

THEME 5 THE VALLETTA BRAND



EVALUATION & MONITORING
Research Findings 2018

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Valletta 2018 Evaluation & Monitoring process is a means through which the Valletta 2018 Foundation gains a deeper insight into the various impacts of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) title on different spheres of cultural, social and economic life.

This process comprises of a series of longitudinal studies commencing in January 2015, three full years before the European Capital of Culture year, and running through to 2019, thereby capturing data before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of Valletta holding the ECoC title.

This process is divided into five themes:

- 1. Cultural & Territorial Vibrancy**
- 2. Governance & Finance**
- 3. Community Inclusion & Space**
- 4. The Tourist Experience**
- 5. The Valletta Brand**

This research is a collaborative, mixed-methods process, involving a number of public entities, collecting and analysing data primarily of a quantitative nature, as well as independent researchers working with data that is predominantly qualitative. These entities and researchers constitute the Valletta 2018 Evaluation & Monitoring Steering Committee, that was set up to manage and implement this research process.

This research process was coordinated by the Valletta 2018 Foundation's Research Department.

Valletta 2018 Research Department

The Research Department is one of the three central departments which were set up at the Valletta 2018 Foundation's birth. After years of work, the Research Department has managed to create a vibrant and multidisciplinary network of international and local researchers, academics, and cultural operators with the overall aim to strengthen Malta's sociocultural fabric through participatory and action-based research. The Department was responsible for the documentation of European Capital of Culture impacts through an evaluation and monitoring research process, as well as the organisation of various seminars and conferences. Well-being, liveability, and community development are the conducting threads that guide the research process.

The Research Department believes on the benefits of practice-based research in the cultural field since it allows the dissemination and practical use of any findings. It involves local communities, artists, operators, activists and local organisations in the process. In this way, research goes beyond, and extends, from an academic perspective, aiming to make a real impact on people's lives.

In April 2015, the Research Department launched www.culturemapmalta.com, an online map of Malta's cultural spaces - the first of its kind in Malta - in which users are invited to upload and update information about cultural spaces. This creates an online, visual database of valuable information which plots the cultural use of public and private cultural spaces across the island. One of the flagship events of the Research Department is its annual international conference, which has been taking place for the past five years. This series of annual conferences focuses on cultural relations in Europe and the Mediterranean, addressing the opportunities and challenges in the local context. These conferences have created a platform of discussion, serving as a knot linking the international and the local cultural spheres, addressing experts, researchers and cultural operators, providing insight into a possible way forward regarding cultural policy, cultural practice and future research.

INTRODUCTION

Branding and communication forms a crucial aspect of any European Capital of Culture, to the extent that in many cases the brand of the respective ECoC becomes synonymous with the sweeping social, cultural and infrastructural changes which the city has undergone. As in any organisational setting, having a clear brand identity allows an organisation to strategise and communicate its goals and engage with diverse communities in a more efficient and cohesive manner not only during the ECoC year itself, but also in the aftermath of the title.

This theme focuses on this issue, analysing the extent to which the Valletta 2018 Foundation has succeeded in communicating its brand, and the degree of engagement with the Valletta 2018 communications strategy. The research study within this theme, conducted by Dr Emanuel Said, tracks user engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand through a process of real-time experience tracking, whereby participants are monitored periodically for their engagement with Valletta 2018 and its various activities throughout the year.

This study is accompanied by an extensive analysis of the online and print visibility of Valletta 2018 and related activities. This study, carried out internally by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, examines the degree to which Valletta 2018 was present on various online and social media channels, as well as local print media.



AUDIENCES' EXPERIENCES OF THE VALLETTA 2018 BRAND

Dr Emanuel Said

INTRODUCTION

The project studies how audiences engaged with the different forms of communication that the Valletta 2018 communications programme transmitted throughout the run-up to and during the manifestation of the European Capital of Culture programme. Longitudinal in nature, this study adopts an innovative data gathering approach involving real-time experience tracking, which seeks to determine the effects that each type of communication transmitted by Valletta 2018 had on different audiences, as reflected in individuals' attitudes and behaviour.

This study builds on the quantitative initiatives the Evaluation and Monitoring committee undertook in the form of periodic CATI Valletta Participation Survey, and investigates *how* audiences engaged with the Valletta 2018 brand by:

- exploring the touchpoints¹ that feature in individuals' engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand;
- determining the sequences of encounters that individuals experience in their engagement with the Valletta 2018 brand; and
- assessing the effects that such encounters produce on individuals experiencing the Valletta 2018 brand.

METHODOLOGY

This study looks at the *process* of engagement rather than at the influences or outcomes of audience engagement with cultural events within the Valletta 2018 programme. It is this process that lies at the basis of audience (behavioural) segmentation that can help producers or creators better plan initiatives that target specific audience segments more effectively in future schemes – both locally and overseas. As an ultimate objective, this study intends to evaluate the outcomes of the Valletta 2018 communications strategy.

This study focuses on the individuals' experiences (of the cultural brand) as the unit of analysis, with analysis levelled to the individuals (as audience members) and their experiences, differing from earlier cultural participation research projects that focus on either the producers'/creators' views or the participants' post hoc perceptions about experienced events.

Individuals experienced and engaged with the Valletta 2018 brand in two key ways: by experiencing communications transmitted directly by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, or by engaging/experiencing indirect communications like word of mouth and social media exchanges. Audiences (and stakeholders) experience a holistic engagement with a cultural brand across multiple points of contact (Grewal, Levy, & Kumar, 2009), touchpoints (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007), or discrete encounters (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), as they progress through their journey with the brand (Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008).

¹ A touchpoint is an episode where an individual (part of an audience) has a direct or indirect contact with a (cultural) brand (after Baxendale et al., 2015).

This study recognises brands (particularly cultural ones) as dynamic, continuous social processes (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Individuals (audiences), production actors (performers, producers, creators) as well as other stakeholders constitute a network of resources (rather than dyadic relationships²) which co-create brand value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Brand value emerges from stakeholders' experiences³ with the brand and because of sustained negotiations and symbolic interpretations of brand-related information. Brand value also emerges from personal narratives based on personal or impersonal experiences with brands (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001). Brand value is located in the minds of audiences and stakeholders (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007) who form brand communities – or specialised non-geographically bound *communities*, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand (Muñiz Jr. & O'Guinn, 2001).

Audiences' engagement with cultural brands exhibits community-like qualities as understood in sociology, and addresses identity-, meaning-, and status-related concerns for all network participants above. There are 12 value-creating practices in brand communities, organised in four thematic categories (after Schau et al., 2009). Of these, *community engagement*, *impression management*, and *social networking* are most relevant to cultural brands.

Brand resonance involves relationships that are described in four dimensions (Keller, 2001). On top of loyalty and attachment, the *community* and *engagement* dimensions are the most relevant to cultural brands like Valletta 2018. The *community* dimension broadly refers to audiences who identify themselves with a brand community and sense affiliation (if not kinship) with other individuals associated with the brand (such as fellow audience members experiencing the brand, performers, producers, and creators among others). Active *engagement*, by contrast, is where audiences assert loyalty to a brand. Within this dimension, audiences invest time, energy, money, and other resources into the cultural brand beyond those explained during the purchase or consumption of cultural events (after Keller, 2001).

This rationale suggests five important considerations that the methodology employed entertains. First, rather than considering the Valletta 2018 as a static property, this study looks at the process through which audiences engage with the Valletta 2018 brand. Second, this process involves a network of actors (audiences, performers, producers, and creators) using operant and operand resources⁴. Third, audiences engaged in this process experience multiple touchpoints. Fourth, a variety of individuals are involved in audience and performer/provider spheres. Fifth, individuals experience cultural brands within a collective consumption context, highlighting the multitude of touchpoints that audiences encounter in their participation in cultural events and associated co-creation of value (after Kelleher et al., 2015).

In response to these five considerations, the study's methodology acknowledges that audiences engage with the Valletta 2018 brand through a multitude of encounters that range from direct instances (like advertising or actual participation in an event) to other indirect experiences (like word of mouth or third-party contributions on social media). These encounters affect individuals' attitudes towards the Valletta 2018 brand.

Traditional survey methods can capture and measure such impacts, but they rely on individuals' memories of encounters with the Valletta 2018 brand after the occurrence of these events. Memories

² After Ballantyne and Aitken (2007); Ind and Bjerke (2007); Jones (2005); McAlexander et al. (2002) and Muñiz Jr. and Schau (2005)

³ Or the subjective response to the holistic direct and indirect encounter with the brand after Lemke et al. (2011).

⁴ Audiences use knowledge and skills (operant resources) to engage with cultural brands and transform physical or experience (operand resources) into meaning, experiential benefits and value.

fade rapidly and are often biased by whether or not an individual has actually participated (Bryman, 2012; Malhotra & Birks, 2007; McGivern, 2013). A richer account of the total effect of the different encounters an individual makes with a brand can be constructed through ethnographic approaches that require observers to participate in the experiences with the observed individuals. Ethnographic methods are limited as individual observers can only shadow a limited number of individuals for a restricted period of time (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; van Maanen, 2011). Moreover, individuals' behaviours tend to change as a result of their own social desirability – or the unconscious desire to “please” the observer (Adler & Adler, 1987; Bryman, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Patton, 1980; Paulhus, 1991).

An alternative approach involves engaging research participants to interact with the researcher using the participants' own mobile phone. Data is collected in real time (hence the term “real-time experience tracking” or RET) (Baxendale, Macdonald, & Wilson, 2015; Macdonald, Wilson, & Konus, 2012) which mitigates the challenges of traditional ethnography in two ways. First, whereas a researcher/observer cannot easily track audiences 24 hours daily, participants' mobile phones can. Second, unlike human observers, the participants' mobile phones do not influence their perceptions of encounters and experiences.

A process view to audiences' brand engagement is drawn from four essential steps, where research participants:

1. fill out an online questionnaire about their personality as well as their sensory, affective, and intellectual dimensions of the Valletta 2018 brand experience;
2. answer a short questionnaire whenever they encounter Valletta 2018 by way of noting Valletta 2018 communications, or participating in events, or experiencing the brand in other direct or indirect ways;
3. fill in an online diary in which they corroborate/reflect on their on their encounters with Valletta 2018; and
4. complete an online questionnaire (modified version of (1) above) to assess any change in attitudes and views about their Valletta 2018 experience.

Established RET methods rely on two types of data collection channels: text (SMS) messaging and online (involving pre-RET and post-RET surveys, as well as an online diary) (Macdonald et al., 2012). In these studies, participant contributions through the online diary were not obligatory and this resulted in poorly capturing the participants' reflections about their experience with brands. The method employed for researching the Valletta 2018 brand moves from utilising traditional mobile phones to using participants' smartphones that are in widespread use among Maltese (and foreign) consumers⁵. The use of smartphones enables observers to use a purposively developed app that captures the relevant data in steps 2 and 3 above in one stage.

This study involved the design, production, and piloting of the new RET app. Just Some Coding Ltd were sub-contracted late in October 2015 to develop the app that was later piloted in February 2016. Following observations emerging from the use of the app during the pilot phase, a new, improved app was launched for larger scale field efforts in May 2016. This involved an eight-week data collection period ending on 15 July 2016, that coincided with the tailing of Valletta 2018 cultural activities in Summer 2016.

⁵ In 2014, 42% of mobile phone users made use of a smartphone – up from 37% in 2013. A prevailing majority of smartphone users are younger than 34 years, with proportions of smartphone users (over total mobile phone users) declining with ages older than 35. These proportions are expected to increase drastically during 2015 and 2016. Source: Malta Communications Authority, 2014.

In 2017, a large-scale administration of the RET app was effected over two periods (the first between July and August 2017, and a second wave between October and November 2017). In 2018, the RET app was administered during a large-scale fieldwork project, engaging 787 individuals and capturing 829 encounters. A summary of all field efforts is set out in Table 1.

From a methodological perspective, there are four key limitations which may affect the study's validity and reliability. First, participants may report their experiences well after the encounter takes place, if at all – this is a common aspect manifest in indirect methods of data collection (such as self-completion surveys). The capture of GIS data remains a valid opportunity and can be captured only if research participants consent, albeit associated with ethical and GDPR reservations.

Second, as with survey methods, researchers' questions (as an intervention) may influence participants' attitudes towards a brand. Third, there is a possibility that specific types of encounters remain only sparsely represented, as reported in earlier studies even when large numbers of participants are engaged in RET studies. This study tried to mitigate this challenge by administering more than one wave of participation (for each participant) following the suggestions of Baxendale et al., (2015) and Macdonald et al. (2012). Asking participants to keep engaged with RET for longer periods than one week was ineffective and is consistent with earlier experience (as well as published studies) where high participant dropout rates in longitudinal investigations are reported (McGivern, 2013).

Fourth, RET participants may fail to report all encounters with the Valletta 2018 brand for various reasons. This study aimed to alleviate the effect of these challenges by administering incentives that help individuals remain committed to their participation in the study. Incentives involved free (or sponsored) access to various events within the Valletta 2018 programme of events, but could not effectively alleviate challenges emerging from diminishing participant engagement with RET.

Table 1: Fieldwork and data collected in this study

Period	Data collection method	Participants	Data collected
May – July 2016	RET	62 participants	367 encounter responses
	Focus group discussions	30 participants	5 focus group discussions, recordings and transcripts
	Face-to-face in-depth interviews	5 participants (all performing artists or producers)	5 interview recordings and associated transcripts
July – August 2017 and October – November 2017	RET	36 participants (18 for each wave of data collection)	121 encounter responses
May – July 2018	RET	787 participants	829 encounter responses

FINDINGS

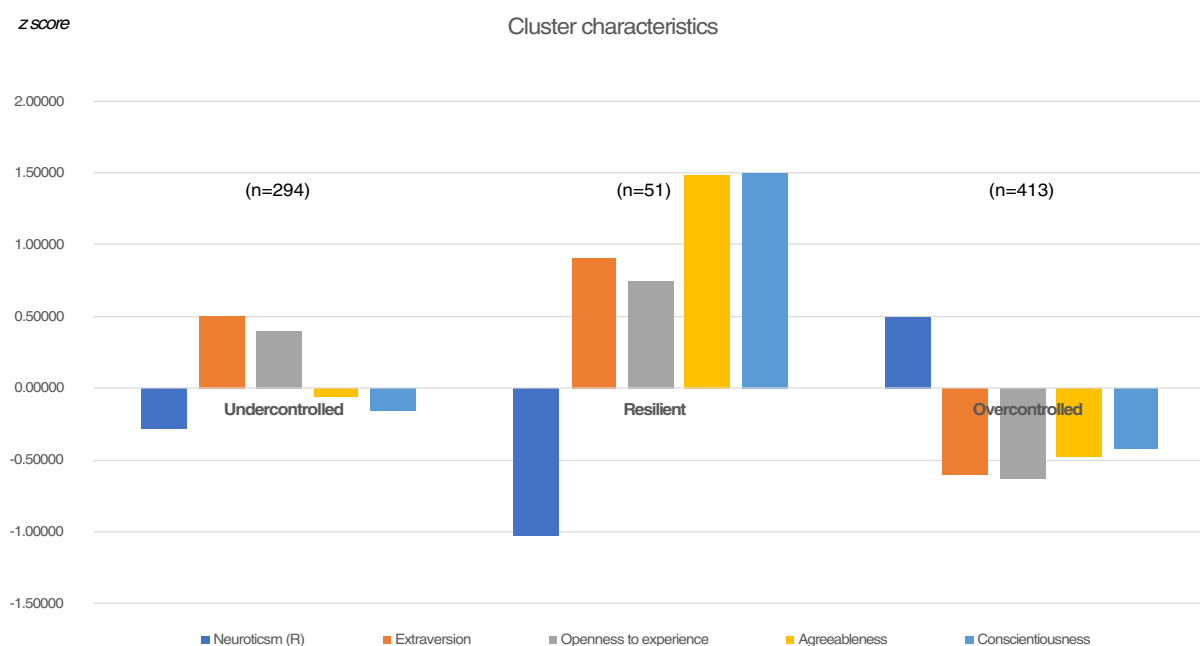
Sample description

The 2018 wave captured the response of 787 participants who reported 829 encounters. None of the participants had participated in earlier waves of this study. A total of 415 participants were female, 338 had achieved up to secondary schooling, a further 149 had completed a university degree, 374 participants were married while a further 291 were single. 239 participants lived in the Northern Harbour region, while a further 139 lived in the Western region. Overall, the participants' average age stood at 43 years (median age 42 years), featuring a relatively normal distribution of ages that ranged from 15 years old up to 88 years old.

A total of 758 participants could be categorised in three personality types: *overcontrolled* (n = 413), *undercontrolled* (n=294), and *resilient* (n=51) (after Asendorpf, Borkenau, Ostendorf, & Van Aken, 2001; Rammstedt, Riemann, Angleitner, & Borkenau, 2004). The remaining participants could not be categorised because their responses (relating to the Big Five personality items) lied well outside the z = ±3 range.

A resilient personality is one where the individual manifests the least neuroticism among all other personality types, but has an above average manifestation of all other four personality dimensions. By contrast, the overcontrolled personality is the one where the individual manifests the highest levels of neuroticism (compared to peer participants), but the lowest manifestations of the other four personality dimensions. The undercontrolled personality manifests around average levels of neuroticism, openness to experience, and agreeableness (see Figure 1).

Chart 1: Cluster membership (Source: Author)



An analysis of the clusters revealed no significant differences in region, gender, or education, but revealed some differences between clusters and the marital status of composing members. However, whereas overcontrolled and undercontrolled clusters seem to be prevalently composed of married members or members living with partners, the resilient cluster is mostly composed of members who are single (see Table 2). In addition, resilient cluster members featured an average age of 38.5 years (median = 36), whereas overcontrolled and undercontrolled cluster members featured an older average age of 44.9 and 41.1 years respectively (median ages standing at 44 and 40 years respectively).

Table 2: Composition of clusters (by member region of residence, gender, education achieved and marital status)

		Cluster membership						Pearson Chi-Square Tests		
		Undercontrolled		Resilient		Overcontrolled		Chi-square	df	Sig.
		Count	Valid %	Count	Valid %	Count	Valid %			
Region	Southern Harbour	56	19.05%	5	9.80%	65	15.74%	14.833	10	0.138
	Northern Harbour	87	29.59%	19	37.25%	125	30.27%			
	South Eastern	51	17.35%	6	11.76%	64	15.50%			
	Western	48	16.33%	4	7.84%	83	20.10%			
	Northern	41	13.95%	13	25.49%	58	14.04%			
	Gozo & Comino	11	3.74%	4	7.84%	18	4.36%			
Gender	Male	131	44.56%	26	50.98%	203	49.15%	1.721	2	0.423
	Female	163	55.44%	25	49.02%	210	50.85%			
Education	Did not finish any school	1	.34%	1	1.96%	5	1.21%	9.066	12	0.697
	Primary schooling	17	5.78%	2	3.92%	24	5.81%			
	Secondary schooling	123	41.84%	23	45.10%	170	41.16%			
	Trade college	80	27.21%	11	21.57%	86	20.82%			
	University degree	48	16.33%	9	17.65%	90	21.79%			
	Post-graduate degree	18	6.12%	3	5.88%	24	5.81%			
	Other	7	2.38%	2	3.92%	14	3.39%			
Marital Status	Single	124	42.18%	21	41.18%	137	33.17%	22.600	8	0.004
	Living Together	10	3.40%	2	3.92%	31	7.51%			
	Married	142	48.30%	18	35.29%	194	46.97%			
	Divorced	10	3.40%	4	7.84%	25	6.05%			
	Other	8	2.72%	6	11.76%	26	6.30%			

Brand experience

As for brand experience (after Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009), this study finds that participants express no discernible change in their impressions on their Valletta 2018 experience (from the start to the end of the RET data collection in 2018). Indeed, all paired t-test comparisons suggest no significant difference in sensory, affective, and intellectual dimensions in responses at the start and at the end of the fieldwork participation). However, when compared to earlier waves, this study finds marked differences in participants' impressions across those waves of data collection happening before and during the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture programme of events (see Table 3). Indeed, participants were relatively less responsive towards Valletta 2018's impression on their senses. There was also a reduced appeal to the participants' senses, a reduced strength of emotions, an increase in thinking about Valletta 2018, and less curiosity. A key interpretation of these observations relates to the saturation of awareness about the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events, as 2018 saw an extensive communications campaign that was a stark contrast when compared with earlier communications efforts in 2016 and 2017. This saturation of awareness led primarily to an overall increased intellectual engagement among study participants with events within the Valletta 2018 brand, as well as their being at ease when offering sensory/affective perceptions about their experiences as Valletta 2018 became a more familiar phenomenon.

Table 3: Net change in participants' impression of their Valletta 2018 experience before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Valletta 2018 Experience	Phase of project	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means				
							F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	
Sensory / Affective	Valletta 2018 makes a strong impression on my senses	Before	97	6.39	2.365	.240	a	9.503	.002	2.109	882	.035	.632
		During	787	5.76	2.831	.101	b		2.426	132.388	.017	.632	
	I find Valletta 2018 interesting in a sensory way	Before	97	6.54	2.011	.204	a	18.628	.000	-1.080	882	.280	-.309
		During	787	6.84	2.726	.097	b		-1.366	143.526	.174	-.309	
	Valletta 2018 does not appeal to mysenses	Before	97	3.10	2.514	.255	a	3.975	.046	-3.467	882	.001	-1.043
		During	787	4.15	2.828	.101	b		-3.800	127.888	.000	-1.043	
Valletta 2018 induces feelings and sentiments	Before	97	6.06	2.309	.234	a	17.101	.000	.794	882	.427	.245	
	During	787	5.82	2.924	.104	b		.954	137.073	.342	.245		
I do not have strong emotions for Valletta 2018	Before	97	3.69	2.591	.263	a	4.339	.038	-2.918	882	.004	-.932	
	During	787	4.62	3.011	.107	b		-3.279	130.158	.001	-.932		
Intellectual	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter Valletta 2018	Before	97	5.40	2.206	.224	a	19.247	.000	-.593	882	.554	-.184
		During	787	5.59	2.953	.105	b		-.742	142.217	.459	-.184	
	Valletta 2018 does not make me think	Before	97	3.56	2.504	.254	a	6.395	.012	-3.359	882	.001	-1.082
		During	787	4.64	3.049	.109	b		-3.915	133.738	.000	-1.082	
Valletta 2018 stimulates mycuriosity	Before	97	7.32	2.211	.224	a	20.411	.000	3.989	882	.000	1.220	
	During	787	6.10	2.911	.104	b		4.936	140.638	.000	1.220		

a equal variances assumed
b equal variances not assumed

A further look into these perceptions suggests that there are no significant differences across research waves among participants within the undercontrolled personality cluster. However, there was a significant increase in perceived sensory experiences (*"I find Valletta 2018 interesting in a sensory way"*) among participants within the overcontrolled personality cluster. The larger shifts in perceptions towards experiences of Valletta 2018, featured among participants with a resilient personality, where marked decline in sensory/affective perceptions as well as marked increases in intellectual perceptions were observed.

Encounters and events

For the 2018 wave, most encounters reported were related to Pageant of the Seas (312 encounters), Malta Fashion Week and Awards (91 encounters), and the Earth Garden Festival 2018 (80 encounters) (see Table 4).

Table 4: Events encountered by participants in 2018 wave (Source: Author)

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Pageant of the Seas	312	37.6%
Malta Fashion Week & Awards	91	11.0%
Earth Garden Festival 2018	80	9.7%
Rockastra 2018	71	8.6%
Valletta Green Festival	55	6.6%
Valletta Film Festival	52	6.3%
Il Festa il Kbir	45	5.4%
Malta World Music Festival	37	4.5%
Star of Strait Street	16	1.9%
Subjective Maps	13	1.6%
Design & Technology Expo@ The Malta Robotics Olympiad	10	1.2%
Rock the South 2018	6	0.7%
Amalgama	6	0.7%
Cantina	5	0.6%
12th Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival	5	0.6%
2018 Accordion Festival	4	0.5%
Solar Cinema	4	0.5%
Map of the Mediterranean	4	0.5%
Modern Music Days: Transition	3	0.4%
Others	10	1.2%
Total	829	100.0

Table 5: Participants' experience of events before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

		Phase of project			
		Before		During	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
How did you experience the event?	Internet browsing	144	29.5%	161	19.4%
	Saw on TV	63	12.9%	264	31.8%
	Heard on radio	41	8.4%	17	2.1%
	Read on newspapers/magazines	31	6.4%	32	3.9%
	Posted on social media myself	39	8.0%	19	2.3%
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	51	10.5%	79	9.5%
	Overheard a conversation	18	3.7%	19	2.3%
	Participated in the event	47	9.6%	163	19.7%
	Other	53	10.9%	64	7.7%
	Used Valletta 2018 App	1	0.2%	11	1.3%

Table 6: Participants' experience of events before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Which event did you encounter?	How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Pageant of the Seas	3.058	312	1.144	4.071	312	0.838	3.712	312	0.726
Malta Fashion Week & Awards	2.396	91	1.201	3.593	91	0.802	3.495	91	0.794
Earth Garden Festival 2018	2.500	80	1.212	3.763	80	0.830	3.350	80	0.797
Rockastra 2018	2.887	71	1.178	4.014	71	0.837	3.887	71	0.803
Valletta Green Festival	3.291	55	0.956	4.255	55	0.799	3.873	55	0.795
Valletta Film Festival	2.615	52	1.286	3.769	52	0.757	3.577	52	0.776
Il-Festa l-Kbira	3.200	45	1.455	4.133	45	0.757	3.978	45	0.812
Malta World Music Festival	2.865	37	1.251	4.027	37	0.928	3.919	37	0.829
Star of Strait Street	2.375	16	1.147	4.063	16	1.124	3.625	16	0.719
Subjective Maps Malta	2.231	13	1.301	3.308	13	0.751	3.615	13	0.961
Design & Technology Expo@ The Malta Robotics Olympiad	3.200	10	1.033	4.000	10	0.943	4.000	10	0.816
Rock the South 2018	3.000	6	0.894	4.000	6	0.894	4.000	6	0.894
Amalgama	3.000	6	0.000	3.333	6	0.516	3.500	6	0.548
Cantina	3.600	5	0.894	4.200	5	0.447	4.200	5	0.837
12th Mechanised Ground Fireworks Festival	3.000	5	1.000	5.000	5	0.000	3.800	5	0.837
2018 Accordion Festival	4.250	4	0.957	5.000	4	0.000	4.250	4	0.957
Solar Cinema	3.750	4	0.957	4.500	4	0.577	4.250	4	0.500
Map of the Mediterranean	2.750	4	0.957	4.750	4	0.500	3.500	4	0.577
Modern Music Days: Transition	2.667	3	0.577	4.667	3	0.577	4.000	3	0.000
The Island is what the sea surrounds	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
European Eyes on Japan	3.000	1		3.000	1		3.000	1	
Rulina	4.000	1		5.000	1		4.000	1	
Atofest Malta	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
A Tale of Two Cities: Broken Dreams	2.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
Apocalypse Trio - Vincenzo Deluci	4.000	1		4.000	1		4.000	1	
Fragmenta: Malta Muses: Goddess, Madonna, Witch	3.000	1		3.000	1		4.000	1	
Modern Music Days: Tehilim	3.000	1		5.000	1		4.000	1	
Total	2.890	827	1.202	3.977	827	0.850	3.705	827	0.783

Unlike earlier waves in this study, encounters in 2018 most often involved television viewership (31.8% of encounters, up from 12.9% in earlier waves), followed by participation in events (19.7% of encounters, up from 9.6% in earlier waves). Internet browsing encounters were the third most common type of encounter in 2018 (19.4% of encounters, down from 29.5% in earlier waves) (see Table 5). These differences are significant at up to 95% confidence interval.

This study measured the perceived value of the events by asking participants to rate how important and how satisfying was the encounter for them (in all three waves of data collection). A further question was introduced in the 2017 field research waves, where participants were asked to express how they felt about their encounter (whether better or worse). Ratings were measured on a five-point scale⁶. Table 6 sets out a summary of these responses obtained in 2018.

Observations suggest that the event that ranked the highest in terms of perceived importance (value) was the Valletta Green Festival (mean = 3.29), followed by Il-Festa l-Kbira, and The Malta Robotics Olympiad (both with a mean = 3.20) (for events with more than 10 observations). As for more satisfying experiences, participants rated the Valletta Green Festival (mean = 4.25), followed by il-Festa l-Kbira (mean = 4.13). Participants rated The Malta Robotics Olympiad as that event which left the largest effect on them (mean = 4.00), followed by il-Festa l-Kbira (mean = 3.98).

Table 7: Perceived value, satisfaction and feeling with different types of encounters across all waves of data collection (Source: Author)

Phase of project		How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Before	Internet browsing	2.68	144	1.035	3.58	144	.714	3.60	35	.847
	Saw on TV	2.81	63	.998	3.59	63	.816	3.55	20	.686
	Heard on radio	2.85	41	.691	3.63	41	.623	3.36	14	.633
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.58	31	.923	3.55	31	.810	3.41	17	.795
	Posted on social media myself	2.90	39	.968	3.41	39	.993	3.80	5	1.304
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.02	51	1.086	3.90	51	.781	3.75	8	.463
	Overheard a conversation	2.56	18	.922	3.39	18	.502	3.50	6	.548
	Participated in the event	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	.996	3.82	11	.405
	Other	2.94	53	1.064	3.74	53	.944	3.75	4	.500
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		3.00	1		3.00	1	
Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	.825	3.57	121	.728	
During	Internet browsing	2.68	161	1.092	3.69	161	.768	3.54	161	.671
	Saw on TV	2.94	264	1.191	4.08	264	.766	3.79	264	.764
	Heard on radio	2.47	17	1.281	3.65	17	.702	3.65	17	.862
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.44	32	1.190	3.75	32	.880	3.56	32	.948
	Posted on social media myself	2.37	19	1.257	3.32	19	.946	3.42	19	.902
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.61	79	1.203	3.72	79	.733	3.47	79	.676
	Overheard a conversation	2.95	19	1.026	3.89	19	1.049	3.32	19	.820
	Participated in the event	3.40	163	1.063	4.47	163	.678	3.98	163	.753
	Other	2.80	64	1.449	3.75	64	1.127	3.67	64	.927
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.55	11	1.128	4.18	11	.874	3.64	11	.674
Total	2.89	829	1.201	3.98	829	.849	3.71	829	.782	
Total	Internet browsing	2.68	305	1.064	3.64	305	.744	3.55	196	.703
	Saw on TV	2.91	327	1.156	3.98	327	.799	3.77	284	.760
	Heard on radio	2.74	58	.909	3.64	58	.641	3.52	31	.769
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.51	63	1.061	3.65	63	.845	3.51	49	.893
	Posted on social media myself	2.72	58	1.089	3.38	58	.970	3.50	24	.978
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.77	130	1.172	3.79	130	.754	3.49	87	.663
	Overheard a conversation	2.76	37	.983	3.65	37	.857	3.36	25	.757
	Participated in the event	3.38	210	1.084	4.38	210	.775	3.97	174	.736
	Other	2.86	117	1.286	3.74	117	1.043	3.68	68	.905
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.50	12	1.087	4.08	12	.900	3.58	12	.669
Total	2.87	1317	1.139	3.86	1317	.853	3.69	950	.776	

An analysis of the encounters by type across all three waves suggests some statistically significant shifts in satisfaction and perceived effect of encounters (but not in perceived importance). For instance, whereas participation in events remained the most satisfying experience (both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC

⁶ In the case of perceived importance, the scale meant 1 = "Not important at all" and 5 = "Very important indeed". In the case of perceived satisfaction, the scale meant 1 = "Highly dissatisfied" and 5 = "Very satisfied". In the case of resulting feeling, the scale meant 1 = "Really worse" and 5 = "Really better".

programme of events), participants perceived the Valletta 2018 App as the second most satisfying encounter (albeit among a relatively small number of users) as observed during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme, while chatting with friends face-to-face was the second most satisfying encounter before the start of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme. Participation in events also remained the most impacting encounter, both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events. However, the second most impacting encounters during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events were TV encounters, rather than the “posting on social media” encounters, which were picked before the start of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme in earlier fieldwork.

As in earlier waves of research, direct encounters remain the most important, satisfying, and impacting encounters reported by participants in 2018. However, significant shifts in satisfaction and perceived effect are evident when responses are compared across field waves before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (see Table 8). Indeed, reported satisfaction and perceived effect improved in general over all types of encounters from before to during the administration of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events.

Table 8: Perceived value, satisfaction and feeling across types of encounters across all waves of data collection (Source: Author)

Phase of project	Type of experience	How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Before	Indirect	2.77	387	.987	3.60	387	.770	3.54	105	.760
	Direct	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	.996	3.82	11	.405
	Other	2.93	54	1.061	3.72	54	.940	3.60	5	.548
	Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	.825	3.57	121	.728
During	Indirect	2.77	591	1.174	3.86	591	.807	3.64	591	.760
	Direct	3.40	163	1.063	4.47	163	.678	3.98	163	.753
	Other	2.76	75	1.403	3.81	75	1.099	3.67	75	.890
	Total	2.89	829	1.201	3.98	829	.849	3.71	829	.782
Total	Indirect	2.77	978	1.104	3.76	978	.802	3.62	696	.760
	Direct	3.38	210	1.084	4.38	210	.775	3.97	174	.736
	Other	2.83	129	1.269	3.78	129	1.033	3.66	80	.871
	Total	2.87	1317	1.139	3.86	1317	.853	3.69	950	.776

Table 9: Perceived importance and satisfaction of direct and indirect experiences across the different personality types of participants, before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Undercontrolled	Before	Indirect	2.76	25	.779	3.56	25	.507	3.79	24	.415
		Direct	3.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	1.414	4.00	2	0.000
		Total	2.78	27	.751	3.52	27	.580	3.81	26	.402
	During	Indirect	2.59	201	1.146	3.86	201	.788	3.55	201	.706
		Direct	3.14	50	1.050	4.34	50	.772	3.82	50	.774
		Other	2.86	21	1.389	3.38	21	1.322	3.43	21	.978
		Total	2.71	272	1.165	3.91	272	.867	3.59	272	.749
	Total	Indirect	2.61	226	1.111	3.83	226	.767	3.57	225	.685
		Direct	3.13	52	1.030	4.29	52	.825	3.83	52	.760
		Other	2.86	21	1.389	3.38	21	1.322	3.43	21	.978
		Total	2.72	299	1.133	3.88	299	.852	3.61	298	.727
	Resilient	Before	Indirect	2.75	324	1.021	3.61	324	.796	3.46	76
Direct			3.40	40	1.172	4.15	40	1.001	4.00	5	0.000
Other			2.96	50	1.087	3.80	50	.904	3.75	4	.500
Total			2.84	414	1.060	3.69	414	.845	3.51	85	.811
During		Indirect	2.78	85	1.016	3.71	85	.737	3.73	85	.777
		Direct	3.50	4	1.291	4.75	4	.500	4.25	4	.500
		Other	3.11	9	1.167	4.11	9	.928	4.00	9	1.000
		Total	2.84	98	1.042	3.79	98	.777	3.78	98	.793
Total		Indirect	2.76	409	1.019	3.63	409	.784	3.60	161	.816
		Direct	3.41	44	1.168	4.20	44	.978	4.11	9	.333
		Other	2.98	59	1.091	3.85	59	.906	3.92	13	.862
		Total	2.84	512	1.056	3.71	512	.832	3.65	183	.811

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Overcontrolled	Before	Indirect	2.97	38	.788	3.53	38	.687	3.60	5	.548
		Direct	2.80	5	1.304	4.00	5	.707	3.50	4	.577
		Other	2.50	4	.577	2.75	4	.957	3.00	1	
		Total	2.91	47	.830	3.51	47	.748	3.50	10	.527
	During	Indirect	2.89	281	1.225	3.91	281	.847	3.67	281	.793
		Direct	3.53	100	1.058	4.54	100	.626	4.06	100	.736
		Other	2.59	44	1.436	3.93	44	.974	3.68	44	.800
		Total	3.01	425	1.247	4.06	425	.856	3.76	425	.797
	Total	Indirect	2.90	319	1.181	3.87	319	.838	3.67	286	.789
		Direct	3.50	105	1.075	4.51	105	.637	4.04	104	.736
		Other	2.58	48	1.381	3.83	48	1.018	3.67	45	.798
		Total	3.00	472	1.211	4.01	472	.861	3.76	435	.792
Total	Before	Indirect	2.77	387	.987	3.60	387	.770	3.54	105	.760
		Direct	3.32	47	1.163	4.09	47	.996	3.82	11	.405
		Other	2.93	54	1.061	3.72	54	.940	3.60	5	.548
		Total	2.84	488	1.024	3.66	488	.825	3.57	121	.728
	During	Indirect	2.77	567	1.174	3.86	567	.812	3.63	567	.763
		Direct	3.40	154	1.070	4.48	154	.679	3.99	154	.750
		Other	2.73	74	1.388	3.80	74	1.098	3.65	74	.883
		Total	2.89	795	1.202	3.98	795	.855	3.70	795	.784
	Total	Indirect	2.77	954	1.101	3.76	954	.805	3.62	672	.763
		Direct	3.38	201	1.090	4.39	201	.780	3.98	165	.732
		Other	2.81	128	1.260	3.77	128	1.031	3.65	79	.863
		Total	2.87	1283	1.137	3.86	1283	.857	3.69	916	.777

Table 10: Perceived importance, satisfaction, and effect of different types of experiences across the different personality types of participants for field waves before and during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events (Source: Author)

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?			
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	
Undercontrolled	Before	Internet browsing	3.25	4	1.500	3.75	4	0.500	3.67	3	0.577	
		Saw on TV	2.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	4.00	3	0.000	
		Heard on radio	2.67	6	0.516	3.50	6	0.548	3.83	6	0.408	
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.33	6	0.516	3.33	6	0.516	3.83	6	0.408	
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1		
		Overheard a conversation	3.20	5	0.447	3.60	5	0.548	3.60	5	0.548	
		Participated in the event	3.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	1.414	4.00	2	0.000	
		Total	2.78	27	0.751	3.52	27	0.580	3.81	26	0.402	
		During	Internet browsing	2.28	47	0.949	3.53	47	0.620	3.32	47	0.471
			Saw on TV	2.84	117	1.122	4.02	117	0.809	3.68	117	0.764
	Heard on radio		2.75	4	1.500	4.25	4	0.500	3.75	4	0.957	
	Read on newspapers/magazines		2.45	11	1.572	3.82	11	0.874	3.55	11	0.820	
	Posted on social media myself		1.67	3	1.155	3.67	3	1.155	3.00	3	0.000	
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face		2.00	18	1.085	3.61	18	0.698	3.33	18	0.594	
	Overheard a conversation		3.00	1		5.00	1		4.00	1		
	Participated in the event		3.14	50	1.050	4.34	50	0.772	3.82	50	0.774	
	Other		2.90	20	1.410	3.35	20	1.348	3.40	20	0.995	
	Used Valletta 2018 App		2.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1		
	Total		2.71	272	1.165	3.91	272	0.867	3.59	272	0.749	
	Total		Internet browsing	2.35	51	1.016	3.55	51	0.610	3.34	50	0.479
		Saw on TV	2.83	120	1.113	4.01	120	0.804	3.68	120	0.756	
		Heard on radio	2.70	10	0.949	3.80	10	0.632	3.80	10	0.632	
Read on newspapers/magazines		2.41	17	1.278	3.65	17	0.786	3.65	17	0.702		
Posted on social media myself		1.67	3	1.155	3.67	3	1.155	3.00	3	0.000		
Chat with friends/family face-to-face		2.05	19	1.079	3.63	19	0.684	3.37	19	0.597		
Overheard a conversation		3.17	6	0.408	3.83	6	0.753	3.67	6	0.516		
Participated in the event		3.13	52	1.030	4.29	52	0.825	3.83	52	0.760		
Other		2.90	20	1.410	3.35	20	1.348	3.40	20	0.995		
Used Valletta 2018 App		2.00	1		4.00	1		4.00	1			
Total		2.72	299	1.133	3.88	299	0.852	3.61	298	0.727		

Cluster membership			How important is this event for you?			How satisfied are you with your experience?			How did you feel about this encounter?		
			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Resilient	Before	Internet browsing	2.64	132	1.027	3.58	132	0.731	3.60	30	0.894
		Saw on TV	2.82	55	1.038	3.62	55	0.850	3.47	17	0.717
		Heard on radio	2.84	32	0.723	3.66	32	0.653	3.00	7	0.577
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.55	22	1.011	3.59	22	0.908	3.10	10	0.876
		Posted on social media myself	2.91	32	0.995	3.44	32	1.014	3.80	5	1.304
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	3.05	40	1.154	3.90	40	0.810	3.67	6	0.516
		Overheard a conversation	2.27	11	1.009	3.36	11	0.505	3.00	1	
		Participated in the event	3.40	40	1.172	4.15	40	1.001	4.00	5	0.000
		Other	2.98	49	1.090	3.82	49	0.905	4.00	3	0.000
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.00	1		3.00	1		3.00	1	
	Total	2.84	414	1.060	3.69	414	0.845	3.51	85	0.811	
	During	Internet browsing	3.03	37	0.928	3.86	37	0.713	3.92	37	0.795
		Saw on TV	2.54	13	1.198	3.77	13	0.832	3.85	13	0.801
		Heard on radio	2.00	2	0.000	3.00	2	0.000	5.00	2	0.000
		Posted on social media myself	2.00	3	1.732	3.00	3	0.000	3.00	3	0.000
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.67	27	0.961	3.59	27	0.747	3.41	27	0.636
		Overheard a conversation	3.00	3	1.000	3.67	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577
		Participated in the event	3.50	4	1.291	4.75	4	0.500	4.25	4	0.500
		Other	3.00	5	1.225	4.40	5	0.894	4.40	5	0.894
		Used Valletta 2018 App	3.25	4	1.258	3.75	4	0.957	3.50	4	1.000
Total		2.84	98	1.042	3.79	98	0.777	3.78	98	0.793	
Total	Internet browsing	2.73	169	1.016	3.64	169	0.735	3.78	67	0.850	
	Saw on TV	2.76	68	1.067	3.65	68	0.842	3.63	30	0.765	
	Heard on radio	2.79	34	0.729	3.62	34	0.652	3.44	9	1.014	
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.55	22	1.011	3.59	22	0.908	3.10	10	0.876	
	Posted on social media myself	2.83	35	1.071	3.40	35	0.976	3.50	8	1.069	
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.90	67	1.089	3.78	67	0.794	3.45	33	0.617	
	Overheard a conversation	2.43	14	1.016	3.43	14	0.514	3.50	4	0.577	
	Participated in the event	3.41	44	1.168	4.20	44	0.978	4.11	9	0.333	
	Other	2.98	54	1.090	3.87	54	0.912	4.25	8	0.707	
	Used Valletta 2018 App	3.00	5	1.225	3.60	5	0.894	3.40	5	0.894	
Total	2.84	512	1.056	3.71	512	0.832	3.65	183	0.811		
Overcontrolled	Before	Internet browsing	3.00	8	0.926	3.50	8	0.535	3.50	2	0.707
		Saw on TV	3.00	5	0.707	3.20	5	0.447			
		Heard on radio	3.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	3.00	1	
		Read on newspapers/magazines	3.33	3	0.577	3.67	3	0.577	4.00	1	
		Posted on social media myself	2.86	7	0.900	3.29	7	0.951			
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.90	10	0.876	3.90	10	0.738	4.00	1	
		Overheard a conversation	2.50	2	0.707	3.00	2	0.000			
		Participated in the event	2.80	5	1.304	4.00	5	0.707	3.50	4	0.577
		Other	2.50	4	0.577	2.75	4	0.957	3.00	1	
		Total	2.91	47	0.830	3.51	47	0.748	3.50	10	0.527
	During	Internet browsing	2.81	74	1.167	3.72	74	0.868	3.51	74	0.646
		Saw on TV	3.04	120	1.246	4.16	120	0.722	3.89	120	0.754
		Heard on radio	2.50	10	1.434	3.60	10	0.699	3.40	10	0.699
		Read on newspapers/magazines	2.56	16	1.094	3.75	16	1.000	3.56	16	1.153
		Posted on social media myself	2.62	13	1.193	3.31	13	1.032	3.62	13	1.044
		Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.85	33	1.349	3.88	33	0.740	3.58	33	0.751
		Overheard a conversation	2.93	15	1.100	3.87	15	1.125	3.20	15	0.862
		Participated in the event	3.53	100	1.058	4.54	100	0.626	4.06	100	0.736
		Other	2.66	38	1.494	3.84	38	0.973	3.68	38	0.842
		Used Valletta 2018 App	2.17	6	0.983	4.50	6	0.837	3.67	6	0.516
Total	3.01	425	1.247	4.06	425	0.856	3.76	425	0.797		
Total	Internet browsing	2.83	82	1.142	3.70	82	0.842	3.51	76	0.643	
	Saw on TV	3.04	125	1.227	4.12	125	0.736	3.89	120	0.754	
	Heard on radio	2.69	13	1.316	3.62	13	0.650	3.36	11	0.674	
	Read on newspapers/magazines	2.68	19	1.057	3.74	19	0.933	3.59	17	1.121	
	Posted on social media myself	2.70	20	1.081	3.30	20	0.979	3.62	13	1.044	
	Chat with friends/family face-to-face	2.86	43	1.246	3.88	43	0.731	3.59	34	0.743	
	Overheard a conversation	2.88	17	1.054	3.76	17	1.091	3.20	15	0.862	
	Participated in the event	3.50	105	1.075	4.51	105	0.637	4.04	104	0.736	
	Other	2.64	42	1.428	3.74	42	1.014	3.67	39	0.838	
	Used Valletta 2018 App	2.17	6	0.983	4.50	6	0.837	3.67	6	0.516	
Total	3.00	472	1.211	4.01	472	0.861	3.76	435	0.792		

An analysis of these experiences and perceptions at the level of personality type (Table 9 above) across phases of data collection (both before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events) reveals that there are no significant differences in perceptions across the three types of personalities. Nor does this analysis reveal any significant shifts in perceptions across the phases (before vs during Valletta 2018) except for the perceived importance and effect of indirect vs direct encounters among overcontrolled participants. Indeed, this analysis shows that such participants viewed direct encounters as more important and more impacting than indirect encounters in 2018 (whereas previously, these participants deemed indirect encounters as more important and more impacting than direct encounters).

A more detailed level of analysis (see Table 10) showed that the most important and satisfying type of experiences involved the participants' contribution to the Valletta 2018 events – especially among resilient personality participants, which showed consistently before and during the administration of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme. Undercontrolled participants' opinion regarding the most important type of encounter shifted from internet browsing (before Valletta 2018 ECoC programme) to participation in events

(during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme). The same holds for overcontrolled participants' perception of the most important type of encounters – from media encounters (like radio and newspapers) before Valletta 2018 ECoC programme to participation in events during Valletta 2018 ECoC programme administration.

Of the total 1,317 experiences that this study captured during all the field waves, 499 responses offered relevant reflections about the specific encounters. Of these, 67 lamented on their experiences (or offered reflections with a negative tone). This study analyses these reflections and observes 19 different themes related to value emerging from the reported experiences. A summary of these themes is set out in Table 11, showing how themes like anticipation, standard of experience, and access dominated the comments offered by the participants.

Table 11: Summary of value dimensions observed in reflections by RET participants (with valence observed as positive or negative comments)

	Negative		Positive	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Social	2	4.1%	47	95.9%
Educational	3	10.0%	27	90.0%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	9	11.8%	67	88.2%
Relevance to own interests	11	16.9%	54	83.1%
Access	40	43.5%	52	56.5%
Fun, excitement	3	5.2%	55	94.8%
Standard of experience	23	22.8%	78	77.2%
Versatility, varied, interactive	4	12.1%	29	87.9%
Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices)	3	33.3%	6	66.7%
Curiosity	0	0.0%	22	100.0%
Anticipation	3	2.6%	113	97.4%
Think (future, country)	2	20.0%	8	80.0%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	3	5.1%	56	94.9%
Ancillary services (quality)	5	83.3%	1	16.7%
Nostalgia	0	0.0%	6	100.0%
Atmosphere	3	8.6%	32	91.4%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	0	0.0%	47	100.0%
Multicultural	2	9.1%	20	90.9%
National pride	1	1.5%	64	98.5%

The following paragraphs define and describe these themes⁷.

- a) **Social:** or experiences that help participants engage with other individuals in a temporary or longer-term rapport

"...appreciate meeting people from different cultures, backgrounds, and social classes."
(R017, F, Undercontrolled)

"Enjoyed with the family." (R072, Resilient)

"I told my colleagues that there is Ghanafest this weekend, and I encouraged them to attend as it is a very enjoyable event in a very picturesque setting." (R251, Resilient)

"It brought really different people together. Good experience." (R604, Overcontrolled)

"...you go out as a family." (FGP41, F)

⁶ In setting out quotes from reflections this report also indicates the source of the quote and uses a framework in such descriptions: R = RET Participant, FGP = Focus Group Participant, INT = Face-to-face interview. The number that follows these codes either suggests the response number (in RET data), or participant (in focus group and interview data). The last word indicates participant's cluster membership or gender (M = Male, F = Female). An asterisk * indicates a negative comment.

- b) **Educational:** or experiences that participants see as opportunities for learning, or as enriching
- "Came up on social media feed...was explicit...gave all the information and more. Was highly satisfactory and informative." (R064, Resilient)*
- "It was a wonderful and informative experience, and it opened my eyes to interesting aspects of culture." (R396, Resilient)*
- "It helps people to get to know and visit more interesting places." (R432, Overcontrolled)*
- "Mod sabiñ sabiex titghallem." (R477, Overcontrolled)*
- "A way of educating people in different sectors." (FGP04, M)*
- "...attract them to participate... educating them." (FGP11, M)*
- c) **Word-of-mouth and popular:** or experiences encouraged as a result of, or which lead to the propagation of positive word-of-mouth communication
- "I heard a lot of positive comments about it." (R004, Resilient)*
- "People are anxiously waiting for the event. There are very positive comments from different people." (R172, Resilient)*
- "...I think it is going to put a mark, more recognised sort of, the usual, Europeans will know more about our culture..." (FGP11, M)*
- d) **Relevance to one's interests:** or experiences that are suited to the target audience (emerging largely from negative comments)
- "Its aim, as indicated on the website is quite relevant, but in my opinion, the current activities won't adequately fulfil this aim." (R028, Resilient)*
- "Not really my thing." (R042, Resilient)*
- "Looked interesting, made me look into it further." (R098, Resilient)*
- "Not something that interests me." (R142, Resilient)*
- "It was very interesting." (R878, Overcontrolled)*
- "... I think something like Notte Bianca is something which everyone is interested in, everyone knows about it..." (FGP01, M)*
- e) **Access:** or aspects of access from a logistical, temporal, linguistic, or economic perspective influencing the participants' experience
- "Difficult to park at Fort St Angelo...not very accessible." (R011, Resilient)*
- "...the only drawback I've seen last year (which didn't affect me personally), was the lack of transport available at night after screenings/events..." (R057, Resilient)*
- "I enjoyed what I saw, but it was difficult to find a view." (R252, Resilient)*
- "...sadly couldn't attend due to the wrong timing of the festival..." (R291, Undercontrolled)*
- "I look forward to attending this one, especially now that exams are finally over and we are freer to attend." (R317, F, Resilient)*
- "I watch their events on TV and I see anything that comes up." (R795, Undercontrolled)*
- "I think this Valletta 2018 sort of helps people...it is open to everyone, everyone can enjoy cultural events." (FGP02, F)*
- "...it would be an idea like...to reach people by going more into their towns as well." (FGP01, M)*
- "...on every pavement there is a crane..." (FGP22, M)*

- f) **Fun, excitement:** or experiences that participants mark with an element of excitement or fun
- "It was fun." (R109, Resilient)*
- "It is an amazing experience for both tourists and Maltese citizens who get to encounter Valletta." (R439, Overcontrolled)*
- "It was spectacular." (R753, Overcontrolled)*
- g) **Standard of experience:** or elements of quality characterising the experiences
- "The event was professionally organised." (R003, Resilient)*
- "Some talented individuals. Some good venues..." (R058, Resilient)*
- "Festival impekkabbli organizzat b'l-aqwa mod u hsieb u stimulant i ħafna." (R424, Resilient)*
- "It was very well organised." (R626, Overcontrolled)*
- "It shows that great talent is found in such a small country..." (R792, Overcontrolled)*
- h) **Versatility, varied, interactive:** or experiences that participants value as a result of the events' nature being interactive or varied
- "An enjoyable, versatile experience." (R005, Resilient)*
- "...Choice and quality of films are quite high..." (R057, Resilient)*
- "...the diversification in the event and it seems to improve year after year." (R106, Resilient)*
- "...opportunita unika sabiex żżur postijiet u tesperjenza affarijiet differenti." (R478, Resilient)*
- i) **Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices):** or experiences where participants appraise value in terms of the benefits earned in return for sacrifices paid (whether monetary, effort or other)
- "A worthwhile annual event." (R007, Resilient)*
- "...Worth it in terms of pricing..." (R057, Resilient)*
- "So much to see..." (R486, Undercontrolled)*
- j) **Curiosity:** or experiences that attracted participants in response to a sense of curiosity
- "I think that it was well thought and was intriguing at times." (R015, Resilient)*
- "...It made me curious to find out more about the event to see..." (R136, Resilient)*
- "...overheard a conversation which stimulated my curiosity and I'm going tonight." (R316, Resilient)*
- k) **Anticipation:** or experiences that participants look forward to
- "Look forward to it every year." (R013, Resilient)*
- "...everyone is looking forward to this event..." (R074, Resilient)*
- "I hope next year this event will be there again." (R314, Resilient)*
- "Looking forward to something similar." (R761, Undercontrolled)*
- "I am going to experience it for the first time, I hope I enjoy it." (R941, Undercontrolled)*
- l) **Think (future, country):** or experiences that push participants to think about the future (related to personal, social, or national dimensions)
- "...makes me think about sustainability, since our country has a limited water supply." (R021, Resilient)*
- "If this is about being green, how about actual demonstrations on how to recycle – practical hints and tips promoting sustainable organisations..." (R205, Resilient)*
- "...I believe that we bring more tourists to Malta too." (R692, Undercontrolled)*

- m) **Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual:** or experiences that participants felt were unique or unusual
"...the event is unusual and makes me curious..." (R160, Resilient)
"...for me it puts Valletta in a totally different perspective." (R227, Resilient)
"Wow what an event...original items." (R243, Resilient)
- n) **Ancillary services (quality):** or participants' reflections relating to experienced ancillary services
*"...the personnel in the stands could have been friendlier..." (R040, Resilient)**
*"...dedicated organisers. Worth it in terms of pricing, choice, and the quality of films was quite high. The only drawback I've seen last year (which didn't affect me personally), was the lack of transport available at night after screenings/events..." (R057, Resilient)**
- o) **Nostalgia:** or experiences that relate to participants' sentiments to past cultural occurrences
"I attended a few years ago. An enjoyable, versatile experience." (R005, Resilient)
"...good to maintain traditions." (R143, Resilient)
"...a past experience of it left me with pleasant memories!" (R182, Resilient)
"It felt very nostalgic." (R610, Undercontrolled)
- p) **Atmosphere:** or experiences marked by their unique ambiance, mood, or tone
"Great Festival; superb atmosphere." (R057, Resilient)
"Great installations and experiences. Wonderful venues." (R521, Overcontrolled)
"Valletta came alive..." (R989, Overcontrolled)
- q) **Loyalty:** or experiences where participants would look forward to a repeated occurrence
"A worthwhile annual event." (R007, Resilient)
"Good. Looking forward to it again." (R342, Resilient)
"I would like it to be more frequent." (R575, Undercontrolled)
"Should be more frequent." (R646, Undercontrolled)
"It is important for this event to take place every year." (R927, Overcontrolled)
- r) **Multicultural:** or experiences marked with a multicultural element valued by participants
"...appreciate meeting people from different cultures, backgrounds, and social classes." (R017, Resilient)
"It was great how international folk music was also incorporated in the event." (R132, Resilient)
"...it was so interesting and nice. We share languages and emotions." (R199, Resilient)
"It brought really different people together. Good experience." (R604, Overcontrolled)
- s) **National pride:** or experiences where participants felt proud to be Maltese, or to be linked with Malta
"Very proud to have been a key part in restarting the Festival." (R047, Resilient)
"I think Malta is reaching very high levels when organising this event." (R195, Resilient)
*"A sense of national pride needs to be instilled in people to attend these events." (R204, Resilient)**
"...makes you feel part of an important event to promote Malta." (R457, Overcontrolled)
"It makes you proud to be Maltese." (R624, Overcontrolled)

"It was a marvellous experience and it promotes tourism in Malta and shows what the Maltese are able to do." (R836, Overcontrolled)

"I love the fact that Malta is coming together to do all of this and it really gives Malta a chance to shine and be original in its ideas." (R962, Overcontrolled)

"...it is a wonderful thing that it is known not just in Europe but around the world... we are all proud of it." (FGP21, M)

"...it was a privilege, a small City was elected to be the European Capital of Culture." (FGP31, M)

"...Valletta no longer a dirty word, there is a new sense of pride; there is a sense of nostalgia as well." (INT01, M)

An analysis of the incidence of these themes (positive vs negative) across the different phases of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme finds that three themes emerge during the course of the cultural programme (see Table 12). The word-of-mouth, access, and fun themes as a means of attracting audiences, overall diminished in incidence in participants' reflections. The prevalence of laments (or negative comments, as a proportion of all the comments contributed by participants) was observed to increase from 2016 throughout the unfolding of the ECoC programme, particularly during the height of ECoC events in 2018. An analysis of these trends across different participants' personality types (see Table 13) suggests that:

- a) a) undercontrolled personalities tended to be more critical in their comments during the administration of the ECoC programme (than before the start of the ECoC programme in 2018).
- b) b) resilient and overcontrolled RET participants tended to be more positive in their comments during the administration of the ECoC programme of events (than before the start of the programme).

Table 13: Comparison of the themes' incidence in RET participants' comments before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events

	Phase of project				Phase of project			
	Before		During		Before		During	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
Social	2	36	-	11	5.3%	94.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Educational	3	24	-	3	11.1%	88.9%	0.0%	100.0%
Word-of-mouth / Pride	3	61	6	6	4.7%	95.3%	50.0%	50.0%
Relevance to own interests	9	42	2	12	17.6%	82.4%	14.3%	85.7%
Access	16	46	24	6	25.8%	74.2%	80.0%	20.0%
Fun, excitement	1	45	2	10	2.2%	97.8%	16.7%	83.3%
Standard of experience	11	37	12	41	22.9%	77.1%	22.6%	77.4%
Versatility, varied, interactive	3	25	1	4	10.7%	89.3%	20.0%	80.0%
Worthwhile, value for money (or sacrifices)	3	6	-	-	33.3%	66.7%		
Curiosity	-	22	-	-	0.0%	100.0%		
Anticipation	3	88	-	25	3.3%	96.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Think (future, country)	1	3	1	5	25.0%	75.0%	16.7%	83.3%
Out of the ordinary, unique, unusual	2	27	1	29	6.9%	93.1%	3.3%	96.7%
Ancillary services (quality)	5	1	-	-	83.3%	16.7%		
Nostalgia	-	5	-	1	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Atmosphere	2	27	1	5	6.9%	93.1%	16.7%	83.3%
Loyalty, repeated participation, engagement	-	18	-	29	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Multicultural	2	18	-	2	10.0%	90.0%	0.0%	100.0%
National pride	-	39	1	25	0.0%	100.0%	3.8%	96.2%

Table 13: Comparison of the valence of the RET participants' reflections before and during the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events, across the different types of personalities

				Phase of project		Phase of project	
				Before	During	Before	During
				Count	Count	Row %	Row %
Valence	Negative	Cluster membership	Undercontrolled	0	16	0.0%	100.0%
			Resilient	25	1	96.2%	3.8%
Overcontrolled			6	18	25.0%	75.0%	
Positive	Cluster membership	Undercontrolled	16	39	29.1%	70.9%	
		Resilient	249	16	94.0%	6.0%	
		Overcontrolled	26	83	23.9%	76.1%	

Media engagement

Although audiences and study participants consider online and print media as opportunities for interacting with the brand with less perceived value, a question remains relating to how such experiences unfold. Indeed, this study considers participants' experiences by looking at statistics compiled separately (through www.mention.com real time media monitoring service).

The study observes how audience interactions with valletta2018.org surged during the launch of the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme in January 2018 – up from an average of around 38,760 page views monthly between January and November 2017 to 365,080 page views in January 2018, plateauing down to an average of 159,160 page views monthly from March 2018 to October 2018 (see Figure 2). These trends correlate with the number of new users visiting www.valletta2018.org and the number of sessions. However, despite the plateauing of these indicators after March 2018, the number of pages per session continued to rise from an average of around 2.5 pages per session up to May 2018, to over 4.7 pages per session in July and September 2018, suggesting that during each session, users viewed more content, indicating higher levels of engagement.

On an annual basis, the statistics offer sharper observations. Annual page views rose from 186,782 in 2015 to over 1,787,300 during the first ten months of 2018 (see Table 14). Users engaging with the same website grew from just over 60,000 in 2015 to almost 397,000 in the first ten months of 2018, whereas new visitors accessing the website augmented from 4,227 in 2015 to 346,417 in the first ten months of 2018 (or 146% over 2017).

Chart 2: valletta2018.org online website interactions (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

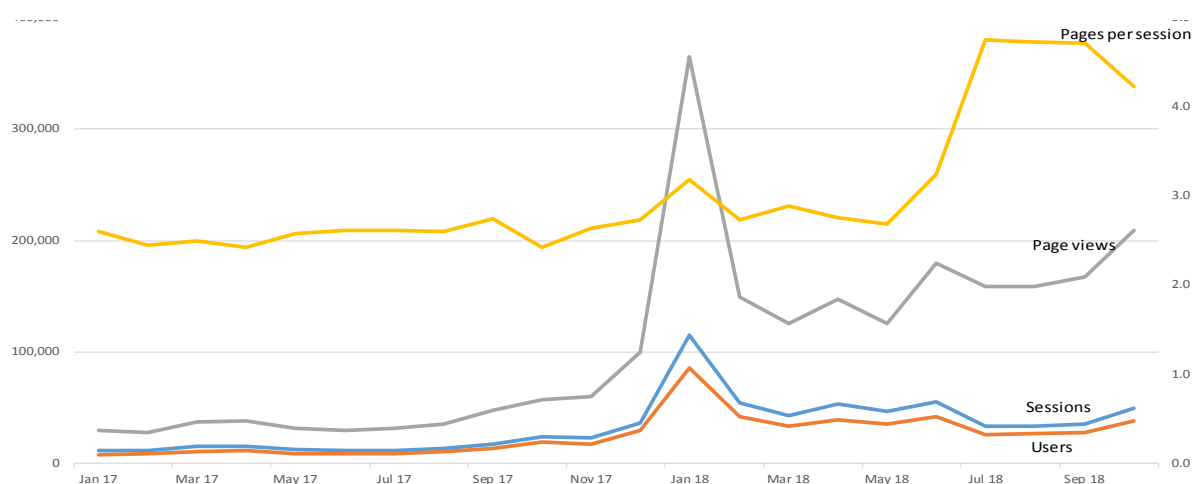


Table 18: valletta2018.org online website interactions (annually) (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sessions	82,169	110,670	203,053	520,647
Page views	186,782	261,928	478,769	1,787,301
Pages per session (average)	2.27	2.37	2.58	3.59
Users	60,034	75,941	156,303	396,956
New visitor	4227	75119	140,337	346,417
Returning visitor	1295	35551	53,012	101,872

Similar observations relating to the three social media channels used by Valletta 2018 Foundation (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) note amplified social media engagement across all media, particularly (as expected) during 2018. Online mentions of the term “Valletta 2018” increased three-fold during 2018 over 2017 (up from 7,931 in 2017 to 34,320 during the first ten months of 2018). The chart in Figure 3 shows how these mentions surged with the launch of Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events in January 2018.

Chart 3: “Valletta 2018” mentions in social media up to October 2018 (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)



Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram feed engagement also exhibits similar growth trends. Facebook likes contributed by audiences on Valletta 2018 Facebook account posts rose from 6,373 in January 2015 to 19,743 in December 2017. They surged to 35,207 by the end of January 2018 to continue rising to 40,229 by the end of October 2018 (Figure 4). Twitter followers rose from 5,340 in June 2016 to 7,498 in October 2018 (Figure 5), whereas Instagram followers grew from 2,064 in January 2017 to 6,051 by the end of October 2018 (Figure 6).

Chart 4: "Valletta 2018" Facebook feed likes (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

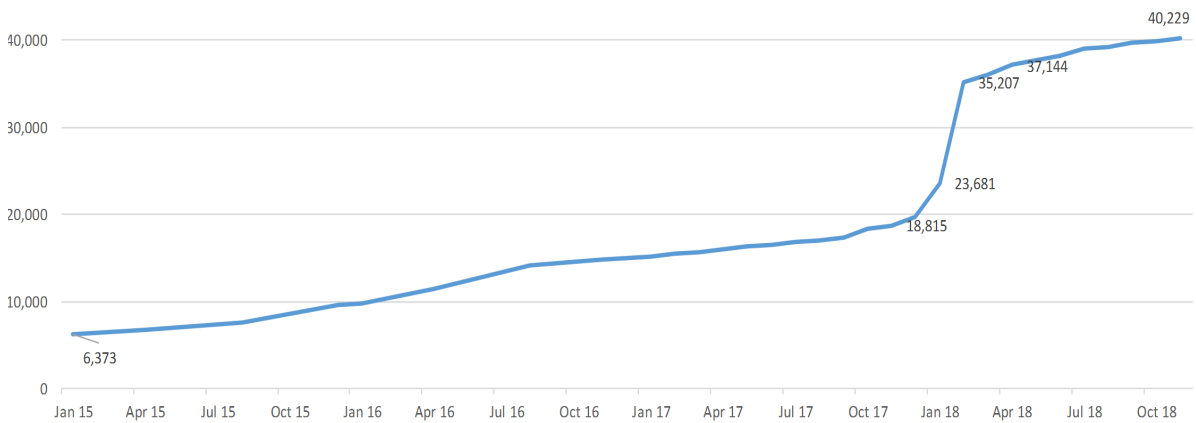


Chart 5: "Valletta 2018" Twitter feed followers (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)

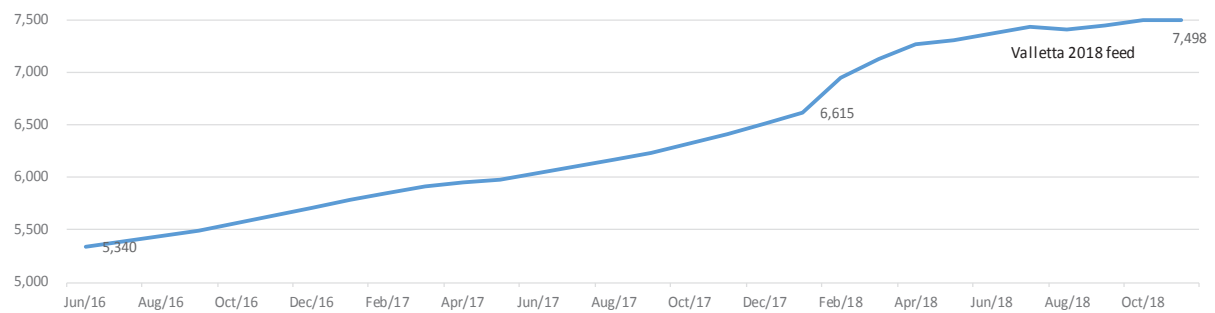
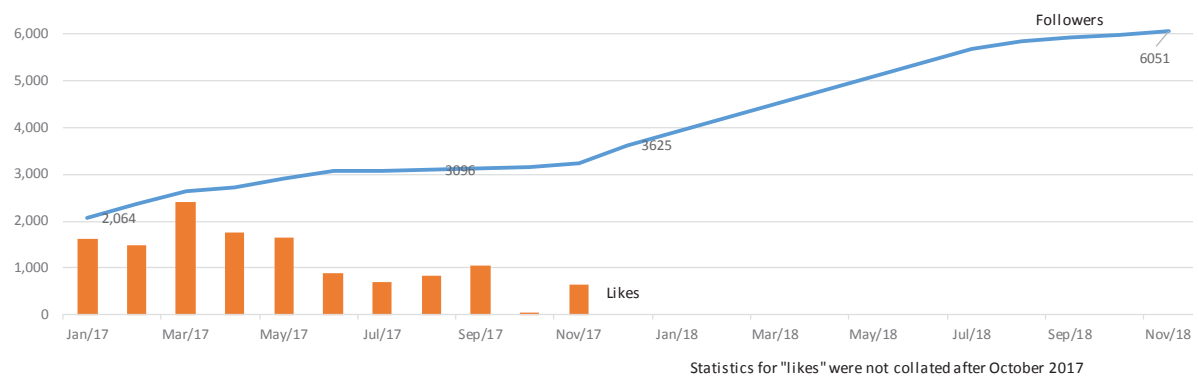


Chart 6: "Valletta 2018" Instagram feed (followers and likes) (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)



Local print media mentions (Figure 7) also exhibit upward trends that are consistent with the audience's engagement with social media. Mentions grew from a mere 7 mentions in December 2010, to a surge of 167 mentions in January 2018, to plateau down to 88 mentions in September 2018 and 29 mentions in October 2018 (Figure 7). An analysis on a month-by-month basis suggests a seasonal pattern with the highest mentions typically happening during the months between April and June from 2015 onwards (except for January 2018).

Chart 7: "Valletta 2018" Instagram feed (followers and likes) (Source: Valletta 2018 E&M Committee)



CONCLUSIONS

The study employed an innovative approach that looks at cultural brands and audience engagement from a processual, longitudinal viewpoint. This methodology relies on the employment of a custom-built smartphone app that has enabled the capturing of insights on how participants co-create value in their engagement with cultural brands across the different touchpoints that constitute the totality of a brand experience.

The findings suggest that engagement with the Valletta 2018 ECoC events involved different types of encounters. Those encounters which involved direct engagement/participation in events, are seen to constitute the best opportunities for value co-creation. This co-creation is directed towards 19 dimensions of value, of which themes like "anticipation", "standard of experience", and "access" dominated the participants' thoughts.

Besides the direct participation in events, the study finds that audiences co-create value by engaging with the communications transmitted by the Valletta 2018 Foundation across different media. Audience engagement was observed to culminate during January 2018 when the Valletta 2018 ECoC programme of events was formally initiated. Growing levels of engagement among different audiences could be observed across all social and print media as a result of increased awareness, interest, and anticipation of unique experiences offered by cultural events within the ECoC programme.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

European Capitals of Culture have often been perceived as unique opportunities for the rebranding of a city. This goes hand-in-hand with the branding of the ECoC title itself, and the ways in which the ECoC programme engages with its diverse audiences. The studies in this theme shed further light on this engagement strategy and the degrees to which the Valletta 2018 programme has succeeded in capturing the attention of different audiences.

The data within these theme provides valuable insight into how large-scale public initiatives - in particular those within the cultural sector - can nurture and maintain an audience over an extended period of time. The different marketing strategies adopted throughout the run-up to 2018 and, more pertinently, throughout the year itself have yielded successful engagement with some sectors of society, although not necessarily with others. The findings within this report enable stakeholders to explore these issues in more detail and trace a comprehensive engagement strategy for their own future initiatives.





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