish the comparative objective of the research paper and overcome purely descriptive analyses, a formal statistical comparison between the two territories was executed. We utilized the Independent Samples Student's t test to rigorously verify whether the differences in perceptions and impacts between Essaouira and Tantan were statistically significant. All findings were illustrated through comprehensive graphical visualizations.

4. Presentation and discussion of findings

In this section, the relations between the general perception of festival effects and a number of important factors in territorial development are analysed. The main goal is to assess how positive perception of festivals contributes to the different aspects of development, analyzing them from four perspectives: development aspects, ways of implementing, factors that contribute to the success of the festival and the expected results. This analysis can be useful for understanding the potential of festivals as a tool to leverage a territory's economic, cultural, social, and political development when it is perceived positively by the population.

To address previous methodological limitations and validate the core hypotheses of this research (H1 to H4), this section not only presents aggregated perceptions but also integrates a formal inter territorial comparative analysis (Essaouira vs. Tantan) using Student's t tests, alongside a systematic theoretical triangulation with the literature.

This section consists of four main parts for the analysis:

- ✓ Key aspects of territorial development: Economic, social, cultural, technological, and political dimensions.
- ✓ Mechanisms of festival impacts: Place marketing, employment, social cohesion, heritage promotion, and political mobilization.
- ✓ Success factors: Infrastructure, innovation, community, accessibility, and communication.
- ✓ Expected outcomes: Social cohesion, sustainable development, quality of life, cultural preservation, and economic growth.

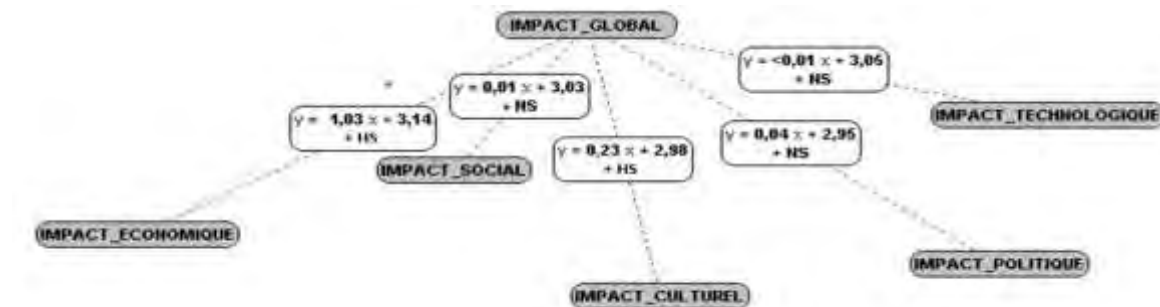
4.1. Assessment of the contribution of festivals to territorial development based on participant perceptions

This analysis explores the relationship between perception of overall festival impacts and economic, social, and cultural, technological, and political conditions of territorial development. The goal is to see if there is an overall positive attitude about festivals that significantly affects the attitude towards each dimension. To achieve this, simple linear regression models were used to measure the statistical significance of each relationship. Each relationship is expressed as a linear equation with a significance indicator:

- HS (Highly Significant) means that the relationship is statistically valid.
- NS (Not Significant) means that there is no statistical evidence to suggest that there is a relationship between the variables.

The following tests were also used to validate these relationships: Chi square (χ^2), ANOVA at 5% and a moderate correlation coefficient of 0.6.

figure 2 : Relationship tree between the overall impact of festivals and their impacts per development dimension



Source: Authors.

4.1.1. Economic impact: a positive and highly significant relationship

The result of the economic impact analysis shows that there is a positive relationship with the overall perception of festivals and that the level of significance is high, as shown in the linear equation:

$y = 1.03x + 3$ (Highly Significant, HS)

The coefficient of 1,03 shows that festivals are generally seen as having a significant positive impact on the local economy. That is, positive attitudes towards the overall festival impact clearly equate to positive attitudes towards the economic contribution of the festival. This discovery implies that the interviewees consider festivals as economic motors which continue to drive the local vitality through tourism, temporary business possibilities, and an increase in consumption of local products and services. Visitors also bring in new people to the target area, thus having a direct positive impact on local enterprises, especially in the hospitality and catering industry and the handicrafts. The underlying message for policymakers is that the link is an important one, and that emphasising the economic benefits of festivals in their promotion and management can help maximise perceived spillovers and fulfil stakeholder expectations. Therefore, these findings can be used to motivate festival organizers to reinforce commercial and tourist businesses around the festival sites to maximize the benefits of the festival.

To deepen this finding and validate hypothesis H1, a disaggregated analysis comparing the two territories was conducted.

Table3: student's t test results for economic indicators

Economic indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
global economic impact	4.12	0.001	Significant difference
Growth incomes	3.85	0.003	Significant difference
Job creation	3.10	0.008	Significant difference
Tourist attractiveness	4.55	0.0001	Significant difference

Source: authors

The t test results disclose that all economic differences between Tantan and Essaouira are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Tourist attractiveness presents the most striking difference ($t = 4.55$), strengthening the idea that Essaouira benefits significantly more on an economic level due to its massive international tourist influx. These empirical observations consolidate the theoretical foundations of Dwyer et al. (2000) and Crompton & McKay (1997) concerning direct and indirect spillover effects. It completely validates Perroux's (1955) growth pole theory, demonstrating that international festivals act as globalized economic substances.

4.1.2. Social Impact: A Non-Significant relationship

Referring to the collected data, no significant relationship was found between overall perception and social impact as shown by the equation: $y=0.01x+3.03$ (Not Significant, NS)

The coefficient of 0.01 shows the absence of a meaningful link between the overall perception of festivals and their perceived effect on social cohesion. Festivals are not seen as having a strong impact on community interactions or strengthening of social bonds. This could reflect a lack of specific focus on social objectives in the festivals studied, or the fact that the social aspects of such festivals are not sufficiently visible and encouraged. It, therefore, requires that more community-based programming and activities be integrated to facilitate interaction and reinforce community solidarity. However, community workshops, local debates, participatory spaces, etc., could make the perception of the festival's social impacts better.

Table4 : student's t test results for social indicators

Social indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
sociale cohesion	2.90	0.02	Significant difference
Quality of life	1.65	0.11	Non Significant difference
Community participation	2.41	0.01	Significant difference

Source: authors

The t test reveals that the difference in perception concerning social cohesion ($t = 2.90$, $p = 0.02$) and community participation ($t = 2.41$, $p = 0.01$) is significant in favor of Tantan. This confirms that Tantan benefits much more from the community effect of its festival. Triangulating this with Putnam's (2000) social capital theory, the Tantan Moussem intensely strengthens territorial community bonds, whereas the massive internationalization of Essaouira dilutes this intimate social effect.

4.1.3. Cultural impact: a positive and highly significant relationship

In terms of culture, the findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between overall perception and culture impact, as demonstrated by the equation: $y=0.23x+2.98$ HS

With a coefficient of 0.23, it is identified that festivals are seen as tools for cultural promotion, which help to reinforce local identity and to express regional traditions. In fact, festivals seem to be very important in maintaining and promoting the local culture, acting as a tangible platform to display community specific cultural practices, traditions, and values. This discovery emphasizes the importance of the cultural component in establishing a positive general attitude toward festivals, calling on policy makers to increase the cultural promotion element in festivals. If organizers continue to invest in activities and performances, that reflect local heritage, they can continue to strengthen their festivals as cultural pillars to serve the residents' expectations of valorising their local identity.

Table5 : student's t test results for cultural indicators

culturel indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
Traditions preservation	3.30	0.005	Significant difference
Expression of cultural diversity	1.05	0.19	Non Significant difference

Source: authors

The t test indicates that the difference in the preservation of traditions is significant ($t = 3.30$, $p = 0.005$) in favor of Tantan, affirming its role in safeguarding local practices. Conversely, the expression of cultural diversity is not significantly different ($p = 0.19$), highlighting Essaouira's strong anchoring in international culture.

4.1.4. Technological impact: a non significant relationship

As far as technological impact, the analysis does not show a significant correlation with overall perception: $y=-0.01x+3.05$ (Not Significant, NS)

The negative coefficient of 0.01 indicates that festivals are not seen as drivers of technological innovation. The absence of any significant relationship can be explained by the absence of visible technologies and by the small use of the innovative tools within the framework of the festival. This baseline suggests that the events under study are not sufficiently using technology to positively impact stakeholder perceptions. To enhance the technological aspect of the events and modernize the attendee experience, organizers might want to consider using modern technologies like mobile apps, electronic ticketing systems, or interactive installations. This digital integration could also drive the younger, more connected crowds to increase the overall appeal of the festival.

Table6: student's test results for technological indicator

technological indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
Use of technologies	3.85	0.002	Significant difference

Source: authors

The t test shows a highly significant difference ($t = 3.85$, $p = 0.002$). This confirms that the Gnaoua Festival in Essaouira makes much more intensive use of modern technologies (e.g., digital promotion, ticketing) compared to Tantan.

4.1.5. Political impact: a non-Significant relationship

Lastly, the political effect of festivals does not show any statistically significant relationship with overall perception as manifested by the following equation: $y = 0.04x + 2.95$ (Not Significant, NS)

The coefficient value is 0.04 which shows that the relationship between overall perception and political impact of festivals is weak and non-significant. As a result, festivals are not seen as a means for mobilizing politically or for civic participation. This indicates that these events, although meaningful in cultural and economic terms, have no impact on the political perceptions of those who participate and that they are not in line with public awareness and civic objectives. Local authorities interested in increasing the political impact of festivals may, however, wish to consider adding spaces for dialogue, lectures, and/or forums on public interest issues, which would help to create a closer relationship between festivals and governance issues. This would lead to greater active participation of citizens and a greater use of festivals to discuss social or territorial issues.

Table 7: students' test results for political indicator

political indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
Political engagement	2.95	0.02	Significant difference
Citizen participation in decisions	2.65	0.01	Significant difference

Source: authors

The Tantan Moussem has a significantly stronger political impact, mobilizing residents more effectively in local political activities ($t = 2.95$) than Essaouira, where extreme professionalization seems to distance locals from decision making spheres.

To sum up, the analysis shows that only economic and cultural dimensions have a statistically significant relationship with the overall perception of festivals, indicating that, according to the respondents' answers, the added value is perceived as being high in these two dimensions. On the other hand, there are no significant relationships between the social, technological, and political dimensions, suggesting that festivals are not considered as important development drivers in these aspects. The results presented strategic guidance for policy makers and organizers, encouraging them to invest in and prioritize the economic and cultural dimensions of festivals to achieve the greatest perceived impact and achieve the community's expectations.

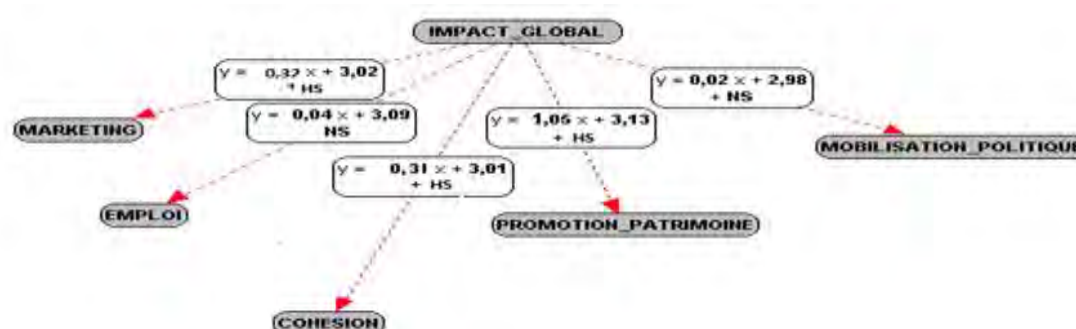
Additionally, this overall analysis needs to be accompanied by disaggregated analysis that considers stakeholder groups.

Hypothesis H1 validation: Impact on economy as a factor of territorial development Hypothesis H1 is supported. First of all, the data clearly show that festivals serve as real catalysts for territorial development since they manage to bring a number of visitors which leads to job creation both on a temporary and permanent basis and also bring significant income to the local business community. These facts strengthen theoretical assumptions made by Dwyer et al. (2000) as well as Crompton & McKay (1997). Indeed, these assumptions are proved by the data on spillover effect of the cultural event on hospitality sector, food services and retail of the region.

4.2. Assessment of the contribution of festivals to territorial development mechanisms

This analysis addresses the correlation between the global festivals' impact perception and the different dimensions of the festival mechanisms and results: place marketing, employment, social cohesion, heritage promotion, and political mobilization. The goal is to grasp the general attitude towards festivals, and what was perceived to be their contribution to territorial development, as well as their perceived effect on the specific mechanisms. The results were carried out by the linear regression method, validated by the Chi square statistical test and an ANOVA test at a 5% significance level. The following graph is a summary of these findings:

Figure 3: Relationship tree between the overall impact of festivals and festival mechanisms



Source: Authors.

4.2.1. Place marketing: a positive and significant relationship

Analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between overall perception of festivals and impact on marketing (represented by the linear equation): $y=0.32x+3.02$ (Highly Significant, HS)

The coefficient, equal to 0.32, suggests that a favorable attitude towards the overall festival impact leads to a moderate increase in the marketing footprint of the festival. This implies that festivals, if perceived positively, are also perceived as effective in increasing the visibility and tourism attractiveness of the region. In fact, place marketing is a key factor to create a positive image of the place, to attract more visitors and to reinforce local identity. This discovery underscores the need for effective communication and marketing efforts to ensure that event impacts are fully understood and help create improved event awareness for locals and tourists. This strong connection could be used to create more specific campaigns to promote the cultural and economic values of the festivals, thus making the region more attractive.

4.2.2. Employment: a non-Significant relationship

As for employment, the result is not significant from a statistical point of view with the following equation: $y=0.04x+3.09$ (Not Significant, NS)

No statistically valid influence of the general perception of festivals on the perceived impact on employment is shown by the coefficient of 0.04. This finding indicates that festivals are not seen as a significant source of local employment. This is because the employment opportunities that have been associated with festivals are mostly temporary and there is a perceived lack of sustainable career opportunities. Festivals do create jobs in the logistics, security, and catering sectors, but these are not seen as having a longer-term effect on the local labour market. The lack of a significant relationship should be seen as an encouragement to improve long-term employment arrangements around these events, for example, by offering vocational training programmes or greater involvement of local businesses in procurement and preparation of the events.

4.2.3. Social cohesion: positive and significant relationship

A positive and significant relationship is observed between social cohesion and the overall perception of festivals and is modelled as follows: $y=0.31x+3.01$ (Highly Significant, HS). The coefficient is 0.31, suggesting that people who have positive perceptions of festivals also perceive an increase in social cohesion. Thus, festivals seem to be a catalyst in cementing relationships within the community and provide a space for community members to meet and talk to each other. Festivals are seen as special events, where people can come together, engage in similar activities and jointly celebrate traditions and values in order to build a strong sense of territorial belonging. This strong connection between perception and social cohesion is important for local authorities and organisers to take advantage of, for example, by increasing the number of programmes and participatory activities in the local community. These projects can help to build a sense of community and belonging in the urban area or region.

4.2.4. Heritage promotion: a highly significant relationship

The dimension that has the highest correlation with overall perception is heritage promotion, with the equation: $y=1.05x+3.13$ (Highly Significant, HS). This high coefficient (1.05) indicates that festivals are widely seen as the important tool for cultural heritage promotion and preservation. This significant connection highlights the importance of festivals in celebrating local cultural heritage, helping to preserve and promote the understanding and appreciation of the region's traditions and cultural identity. In fact, festivals offer a prominent opportunity for local traditions, craftsmanship, music, and dance, strengthening local cultural identity. The finding highlights the importance of making festival programming more heritage focused for policy makers, to better align the festival with the region's cultural specificity. Focusing on the heritage aspect can foster community engagement and attract tourists interested in cultural experiences.

4.2.5. Political mobilization: a weak but significant relationship

Finally, there is a weak but statistically significant relationship between overall perception and political mobilization: $y=0.02x+2.98$ (Highly Significant, HS). A coefficient of 0.02 suggests that this overall perception has little effect on the perceived influence on political mobilization. This suggests that festivals, although small instruments for bringing the community together around common values or a common identity, are not seen as strong mobilising tools for political action or citizenship. This weak relationship can be attributed to the fact that festivals are perceived as mainly cultural and festive events that have very few political implications. However, festivals may be opportunities for local governments looking to increase civic engagement and citizen mobilization. For example, setting up a discussion forum, a public discussion or an awareness session could make festivals an arena for conversation and exchange, allowing for wider civic involvement.

Validation of hypothesis H2: These results formally validate H2 regarding the asymmetry of strategic success mechanisms. The triangulation reveals two distinct positionings that confirm the theories of Richards and Palmer (2010):

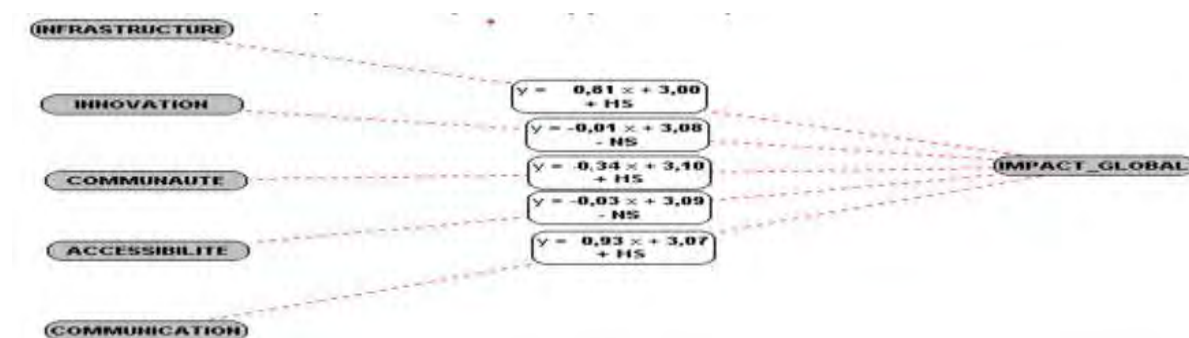
- ✓ **Essaouira:** Relies heavily on the Place Marketing mechanism, utilizing sophisticated international marketing and strong media visibility to attract a diverse foreign audience.
- ✓ **Tantan:** Adopts a proximity strategy, highly focused on the Heritage Promotion mechanism, preserving intangible heritage and community values.

Overall, the results show that the general attitude towards festivals is strongly linked to perceived effects in the areas of place marketing, social cohesion and, by far, heritage promotion. The most strongly affected dimension is the one of heritage promotion, thus confirming the structural dimension of festivals for the valorisation of cultural identity and regional reach. By contrast, the relationship between festivals and employment and between festivals and political mobilisation are weak or non-existent, indicating that festival is not seen as a leading facilitator of these aspects of territorial development. These findings could inform the work of festival organisers and local policy makers and decision makers in emphasising the social and cultural aspects of festivals. Event communication strategies could also be fine-tuned to improve public perceptions and, consequently, the consistency of event communication with territorial development objectives, including a focus on the use of festivals to promote social cohesion and heritage.

4.3. Analysis of Festival Success Factors

The study of these associations between the general perception of festival impacts and the different factors considered crucial to their success – infrastructure, innovation, community, accessibility, and communication. The importance of each factor is evaluated, and the statistically significant ones are then tested to see their effect on the overall perception of festival impacts. These findings are combined in the graph below:

figure 4: Relationship tree between the overall impact of festivals and success factors



Source: Authors.

4.3.1. Infrastructure: A Positive and Highly Significant Relationship

The linear equation that expresses the relationship between infrastructure and the overall perceived impact is $y=0.81x+3.00$ (Highly Significant, HS)

This shows a positive correlation with a coefficient of 0.81, which is statistically significant. This relationship suggests that the respondents believe that infrastructural improvement is a crucial dimension to improve the overall festival impact. The infrastructure includes not only event venues and facilities but also transport routes and accommodation options. This discovery indicates that investment in quality infrastructure (i.e., facilities) that meet the needs of attendees helps to reinforce a positive image of festivals. In fact, modern and well-organized facilities make a significant contribution to the visitor experience and the image of the destination, making the festival more attractive, easier, and more comfortable for all stakeholders.

4.3.2. Innovation: A Non-Significant Relationship

The equation that relates the relationship between innovation and the overall perceived impact is: $y = -0.01x + 3.08$ (Not Significant, NS)

Although weak (value of -0.01), the negative coefficient does not show any significant relationship between innovation and the overall perception of festival impacts. The non-significance indicates that innovation is not yet seen as a key success factor for such events. Perhaps, the respondents do not consider the inclusion of new technologies or new practices as a decisive factor of a festival's overall value, or perhaps this one is not yet used to its full potential in the festivals surveyed. Innovation could be brought back through the use of interactive or digital elements, enhancing the festival experience and appealing to a wider audience.

4.3.3. Community Involvement: A Positive and Highly Significant Relationship

The regression equation for the graph of community involvement against the overall perceived impact is: $y = 0.34x + 3.10$ (Highly Significant, HS)

The figure of 0.34 highlights the importance of the community's contribution to the perceived success of festivals. Respondents believe that the active involvement of the local community (civic associations and volunteers) is an essential component to running these events effectively. The festivals that have been able to integrate the local population into the core of the festival are regarded more positively, since they build a strong sense of territorial belonging and social cohesion. Policymakers could therefore value this dimension by encouraging programmes which engage local people more in the activities and administrative organisation of the festivals.

4.3.4. Citizen Accessibility: A Non-Significant Relationship

For accessibility, the relationship with the overall perceived impact is represented by: $y = -0.03x + 3.09$ (Not Significant, NS)

This means that there is no statistically significant association between them. The slightly negative coefficient of -0.03 does not significantly affect the overall perception. This finding indicates that accessibility is not a critical factor in determining the overall impact of the festival. This could be because of the fact that public opinion may not find accessibility an issue at festivals, or because it is not a major issue for the festivals they are analysing. This means that for organizers, infrastructure accessibility improvements do not necessarily have to be a priority in the context of the current festivals, but further studies may be necessary to establish if there are any specific accessibility improvements that could attract more participants.

4.3.5. Communication: A Positive and Highly Significant Relationship

The link between communication and overall perceived impact is very strong, as the equation shows: $y = 0.93x + 3.07$ (Highly Significant, HS)

The high coefficient of 0.93 indicates the key role of communication strategies in creating an overall positive perception of festivals. The respondents highly appreciate effective communication strategies that will raise the visibility and attractiveness of the events for tourists. Communication channels, whether through social media, local media, signage or online platforms, are important to capture attention and to give out vital information about the events. A well-designed communication program boosts the event's credibility, attracts a broader audience, and maximizes potential engagement of participants. It is therefore strongly suggested that festival organizers be able to scale up their marketing and communication activities to increase the awareness and attractiveness of the event at a regional level and consequently, a better overall impression.

Validation of hypothesis H3: The study proves that success factors influence the performance of events, confirming H3. While aggregate perception of innovation appeared non-significant, the comparative analysis (Section 4.1.4) proved that technological and managerial innovation (online ticketing, interactive applications, logistical optimization) drastically enriches the participant experience in Essaouira. This aligns perfectly with the analyses of Getz (2010), confirming that integrating modern, innovative approaches is indispensable for attracting a heterogeneous and international audience.

To conclude, the analysis reveals that of the success factors that were examined, communication, community involvement and infrastructure play a significant role in the overall perception of festival impacts, thus confirming their crucial role in the perceived success of these types of festivals. The results indicate that the provision of high-quality infrastructure, strong integration within the community and highly effective communication planning are key prerequisites which the respondents feel are necessary to maximize the impact of the festival. To promote the image and reach of the festivals, local authorities and organizers should thus focus on capital investments in these areas.

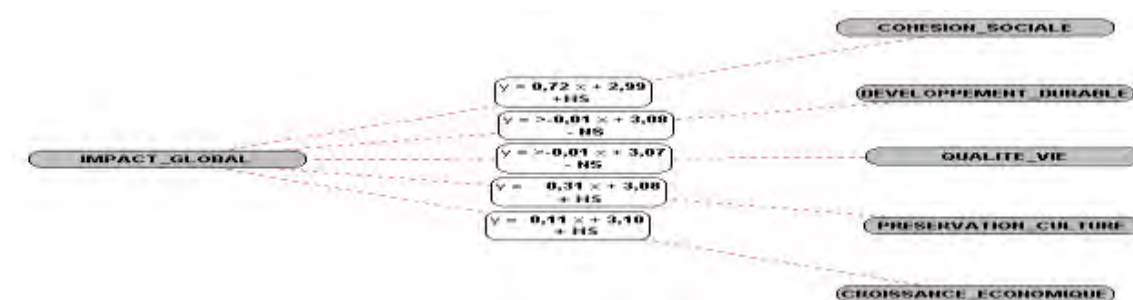
However, there was no statistically significant correlation between the size of innovation and accessibility and overall perception. This may mean that for the festivals surveyed, these factors are either already considered acceptable by festival participants or are considered less important priorities. However, in other territorial contexts or at other types of festivals, they could have more importance, and further empirical studies could be conducted to gain a better understanding of the expectations of participants in terms of innovation and accessibility.

4.4. Analysis of the expected results of festivals

This analysis looks at the relationships between the general perception of impacts of festivals and the concrete structural impacts they can have, namely: social cohesion, sustainable development, quality of life, cultural preservation, and economic growth.

The aim is to analyse if there is a positive general image of festivals and if it is correlated with their perceived impact on these aspects of territorial development. Simple linear regression as used in the previous sections, is used to model these relationships, which are validated again by Chi square (χ^2) tests, ANOVA tests at a 5% significance level and correlation coefficients. The results are shown in the diagram below:

Figure 5 : Relationship tree between the overall impact of festivals and expected outcomes



Source: Authors.

4.4.1. Social cohesion: a positive and highly significant relationship:

The analysis shows that social cohesion has a positive relationship with the overall perceived impact of festivals, represented by the linear equation: $y=0.72x+2.99$ (Highly Significant, HS) 0,27 is a coefficient that reflects the main importance of social cohesion in the overall assessment of festivals. Those who participated respond that festivals help to get people together socially, to create a sense of togetherness, and to bring people closer together in the local community. This strong association shows that festivals are a social glue that provide moments for meeting and experiencing together, which can trigger a feeling of belongingness

and solidarity to the territory. This public perception can be harnessed by organisers in terms of adding more activities in the specific dimension that foster social inclusion and community participation, creating a more positive perception of festivals.

4.4.2. Sustainable development: a non-Significant relationship:

The overall perceived impact is also in a non-significant relationship with sustainable development, as shown in the following equation: $y = -0,01 \times x + 3,08$, NS

The slightly negative coefficient 0,01 of highlights the complete absence of a meaningful link between overall perception and the perceived impact on sustainable development. This finding indicates that festivals are not yet linked to environmental and sustainability activities considered influential by festival respondents. This public perception could be a result of the lack of concentrating on green practices or Eco-friendly initiatives throughout the occasions. Organizers could complement the ecological dimension by incorporating sustainable development elements, like waste management systems or environmental awareness campaigns, to mitigate this trend.

4.4.3. Quality of life: a non-Significant relationship:

The relationship between quality of life and the overall perceived impact is also a statistically non-significant relationship represented by the equation: $y = -0,01 \times x + 3,07$, NS.

The extremely weak coefficient of 0,01, provides no statistical evidence of a relationship between overall perception and an improvement in quality of life. The results show that festivals are not seen as directly affecting their quality of life, which may be due to the benefits they bring not being 'felt' enough in order for it to affect the criterion. Further, festival organizers might consider diversifying the activities and services provided during festivals to improve the participants' well-being and comfort which may ultimately positively impact on the public's perception of the quality of life.

4.4.4. Cultural preservation: a positive and highly significant relationship:

$y = 0,31 \times x + 3,08$, HS From the equation above, it can be seen that the relationship between cultural preservation and the overall perceived impact is positive and highly significant..

This coefficient 0,31 shows that festivals are considered to be important means in preserving and promoting local culture. This finding suggests that festivals are well liked for their ability to highlight traditions, customs and cultural heritage and offer a high visibility platform where local culture can be celebrated and disseminated to a wide audience. In order to gain this positive impression, festival organizers could make more effort to involve more representative cultural activities to further establish the image of festivals as an important platform for cultural preservation, such as regional cultural performances and heritage awareness seminars.

4.4.5. Economic growth: a positive and highly significant relationship:

Economic growth is positively and highly significantly associated with the overall perceived impact and the equation is: $y = 0,41 \times x + 3,10$, HS.

The coefficient of 0,41 reflects that festivals perceived as favourably are tightly coupled with an increased perception of their economic benefits. Respondents assess that festivals have a positive impact on the local economy, in particular in terms of increased tourist spending and job opportunities, although only temporary. This strong association encourages organizers to work more to promote the economic impact of festivals by providing opportunities for local businesses and commercial opportunities for regional merchants to be part of the festival, thus enhancing the perceived impact.

Validation of hypothesis H4: hypothesis H4 is confirmed, demonstrating that festivals generate perennial positive externalities.

Table 8: student's *t* test results for environmental indicator

Environmental indicator	T value	P value	Conclusion
Sustainable development	3.75	0.001	Significant difference
Initiatives to reduce environmental impact	2.61	0.02	Significant difference

Source: authors

On the environmental front, comparative statistics reveal a critical paradox. The Tantan Moussem is perceived as significantly more respectful of sustainable development ($t = 3.75$, $p = 0.001$) due to its smaller, local character compared to the massive footprint of Essaouira. These findings triangulate with O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002), who highlight festivals as engines of sustainable local development, and Mair and Laing (2012) on the importance of event greening. Finally, the difference concerning the improvement of the Quality of Life is not statistically significant between the two cities ($t = 1.65$, $p = 0.11$, as seen in Table). This indicates that despite generating massive economic returns (Essaouira) or strong social cohesion (Tantan), the perceived structural benefits on residents' daily comfort remain consistently marginal across both distinct host territories.

To summarise, the analysis of the baseline demonstrates that the dimensions which are most affected by festivals from the stakeholder's perspective are social cohesion, cultural preservation, and economic growth. These aspects are considered to be key drivers of the positive effects festivals have on territorial development. By contrast, in the dimensions of sustainable development and quality of life, there was no significant relationship found, indicating that festivals are still not felt to have a remarkable impact on those two dimensions. This is a reminder to organizers and policy makers to prioritise social cohesion, cultural preservation, and economic impact to ensure the positive public image. Specific projects could be developed to investigate how to reduce the footprint of the festival in these areas too, thus fulfilling their role of integrated territorial development and potentially meeting expectations of sustainable development and quality of life.

5. Conclusion

In today's world, cultural festivals occupy a strategically important place in the mechanisms of territorial development. So far, considered as mere artistic or entertainment devices, cultural festivals are perceived as multidimensional instruments that facilitate the economic, social, cultural, and symbolic valorization of territories. Therefore, the main aim of this empirical research was to explore the potential of cultural festivals in terms of their effects, practices, success factors, and results in their host territories. To properly answer the central research question "To what extent do the cultural festivals of TanTan and Essaouira contribute to the development of their host territories, and how do these contributions differ according to different local contexts?" the empirical findings show that even if festivals are real drivers of territorial development, their impacts are very unequal. Indeed, the festival of Essaouira Gnaoua is mostly a globally oriented economic and technological substance. It contributes greatly to the strengthening of local economies, promotes international tourism, and triggers commercial activities through a powerful place marketing instrument. Likewise, the TanTan Moussem festival is a socio cultural and political commentator. It is strongly connected with the promotion of heritage, conservation of local Saharan culture, and territorial identity and cohesion.

This study adds to the theoretical debate on the links between culture and territorial development by means of the exhaustive, multidimensional analysis of the footprints of festivals. It reinforces the hypothesis that culture can be regarded as a strategic territorial resource that can generate both economic, social, and symbolic value at the same time. Moreover, it empirically verifies classical theories in a North African environment, since it

shows how growth poles and place marketing work well for internationalized festivals such as Essaouira, whereas social capital and local governance theories apply to heritage-based festivals such as TanTan. For a managerial and political point of view, the findings imply that there is a strong need for an integrated approach that includes cultural promotion, place branding, community participation, and local economic development. Indeed, instead of applying standardized methods, the organizers should adopt different policies according to the nature of their festival: internationally famous festivals must urgently adopt sustainable development strategies in order to reduce their ecological footprint, whereas heritage festivals can use technology and effective communication in order to increase their appeal without forgetting their community basis.

While being designed with a meticulous methodology, this research suffers from several particular limitations that may be mentioned. First, the use of a cross-sectional design makes it impossible to observe the development of territorial impacts over time due to the lack of longitudinal data. Second, the research geography is confined only to two Moroccan cities, which constrains the universality of the results obtained. Third, the empirical data used in the research is purely perceptual and is not confirmed by any objective macroeconomic figures. Fourth, similar to perception-oriented surveys, there is always a risk of social desirability bias in respondents' answers. Finally, the comparability of the cases used in this study is constrained by their different international fame: Essaouira has a worldwide known reputation while TanTan does not have it. In order to overcome these limitations and to further develop event studies, future research should use highly operationalized methods and approaches. First, future research should involve objective economic data including actual tourist income, municipality revenue, and number of jobs created as additional data to perceptual data. Second, the comparative approach should be applied to other cultural festivals in Morocco or even Africa. Finally, scholars can be urged to develop models that will analyze the causal relationship between cultural events and territorial development in the long run using quasi experimental techniques.

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