

Traveling in the Footsteps of ABBA

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Life is short, the world is wide
Young Donna in *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again*

BEFORE THE INTERNET ERA SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS SWEDES were Björn Borg, Greta Garbo, Astrid Lindgren, and of course ABBA, a legendary band in pop music history. ABBA's international breakthrough came with winning the Eurovision Song Contest in 1974, after which it toured the world for many years, playing its last live concert in 1980. The band is closely associated with Sweden, even to the point where Swedish music was once synonymous with ABBA, and therefore attracts people's interest in Sweden as a place to visit (*Visit Sweden*). Traveling in the footsteps of ABBA involves people traveling as either fans, pilgrims, concertgoers, or festival attendees and is a type of music tourism (Lashua et al. 4). Music tourism is by no means a new tourism phenomenon (Gibson and Connell 162), but tourism associated with mass-produced popular music is of course a more recent thing.

The number of tourists who visit Sweden and other related sites internationally because of ABBA is unknown. In fact, there is little empirical research on music tourism in general, with the exception of

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a few specific case studies on the Beatles and Liverpool (Cohen), the Korean pop wave (Kim and Nam), and the Eurovision Song Contest (Linden and Linden). Qualitative research on music tourism is also scant. One exception is a study by Leonieke Bolderman and Stijn Reijnders about fans of ABBA, U2, and Wagner, in which they found that ABBA fans travelled as a way of sharing identities across generations.

Based on the scarcity of research on music tourism and music tourists in particular, there is a need for more empirical research. The overall purpose of this study is to substantiate ABBA tourism, as it appears several decades after the band's last live concert, by empirically identifying and describing ABBA fans' activity as tourists. In previous literature, fan involvement and social identity are important concepts in the study of fans and include an interest in their motives for travel, the value they place on it, and their online interaction. The research questions are as follows: (i) what are the profiles and online practices of fans who travel with an interest in ABBA; and (ii) what is the relationship among the concepts of involvement, social identity, motive, social value, perceived value and future behavior, and online fan practices for ABBA fans? An online survey among ABBA fans is the method for data collection in this study.

The answers to these questions are important for tourist destinations associated with ABBA in regard to promotion and marketing. In general, the knowledge may help tourist destinations become more proactive instead of reactive to the sudden demand often associated with popular culture tourism, such as music tourism (Larson et al. 75). New insights in music tourism are also necessary in a changing global context where tourism has become more and more interlinked with media.

Notably, Madelene McWha and Sue Beeton have recently suggested that major changes in the way travel and tourism engage with popular media can be expected in the future. These changes may affect the continuing popularity of ABBA's music, musicals and films, and the tourist destinations associated with them. Today, visitors in Sweden are able to walk in the footsteps of ABBA at the Polar Music Studios, various music video and photo shooting locations, band-member birthplaces, and the grave of their manager Stikkan Anderson (Tollstoy). The Stockholm City Museum has offered guided tours of ABBA sites since 2011 ("ABBA City Walk"), and there is a

guidebook including more than sixty places associated with ABBA (Russel). There is also the International ABBA Weekend, which is the world's largest and greatest ABBA party (*ABBA: The Official Site*). In Ireland, U2 is honored with a small exhibition at the Little Museum of Dublin and plans for a U2 museum have been approved (Kelly), but ABBA already has a museum in Sweden, built in 2013. In addition, a digital reconstruction of the band has been created and is set to perform in 2019 ("The Story").

Research on music tourism is to a great degree centered on travel to live music performances, such as festivals and concerts, or to places of musical heritage. Tourist destinations promote their musical heritage as a strategy of economic and cultural development (*Visit Stockholm*). Although there is not a stable definition of musical heritage, research tends to focus on conventional tangible formats and practices which overlooks the fan-driven practices that also shape music tourism (Brandellero and Janssen 236).

This article incorporates fans and the fan experience into the study of music tourism, expanding beyond live performances and cultural heritage. Research on the personal experiences of the fan-tourists, and how music shapes their attraction to a place, is limited (Reijnders et al. 335). The following definition of music tourism, introduced by Chris Gibson and John Connell, is useful: "travel, at least in some part, because of a connection with music" (161).

Needs, motives, and motivation are drivers of human behavior. Traditionally, researchers view tourists' motives as either a need or desire to leave the ordinary life of home or a strong attraction to a destination. In this mix, fans may search for nostalgia, authenticity, and belonging. Nostalgia is a salient theme in research on fans, and Christian Hviid Mortensen and Jacob Westergaard Madsen propose that eliciting nostalgic experiences is important for bridging a generational gap among visitors of pop/rock exhibitions, including at ABBA the Museum (259). These visitors may have no living memories of the band, but are cognitively and emotionally immersed and absorbed in media reconstructions of a pop/rock heritage. Bolderman and Reijnders found that proximity is an important motivation for music tourism and that the experience is an extension of home, not an escape as previously conceptualized for tourists in general (172–73). A significant factor shaping the fan practice of traveling to places associated with music is the bodily experience and sense of "being

there" (177). The act of traveling to a place associated with a particular interest in a popular culture phenomenon such as music can be a form of pilgrimage and an important link between music, identity, and place (Gibson and Connell 186). The popular destination of Graceland is even seen by some as a place of cultural religious heritage. As Matt Hills explains of fan pilgrimage, "'inhabitation' . . . forms an important part of cult fan's extensions and expressions of the fan-text relationship" (110). For the fan tourist, "fandom is now physical just as much as tourism is now mediated" (Geraghty 203). On this latter point, the mediation of tourism and music tourism is as much centered in digital action and interaction. As an example, the Greek islands of Skiathos and Skopelos, used as filming locations in *Mamma Mia!*, produce cinematic tourism through both virtual, imaginative, and embodied tourist mobilities where new technologies play a big role in shaping commodified pilgrimage, such as to the chapel of Agios Ioannis in Skopelos (Tzanelli).

What also shapes the fan practice of traveling is the issue of active or passive engagement. As a study by Rebecca Johnke shows, fans who take walking tours engage in a form of embodied music tourism that connects them with place (327). It is a meaningful event in their identity construction and essential to their "self-making." They not only see the sights but actively walk in the footsteps of their idols, creating their own narrative in that place. Thereby, fans engage with popular media and popular music through tourism. However, different types and levels of involvement among fans need further investigation as well as the implications of this for the formation of intentions to travel.

In addition to engagement and involvement, central research themes in the domain of fans and their fan practices are fandoms as a social network that shapes individual identity and provides an extension of self. Very active participation by and between fans both online and in "real life" (Hills 175), and its subsequent cocreation of content typical of the current postmodern era (Vargo and Lusch), define these social networks. Social networks are, in many countries, especially in high-income OECD member countries, to a great degree digitalized. Looking at fan practices such as tourism, the digital turn of society is a far-reaching change. In tourism, information is the "life blood" and therefore digitalization has an extensive impact on many aspects of tourism, especially information search, decisionmaking, and feedback.

Therefore, it is necessary to further understand how digital media shapes human meaning-making and cognition, or, as in this case, the influence on travel intentions (Westera 6). As Lexhagen concluded, social dimensions of fans as tourists are important to further study both in online and offline contexts (244).

For example, online fan communities are platforms for fan discourse, allowing fans to respond and react according to their interests and in interactions with other fans, which in turn may alter their social practices such as traveling (Todd). Moreover, previous research on sports fans shows that online media usage has a strong impact on maintaining and increasing social identity (Phua 201). Technology per se is a tool for fan cultures to stay in contact and share content but also to interact with commercial producers of popular culture, creating further participation and interaction in digital communities (Jenkins et al.).

Interactivity, sharing, and commitment in online communities are important drivers of how fans experience and explore emotions in this “affective space,” where fan practices are not determined by either the product or the consumer alone (Marsh and Roberts 428). Social media in particular can play a central role in global cultural flows. Fans prefer social media as a means to stay in touch with the fandom because of its “easy access,” “fast update,” “low cost,” and “modes of sharing” (Jung and Doobo 497).

Conceptual Framework

Studies have previously confirmed that popular culture has an impact on the desire to visit a destination. For instance, K-pop (Korean popular music) has emerged as a highly fan-driven popular culture phenomenon, largely pushed by consumption and circulation on social media. The South Korean government has featured K-pop in its nation-branding strategies to attract tourism (Ehlin), and, indeed, an increase in South Korea tourism related to K-pop has been reported (Lee and Bai 163). Furthermore, research shows that K-pop supports a positive image of South Korea as a destination and has a stronger influence on the nation’s image formation, surpassing other promotional activities in attracting tourists (167). Thus, popular music heritage can be important, as concluded by Peter Schofield, in defining

Involvement appears as a concept in many studies of sports fans but only rarely in studies on other popular culture phenomenon. Related specifically to music tourism, we find that Scott Thorne and Gordon C. Bruner use fan involvement as a concept to develop a typology of music fans. Since involvement in this study was measured both as a construct for on- and offline fan practices, it includes personal, situational, and product involvement in line with its use in studies of intention to purchase travel products by social media users (Huang et al. 523–24).

Social identity is another concept used in many research domains relating to human behavior. Focusing on group membership (rather than role-identity based on the theory of identity), the fan identification concept in Figure 1, derived from social identity theory, is defined as “an orientation of the self in regard to other objects, including a person or group, that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment” (Trail et al. 10). Importantly, and related to tourism, research on sport spectators has shown that the more fans identify themselves with the object of their fascination, the more likely they will travel (Smith and Stewart 162). Following Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Klein Pearo, the concept of social identity has three components: cognitive, affective, and evaluative. The cognitive component is how the individual forms a self-awareness of membership while the affective component implies that social identity includes emotional involvement with the group. Evaluative social identity focuses on the evaluation of self-worth based on belonging to the community. Research on music festival participants on a cruise ship exemplifies the evaluative aspect, showing how participants formed a temporary community—the “ship-fam”—that not only met during the festival but also sometimes in-between (Cashman 246).

In the tourism domain, there are many types of tourist motives. A long tradition of studying tourist motives has brought us an understanding of tourists’ motives as continuums of seeking—escapism, push-pull, and personal and interpersonal rewards (Figure 1). Motives develop either from internal needs, including social interaction, or from attractive characteristics of a desirable place to visit (Crompton; Dann; Uysal et al.). In fan studies, three dimensions of fan motives are mostly used for conceptualization: psychological, sociocultural, and social belonging. Specific examples of psychological motives are eustress, escapism, aesthetic pleasure, drama, and entertainment

(Smith and Stewart 158). Examples of sociocultural motives are spending time with family, friends, and other like-minded people as well as cultural connections with mythical images, icons and symbols, and nostalgic reflection (Smith and Stewart 161–62). Social belongingness motives, on the other hand, focus on tribal connections, vicarious achievement, and self-esteem (Smith and Stewart 162–64). Social belongingness motives may also predict subsequent travel behavior (Smith and Stewart 162).

There is no universally agreed upon set of criteria for understanding motivation in various settings. However, many types of motives and combinations of motives can help explain why people behave in certain ways in more than one type of setting. For example, a study of European dance music (EDM) tourists in Berlin points out that the primary motive is being a fan of EDM rather than being attracted to traditional tourist attractions and experiences. Motives related to a sense of affinity with other fans, as well as the atmosphere and authenticity of the place and the experience, and performative participation in local daily life are very important (Garcia). Therefore, we argue that, in studies of music tourists, it is important to acknowledge both typical tourist motives as well as those specific to the study of fans.

In this study, the concepts of web usage and perceptions of web experiences represent online practices. Web usage is the frequency of Internet and social media use (Figure 1). Related to this, and following Margret M. Bradley and Peter J. Lang (50), we specify web experience as measurement items using semantic differential scales of emotions related to arousal and feeling pleased.

Both as an outcome of concepts, such as involvement, social identity, and online practices, and an influencing factor of intentions, perceived value is an important aspect of tourism behavior (Figure 1). Especially due to the intangible, experiential, and cocreative nature of the tourism product, it is also a multidimensional concept (Sánchez et al.). Customers' perceptions of value are dependent on the trade-off between negative and positive consequences (Zeithaml), the situation at hand, subjective experiences, characteristics and conditions of the customer, level of interaction in the process of value-creation, as well as linkages between product attributes and desired end-states (Woodruff and Gardial; Woodruff). It is also a relative concept since it is comparative and based on evaluative dimensions such as preferences

and perceptions about quality and satisfaction (Holbrook). The position of value in tourism research is that motives are important drivers of perceived value, which in turn is an important antecedent of future intention (Prebensen et al. 254). In this study, perceived value includes dimensions of perceptions about functional, emotional, and social value.

The basis for the main outcome variable in Figure 1, future behavior, is the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen) and the later theory of planned behavior (Ajzen). This theory postulates that intentions precede actual behavior and intentions are a result of beliefs about desirable outcomes of a certain behavior. Furthermore, attitudes toward purchasing a product based on previous experience shapes behavioral intention, hence showing how perceptions about experiences (e.g., satisfaction and value) create interest in re-purchasing and recommendation as a form of loyal behavior (Oliver and Burke 211). Importantly for research in music tourism, loyalty toward an event or a destination is dependent on intensity of involvement by fans of a K-pop pop star (Lee and Yoo 384). In this study, future behavior relates to intention to participate in future travel and events related to ABBA and intention to recommend others to participate.

Related to the purpose of this study, to show the influence of involvement and social identity on travel motives, perceived value, and travel intentions, including the moderating effect of online practices, the relationships between the theoretical concepts are explored in a prior analysis (Lexhagen et al.). The analysis approach was structural equation modeling based on the same survey data as in this article. In summary, overall, the level of involvement among fans, fans' perceived association with the ABBA community, and their interest in and perception of information in blogs and online communities affect their average use of online platforms. This, in turn, has a modest positive effect on social values implying that when fans prioritize their interest and sense that ABBA products are rewarding and closely tied to their personality, they engage online more frequently. They also engage more when they are generally very interested as well as holding the belief that online engagement is an efficient way of finding information. When their self-image fits with the community or they have a strong feeling of belonging, attachment, and membership (i.e., social identity), they also engage more frequently online, which then results

in a positive social value (i.e., a sense of social approval, self-esteem, and positive perception of and acceptance by others).

Furthermore, the positive effect of online engagement on excitement and feeling pleased when online, as well as for social value and future intentions, is evidence of how digital interactions influence perceptions of value and future travel intentions. When fans have a great interest in blogs and online communities and find them appealing, personally meaningful, reliable, an efficient way of finding information, and free from commercial interests, then they feel happy, pleased, and contented, but also aroused, frenzied, and excited. This in turn supports their social value in terms of feelings of acceptance, approval, self-esteem, and impression on other people and eventually affects their likelihood to travel or to recommend travel to others.

It is interesting to note, however, that social identity (attachment, belongingness, membership, and sense of fit between the self-image and identity of the community) is less important for creating positive web experiences and increased likelihood of future ABBA-related travel.

As expected from previous tourism literature, travel motives have considerable importance for perceived experience value (Prebensen et al.). However, some of the typical motives for travel, such as meeting friends and partying, are of less importance for attaining high levels of functional, emotional, and social value compared to those involving excitement, experiencing new and different things, and bonding with ABBA and the ABBA community. In turn, future travel intentions depend very much on perceived emotional, social, and functional value. Especially, fans who experience feelings of absorption, escape, and excitement and who learn new things are more interested in ABBA-related travel in the future. Elements of perceived value, such as high-quality experiences, meeting expectations, value for money, enjoyment, and that the trip was worth the time and effort, are also important for establishing an interest in future travel.

Study Inquiry

Popular culture tourism destinations often face a new or significant change in demand and mostly use a reactive strategy to address it.

Knowledge of what influences traveling fans would help destinations and tourism businesses to understand better the prerequisites for impacts, marketing, and development. Furthermore, literature lacks empirical studies on music tourists and in particular what shapes their interest in traveling. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify and describe ABBA fans as tourists, including their online practices, and to show the influence of involvement and social identity on travel motives, perceived value, and travel intentions, including the moderating effect of online practices.

Data were collected through an online survey available via a link on the official ABBA fan club website, other ABBA fan club websites, ABBA-related Facebook groups, Twitter, and the ABBA Museum's Facebook page. The total number of respondents was 1,286. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were used to analyze the data. Also, a two-step cluster analysis was done in order to segment ABBA tourists. In the prior analysis of relationships among theoretical concepts, structural equation modeling was used.

For a detailed description of the method and statistical results for this study, please see Maria Lexhagen, Tatiana Chekalina, and Christine Lundberg.¹

Overall Characteristics of ABBA Tourists in This Study

The ABBA tourists included in this study listen to ABBA mostly every day or between one and six times a week. Most of them became fans when ABBA was still actively recording and performing. However, a number of others have become fans of ABBA at a later or much later date. The absolute majority became fans between under twelve and nineteen years of age. Table 1 below summarizes the main characteristics of the ABBA tourists included in this study.

Fan Segments: Profile and Behavior

In response to the overall purpose of identifying and describing ABBA fans as tourists, and based on the conceptual framework previously introduced, we will, in this section, present the findings of the segmentation analysis. The findings provide insights into the heterogeneous fan community of ABBA fans. The section begins with a

Table 1
Sample characteristics

| ABBA tourists included in the study | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Gender | |
| Male | 58.3% |
| Female | 41.6% |
| Transgender | 0.1% |
| Age (between 16 and 65, majority categories to the right) | |
| 35–44 years | 23% |
| 45–55 years | 58% |
| Country of origin (58 countries in total, majority categories to the right) | |
| United Kingdom | 17.6% |
| Netherlands | 11.7% |
| Germany | 11% |
| Civil status (majority categories) | |
| Singles with or without children under 18 | 44.5% |
| In relationship without children under 18 | 26.2% |
| In relationship with children under 18 | 15.4% |
| Sexual orientation | |
| Heterosexual | 59% |
| Homosexual | 36.2% |
| Bisexual | 4.8% |
| ABBA fan status and consumption | |
| Perceive themselves as ABBA fans (scale 1–7) | \bar{x} = 6.5 |
| Not seen a live ABBA concert | 77% |
| Members of the international ABBA fan club | 34%** |
| Own all ABBA albums | >80%** |
| Own ABBA memorabilia or merchandise | >75%** |
| Attendance of ABBA tribute band concerts | 64%** |
| Seen the musical <i>Chess</i> | 50%** |
| Seen the musical <i>Kristina from Duvemåla</i> | 26%** |
| Visited ABBA the Museum in Stockholm | 32%** |
| Travelled to Sweden due to its association to ABBA | 51%** |
| Travelled based on their interest in ABBA | 86%** |
| Traveling for the purpose of attending an ABBA-related event | 55.1%** |
| ABBA as primary travel motive (of which 19% taking international trips) travelled more than 10 times | 37% |
| ABBA as primary travel motive travelled 1–10 times | 62% |
| Shared experience online after trip (blogs and communities) (scale 1–7) | \bar{x} = 4.1 |
| Most common duration of trip | 4–7 days |
| Maximum expenditure for ABBA trip | \$35,000 |
| Majority's expenditure for ABBA trip | Up to \$1000 (\bar{x} = \$500) |
| ABBA online practices | |
| Visited ABBA-related websites, blogs or communities several times a day to few times per week | 66.3% |

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

| ABBA tourists included in the study | |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Find information on band members | 46%* |
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Read of watch ABBA-related content | 44%* |
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Find information in general about ABBA | 38%* |
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Purchase ABBA-related product | 35%* |
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Find exclusive content | 27%* |
| <i>Motivation for online activity</i> : Interact with other fans | 22%* |
| Used blogs and communities to plan their participation in ABBA-related travel (scale 1–7) | $\bar{x} = 4.9$ |
| Information found online influenced decision to participate in ABBA-related travel (scale 1–7) | $\bar{x} = 4.1$ |
| Primary source of information prior to the ABBA trip | |
| ABBA-related websites | 43% |
| Other websites | 14.8% |
| Social media | 11.8% |
| Travel operator/travel agency | 11% |
| Other ABBA-related sources | 7.1% |
| Offline word-of-mouth | 6.3% |
| ABBA travel companions | |
| Real-life friends and/or family | 67% |
| By themselves | 27.4% |
| Online friend or real-life and online friends | 5.6% |
| Future ABBA-related travel and recommendations | |
| Interested in future ABBA-related travel (scale 1–7) | $\bar{x} = 5.4$ |
| Recommend others to participate in ABBA travel (scale 1–7) | $\bar{x} = 5$ |

*Proportion of respondents who indicated this motive as one of the top three among the alternatives.

**Part of fan involvement index.

segmentation based on involvement and social identity followed by a segmentation based on type of motivation for traveling. The next two subsections described these segments in terms of fans' online practices and their perceived value and future travel intentions.

Interested, Hooked, or Enthusiastic Fan Segments

An examination of the descriptive analysis results suggests that ABBA fans do not constitute a homogeneous group. This result is coherent with leisure research studies on involvement where Mark E. Havitz and Frédéric Dimanche (144) propose the use of segmentation to capture the various facets of how involvement influences behavior. In this study, based on involvement and perceptions of social identity among

fans, these three segments emerged: (i) interested nondevoted; (ii) hooked independent; and (iii) eager-enthusiastic group member.

The interested nondevoted group, the smallest group, has a generally low level of involvement and social identity but a high level of general interest in ABBA. They express this as an interest in ABBA, and they label themselves as ABBA fans.

The hooked independent group, the largest segment, is more involved in its ABBA interest. The members prioritize their interest over other things and purchase ABBA-related products as a reward or symbol of their personality and character. They are also more involved and interested in online information and interaction, especially in terms of looking for information that is appealing, relevant, and meaningful on a personal level, as an efficient way of finding information, and represents a place inaccessible to people outside the ABBA community. However, they have low scores for all measures on social identity, implying that they do not have a sense of attachment, belongingness, membership, or sense of fit between self-image and community identity. At the same time, they identify themselves as ABBA fans.

Fans who belong to the eager-enthusiastic group identify themselves as ABBA fans, have high scores for both on- and offline involvement, as well as social identity. They are highly involved with their interest in ABBA and their related online activities and experience a sense of fit between their own self and the group identity. Especially those ABBA fans traveling with friends they met online, and fans who attended more than ten ABBA-related events or trips, view themselves as valuable members of the online ABBA community (i.e., social identity).

Remarkably, the eager-fans segment has many more single members, with or without children (62.5 percent), than those who are married or live in common law relationships (37.5 percent), while the proportion of singles and couples is relatively even among the other two segments. It is also interesting that singles are significantly more interested in purchasing ABBA merchandise and reading and showing more trust in blogs and communities, and they score higher on all indicators of social identity.

The eager-enthusiastic group members have a significantly lower income level compared to the other two fan segments: 62 percent of this group, 49 percent of hooked independents, and 47 percent of

interested nondevoted fans report income below \$50,000. Fans with income below \$20,000 have the highest online and offline involvement and social identity scores, and fans with income above \$90,000 have the lowest. Income goes hand in hand with price sensitivity, as 38 percent of eager fans, 22 percent of hooked independent fans, and only 10 percent of interested nondevoted fans agree with the statement that price is the main criterion for the decision to participate in ABBA-related trips and events.

From Highly Motivated to Emotional Junky Fan Segments

Based on types of travel motive, five segments emerge: (i) highly motivated; (ii) shillyshallies; (iii) get-togethers; (iv) thrill seekers; and (v) emotional junkies. The highly motivated group of fans, which is also the biggest segment, have high scores for all types of motives, which means they are motivated by ABBA-specific things like belonging to an ABBA community, belongingness with ABBA, immersion in an ABBA atmosphere, and participation in ABBA-related activities. Nevertheless, other traditional types of tourism motives are also important for these group members, such as being with friends and family; having fun and enjoying themselves; experiencing new, exciting, and different things; getting away; or visiting an attractive or particular destination. The shillyshallies, the smallest segment, have low scores and are scattered across all types of motives without any distinct pattern. The third segment, the get-togethers (equal in size with segment four and five), focus on social aspects. Experiencing an ABBA atmosphere, meeting old friends, and having fun with friends and family are typical motives. The fourth segment, the thrill seekers, are different in that they focus more on traditional tourism motives, such as having fun and excitement, experiencing new and different things, and visiting an attractive or particular destination. Finally, the emotional junkies group of fans have high scores for motives, related to an ABBA atmosphere, belonging to ABBA and the ABBA community in combination with fun and excitement, and experiencing new and different things.

Among the five segments, the group of highly motivated fans has the highest scores on all aspects of fan involvement such as interest in merchandise and engagement with the online community, as well as on social identity with the fan community. The highly motivated

fans group is also the dominating segment within the eager-enthusiastic-group-member segment, implying that the highly motivated in fact overlap (60 percent) with the fan segment where fans identify themselves as fans of ABBA and who have a strong sense of social identity with the community and engage largely in online practices. There are also other overlaps between involvement and identity segments and the motivation segments. The hooked independent fans who really identify with ABBA represent more than half of the fans in the get-togethers, thrill seekers, and emotional junkies segments.

Thrill seekers have particularly low scores for social identity and they show a lack of appreciation of ABBA online communities as an information source. The overlaps between segments also offer interesting clarity on how those who are indecisive and have low travel motivation (the shillyshallies) overlap (almost 50 percent) with the interested nondevoted fans who are not very involved and do not identify with the community but still consider themselves as fans. In terms of digital practices, the shillyshallies segment has the lowest scores for all aspects of offline and online fan involvement and social identity and the lowest for identification as an ABBA fan.

The highly motivated fans and get-togethers have the highest proportion of fans who attended more than ten ABBA-related trips or events (47 percent and 51 percent, respectively), while thrill-seeking visitors are the least experienced ABBA travelers, with 32 percent participating in one to two and 49 percent in three to ten ABBA-related trips or events. The “emotional junkies” segment has the highest proportion of solo ABBA travelers (47 percent) followed by “shillyshallies” (38 percent), while around 70 percent of highly motivated fans, get-togethers, and thrill seekers travel with family and friends. In addition, highly motivated fans, shillyshallies, and get-togethers travel together with online friends (6–8 percent) more than thrill seekers and emotional junkies (1 percent).

Online Fan Practices

The clear majority of the eager-enthusiastic group members visit ABBA websites, blogs, or communities very often, that is, every day (63 percent) or every week (23 percent). The hooked independents are a little less active in their ABBA web usage than eager-enthusiastic fans. Nevertheless, about 70 percent of hooked independent fans visit

ABBA-related websites, blogs, or communities every day or every week. The situation is the opposite for the interested nondevoted fans, as the majority (60 percent) visit ABBA online resources a few times every month or less. ABBA fans who visit ABBA websites, blogs, or communities every day also show the highest degree of fan involvement based on the index (see Table 1). Active online fans also travel more, since about half of those who visit ABBA websites, blogs, or communities daily have also participated in more than ten ABBA-related trips. They demonstrate the highest degree of social identity and score highest on the travel motives related to being part of an ABBA community, experiencing the ABBA atmosphere, and appreciating the social aspects of ABBA travel such as partying, meeting old and new friends, and sharing the experience with their travel companions.

Unsurprisingly, the travel motive to interact with other fans is essential for most ABBA fans traveling with their online friends. The eager-enthusiastic group members and those visiting ABBA websites, blogs, or communities every day also largely identify interaction with other fans as an essential travel motive. The daily online users in comparison with other fans score highest on emotional aspects of web experience such as being aroused, frenzied, excited, contented, pleased, and happy, indicating the importance of emotional aspects of online fan practices. Frequent web users also have the highest level of general interest in ABBA, identify with ABBA, and have an interest in the online ABBA community.

It is evident that online fan practices affect future travel intentions since the absolute majority of ABBA fans (92 percent) that use information in blogs and online communities for planning trips and events agree that it has also influenced their final decision. There are slight differences between the involvement and identity segments where eager-enthusiastic group member fans use blogs to plan their ABBA-related travel more (83 percent) than the hooked independent fans (62 percent). Among the interested nondevoted fans there is much less (62 percent state to a low extent or not at all) use of blogs or communities to plan ABBA-related travel and the information mostly (81 percent) did not influence their travel decision.

In respect to the motivation-based segments, highly motivated fans and get-togethers use blogs or communities to a great extent to plan ABBA-related travel, and over half in each group consider blogs or communities important for their decision to travel. Use of blogs or

communities to plan travel is lowest among shillyshallies and thrill seekers even though over half of them in each group do so.

The emotions evoked when using blogs or communities show the highest scores for the eager-enthusiastic ABBA fans, highly motivated fans, fans that widely use blogs or communities for travel planning and decisionmaking, and fans with the lowest income below \$20,000. The emotional junkies segment scores high on excitement, happiness, and pleasure when using ABBA blogs or communities. The singles group, as opposed to those in a relationship, have higher scores for emotional response in terms of arousal, frenzy, excitement, and happiness.

The Many Faces of Perceived Value and Travel Intentions

The results suggest that the involvement and social identity segment of eager-enthusiast group members have the highest scores on all aspects (functional, emotional, and social) of the perceived value of an ABBA-related trip or event. This includes the overall quality evaluation, including value for the money, time and effort spent, enjoyment, excitement, escape, absorption in the experience, the novelty value of learning about new information and trends, and the social value of acceptance, approval, self-esteem, making an impression on other people and social interaction. The same applies to the highly motivated fans. The emotional junkies segment has somewhat lower scores on novelty value and social value but high scores on other aspects of perceived value. The segments with less involved and more indecisive fans (the nondevoted and shillyshallies) have the lowest scores on all aspects of perceived value.

The daily visitors to ABBA websites and online communities experience the highest levels of excitement, accomplishment, and all other social value aspects, and the less frequent users (i.e., once every month or less) the lowest. Also, fans who extensively use information in blogs and online communities to plan their trip participation obtain significantly higher levels of perceived value and social value.

The single ABBA fans experience high levels of value in terms of novelty, acceptance, approval, and social interaction with other people. In addition, fans traveling together with their online friends experience social approval more than other fans and use ABBA trips and events as an opportunity to interact and communicate with other

people. A noteworthy result is that the social value scores are highest among the fans in the lowest income group.

The results indicate how involved, motivated, experienced, and online-active fans are significantly more inclined to participate in ABBA trips and events in the future and to recommend others to do so. It is also evident that emotionally and socially motivated fans are also quite positive regarding their future intentions and willingness to recommend ABBA trips and events to others. The eager-enthusiastic group members, the highly motivated fans, the relatively frequent (at least weekly) users of online platforms, and those who use online information to plan their trip or event participation also share their experiences on blogs and communities more than others.

Concluding Remarks

Despite the very limited tangible popular music heritage of ABBA, the findings in this study suggests that ABBA fans engage in ABBA tourism to Sweden and elsewhere. This illustrates how tourism is a fan practice constituting the value of the bodily experience of “being there,” connecting fans with places.

The aim of this study was to empirically describe today’s ABBA tourists in terms of their involvement, social identity, online practices, and travel motives and to show how this influences their perceived value and future travel intentions. It may be no big surprise that there are heterogeneous segments, but the findings offer detailed insights into how they are different and what the implication of this difference is in terms of perceived value and future travel intentions.

For destinations and attractions associated with ABBA, it is important to have knowledge on the needs and wants of potential ABBA tourists. For instance, knowing that a large segment of ABBA fans extensively engages in online information searching and interaction makes them even more involved. Yet importantly, fans who have a strong relationship with the fandom and who feel all types of motives for traveling are important, are most active online, travel more, and experience the highest degree of perceived value in their tourism experience. However, overall, fans who are highly engaged and identify with the fandom also have generally low incomes, likely

making them less interesting as potential tourists. The segmentation analysis clearly shows that fandom, online activity, and tourism as a fan practice are interlinked and reinforce each other. Furthermore, when designing tourism services and marketing communications, as well as when monitoring specific interests of fans as they develop over time, this detailed knowledge on segments is valuable.

Moreover, in our findings we also show the high degree of overlaps between fans who are highly motivated by both ABBA-specific motives and other general types of travel motives, and the very involved and fandom-attached segments who also engage a lot in online activities. This supports our argument on the importance of considering travel motives in music tourism that go beyond traditional tourist motives, as well as maintaining a holistic view of music fans as tourists.

A main limitation for this study is that it only includes fans of ABBA, and therefore, any generalizations to other music tourism contexts must be carefully considered.

Note

1. The foundation for the research presented in this paper is an online survey of ABBA fans from 2013. The survey used a nonprobabilistic snowball sampling and a link was available on the official ABBA fan club website, other ABBA fan club websites, ABBA-related Facebook groups, Twitter, and on ABBA the Museums Facebook page. The total number of respondents was 1,286.

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