Dazzled by the strobe lights: Tourist experience and complexity in the night-economy

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ABSTRACT

This study that is anchored in complexity theory investigates the complex factors affecting the destination nightlife experience of tourists while using the destination of Cyprus as a fitting place context. Based on a sample of 390 holidaymakers, a fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis reveals certain complex solutions. These deal with the social and marketing nexus; the socio-cultural and quality connection; and the relationship between price with quality in the night economy. In spite of hygiene and safety issues that are deemed necessary for the prevention of a non-positive overall night-time experience, the socializing aspect is the one that appears to prevail within the nightlife tourist experiential milieu.

1. Introduction

The night economy refers to economic activity that occurs during night hours (Huang & Wang, 2018). It is considered as part of the tourism circuit exhibiting a tourism ratio (i.e. a sector's tourism-related turnover as a percentage of its total business turnover) over 15% at least in popular urban centres and destinations (Stabler et al., 2010) and contributes to the hospitality industries of destinations (Liu & Fang, 2016). Global night economies were hit hard by the pandemic due to restrictions, strict lockdowns and limits of movement especially during evening hours. Despite the increasing interest of the academic community in the nightlife economy, the available literature has not yet adequately addressed the dynamics shaping the tourist night experience particularly amid the complex convolutions created by the pandemic. This is rather surprising given the importance of the night-economy for destinations and nightlife within the experiential milieu (Huang & Wang, 2018; Jiang & Hong, 2021). In this context, the present study investigates the complexity attribute configurations that affect tourists' nightlife experience.

This study examines nightlife tourist experience formulation in a specific fitting place context that is known for its nightlife. The study contributes at a theoretical and managerial level by delivering a thorough examination of the tourist night-time experience formulation through fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) that is particularly insightful when examining complex phenomena since it

bridges quantitative and qualitative techniques. The method involves the testing of quantitative data and proceeds by allowing an analysis of specific cases through the employment of qualitative rationale (Papatheodorou & Pappas, 2017; Pappas & Woodside, 2021). It allows assessing various differing causal recipes concurrently while developing meaningful insights to complex phenomena under investigation (Chaouali et al., 2022).

2. Complexity theory and complexity in the night experiential economy

Complexity theory captures the essence of contemporary world with its dynamism, technological innovation, space-time compression, and interconnectivity (Larsen- Freeman, 2017). The theory has been viewed as a useful and sufficient theoretical background for understanding complex phenomenon, such as behaviour (Mehran & Olya, 2020) and experience formulation (Pappas, 2019) particularly under idiosyncratic circumstances, such as economic turmoil or the recent pandemic which threw tourism into a chaos (Henley, 2020). To adopt a complexity theory perspective, a researcher requires to acknowledge that reality is a complicated system and in this sense it takes the form of dynamic and perplexed systems that influence greatly the likelihoods of events that will follow, as the case of customer experience (Varnali, 2019). Complexity theory embraces the notions of conjunction, equifinality and asymmetry (Leischnig & Woodside, 2019). The theory has been used in

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studies to elucidate customer evaluations through the application of alternate asymmetric combinations of factors that act as indicators (Wu et al., 2014). It has been particularly useful in examining complicated phenomena, such as the complexity of the tourist experience in a dynamic context of constant change.

Due to its importance for destinations, the tourist experience has long been the focus of tourism academics (Bravo et al., 2019; Christou & Farmaki, 2019; Lee et al., 2019). Yet, the tourist experience appears as a complicated phenomenon since it embraces various personal and destination-linked factors, while it is constantly impacted and shaped by differing altering factors. It is hard, if not impossible to pinpoint precisely all elements that shape the tourist experience, with researchers arguing the complexity of the notion and the factors that shape it (Christou, 2020). Even so, existing literature has equipped us with the necessary knowledge to appreciate key factors that may influence the tourist experience. These include, hygiene and safety aspects (Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021; Xie et al., 2021), marketing dynamics (Mossberg, 2007; Pappas, 2019), quality (Suhartanto, 2020; Lee et al., 2011), price issues (Pappas, 2019; Campo & Yagüe, 2009), and social aspects (Christou & Sharpley, 2019; Lin et al., 2019; Zatori et al., 2018). Nonetheless, these same key factors may result in the non-positive or negative experience of tourists (Bianchi, 2016; Lam--González et al., 2021). For instance, the study of Christou et al. (2018) revealed that various factors, such as lack of quality, hygiene and safety issues, unrealistic expectations as a result of false marketing, as well as over-priced offerings may be the cause of negative tourist emotions. Consecutively, these lead towards non-positive or negative experiences for visitors.

Indeed, the visitor experience comes across as a complicated phenomenon (Pappas, 2019). It may be argued that the complexity of tourist experience within the night experiential context becomes even more perplexed. From an experiential perspective, nights offer differing offerings and experiences to visitors compared to day-time experiences. Night economies of destinations are often characterized by special atmospherics, night-light illuminations and entertainment that leverage unique tourism opportunities (Jiang & Hong, 2021). Even so, tourists may find themselves in such idiosyncratic night-linked conditions that may impact and perplex the delivery and 'consumption' of experiences. Tourists within specific night destination economies that promote a party-sense may find 'fertile' grounds to misbehave and engage in *carnivalesque* behaviours that may cause mistrust and hostile attitudes by locals, that may impact upon their overall experience (Christou, 2021). All the same, the night economy may be particularly exposed to safety risks and other issues such as alcohol overconsumption, substance use, noise and conflicts (Nofre et al., 2018; Tutenges, 2012) that may interfere in the process of delivering positive visitor experiences.

3. Methodology

This study uses fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) which is regarded as a suitable method to unravel complex causal structures and complicated phenomena. It involves the testing of quantitative data and proceeds by allowing an analysis of specific cases through the employment of qualitative rationale (Papatheodorou & Pappas, 2017) while using qualitative inductive reasoning (Longest & Vaisey, 2008). The current research examines the formation of the overall nightlife experience of tourists while examining the presence or absence of aspects concerning visitor experience within a destination's night economy context. The examined attributes of this study are six, in conjunction with two socio-demographic characteristics.

By considering certain principles posed by Woodside (2014), and by consulting analogous empirical studies for the formulation of tenets (such as, Olya et al., 2018), this study included six tenets (i.e. principles). In more detail, *Tenet 1:* The same attribute can determine a dissimilar result for the nightlife experience, subject to its configuration with other different attributes. *Tenet 2:* The formation of a complicated

configuration made up by at least two conditions results into an outcome that may have a consistently high score ('recipe principle'). *Tenet 3:* Complex connections may influence the experience of tourists within the night economy of a destination. *Tenet 4:* Dissimilar combinations of the simple conditions are probable to influence the tourists' nightlife experience. *Tenet 5:* A sufficient overall nightlife experience may not necessarily lead to a high outcome score ('equifinality principle'). *Tenet 6:* When Y scores are high, a specific recipe for the nightlife tourist experience is not relevant for all cases.

Study participants (that included international tourists) were reached in Cyprus, a European destination in the Mediterranean Sea, which attracts international visitors that may benefit from its vibrant nightlife (Christou, 2018). Participants were randomly selected based on the criterion of having stayed at the destination for at least three nights. Limitations include both convenience sampling and voluntary response bias. Participants were interviewed based on a structured questionnaire at public places of the island, during the summer months of 2021. A conservative response of 50-50 was chosen given that the population proportions were considered unknown, with the sample size being determined at 384.16 through the selection of 95% confidence, as indicated in studies of a similar nature (Akis et al., 1996):

$$N = \frac{Z^2(hypothesis)}{S^2} \Longrightarrow N = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.05^2} \Longrightarrow N = 384.16$$

The data collection process was completed when 390 questionnaires were collected (response rate: 58.04%). The questionnaire of the study included 36 Likert scale statements with 1 signifying a strong disagreement, and 5 a strong agreement, and two socio-demographic questions. Pappas (2019)'s grouping of age (that is, 18–35; 36–50; >50) and income categorization in two main sections (above and below a specific income threshold) was followed. For the income threshold, we consulted the average gross wages of Eurostat (2020). The statements related to 'quality' and 'price' were adopted from Pappas (2019), yet were worded to fit the study's scope. The statements of 'safety', 'hygiene', 'marketing', and 'social' were based on current research related to the tourist experience (Xie et al., 2021; Pappas, 2019; Zatori et al., 2018; Christou et al., 2018; Mossberg, 2007).

Descriptive statistics were calculated by 'SPSS version 28', Explanatory Factor Analysis with the use of principal component analysis and varimax rotation (Kaiser Normalization) was also utilized via SPSS. After obtaining all possible solutions that may explain the outcome, testing for specific propositions was conducted through XY plots (Pappas & Woodside, 2021) for each model produced. This was done by the 'fsQCA' software, which also evaluated the complex configurations.

The differing examined factors of this study were correlated less than 0.60 (refer to Table 1) indicating that asymmetry was present in the examined relationships and that the study could progress to fsQCA (Skarmeas et al., 2014). The research was calibrated with a group of 50 cases chosen on random criteria. The calibrated fuzzy-sets used in this study for the investigation of the formulation of the tourist overall experience are as indicated in the fsQCA's sufficient configurations table that follows in the results section.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis

The characteristics of the 390 respondents are provided in Table 2 and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3. Exploratory Factor Analysis examined the loadings. The KMO test score was 0.823 which is higher than 0.6 (i.e. the minimum acceptable score). Due to low commonality, the rotated component matrix loadings below 0.4 were excluded from additional analysis. To address reliability concerns, Cronbach's alpha was conducted (overall Cronbach's alpha: 0.857). In almost all cases (apart from one) alpha was close to 0.8 with only one case being 0.6, which is still considered as acceptable (Wu & Chang,

Table 1
Correlation matrix.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Safety Issues	1.000						
2	Hygiene and Health Issues	.235[a]	1.000					
3	Marketing Issues	.276[a]	.266[a]	1.000				
4	Price Issues	.281[a]	.244[a]	.286[a]	1.000			
5	Quality Issues	.324[a]	.172[a]	.214[a]	.291[a]	1.000		
6	Social and Cultural Aspects	.026	.127[b]	.111[b]	.133[a]	.074	1.000	
7	Overall Experience	.159[a]	.113[b]	.184[a]	.152[a]	.227[a]	.443[a]	1.000

[a] Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
[b] Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2
The profile of the respondents. Profile of the respondents.

		N	%
Age	18–35	185	47.4
	36–50	140	35.9
	>50	65	16.7
	Total	390	100.0
Income	≤ €2000	220	56.4
	> €2000	170	43.6
	Total	390	100

2006).

To test the predictive validity of the configurations we cross-validated two holdout random subsamples (Pappas & Woodside, 2021; Woodside, 2013). Consistency and raw coverage are similar between the subsamples and the configurations.

4.2. Analysis of necessary conditions

An important stage in the application of fsQCA is the necessity analysis. This defines those factors that are considered as necessary for tourists' overall experience. A condition is necessary if the score of consistence is above 0.90 and the coverage is above 0.50 (Ragin, 2006). The necessity analysis (refer to Table 4) indicates that no single condition exceeds the threshold of 0.90 and a coverage exceeding the threshold of 0.50, which would judge the condition as necessary (Chaouali et al., 2022).

4.3. Sufficient complex statements

FsQCA produced three specific sufficient configurations (that is, models 1, 2 and 3) for predicting **high** score of outcome (refer to Table 5). The overall solution coverage is 0.40 and the solution consistency is 0.91, hence being regarded as both acceptable and informative (Skarmeas et al., 2014). The first solution indicates that high socio-cultural and marketing issues have resulted into high membership scores regarding the nightlife overall experience of visitors. The second configuration reveals that high socio-cultural and quality aspects have resulted in high membership scores regarding the overall night-time experience of visitors. The third, and final sufficient configuration that fsQCA generated coverage 0.33 is based on the triptych socio-cultural, price and quality issues, with the demographic of age. The socio-cultural aspect appears in these three generated solutions (i.e. Models 1, 2 and 3).

FsQCA produced another two specific sufficient configurations (that is, models 4 and 5) for predicting **low** score of outcome. The overall solution coverage is 0.30 and the solution consistency is 0.94, and therefore is considered as acceptable and informative (Skarmeas et al., 2014). The first solution (i.e. model 4) indicates that high safety and hygiene scores have resulted in low membership scores regarding the nightlife overall experience of visitors. The second solution (i.e. model 5) indicates that high hygiene and price issues have resulted in low

membership scores regarding the nightlife overall experience of visitors.

4.4. Testing the sufficient configurations- XY plots

After obtaining the possible solutions, we can test for specific propositions and examine according to Pappas and Woodside (2021) for how many cases in in the sample these propositions hold true. In XY plots (refer to Fig. 1) if most cases are under the main diagonal, this indicates a relation of sufficiency, while the positioning above (i.e. X values are equal or less than their Y values) determines a relation of necessity (Mello, 2014). According to Schneider and Rohlfing (2013), the XY plot can be divided in six zones resulting from the intersection of the diagonal and the 2 × 2 matrix. If the membership score of the outcome is consistently higher than the membership score of the causal combination, then the proportion of cases in the upper triangle will be above a specified level (Mello, 2014). In this study, the models are supported as they establish the identity of the asymmetries of the complex causal paths pertaining to the overall nightlife experience. Models with consistency above 0.80 are useful and can serve theory advancement (Woodside, 2017). In this study, the models for predicting high (i.e. models 1–3) and low score of outcomes (i.e. models 4 and 5) have consistencies above 0.90.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1. Confirmation of tenets

All eight simple conditions that are examined appear in at least one of the sufficient complex configurations. This, despite of the fact that the generated solutions by fsQCA lead to the same outcome (i.e. nightlife overall experience). Hence, *Tenet 1* is confirmed. *Tenet 2* is also confirmed since all generated solutions include a minimum of two simple conditions each (e.g. 'socio-cultural aspects and marketing issues in model 1). *Tenet 3* is concerned with complex interactions that are likely to impact on the overall nightlife visitor experience. This tenet is also confirmed since the produced models concern differing pathways. For instance, model 1 deals with the marketing and socio-cultural nexus, model 2 with socio-cultural issues linked to quality, and model 3 integrates price issues. Furthermore, this study implemented contrarian case analysis (Woodside, 2014) in which the absence or presence of a condition may influence the outcome. *Tenet 4* is confirmed given that within different and various combinations the conditions of configurations may affect the overall nightlife visitor experience. Furthermore, based on Woodside (2014), different paths may result into the same outcome (that is, the 'equifinality' principle). *Tenet 5* is confirmed given that the outcome scores of the generated solutions are not high and that the specific sufficient configurations are able to lead to the same outcome. Finally, *Tenet 6* is also confirmed since the complex solutions' coverage range/vary.

5.2. Complex solutions

The first sufficient configuration shows that within a destination's

Table 3
Descriptive statistics.

Construct and scale items	S.D.	Means						Loadings
		Total	18–35	36–50	>50	≤€2000	>€2000	
SAFETY ISSUES *(Cronbach's A: 0.78)*								
S1. I am afraid to walk alone in the streets of Cyprus during night time.	1.214	2.11	2.13	2.10	1.92	2.15	2.05	LC
S2. I prefer to walk in well-lighted streets during the night.	1.340	3.78	3.76	3.79	4.00	3.74	3.86	0.741
S3. I feel safer when I see public areas being patrolled by the police during the night.	1.359	3.29	3.21	3.48	3.18	3.31	3.26	0.751
S4. The safety issue (feeling safe) affects the quality of my night experience at a destination.	1.424	3.33	3.22	3.51	4.00	3.33	3.34	0.763
S5. I am reluctant to visit places or hospitality venues in which I don't feel safe.	1.393	3.39	3.24	3.74	4.00	3.40	3.37	0.700
HYGIENE AND HEALTH ISSUES *(Cronbach's A: 0.60)*								
HY1. Hygiene and sanitation issues affect my experience at a particular place or venue (e.g. event, restaurant and café).	1.229	3.90	3.80	4.18	4.08	3.85	3.98	LC
HY2. My choice to which outing place or venue to visit depends on its hygiene conditions.	1.199	3.61	3.44	4.06	4.08	3.49	3.81	LC
HY3. The less interaction I have with other people while out, the less likely there will be hygiene and health risks.	1.268	2.84	2.67	3.24	3.44	2.77	2.95	0.654
HY4. There are more hygiene and sanitation risks during a night's outing, compared to a day's outing.	1.376	2.71	2.64	2.61	3.80	2.68	2.76	0.748
MARKETING ISSUES *(Cronbach's A: 0.80)*								
M1. Promotional activities of destinations influence my decision to select a specific destination.	1.190	2.97	2.99	2.86	3.08	2.95	3.00	0.775
M2. Promotional activities undertaken by tourism businesses influence by decision to select a night outing event, or hospitality venue.	1.141	2.98	3.04	2.83	2.84	3.00	2.94	0.796
M3. Promotional activities of destinations and tourism businesses on social media influence my decision to which night experiences/outings to have.	1.218	3.09	3.12	2.91	3.36	3.10	3.08	0.801
M4. The popularity of a particular event, festival or hospitality venue influences by decision to visit it.	1.141	3.58	3.67	3.39	3.24	3.55	3.64	0.657
PRICE ISSUES *(Cronbach's A: 0.76)*								
P1. The higher the price of the product, the better its quality.	1.085	2.73	2.71	2.79	2.80	2.70	2.79	LC
P2. I buy as many of my tourist services and products as possible at sale prices.	1.184	3.03	2.99	3.11	3.28	3.03	3.04	0.579
P3. Price is my main criterion for my service purchase decision.	1.168	2.93	2.86	2.94	3.60	2.94	2.89	0.680
P4. I look carefully to find the best value-for-money.	1.050	3.91	3.86	3.95	4.32	3.88	3.96	0.668
P5. I usually choose lower priced tourist services and products.	1.079	2.89	2.84	2.91	3.40	2.96	2.75	0.760
P6. I think about the risk of not having made a good purchase, bearing in mind the price I pay.	1.125	3.33	3.20	3.65	3.84	3.27	3.44	0.654
P7. The tourist service I purchase should be reasonably priced.	1.009	4.04	4.00	4.09	4.36	3.98	4.14	0.500
QUALITY ISSUES (Cronbach's A: 0.79)								
Q1. When buying tourist services, I consider the potential quality in the way the relevant service is organized.	.929	3.86	3.78	3.98	4.36	3.78	3.99	0.686
Q2. When buying tourist services, I consider the potential risk that I will not receive what I expected.	1.050	3.61	3.58	3.53	4.16	3.56	3.68	0.533
Q3. When buying tourist services, I consider its quality compared with other relevant available service choices.	.977	3.92	3.89	4.01	3.96	3.90	3.95	0.703
Q4. I have very high standards and expectations with regard to the tourist services I buy.	1.043	3.58	3.49	3.75	3.96	3.50	3.71	0.637
Q5. In general, I try to buy the best overall quality.	.931	4.05	4.00	4.13	4.36	4.00	4.14	0.726
Q6. When it comes to buying tourist services, I try to get the very best, or perfect choice.	.95	4.10	4.06	4.16	4.32	4.04	4.19	0.704
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS *(Cronbach's A: 0.83)*								
SC1. I go out during the night (e.g. to dine, attend an event, have fun), because I enjoy being with friends.	1.091	4.21	4.22	4.13	4.40	4.11	4.39	0.620
SC2. I enjoy going out during the night because I like to meet other people.	1.260	3.57	3.57	3.59	3.44	3.46	3.75	0.762
SC3. I believe night outings allow more possibilities for socializing, compared to daytime outings.	1.232	3.39	3.44	3.23	3.32	3.29	3.56	0.818
SC4. Night outings allow meaningful interactions with other people.	1.204	3.33	3.36	3.21	3.36	3.24	3.49	0.819
SC5. Night outings enable me to gain insights to the destination's people, lifestyle and culture.	1.193	3.49	3.47	3.46	3.72	3.43	3.59	0.701
OVERALL EXPERIENCE *(Cronbach's A: 0.81)*								
OE1. My overall nightlife experience at the destination was as expected.	.931	3.68	3.67	3.65	3.92	3.66	3.71	0.710
OE2. The night outing at the destination made me happy.	0.917	3.84	3.81	3.83	4.16	3.82	3.87	0.767
OE3. I would recommend this destination to others for night outings.	1.004	3.81	3.76	3.85	4.28	3.80	3.83	0.838
OE4. I will say positive things about the destination's nightlife.	0.961	3.87	3.82	3.94	4.20	3.90	3.82	0.831
OE5. I will share on social media pictures from the destination's nightlife.	1.405	3.40	3.40	3.35	3.56	3.47	3.27	0.558

night economy, the social and marketing connection (i.e. outings, meeting friends, have meaningful interactions with other people) may shape the tourists' overall experience. The social factor is not only acknowledged in the first solution, but also in the other two solutions that follow. The pandemic has affected amongst others, the social and psychological wellbeing of people (Steptoe & Di Gessa, 2021). Lockdowns and social distancing led people to rely on other than human-linked means (such as technology) to address their social needs (Dimmock et al., 2021). Even so, the extent to which technological means may replace physical meetings and gatherings with friends is highly arguable. A night outing may offer increased opportunities for people to socialize, interact with others, meet other people, and enjoy their night-time (with all its associated offerings) with friends. Besides this, marketing holds a specific dynamic in the overall experience of

visitors, since it is acknowledged for its contribution in the decision-making process of visitors. Customers consult opinions expressed online prior final decisions (Stamolampros et al., 2019). Websites and social media have become extremely popular for seeking information in current years (Rather, 2021) and people would refer to such channels to assess decisions for visitation at particular events, hospitality venues and restaurants.

The second solution of this study specifies that the socio-cultural and quality nexus contributes towards the formulation of the visitor experience within the night economy of a destination. Quality aspects within the context of hospitality and overall tourism field have been highlighted in previous studies as significant factors that affect directly or indirectly the overall experience of tourists/guests (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Rauch et al., 2015). Tourists seem to seek for quality in their night

Table 4

Necessity analysis.

Condition	Experience			
	Positive Overall Experience		Non-Positive Overall Experience	
	Consistency	Coverage	Consistency	Coverage
Safety issues	0.73	0.70	0.68	0.64
~ **Safety issues**	0.62	0.66	0.69	0.72
Hygiene and health issues	0.62	0.69	0.56	0.61
~ **Hygiene and health issues**	0.65	0.60	0.71	0.65
Marketing issues	0.72	0.76	0.64	0.67
~ **Marketing issues**	0.69	0.66	0.77	0.73
Price issues	0.76	0.75	0.72	0.69
~ **Price issues**	0.69	0.71	0.74	0.75
Quality issues	0.80	0.74	0.72	0.66
~ **Quality issues**	0.63	0.69	0.71	0.78
Social and cultural aspects	0.79	0.76	0.66	0.62
~ **Social and cultural aspects**	0.57	0.58	0.75	0.79
Age	0.24	0.72	0.22	0.66
~ **Age**	0.89	0.54	0.80	0.54
Income	0.37	0.51	0.36	0.49
~ **Income**	0.63	0.50	0.64	0.50

Note: ~ = absence of a condition.

outings involving socio-cultural transactions, yet also look for value-for-money experiences based on the outcomes of this study (as indicated in the third solution). This outcome suggests that tourists pay attention to the quality of the services and products provided in the places where they choose to meet, mingle and socialize with others. The quality aspect is also indicated in the third sufficient configuration where the price aspect also makes its presence. Tourists may seek for quality in their night outings, yet they may be price-cautious seeking for value-for-money in their event, gastronomic and cultural experiences and other outing-related night experiences.

Of equal importance are the solutions produced for predicting low score of outcome. Hygiene factors appear to prevail in models 4 and 5, in conjunction with safety (in model 4) and price (in model 5) issues. This outcome re-enforces the important role of hygiene and safety that may prevail in the formation of a non-positive or negative overall experience of visitors. In more detail, the absenteeism of hygiene and safety measures may result in peoples' dissatisfaction and/or negative experiences, and this has being been heralded for decades by researchers within or outside the tourism field (Bianchi, 2016; Herzberg et al., 1959; Lam-González et al., 2021). Yet, rather surprisingly, the absence of high

scores of these particular aspects in models 1 to 3 (as presented previously), may not yield high scores of the outcome (i.e. positive overall experience).

5.3. Conclusions, limitations and further research

This study focused on the nightlife experience of visitors while using Cyprus as a fitting place-context. By doing so, it has contributed towards academic pleas of the standing of destinations' night-economy and the tourist nightlife experience (Huang & Wang, 2018; Jiang & Hong, 2021). In this study, the socio-cultural factors appears as a dynamic and essential diptych contributing to the overall experience of tourists within the night economy. This may be the result of two reasons. Firstly, the social prevailing factor in all likelihood mirrors people's urge to socialize following prolonged and strict social restrictions (Mucci et al., 2020). Secondly, visitors may benefit from the increased socio-experiential and differing (compared to day-time) opportunities that are offered within the context of night economies of destinations (Jiang & Hong, 2021). Destinations are therefore urged to focus on their night-linked social and cultural aspects. This may be achieved by tourism stakeholders (i.e. planners) allowing free and well-lit public areas that can be used for socializing purposes, night markets and night cultural performances, and hospitality stakeholders providing further opportunities for people to socialize and experience the culture of their place and venue. Destinations may also look at the possibility of opening cultural sites (e.g. museums) during the night hours. The active involvement of the local entrepreneurs/artists may also be fostered through the encouragement of night art exhibitions, and indigenous/folkloric music/dance performances. Provided that the 'quality' aspect was also raised in regards to the cultural aspect, it is advisable that city councils and entrepreneurs ensure that events, festivals and markets do not lack in organization, aesthetics, and that the quality of services and products is rigorously monitored.

Furthermore, due to the idiosyncratic character of night outings, the hygiene and safety issues are also highlighted. Although such aspects may not secure positive overall experiences, they may obstruct non-pleasant overall experiences for visitors within a night-experiential context.

This study has certain limitations that are ought to be acknowledged. Firstly, fsQCA may produce alternative routes, hence caution should be exercised if attempting to generalize the study's outcomes. Further research is suggested to investigate tourist experiential phenomena within different contexts. Secondly, our study did not include propositions based on theory as has been done in other studies that have used a fsQCA methodological approach (such as, Chaouali et al., 2022). We

Table 5

Complex solutions.

Model for predicting *high* score of outcomes	Raw Coverage	Unique Coverage	Consistency
Model f_oe = f(f_si, fhhi, f_mi, f_pi, f_qi, f_sca, f_i, f_a)			
Model 1: ~f_si*~f_hhi*f_mi*~f_pi*~f_qi*f_sca*~f_i*f_a	0.32	0.05	0.94
Model 2: ~f_si*~f_hhi*~f_mi*~f_pi*f_qi*f_sca*f_i*f_a	0.25	0.01	0.95
Model 3: ~f_si*~f_hhi*~f_mi*f_pi*f_qi*f_sca*~f_i*f_a	0.33	0.02	0.95
Solution coverage: 0.40			
Solution consistency: 0.91			
Model for predicting *low* score of outcomes			
Model ~ f_oe = f(f_si, fhhi, f_mi, f_pi, f_qi, f_sca, f_i, f_a)			
Model 4: f_si*f_hhi*~f_mi*~f_pi*~f_qi*~f_sca*~f_i*~f_a	0.27	0.04	0.94
Model 5: ~f_si*f_hhi*~f_mi*f_pi*~f_qi*~f_sca*~f_i*~f_a	0.26	0.03	0.95
Solution coverage: 0.30			
Solution consistency: 0.94			
f_si: Safety issues	**f_pi: Price issues**	**f_oe: Overall Experience**	
f_hhi: Hygiene and health issues	**f_qi: Quality issues**	**f_i: Income**	
f_mi: Marketing issues	**f_sca: Social and cultural aspects**	**f_a: Age**	

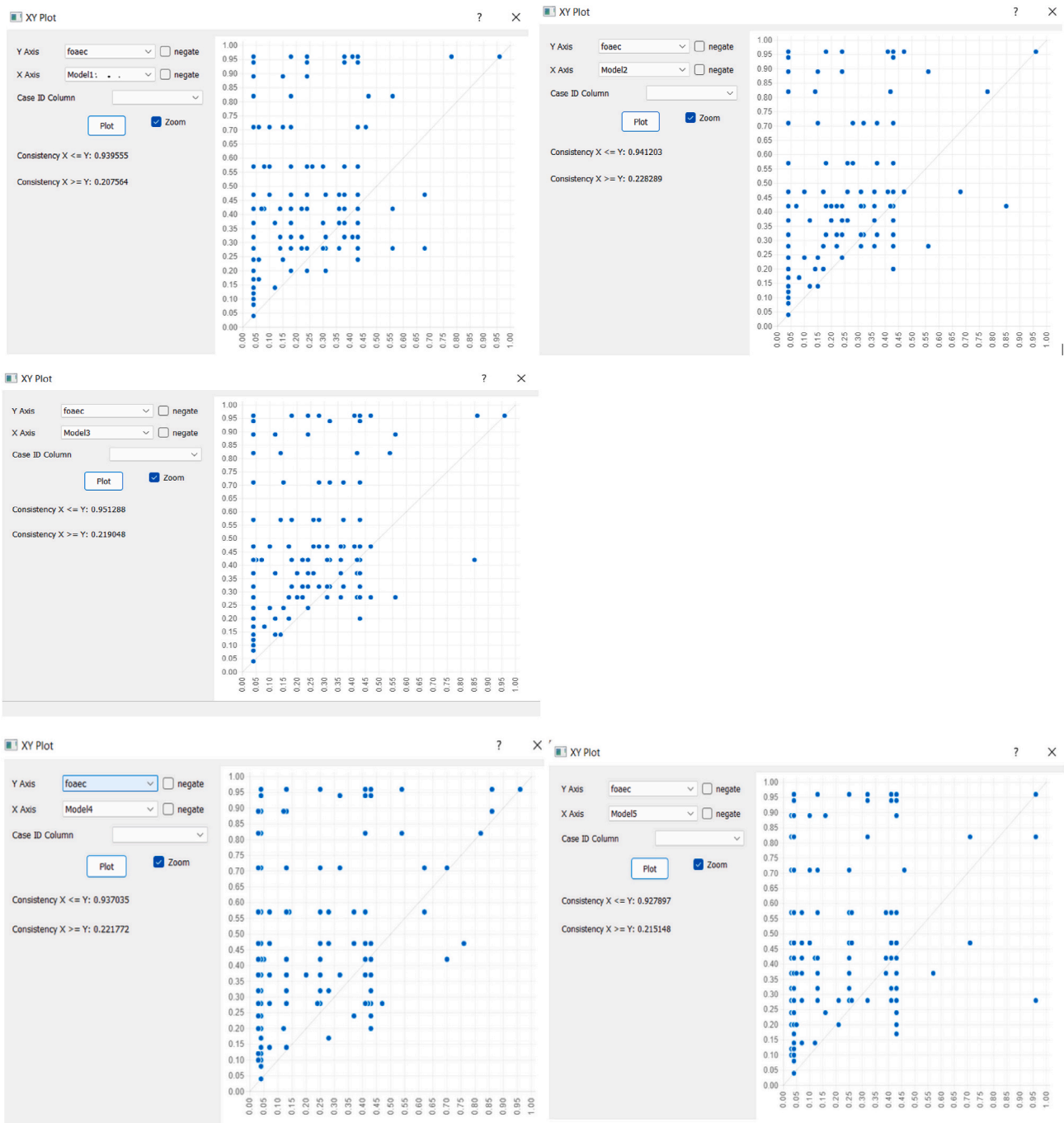Note: * = presence of a casual condition ~ = negation of a casual condition Frequency = 2 Consistency = 0.80.

Fig. 1. XY plots.

recognize this as a limitation (Woodside, 2016). We do acknowledge the significant role of abductive reasoning (as in Saridakis et al., 2020) in terms of having a 'reason to suspect that the conclusion of an argument is worthy of pursuit based on an observation' (Folger & Stein, 2017, p. 308). Existing theory on tourist experience enabled us to pin point 'key' antecedent conditions to be examined, while we proceeded in exploring 'all possible solutions that explain the outcome of interest' (Pappas & Woodside, 2021, p. 3). We hope that our study can be used as a basis for the construction of recipes in future fsQCA-related research that will examine tourist experiential phenomena. The findings of this study provide some fertile grounds for further investigations, such as based on the demographic characteristics (i.e. age) of the respondents and how these differ in regards to different issues (such as, the safety aspect) and their overall night-experience. For instance, additional research may be directed in answering *why* older visitors (above 50) are found to rate more favourably their experiences, compared to youngsters. Is it because they had 'less' expectations than the youngsters? or/and were youngsters expecting a more 'lively' nightlife experience than what they have actually experienced? As a concluding statement, destinations should acknowledge the importance of the night economy in shaping visitor experiences. This study has provided some insights to this rather neglected idiosyncratic context in which experiences of visitors may be particularly shaped and fostered.

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