

Differentiation of the Hungarian Food Festival Offer According to the Thematic, Spatial and Temporal Characteristics Before the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In our study, we analysed the pre-pandemic Hungarian gastro festival offer based on their topic, spatial and temporal characteristics, using media content analysis and advanced statistical methods. Based on the results, the Hungarian gastro festivals can be divided into several categories according to their theme and the emphasis of their theme. The examined festivals were mainly held in rural areas, most of them did not perform tourist functions, they can be defined as local, community events. According to the time characteristics, Hungarian festivals typically last for 1-2 days or are organized for 1-2 years. They are held primarily during the main tourist season, but some festival themes are also off-season. Based on our results, there is a correlation and difference between the theme, spatial features and temporality. The theme also influences the schedule, length and age of the festivals, while some themes can be linked to a city or countryside, and some themes are more relevant to tourism. Festivals are time-varying phenomena in terms of both number and territorial significance.

Keywords: food festival, food tourism, K-mean cluster, One-way ANOVA

Introduction

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of festivals, included gastro festivals was popular both internationally and in Hungary (Hall, Sharples, 2008; Várhelyi, 2016; Pusztai, 2020). The increase in the number and dynamic change of food festivals made it less possible to register gastro-festivals. At the same time, there has been widespread differentiation in the festival offer in terms of theme, temporal and spatial characteristics, and goals.

Nevertheless, to date, there has been little large-scale empirical research on the offer of (gastro) festivals in a given region in the international festival literature. The festival literature

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usually examines the motivations of festival visitors (Büyükşalvarci, Akkaya, 2018; Krajíčková, Šauer, 2018), the socio-cultural impacts of festivals (Sharpley, Stone, 2012; Bogataj, 2019) economic, tourism development and location marketing aspects (Bottyán, 2015; Vukic. et al., 2016), and the management of festivals through a few case studies through the study of the role of different interest groups (Andersson, Getz, 2008; Presenza, Iocca, 2012).

In our research, we aimed to fill this gap by examining the pre-pandemic supply of Hungarian food festivals from several perspectives. In the framework of this, we explore how the Hungarian gastro festivals can be typified based on the theme intended for the celebration, and how these events can be categorized in connection with the emphasis of the theme. We examine the spatial characteristics of the events, with special regard to how the Hungarian food festivals differentiated in terms of the size of the settlement organizing the festival, as well as their volume and territorial significance. We also explore the temporal characteristics of the events, during which we examine what was characteristic of the length and age of the food festivals.

To answer our questions, we compiled a database of Hungarian food festivals for the year 2019 with the help of media content analysis, as there was no collection for the whole country before, including the temporal and spatial data of the events. In another multi-faceted internet media analysis, we recorded additional data on the events included in our database, with reference to program offerings and marketing elements. We performed advanced statistical analyses on the data, with the help of which we explored the thematic, spatial, and temporal characteristics of Hungarian food festivals, as well as the interrelation between them.

Characteristics of food festivals

Festival research is a popular topic in the international literature, but there is no general, internationally accepted definition of the concept (Ásványi, Jászberényi, 2017; Mair, 2019).

Based on the various concepts and festival descriptions used in the literature (Falassi, 1987; Hall, Sharples, 2008; Kalkstein-Silkes et al., 2008; Besermenji et al., 2009; Presenza, Iocca, 2012; Dwyer, Jago, 2019; Mair, 2019) in our study we consider a festival *to be events that have a limited duration and are repeated periodically, organized around a theme to celebrate and sustain some elements of a community's culture, but are also open to a wider audience. In addition, they work with different stakeholders to achieve economic, social and / or cultural goals.* In our study, we address the celebratory theme of the festival, the target audience and its volume, and the components of timeliness, so we present the characteristics of these elements.

Festivals can be divided into different types according to the theme to be celebrated. One of the most popular types is gastronomy-based festivals also internationally and in Hungary (Hall, Sharples, 2008; Lee, Arcodia, 2011; Várhelyi, 2016; Pusztai, 2020). According to Lee, Arcodia (2011 p. 5) „*A food festival is a food featured festival that really highlights what regional/local speciality food is or a foodthemed festival which has food-based or food-themed activities and programme*”. Gastro festivals basically draw attention to the uniqueness of the place by celebrating gastronomic traditions at a certain point in the year (Smith, Costello, 2009; Dixit, 2019). However, the basis of festival creation can be not only the local gastronomy, but in many cases in order to achieve the goals, the organizers use their creativity as a local resource to create festivals by localizing some general food / drink (Rotherham, 2008; Pusztai, 2020; Tóth et al., 2020).

Gastronomic festival typing on the gastronomic theme for celebration is less common in the international literature and there is no uniform classification system. Hall, Sharples (2008)

distinguish the generic, (no local food focus); the generic (but focussed on local food); the wide range of themes, local focus, and product combinations (multiple themed/categories); the ones based on a single category of product; as well as gastro festivals based on a specific product or food type. Based on the typology of Bottyán (2015) the food festivals by theme are a kind of agricultural crop (e.g., pumpkin, cherry, apple...), a kind of food (e.g., fish soup, aspic, dodolle – special potato dish...), a kind of food product (e.g., ham, sausage, cheese, wine, palinka...), and differentiate according to special traditional food producer crafts (e.g., pigsticker, baker...). While Bogataj (2019) differentiate food festivals based on traditional culinary or gastronomic theme, based on contemporary interpretations of a culinary tradition, and based on innovations based on modern culinary and gastronomic endeavours.

In addition to their main theme, festivals typically offer music and cultural programs to visitors (Krajíčková, Šauer, 2018). However, despite the naming gastronomic theme, the musical program offerings may receive a greater focus than gastronomy (Büyüksalvarci, Akkaya, 2018). Food appears in almost all types of festivals, but if gastronomy does not play a prominent role, it cannot be considered a gastro-festival, even if the name of the festival refers to a gastronomic theme (Lee, Arcodia, 2011; Presenza, Iocca, 2012).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of gastro festivals was popular at all levels of the settlement hierarchy, in both urban and rural environments, resulting in an increase in the number of festivals and their differentiation according to scale, volume and significance. The literature identifies tourism-oriented and local, community festivals as two main types of festivals (Getz, 2008; Presenza, Iocca, 2012; Ásványi, Jászberényi, 2017). The large-scale, tourism-oriented festivals are aimed at a wider audience, in addition to the local audience, they are waiting for visitors beyond the borders of the settlement, providing a source of experience through the accompanying cultural programs and meals (Bessière, 1998; Quan, Wang, 2004; Bogataj, 2019). Local, community festivals are typically local, recreational community events that provide a meeting place for residents so that their social relationships can be strengthened through eating together and cooking together (Presenza, Iocca, 2012; Dwyer, Jago, 2019). Based on the definition of festival used in our study, festivals are celebrations of the local community, but are also open to the wider community. Therefore, if local community festivals are not an attraction at all for those outside the local community or are just excluded from it, they cannot be considered a festival by our definitions.

The temporality of food festivals can also be interpreted in terms of their age, length and schedule, periodicity, and their relationship to their past and future. These events take place at a specific time, which are repeated periodically, usually annually, yet cannot be repeated, the “same” festival provides a different experience year to year (Smith, 2009; Getz, 2012). As a result, the festival provides a framework for celebration, production and consumption in a given space and time, which is different from the usual practice of everyday life (Getz, 2010; Quinn, Wilks, 2017). The scheduling of festivals is also an important factor, as they can help to prolong the tourist season, or they can be an additional attraction for tourists during the main season (Benedek, Stark, 2009). In addition, the timing of the festivals also depends on the seasonality of the theme to be celebrated (Lyons, 2008). Food festivals can make a connection between the past, the present and the future by celebrating traditional food to preserve it and pass it on to future generations (Bessière, 1998). Festivals are dynamically changing phenomena over time, new events are created every year, previous festivals cease to exist. In addition, festivals can evolve over time according to their goals or volume (Andersson, Getz, 2008; Pusztai, 2020).

Data and methods

At the beginning of our research, we created a database of Hungary's gastro-festivals for 2019 with the help of content analysis. Agreeing with Bottyán's (2015) statement, at the beginning of our research, during the collection of gastronomic events, we considered a food festival to be any event whose name included a food or beverage, product, crop, or food production process. The festivals were collected using archive festival databases, content analysis, keywords and word combinations formed from the names of the settlements, searching for all the settlements of Hungary one by one with the help of the Google search engine. Only the events of Budapest are not included in the database, because due to the large number of events in there, this method cannot be applied. The result of the research is a gastronomic event database covering the national level, which contains the regional and temporal data of the events. It is important to note that the database was created based on our predefined criteria system, the events issued by the search engine and their filtering by their own evaluation.

In our research, we typed the collected gastro festivals based on their topic, the emphasis of their topic, and their territorial significance, by analysing the media content found on the Internet. The relevance of the method is supported by the fact that nowadays the media is one of the most important image-forming tools, which also influences the consumer decisions of tourists. (Hanan, Karim, 2015; Mandabach, Chuanbiao, 2019; Süli, Martyin-Csamangó, 2020). In addition, the media activity of the festivals can be used to deduce the function, size, target group and emphasis of the festival (Andersson, Getz, 2008). As part of this, we created an indicator called "Focus" that includes the characteristics of the theme to be celebrated at the festivals. It refers to the extent to which the examined events can be considered gastronomic or rather cultural-musical focus on the basis of textual content published in the media. As a first step in the creation, we examined the content of the news about the festivals, the poster or program description of the festivals, and the interrelation between the program and the theme in terms of how prominent the gastronomic theme was compared to the musical program offering. Within this, we scored the festivals on a scale of 1 to 5 based on the content of the news published in the media and the content of the program description or poster, whether the cultural-musical program offerings of the events or the gastronomic character played a more prominent role in these contents. The scores for these two aspects were considered with double weight. We also scored on a scale of 1 to 5 to fit the theme of the program and the festival. The second step was to build the indicator. The scores of these three aspects were added together, but if the event was called village day or city day in its name or description, it lost its

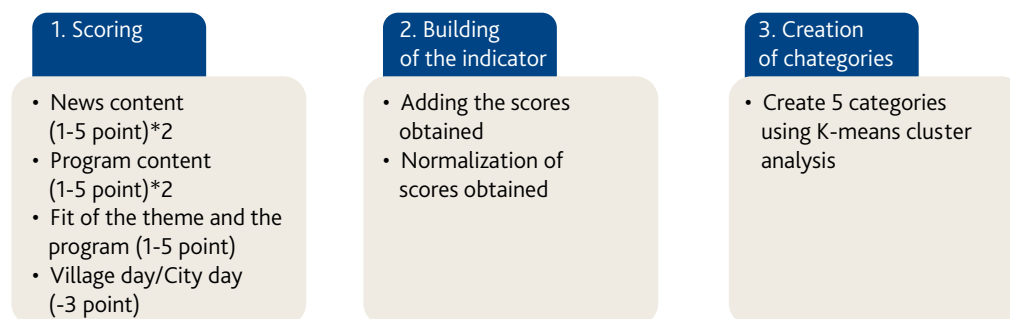


Figure 1. The steps of creating "focus" indicator

Source: Own edition

gastro character, and 3 points were deducted from the points earned. Then, by normalizing the scores, we created the “focus” indicator (the scores obtained were divided by all the points that could be obtained to avoid biasing the data gaps). As a third step, we created five groups in the SPSS program using K-means cluster analysis (Figure 1.) (Landau, Everitt, 2003).

We created the “function” indicator, which refers to the scale, volume, and territorial significance of the festivals. In the first step, we scored the appearance on the internet marketing platforms, for example, whether the festival has a poster or program available, a website, a Facebook page, or a Facebook event for the events. Furthermore, we scored whether the event was featured on programturizmus.hu (Hungarian program recommendation website) and how many videos about it appeared on YouTube, how many watched the most popular video of the event. Participation in the Hungarian Festival Qualification Program can indicate the quality of the events, so a point was given if the event is qualified or registered. Furthermore, the number of years of organization and the number of days of the festival can also be a quality indicator, so we formed scores from these as well. As a second step, we added the scores for each aspect, normalized them, and finally created 5 categories with the help of K-means cluster analysis in the SPSS program (Figure 2.) (Landau, Everitt, 2003).

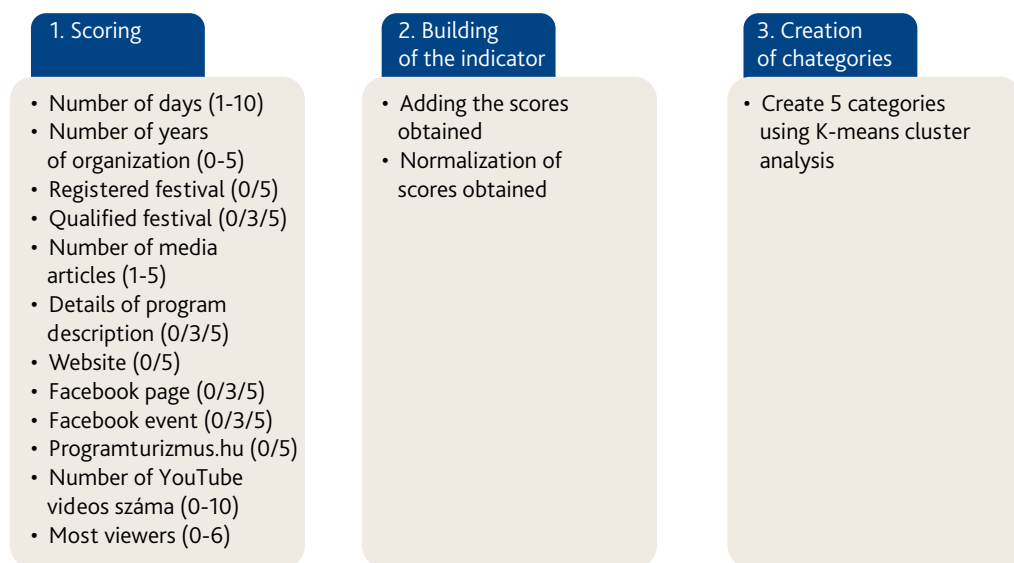


Figure 2. The steps of creating “function” indicator

Source: Own edition

ANOVA

Moreover, we used one-way ANOVA method to explore the main differences between festival groups with specified features. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a collection of statistical models and their associated estimation procedures used to measure the differences among means (Gillard, 2020). This method is based on the law of total variance, where the observed variance in a particular variable is divided into components attributable to different sources of variation. In its simplest form, ANOVA provides a statistical test of whether two or more population or features means are equal, and therefore generalizes the T-test beyond means (Gillard, 2020).

In our study we performed this kind of statistical analyses on the retrieved data and compiled the necessary and charts for further analysis.

Results

During the collection of gastronomic events at the national level, we found a total of 987 events that met all aspects of our research. In the following, we explore the characteristics related to the theme, territorial significance, volume, and timeliness of these events and look for the interrelations between these aspects.

Characteristics of food festivals by theme of celebration

During the examination of the topic of the events, we created our own food festival categorization system by analysing the names of the gastronomic-themed events we collected, during which 7 categories were created. Most gastronomic events (about 20%) are celebrated with a crop festival, some kind of vegetable or fruit, or food made from them. The second most events (about 19%) fell into the pig slaughter category. The slaughter is closely linked to Hungarian traditions, as pigs were previously raised and slaughtered in most village households. These events are an excellent opportunity to nurture this tradition and pass it on to the younger generations. Of the beverage festivals, which accounted for about 16%, wine festivals (107) were the most typical in Hungary in the year under review, but beer celebrations were also occurred (41). One of the most unique products of the Hungarians is pálinka, which is a spirit drink, however, we have identified only 9 pálinka festivals. Animal and meat cooking or baking festivals typically celebrated the selected meat dish and its preparation in a cooking competition. About 8% of the festivals have a general focus, so they had no specific theme. In these cases, the specific flavours of an area were typically celebrated, but modern street food events were also list-

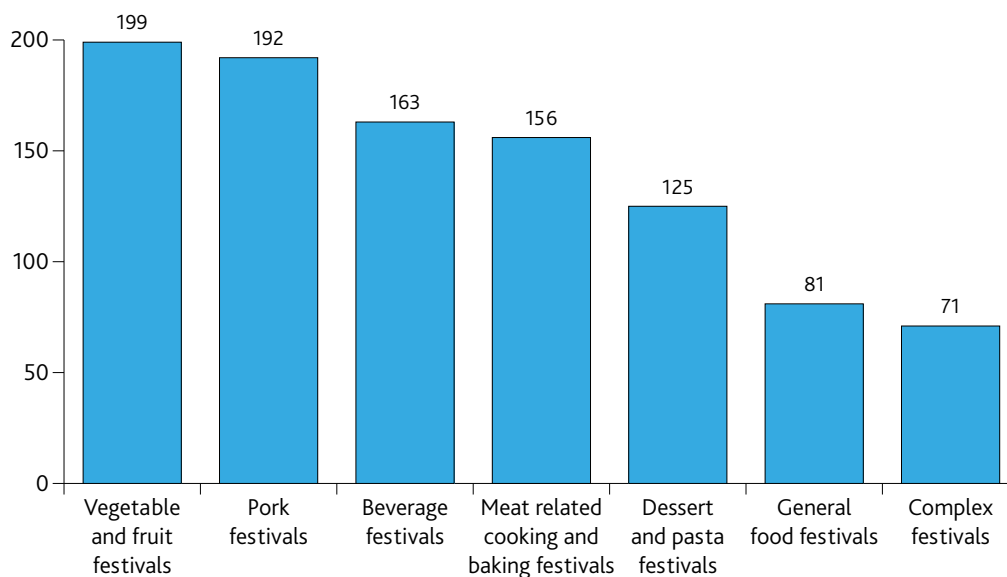


Figure 3. Distribution of food festivals in Hungary by category

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

ed here. The events last approx. 7% have a complex theme, which means that the celebration theme of the event was created by combining the former categories (Figure 3.).

We explored the extent to which gastronomic events in Hungary focused on the selected, celebrated theme. For this, we used a “focus” indicator based on Internet media content. Based on the results of this, 7.2 percent of the gastro festivals in our database did not reveal at all the form in which gastronomy appeared, the text media contents, and the posters of the events emphasized the cultural and musical offer. Nearly 20 percent of the events suggested the way food or drink appeared, but cultural shows were dominant despite the gastronomic name. In our view, cultural, and more culturally focused, events are less considered food festivals if the celebration of gastronomy has really played a minor role (Lee, Arcodia, 2011; Presenza, Iocca, 2012). The reason for choosing the gastronomic theme may be the popularity of these festivals, the name may make them attractive to visitors and distinguish them from events in other settlements. The gastronomic and cultural-musical offer was presented in a similar proportion by 29% of the events, these were called gastro-cultural festivals. Events focusing on gastronomic elements, but also emphasizing musical stage elements, approx. 15% were present, while 30% clearly focused on the gastronomic offer according to the analyzed media content (Figure 4.).

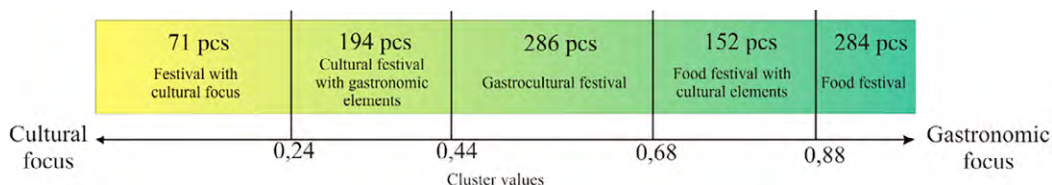


Figure 4. Distribution of the food festivals in the categories of the „focus” indicator in 2019

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

In connection with the analysis of the topic of the events, we explored the connections between the nature of the topic of the events and the emphasis of the topic. The results show that the least gastronomic-focused events are fruit and vegetable festivals, sweets and pasta, and meat cooking festivals. These events are usually cooking competitions; however, the sight of cooking others can be less of an experience for visitors if they are not allowed to consume the competitor’s food. Therefore, to increase the attractiveness of the events and to enhance the visitor experience, it is necessary to supplement them with theatrical, musical programs. The events that focus most on gastronomy are the pork festivals, where the processing of the pork throughout the day is a spectacular element in itself. Here the entertainment programs are the additional elements, not the main attractions (Figure 5.).

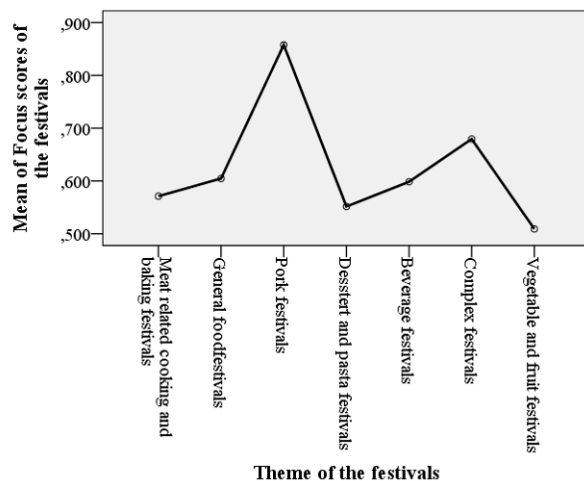


Figure 5. Interrelation between the focus indicator and the theme of the festivals

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

Spatial characteristics of food festivals

In connection with the examination of the spatiality of gastronomic events, we explored how the events were distributed in the Hungarian settlement hierarchy. Based on the results, almost one third of the festivals were held in settlements with a population of over 10,000, which are typically urban, and two-thirds in rural settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants. In the largest proportion of these, large and small villages, settlements with 500 and 4999 inhabitants organized more than half of the gastronomic events in Hungary.

To explore the territorial characteristics, we used the “function” indicator, which refers to the territorial significance, the volume, scale, and attractiveness of the festival. According to the “function” indicator, 14% of the events were aimed at attracting local audiences, their attractiveness was not or less extended to neighbouring settlements. Events that were mainly aimed at the local audience, but also at the surrounding population, were attended by almost 35%. The events that fall into these two categories are less relevant from a tourism point of view and can be defined as local, community events based on the literature. Their role in the survival of the local community and settlements should be emphasized, as joint eating and cooking and joint celebration play a key role in strengthening the identity of the local community (Prezenza, Iocca, 2012; Dwyer, Jago, 2019). Almost 38% of the events, which form a transition between community and tourism-oriented festivals, were attended by local and surrounding

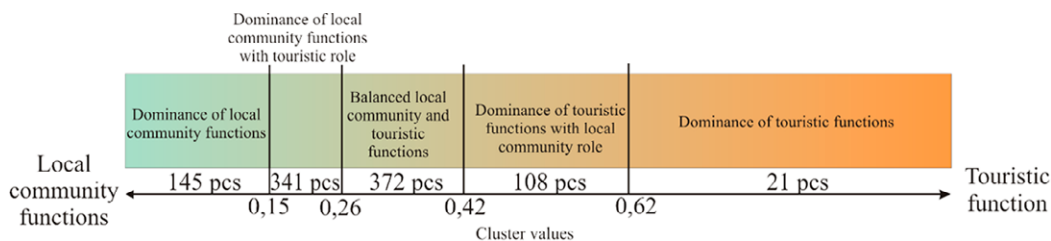


Figure 6. Distribution of the food festivals in the categories of the „function” indicator in 2019

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

residents and tourists in a similar proportion. At the regional level, about 11% of events may be attractive, with the attraction of tourists also appearing as a goal in addition to attracting the local population. While only 2% of festivals have become significant tourism-oriented events at the national level (Figure 6.).

We examined the interrelation between the size of the organizing settlement and the volume and territorial significance (function) of the events. Based on the results, the larger the volume of the event, the larger the size of the event. This is understandable, as in general, settlements with a larger population have more resources and more infrastructural equipment than smaller settlements, so they have better opportunities to organize tourism-oriented festivals (Figure 7.).

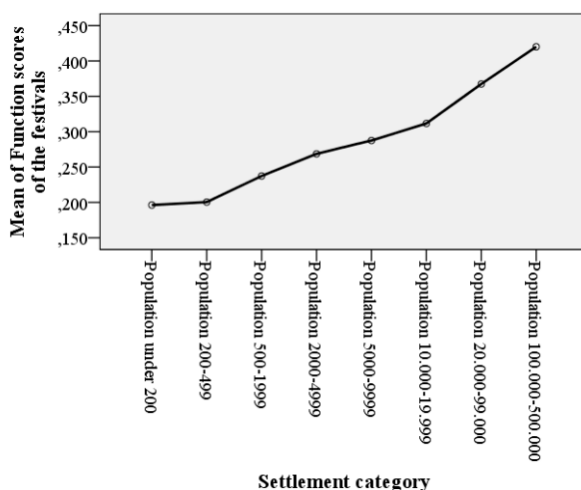


Figure 7. Interrelation between the function indicator and the population of the organizing settlement
Source: Own edition according to own data collection

Temporal characteristics of food festivals

As part of the temporal characterization of the gastro festivals in Hungary, we analysed the years of organization of the events, but 164 events did not reveal how many years they were held. The festivals analysed are quite young. In 2019, most of the festivals were held for the first time, proving both the popularity of organizing gastro festivals and the fluctuation related to them (Figure 8.). From this it can be concluded that fewer festivals have been organized in the past than in recent years, but also that many of them have presumably ceased to be organized, as evidenced by the archive content of previous festival databases.

In connection with the duration of festivals, according to the Hungarian Festival Qualification System, only events that last at least 2 days can be considered as festivals. Based on this 70% of gastronomic events in Hungary cannot be considered gastro-festivals, as so many events lasted only one day (Inkei, 2010) (Table 1).

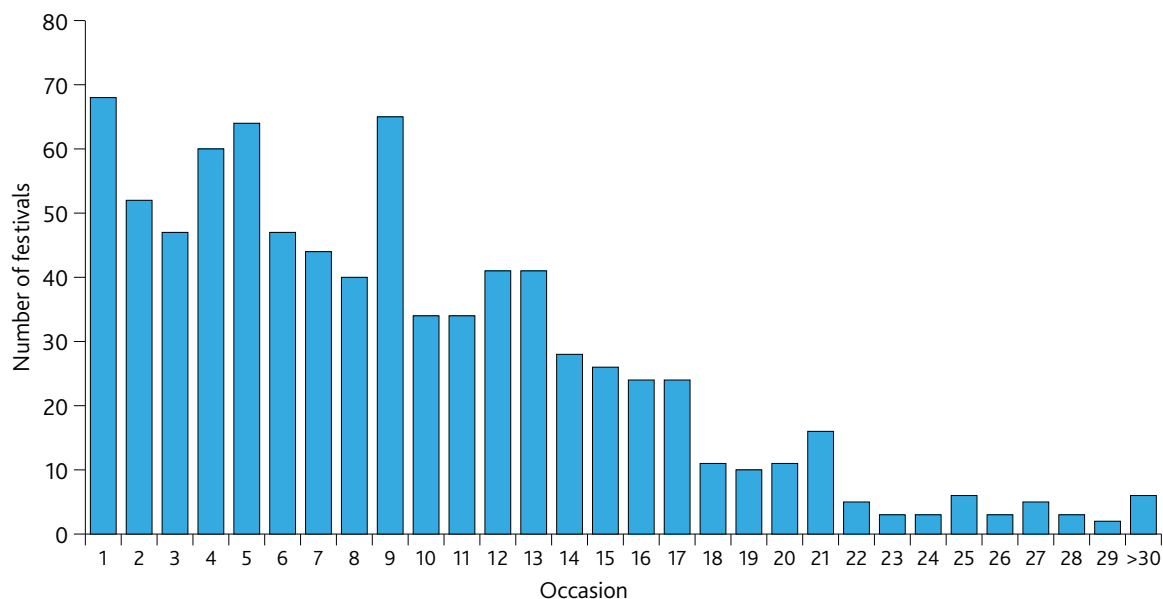


Figure 8. The occasion for organizing food festivals in 2019

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

Table1. The distribution of festivals their duration in 2019

Duration	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	6 days	8 days	9 days	10 or more days
Number of festivals	679	143	112	30	14	1	2	2	4

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

According to the relationship between the length of festivals and their age, with a few exceptions, the longer a festival has been organized, the more days it has been last (Figure 9).

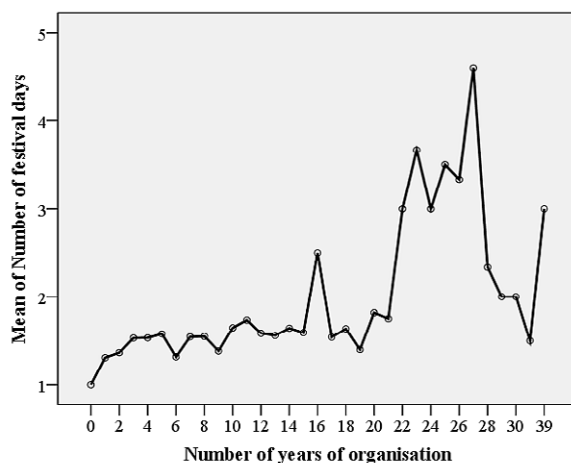


Figure 9. Interrelation between the length and age of festivals

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

In terms of schedule, most festivals were held on summer weekends, but the proportion of autumn events is also high. The proportion of winter events is high compared to the fact that this period is less favourable for tourism in Hungary. The smallest proportion of festivals were held in the spring, which is also a dead season in Hungary (Figure 10). Based on this, gastro festivals really help to prolong the tourist season and also complement the tourist offer.

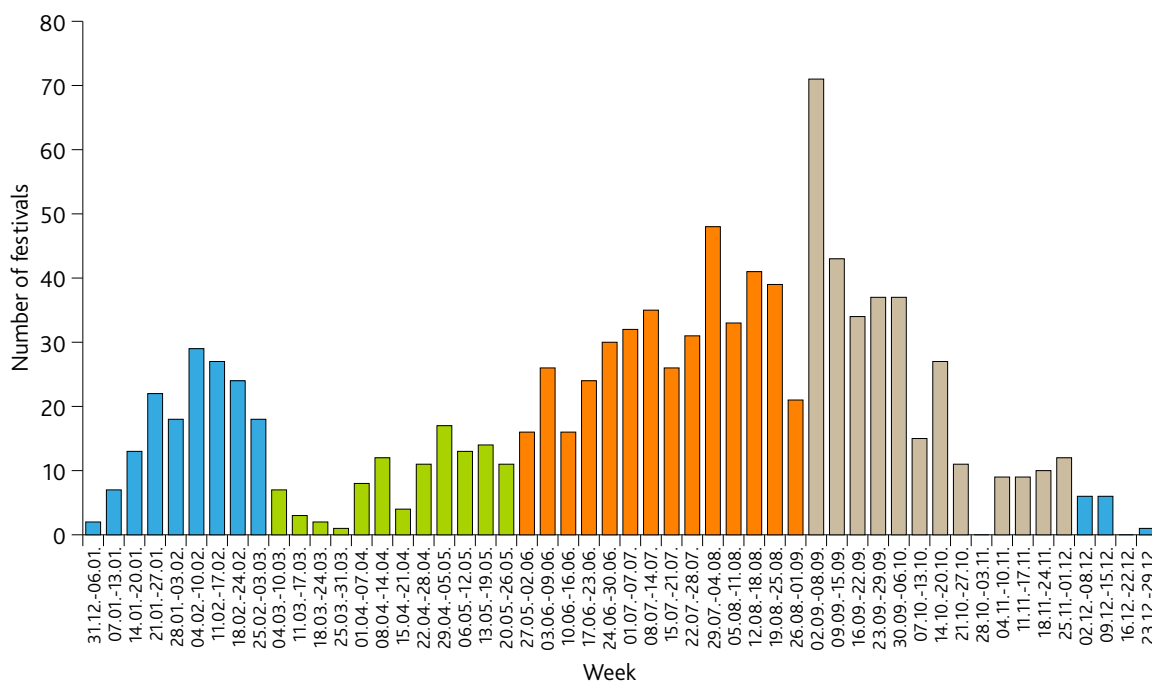


Figure 10. The number of food festivals at the weekends of 2019

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

Discussion

In the research we explored the correlations and differences between the theme, spatial and temporal characteristics of the festivals with the help of ANOVA analysis (Figure 11). The F-value degrees of freedom and significance values obtained between the criteria pairs examined during the ANOVA analysis are plotted in Appendix 1. Pairs that are not significant (Sig. > 0.05) were not analysed. The results are based on the means, therefore they provide a comprehensive, generalizing picture of Hungary’s 2019 festival offer. There may be exceptions when examining all aspects.

According to our research results, there is a correlation and difference between the theme of the festivals and the time characteristics, as the nature of the theme greatly influences the length and schedule of the festivals as well. For example, beverage and complex festivals were, on average, the longest in the year under review, while events related to pig slaughter were the shortest. In connection with the schedule, certain gastronomic products and activities intended for celebration can be linked to a season, which determines the time of organizing the festivals (Lyons, 2008). For example, pig slaughter festivals are typically winter holidays, so they are able to create a tourist offer in the less popular winter tourism season in Hungary.

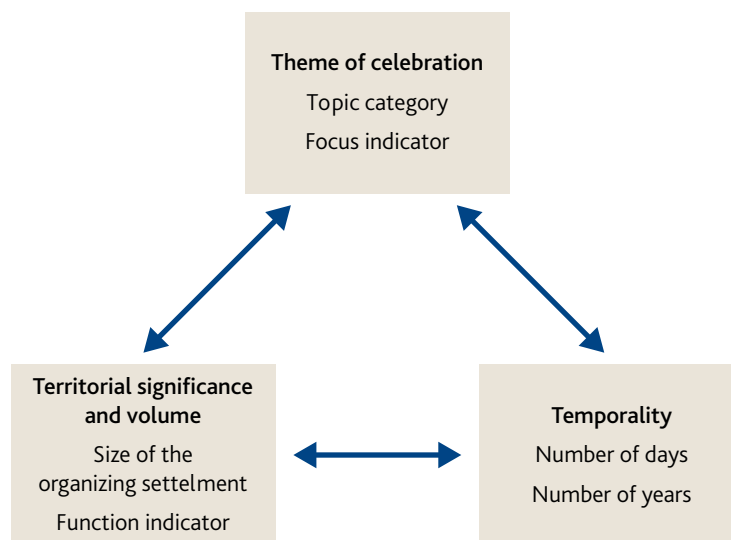


Figure 11. The interrelations between the theme of the celebration, the spatial features and temporality
 Source: Own edition according to own data collection

The oldest festivals, with an average age of over 10, are the meat-making and vegetable-fruit festivals, followed by the beverage and dessert and pasta festivals. In our view, these gastronomic products, crops, and activities may be the most traditions of the organizing settlement, and when they were first held, these themes may have been the most popular ones. While the settlements that later joined the organization of gastro-festivals, did not have a local specificity, or lagged the expropriation of the specifics of the area, decided to organize festivals with complex, general themes (including fashionable street food nowadays) and pig slaughter festivals (Rotherham, 2008; Pusztai, 2020) (Figure 12.). In addition, the youth and high proportion of pork events may be since they can be organized quickly, flexibly and require less high-quality supplementary programs. Pig slaughter is generally characteristic of the whole of Hungary,

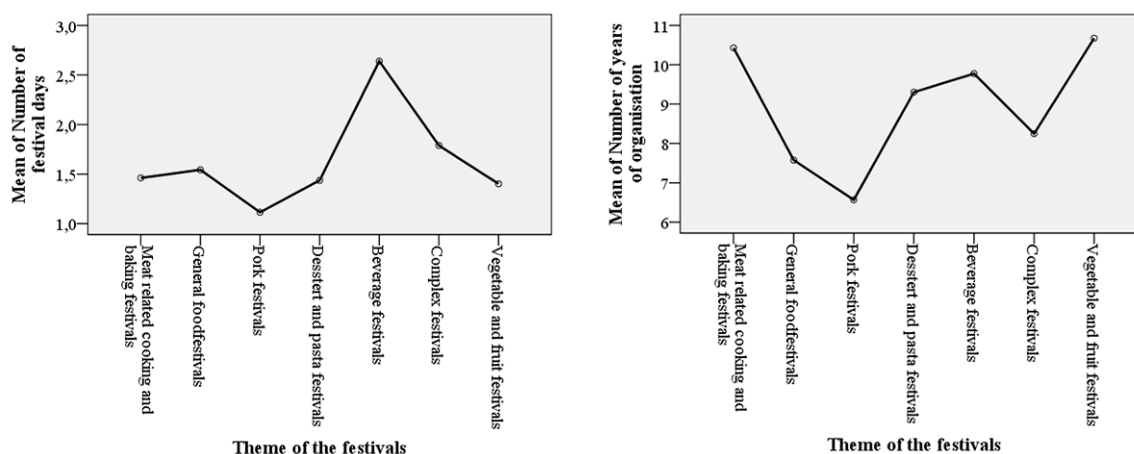


Figure 12. Interrelations between temporality and the theme of festivals
 Source: Own edition according to own data collection

so their organization can be no stranger anywhere, but it appears less and less in the practice of everyday life. In the form of a gastronomic event, this tradition can be carried forward, it can help to create a connection between past and future generations (Bessière, 1998).

The emphasis on the theme and the length of the festival did not show significant results (Appendix 1), so we failed to statistically prove our hypothesis that the longer an event, the more it focuses on the music program offerings. Nevertheless, we consider it important to outline the connections between these aspects, as the trend supports our suggestion. In our view, the reason for the trend may be that the longer a festival lasted, the more cultural programs had to be organized to be able to continuously maintain the interest of visitors with different stage shows. According to the interrelation of focus and temporality, with a few exceptions, the older a festival was, the more it lost its gastronomic character, and its appeal was more in the range of cultural and musical programs (Figure 13.).

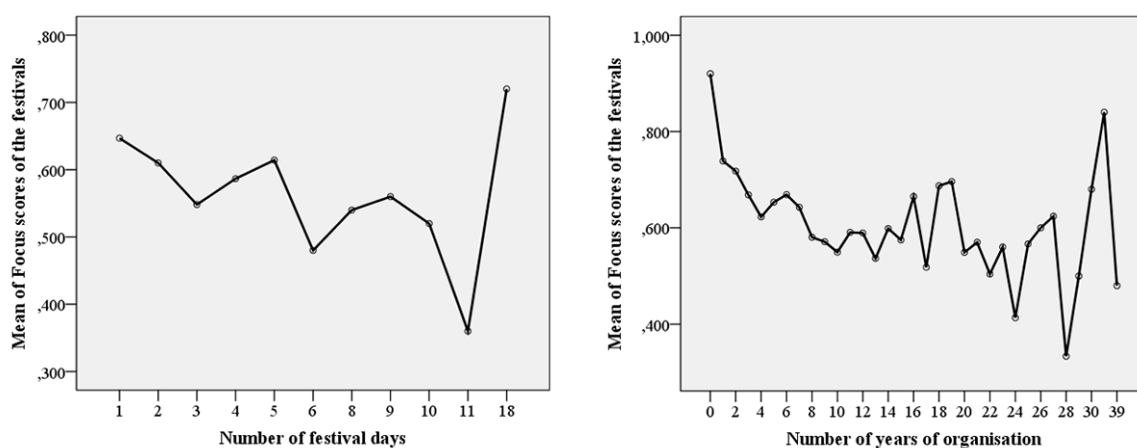


Figure 13. Interrelations between focus indicator and temporality

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

We examined the relationships between the theme of food festivals and spatiality. Vegetable and fruit festivals, pork events and meat cooking festivals are those that have typically taken place in settlements with smaller populations, which is understandable as crop and livestock production are more rural activities. Beverage festivals were typical of larger cities. Both general focus and complex events are more likely to be related to cities, which may be due to the fact that cities are less gastronomic in nature or choose a more general theme to attract a larger audience. The pork events had the smallest volume, so they were typically more traditional community events for the local community, while the biggest tourist attraction was the beverage festivals (figure 14.).

In terms of spatial and temporal characteristics, according to the literature, there are festivals that started as local community events and then, due to their growing importance, became tourism-oriented festivals, which may have resulted in separation from the local community (Smith, 2009; Duffy, Mair, 2014). In this respect, festivals can be considered as tourism products that have a life cycle similar to other tourism products (Butler, 1980; Getz, 2010). The change in the territorial significance of festivals over time is also supported by our research results. According to them, the older a festival is, the greater its territorial significance, but there have been cases, especially after 24 years, of having a lower function. This can be related

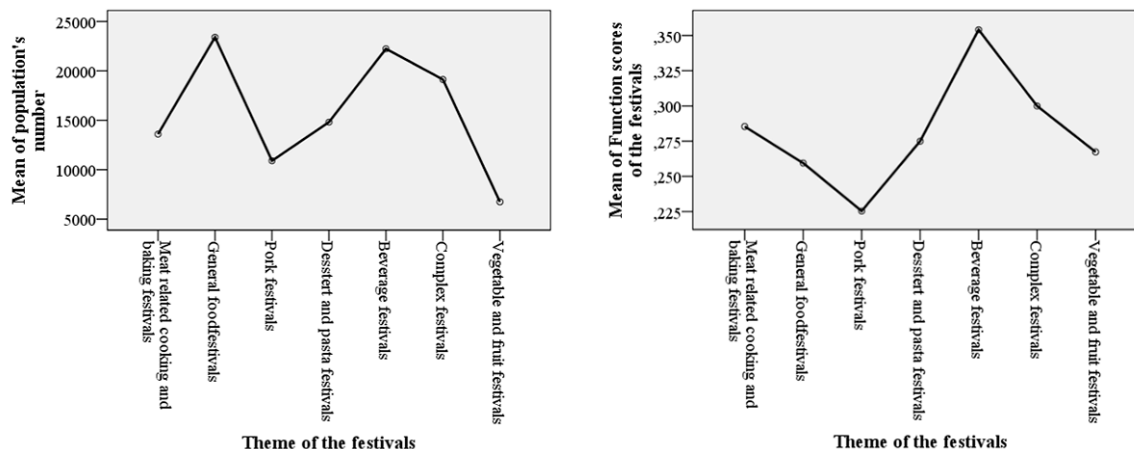


Figure 14. Interrelations between spatiality and the theme of festivals

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

to the mentioned tourism life cycle model, as these events with a long history were presumably in a crisis of renewal in the year under review. Events over the age of 28 have passed this critical period and have been among the gastro festivals with the greatest tourist appeal (Figure 15).

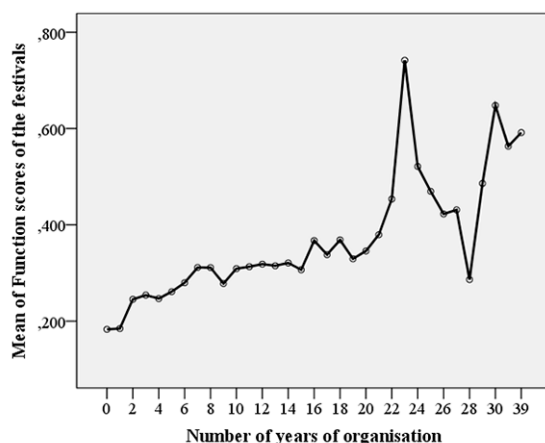


Figure 15. Interrelations between spatiality and the age of festivals

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

The relationship between territorial significance and the length of festivals clearly shows that the longer the festival, the greater its territorial significance and volume, and thus its greater tourist attractiveness. This interrelation is not so clear between the size of the organizing settlement and the length of the festivals, but it should be emphasized that longer festivals are more typical in cities. This can be important, for example, to provide an additional attraction for tourists visiting the city during their stay, as well as to increase the length of stay (Mandabach, Chuanbiao, 2019) (Figure 16).

In connection with the examination of the three aspects of the study, i.e. the theme, spatiality and temporal characteristics, it should be emphasized that, in general, the volume of tourism-oriented events in the Hungarian gastro-festival offer was more typical in cities. These are

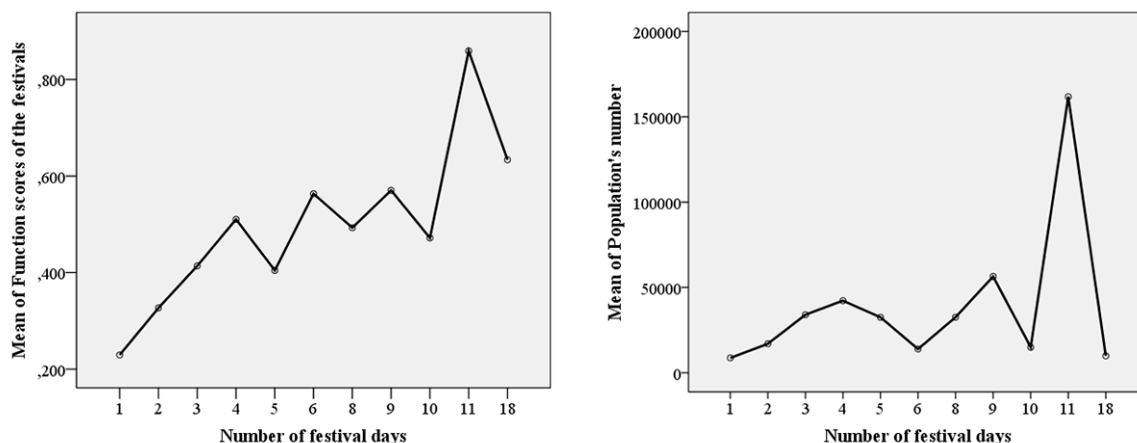


Figure 16. Interrelations between spatiality and the length of festivals

Source: Own edition according to own data collection

the longest and oldest events, their focus has been more on gastronomy than on the music program, and the most typical of these are beverage festivals as well as general-focus events. In contrast, small-scale, local community festivals were typically held in smaller settlements, the most typical of which were more gastronomic pork events and low-gastronomic-focused vegetable and fruit festivals. It is important to note that the results were based on means, and in the overall offer, festivals organized in settlements with a smaller population were much more typical than those organized in larger cities.

Conclusion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of gastro festivals in Hungary at all levels of the settlement hierarchy was popular. Due to the increase and dynamic change in the number of gastro-festivals and the unclear definition of the concept of a festival, no large-scale, empirical research has been conducted on the characteristics of the gastro-festival offer. In our research, we set the goal of filling this gap, and based on our own food festival database, we typed the offer based on the theme intended for the celebration, the spatial and temporal characteristics of the festivals, and we looked for correlations. In the course of the research, we performed media content analysis, and processed the data using advanced statistical methods.

According to the characteristics of the theme, the Hungarian gastro-festival offer was dominated by crop festivals and tradition-preserving holidays, but gastronomic events with a more general focus and presenting current trends also appeared. Most of the events focused on celebrating the marked gastronomic theme in their program offerings, however, there were events in which, despite the gastronomic theme, cultural-music programs were given a more prominent role. This may be due to the fact that some food festival themes (such as cooking competitions) provide less experience for visitors and have been involved through stage programs. According to the spatiality, almost half of the events can be defined as local, community festivals, so their tourist attraction was low, which events were typically held in rural settlements. The temporal analysis of festivals proves the popularity of festival organization, as most festivals were held for the first time in the year under review, and the low number of older festivals

is also justified by the closure of festivals. Festivals in Hungary are typically short, as almost three-quarters of them lasted only one day. On the other hand, it is typical that the older a festival was, the longer it lasted. The majority of the festivals in Hungary took place during the tourist-frequented summer period, but the autumn and winter festivals were also typical, celebrating themes related to these seasons.

Based on the results, in the case of gastro festivals in Hungary there is a correlation and difference between the thematic, spatial, and temporal characteristics of food festivals. The nature of the theme greatly influenced the schedule of the festivals as well as their length. Based on the age of the festivals with different themes, the currently popular themes and trends can be discovered. However, the emphasis of the topic may change over time, as the results show that the longer a festival has been organized, the more it has focused on the musical program offerings instead of gastronomy. While this, of course, as just mentioned, may have been influenced by the current trend theme. We also discovered connections between theme and spatiality. For example, some gastronomic themes were more rural, others were more urban, and the territorial significance of the festivals was different for each theme. The research proves that festivals are time-varying phenomena, as territorial significance can change over time, which fits the product life cycle model, so festivals can also be considered a tourism product. In the context of temporality and spatiality, the interrelation between length and territorial significance shows that the longer a festival is, the greater its tourist significance, while short events have more of a local, community function.

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Appendix 1. Main values of each one-way ANOVA analysis of the food festivals

Analysed features	F ratio	df	Sig.
Mean of Focus scores of the festivals and Theme of the festivals	38,913	6	,000
Mean of Function scores of the festivals and Settlement category	26,666	7	,000
Mean of Number of festival days and Number of years of organisation	3,147	32	,000
Mean of Number of festival days and Theme of the festivals	29,786	6	,000
Mean of Number of years of organisation and Theme of the festivals	8,243	6	,000
Mean of Focus scores of the festivals and Number of festival days	1,575	10	,109
Mean of Focus scores of the festivals and Number of years of organisation	1,664	32	,013
Mean of population's number and Theme of festivals	5,561	6	,000
Mean of Function scores of the festivals and Theme of festivals	15,306	6	,000
Mean of Focus scores of the festivals and Settlement category	1,248	7	,273
Mean of Focus scores of the festivals and Function clusters of the festivals	2,045	4	,086
Mean of Function scores of the festivals and Number of years of organisation	7,549	32	,000
Mean of population's number and Number of years of organisation	1,092	32	,334
Mean of Function scores of the festivals and Number of festival days	57,658	10	,000
Mean of population's number and Number of festival days	13,608	10	,000