

Profile of 2007 Rice Street Festival Attendees

Rice Street Festival

Prepared for:
The Rice Street Festival organizers &
The St. Paul Festival Association

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The projects' success resulted from a collaborative effort among several organizations and instrumental contributors. The authors would like to acknowledge the Rice Street Festival organizers and the St. Paul Festival Association. Gratitude is also extended to Amanda Schultz, Chris Romano, Shelly Harris, Dan Erkkila, Bernie Swafford, Bruce Larson, Fred Huerta, Brian Toole and the JROCTC volunteers from Arlington High School, and everyone at Klub Haus who assisted with data collection efforts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the University of Minnesota Tourism Center (UMTC) was contracted to profile visitors to Rice Street Festival. Several visitor characteristics were of interest beyond demographics, including information sources, spending habits, and experience at Rice Street Festival. To that end, a visitor questionnaire was developed and administered to Rice Street Festival visitors.

Methods

An on-site questionnaire was administered to attendees. A systematic sampling system was implemented during the Rice Street Festival parade. A total of 141 parties were contacted and 80 questionnaires completed which resulted in a 56.7% completion rate. Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned and checked in SPSS version 15.0.

Results

Demographics

Most often respondents were female, non-Hispanic Whites, and reported an average age of 40.0 years. The most frequently cited income was between \$35,000-49,999 (27.0%).

2007 Rice Street Festival experience

On average, respondents spent more than three hours at the Rice Street Festival, predominately with family (45.8%), and reported spending the most on food and beverages ($M=\$13.97$). Respondents indicated they enjoyed many aspects of the Rice Street Festival. Among the options presented, respondents most frequently cited they enjoyed the parade (47.8%), live music (15.9%), and people watching (14.5%).

A majority of respondents had previously attended Rice Street Festival and heard about it through friends. Respondents attended Rice Street Festival an average of eleven times previously ($M=10.8$), most often as recent as 2006 (64.0%). However, nearly one-fifth of respondents were first time visitors to Rice Street Festival. Among these new visitors, a majority stated an intention to return to the Rice Street neighborhood in the next twelve months.

Overall, Rice Street Festival appears to meet its objectives as an enjoyable event on Rice Street, as evidenced by Rice Street Festival visitor respondents' intention to return. Opportunities to enhance Rice Street Festival include expansion of event offerings and amenities, as well as increased information on Rice Street businesses made available to Rice Street Festival attendees.

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INTRODUCTION

Festivals and special events benefit both local communities and visitors. Community festivals of short duration contribute to the celebration of local culture, identity, and place. Festivals also enhance exposure, awareness, profitability and image of the host community, as well as serve as a vehicle for other development (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003; Getz, 1991; Hall, 1992; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). To maximize benefits and enhance events, organizers need to continually assess and evaluate their event and its market.

In 2007, the University of Minnesota Tourism Center (UMTC) was contracted to profile visitors to Rice Street Festival. Visitor demographics, information sources for the festival, experience, and expenditures at Rice Street Festival, as well as familiarity with community were of specific interest. The study methods and results are presented below and are followed by a discussion.

METHODS

An on-site questionnaire was administered to visitors during the 2007 Rice Street Festival. The methods for the questionnaire administration are presented in the following sections: study setting, questionnaire, approach, response rate, and analysis.

Study Setting

The 2007 Rice Street Festival was held July 26th-29th. Rice Street Festival is reported to attract more than 15,000 visitors and is located on Rice Street between Atwater Street and Arlington Avenue in St. Paul, Minnesota. The event included a parade, food and merchandise vendors, a Rice Street Festival royalty coronation, softball games, a one-mile run competition, and many other activities.

Questionnaire

An on-site questionnaire was developed based on previous events and with the assistance of Rice Street Festival personnel. Questionnaire sections included event participation, enjoyable attributes, information sources, expenditures, group composition, community familiarity, and demographics (Appendix A).

Approach

A sampling plan was created to reach the range of Rice Street Festival attendees. A systematic intercept sampling approach was implemented where every third visitor was approached and asked to complete the questionnaire. Due to the limited number of volunteers, sampling efforts were concentrated around the parade where it was thought that the greatest number and variety of attendees could be approached.

Based on estimated attendance from preceding years, a sampling quota target was set at 95 visitor contacts (90% confidence interval; $\pm 5\%$ sampling error rate). Trained volunteers and University of Minnesota Tourism Center staff administered the questionnaire.

Response Rate

Throughout the event, a total of 141 parties were contacted and 80 questionnaires attained (56.7% compliance rate; Appendix B; Table 1). A total of 7 questionnaires were unusable, and thus, 73 questionnaires were included in the analysis. Among those who did not agree to participate, the most frequently specified reason was lack of interest. Just over a tenth (11.5%) of non respondents indicated they had already completed a questionnaire.

Analysis

Completed questionnaires were entered, cleaned and checked in SPSS version 15.0. Extreme outliers were winsorized to bring highly skewed variables into usable ranges. Descriptive analysis provided means, standard deviations, and frequencies to describe the sample and provide information on variables of interest. Chi-square analysis identified differences among groups when appropriate.

RESULTS

Respondents

Demographics

More than half (63.4%) of respondents were female and reported an average age of 40.0 years (Appendix B, Table 2). A majority of respondents were white (65.8%) and of non-Hispanic or non-Latino background (95.7%). The highest percentage of respondent's reported an annual household income of between \$35,000-49,999 (27.0%; Appendix B, Figure 1), with the remainder relatively evenly distributed among all income categories.

Primary Residence

Respondents' predominately resided in the Metropolitan area, as indicated by their stated zipcode. A majority (92%) of respondent's primary residence was zero to ten miles from the Rice Street area (Appendix B, Figure 2). An additional (5%) resided eleven to twenty-five miles from the Rice Street area. Very few respondents (4%) indicated they resided more than twenty-five miles from Rice Street. More than one third (38.8%) of respondents indicated their zipcode was 55117, the zipcode where Rice Street Festival is held.

Rice Street Festival Experience

A majority of respondents had previously attended Rice Street Festival (82.2%; Appendix B, Figure 3). Respondents attended Rice Street Festival an average of eleven ($\underline{M}=10.8$) times

previously, most often (64.0%) as recent as 2006. On average, respondents spent three to four hours (\underline{M} =3.7) at Rice Street Festival, with a range of one to twelve hours.

Sources Informing about Rice Street Festival

Respondents heard about Rice Street Festival most frequently from friends (32.9%), ‘other’ sources (32.9%), or a previous visit (30.1%; Appendix B, Table 3). Slightly fewer than a fifth (17.8%) indicated the newspaper as an information source. Very few respondents indicated they heard about the event through a brochure (5.5%), radio (1.4%), Internet (1.4%), or TV (1.4%). Among those new to Rice Street Festival in 2007, friends (76.9%) were the most frequently cited information source.

Attributes of Enjoyable Experience

The top cited most enjoyable attributes of Rice Street Festival were the parade (47.8%), live music (15.9%), and people watching (14.5%; Appendix B, Figure 4). Less frequently cited attributes included the food and beverages (8.7%), family area (7.2%), and the sporting events (5.8%). Given the sampling occurred before and during the parade, its ranking as the most frequently cited enjoyable attribute is not unexpected.

Group Composition

Most frequently respondents attended Rice Street Festival with family (45.8%; Appendix B, Figure 5). Slightly more than a quarter (27.8%) attended with family and friends, while nearly one fifth attended with friends (19.4%). Very few respondents attended Rice Street Festival alone (2.8%) or with organized groups (2.8%). Among respondents who specified the actual number of people in each category, groups averaged four adults (\underline{M} =3.8), two children (\underline{M} =2.2) and two teenagers (\underline{M} =1.9; Appendix B, Figure 6).

Rice Street Festival Expenditures

Respondents spent an average of \$13.97 on food & beverages and \$10.22 on souvenirs (Appendix B, Table 4).

Rice Street Experience

A majority (86.3%) of respondents had previously visited Rice Street for reasons other than the Festival. Among those who had previously visited Rice Street, the most frequently cited reasons were for shopping (69.9%), other events (67.1%), and restaurants (45.2%; Appendix B, Table 5). Though the least popular response, more than one quarter (26.0%) of respondents reported that they come to Rice Street for services. On a related note, more than a third (37.0%) of respondents identified themselves as Rice Street residents.

A majority (94.3%) of respondents intend to return to Rice Street in the next twelve months (Appendix B, Figure 7). Similarly, among respondents who indicated no previous exposure to Rice Street, approximately two-thirds (61.5%) indicated an intention to return.

Comments and Suggestions

Qualitative analysis of open-ended comments and suggestions revealed several themes (Appendix C). The most common suggestions focused on ways to improve the parade and requests for more children's activities. Ideas for improving the parade included changing the date/time, including more diversity in the parade, and stopping traffic during the motorcycle portion of the parade. There were also several positive comments about the parade such as "Always have fun at Rice St. Parade" and "We love this parade!"

DISCUSSION

The 2007 Rice Street Festival attracted a range of visitors from the local area who found a variety of the events enjoyable. Results indicate that Rice Street Festival provides an enjoyable experience among visitors, as evidenced by open-ended comments and return visitation. Many respondents expressed favorable sentiments about Rice Street Festival indicating a high degree of satisfaction among respondents. Furthermore, a majority of respondents have had a long history and frequent visitation to Rice Street Festival. The high intention to return suggests that visitor's previous experience was positive. The degree of return visitation also suggests that visitors will continue to be drawn to the event and the level of attendance can be expected to continue, barring major weather events, competition or major political events.

The parade played a major role in attracting visitors and was indicated as the most enjoyable event for nearly half of the respondents. Given the sampling occurred during the parade, this is not surprising. However, a common theme in respondent's open-ended comments focused on enhancement of current offerings. Adding more children's events and more variety to the parade could enhance the festival's appeal and increase the number of visitors to the event.

Word of mouth was an important vehicle for event marketing and mirrors previous state and national findings (Getz, 1991; Salk & Schneider, 2006; Salk, Schneider, & Monson, 2005). Approximately one third of new visitors heard about Rice Street Festival through friends. Early planning is crucial to maximize the effects of word of mouth, as it increases the likelihood of event dates, scheduled programmatic information, and new additions to circulate. Newspapers were also one of the frequently cited information sources. To attract visitors outside of the St. Paul Metro area, newspaper announcements placed throughout the region would be beneficial.

With regard to visitor spending, food and beverages accounted for the highest expenditure. Respondents also reported spending on souvenirs and a modest amount on "other" expenditures. To maximize visitor spending, efforts to increase visitor length of stay and product offerings are suggested. On average, visitors spent about three and a half hours at the event. Providing for enhanced visitor comfort, as well as increasing the number and variety of events would potentially extend their stay. Enhanced visitor comfort could be achieved through expanded seating opportunities, shade structures, and enhancement of restroom facility maintenance.

Rice Street Festival played a role in increasing the awareness and exposure to the Rice Street area. Almost one fifth of respondents had no prior visitation to Rice Street Festival. While a majority of respondents indicated they had previously been to Rice Street, a majority of respondents new to the area stated an intention to return in the next twelve months. To enhance the likelihood of return visitation, on-site promotion of community amenities and offerings is advised. This could be achieved through the expansion of the map and schedule made available at Rice Street Festival.

Although this study will be useful to the Rice Street Festival organizers, as well as other event organizers in the region, it does have its limitations. The limitations relate to the sample collected and data collection. The total number of questionnaires attained was considerably lower than was desired or expected primarily due to the short duration of time (3 hours) available to collect data. Due to the shortage of volunteers, the data collection only took place during the parade because it was thought that the greatest number and variety of people could be approached during that timeframe. However, this may have resulted in some biases in the data since people attending other events during the festival may have had different opinions about the festival. Furthermore, the volunteers were JROTC students aged 16-17, from the local high school. Due to the age of the group, they seemed to lack the experience and confidence to approach and encourage people to fill out the survey. They were also dressed in their uniforms, and though they looked professional, the political implications may have deterred people's desires to complete the survey or acknowledge the volunteers.

While visitor surveys have the ability to better understand the festival market, they do not capture other information of potential use to event organizers such as actual visitation, the overall economic impact of Rice Street Festival and how the event compares to other festivals in the region. Future research to capture this useful information is advised.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Rice Street Festival Survey

Have you been to Rice Street Festival before (check ONE)? ___ YES ___ NO

If yes, how many years have you attended the Rice Street Festival? ___ YEARS
What was the last year you attended the Rice Street Festival? _____

Where did you hear about this event? (check all that apply)

___ NEWSPAPER ___ FRIENDS ___ INTERNET ___ BROCHURE
___ PREVIOUS VISIT ___ RADIO ___ TV ___ OTHER

About how long do you intend to be at the event? ___ HOURS

Have you ever been to Rice Street for any reason other than the Rice Street Festival?
___ YES ___ NO

If yes, what was the purpose? (check all that apply)

___ SHOPPING ___ RESTAURANTS ___ SERVICES ___ RESIDENT ___ OTHER EVENTS

Do you intend to return to Rice Street in the next 12-months (check ONE)? ___ YES ___ NO

What do you enjoy most about the Rice Street Festival (check ONE)?

___ LIVE MUSIC ___ SPORTING EVENTS ___ FOOD & BEVERAGES ___ PARADE
___ PETTING ZOO ___ FAMILY AREA ___ PEOPLE WATCHING ___ OTHER

Who are you with (check ONE)?

___ ALONE ___ FRIENDS ___ FAMILY ___ FAMILY & FRIENDS
___ ORGANIZED GROUP ___ OTHER (SPECIFY: _____)

How many in your group are of the following ages (specify NUMBER):

___ 0-12 YEARS ___ 13-17 YEARS ___ 18+ YEARS OLD

How much did YOU spend during your time at the Festival?

\$ _____ PARKING \$ _____ SOUVENIRS \$ _____ FOOD & BEVERAGES \$ _____ WRISTBAND
\$ _____ OTHER

What year were you born? 19____ What is your zip code? _____

What is your gender? ___ FEMALE ___ MALE

What is your annual household income (before taxes)?

___ LESS THAN \$5,000 ___ \$5,000-9,999 ___ \$10,000-14,999 ___ \$15,000-24,999
___ \$25,000-34,999 ___ \$35,000-49,999 ___ \$50,000-74,999 ___ \$75,000-99,999
___ \$100,000-124,999 ___ \$125,000-149,999 ___ \$150,000 or more

What is your ethnic origin (check one)?

HISPANIC/LATINO NON-HISPANIC/NON-LATINO

WHAT IS YOUR RACE? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE ASIAN BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
 WHITE NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER OTHER (Explain: _____)

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

THANK YOU

APPENDIX B

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Response rate among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007.

Total parties contacted	141
Respondents	80
Refusals	61
Compliance rate	56.7%
Unusable Questionnaires	7
Usable Questionnaires	73

Table 2. Demographic characteristics among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007.

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	26	36.6
Female	45	63.4
Total	71	100.0
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	3	4.3
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	66	95.7
Total	69	100.0
Race		
White	48	65.8
Other	4	5.5
Black or African American	7	9.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	5	6.8
Asian	9	12.3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0
Total	N/A ¹	N/A ¹
Age (M=40.0; S.D.=15.7)		
18-30	19	29.7
31-40	15	23.4
41-50	15	23.4
51-60	7	10.9
61-70	6	9.4
71 or older	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

¹ Due to possible selection of multiple categorical responses.

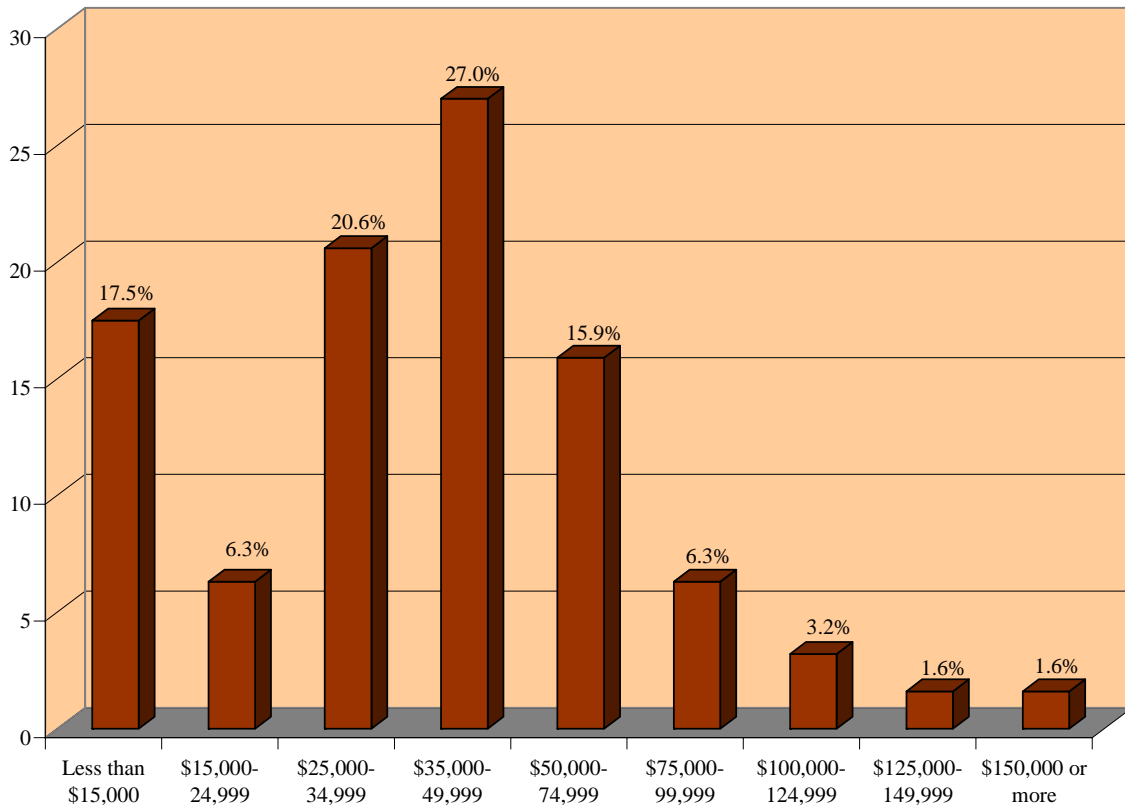


Figure 1. Percentage of annual household income among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n = 63).

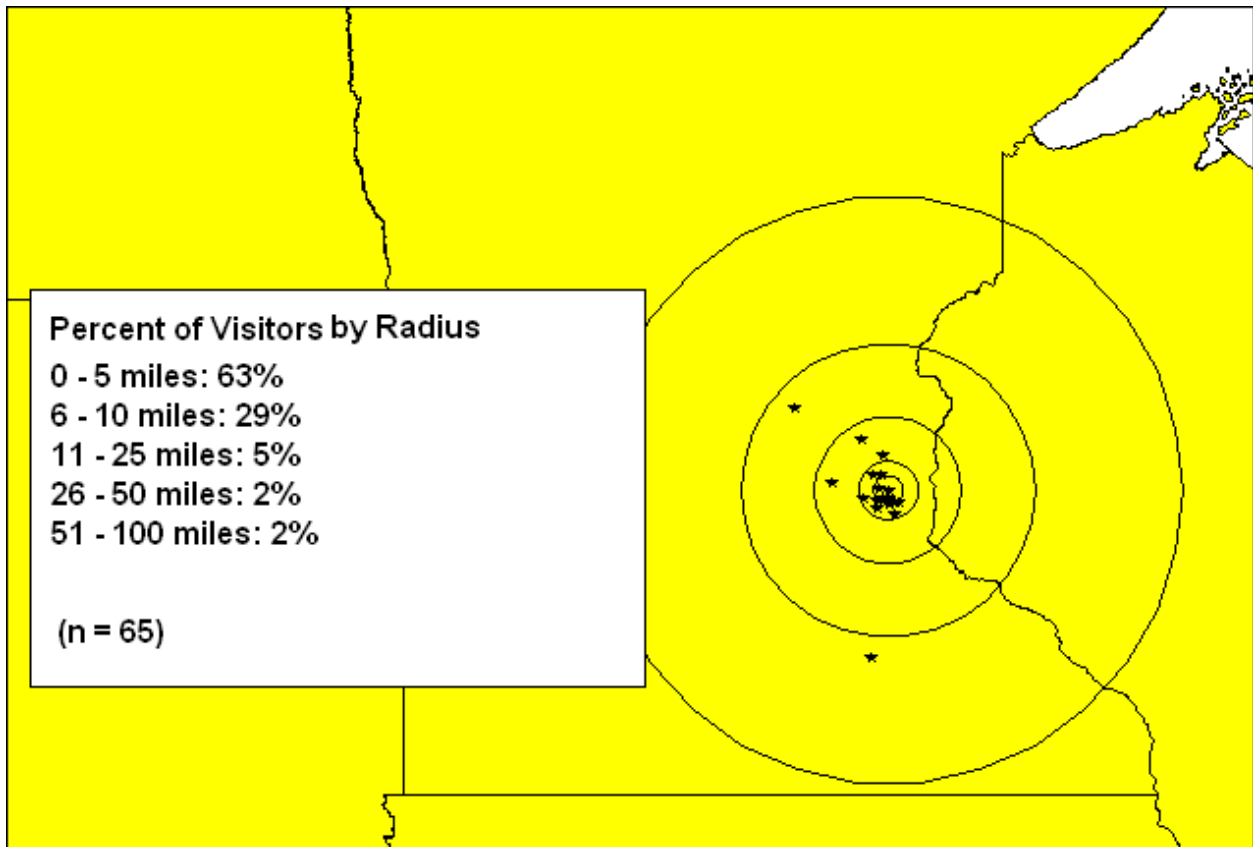


Figure 2. Radius map of respondents to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n=65).

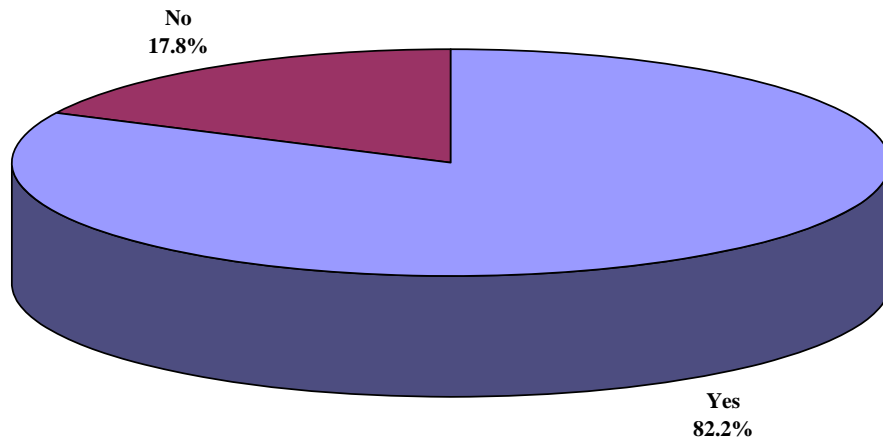


Figure 3. Previous Rice Street Festival attendance among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n = 73).

Table 3. Information sources among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007.

	Frequency	Percent
Friends	24	32.9
Other	24	32.9
Previous Visit	22	30.1
Newspaper	13	17.8
Brochure	4	5.5
Internet	1	1.4
TV	1	1.4
Radio	1	1.4

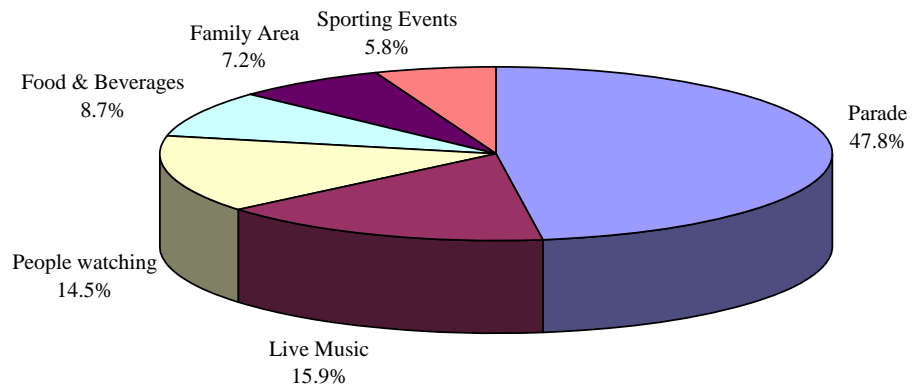


Figure 4. Most enjoyable attribute of Rice Street Festival among questionnaire respondents, 2007 (n =69).

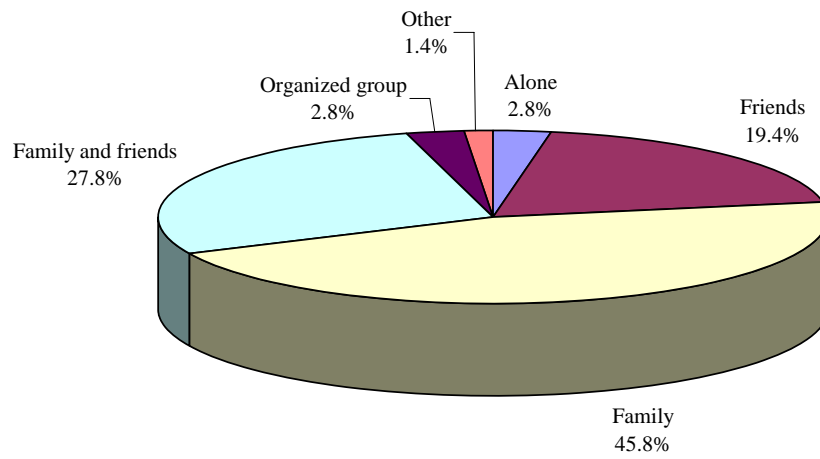


Figure 5. Group composition among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n = 72).

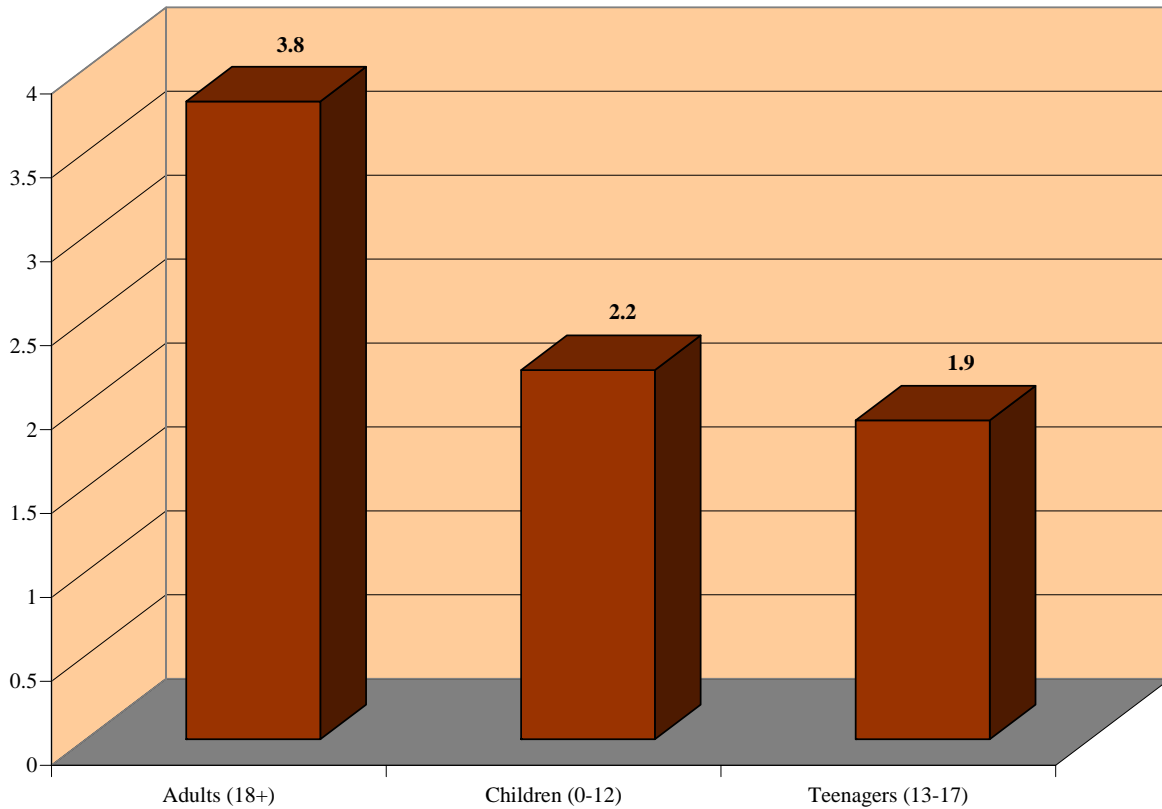


Figure 6. Average group size based on age categories among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n = 46).

Table 4. Average expenditures at Rice Street Festival among festival attendee respondents, 2007.

	M	S.D.	Range
Souvenirs (n=27)	\$10.22	\$14.63	\$0-50
Food and beverages (n=37)	\$13.97	\$11.75	\$0-40
Other (n=3)	\$1.23	\$2.98	\$0-10

Table 5. Purpose of previous visit to Rice Street among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007.

	Frequency	Percent¹
Restaurants	33	45.2
Shopping	22	30.1
Resident	27	37.0
Services	19	26.0
Other events	24	32.9

¹Totals more than 100% as respondents may have indicated more than one purpose for prior visit.

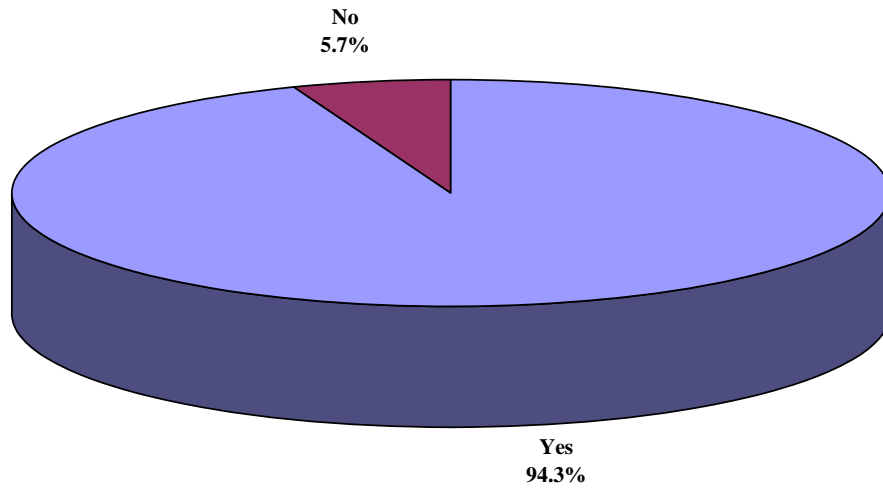


Figure 7. Intention to return to Rice Street in the next twelve months among visitors to Rice Street Festival, 2007 (n = 70).

APPENDIX C

Respondents Comments and Suggestions

Always have fun at Rice St. Parade.

Stop traffic completely during bike parade on both sides of street so people can enjoy seeing all motorcycles as they come down the street instead of having to look through all the traffic.

Make souvenirs cheaper.

Change the Day

Nice

We love this Parade!

As far as being a vendor, The event needs to be Better planned. The parade should be held in the morning.

More information out in surrounding areas would be nice.

More diversity in the parade.

Add more children events!

Bring Back To Park Not Parking Lot / Fireworks

Kathy McSawghey

More young child friendly activities

Keep the Parade I'd like to come again!

Nothing

Wait for it every year

None