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TOURIST PERCEPTION OF FACILITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, GENDER PARTICIPATION AND REVISIT INTENTIONS IN CHOLISTAN JEEP RALLY

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Abstract

The Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally is an exceptional event in Pakistan that attracts many domestic tourists. Despite its popularity, there is not enough empirical knowledge available concerning the perceptions of tourists concerning their experience and satisfaction level. This study aims to assess the impact of perception regarding experience quality, level of satisfaction, revisit intention, and event inclusivity based on gender. Through cross-sectional design, this research employed interview schedules to collect data from the respondents. A sample size of two hundred was selected using convenient sampling technique. Descriptive statistics as well as chi-square and binary logistic regression were used as methods of analysis. In terms of findings, a vital paradox was established in which despite a high level of satisfaction was reported, the ratings were low concerning the cost, sanitization, hygiene, and accessibility. Moreover, revisit intention was significantly associated with the gender in which the event was considered to favor males. The results show that only one variable, safety, was significantly influencing the tourists' intention to visit the event again in the coming year. Therefore, it can be stated that while safety perceptions are necessary for encouraging tourists to visit the event in future, infrastructure problems and gender biases make the event unsustainable.

1. INTRODUCTION

Event tourism is one of the fast-growing branches of the world tourism industry, creating new economic, social, and cultural opportunities in many parts of the world (Akhundova, 2024; Finkel et al., 2020). Events of all types, from music festivals to heritage fairs to extreme sports and even desert rally events, promote destinations, build communities, and become the source of expenditure for visitors. Event tourism is also a part of emergent destinations, like Pakistan, where events are not just entertaining activities but instruments for nation-building, investment attraction, and regional economic development (Arshad et al., 2018; Manzoor et al., 2019). One of the examples of adventure cultural events is the

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Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally held annually in the Cholistan Desert in the southern Punjab province of Pakistan and organized by the Government of Punjab.

The event started in 1979 and was revived in 2005, offering a combination of motor-racing and demonstrating the cultural heritage, traditional cuisines, and folklore heritage in the desert area near the remnants of the Hakra River civilization. Despite being a well-established event with rich tourism potential, few sources provide data regarding the visitor experience, quality, and sociodemographic characteristics associated with them. Another factor that must be studied in this context is gender. Gender as a variable has been extensively used in previous studies to reveal differences in tourism motivations, risk perceptions, and satisfaction with experiences obtained (Apollo et al., 2023; Maklári et al., 2024). At the same time, adventure and motorsport events have a stereotypical association with men as participants (Apollo et al., 2023; Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). Still, exploring gender issues in relation to Cholistan Desert Rally is vital to solving any problems related to event tourism in general. Additionally, exploring women's participation in adventure tourism is a sign of female empowerment, which cannot be overlooked as an issue (Clarke et al., 2021; Saffari et al., 2022).

Moreover, establishing relationships between visitors' satisfaction with events, quality of services, and subsequent behavior is a crucial step for developing event tourism in developing destinations. Studies show that satisfaction is determined by the quality of experience in terms of safety, accessibility, hospitality, and community engagement (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Thus, identifying the gaps and addressing them becomes one of the major tasks of the managers (Nguyen et al., 2024). In this research, all above issues are explored using the results of research collected from 201 Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally attendees. To analyze the data and identify variables under consideration, descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and binary logistic regressions are used.

2. Research Objectives

The study is governed by the following objectives:

1. To describe the socio-demographic and visitation behavior traits of rally participants
2. To evaluate perception of quality on important service dimensions such as safety, accommodation, food, sanitation, accessibility, and event management
3. To determine relationships between socio-demographic factors and behavior measures
4. To establish predictors of satisfaction and revisit intentions through binary logistic regression analysis

3. Literature Review

The concept of event tourism involves the planned creation, organization, and promotion of events as destinations and as image builders for destinations (Akhundova, 2024). The first theoretical model introduced by Getz (2008) defines events as unique experiences in terms of time period, with their development process influencing the community directly or indirectly. Empirically, the economic impacts of festivals are well known, as tradition-oriented tourists have been identified as the most profitable by Attanasi et al. (2025); furthermore, Nyandoro (2024) finds that cultural festivals in developing nations have a positive influence on the economy through the multiplier effect in hospitality and transport sector. With regard to the Pakistani situation, Manzoor et al. (2019) found that there was a positive relationship between tourism and GDP growth in the long term; likewise, the level of authenticity and promotional efforts in an event were found to be very reliable word-of-mouth predictors by Naqvi et al. (2018). However, there had been little research with inferential analysis in Pakistan's event tourism literature.

The idea of matching visitors' expectations with the actual post-visit experience evaluation defines tourism behavioral analysis (Sehahabane, 2019).

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According to the expectancy disconfirmation theory (EDT), individuals feel satisfied when perceptions align with or surpass their expectations (Seow et al., 2024). Satisfaction is reported to influence revisit intention more powerfully than recommendation intention in the context of event tourism by Bayih and Singh (2020). On the other hand, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) demonstrate how cultural factors directly and indirectly impact behavioral intentions through satisfaction. Furthermore, Nguyen et al. (2024) confirm culture contact as the most influential determinant of satisfaction that highlights the importance of cultural factors for the unique selling point of events like Cholistan Rally. Additionally, service dominant logic (SDL) (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) provides another theoretical approach to tourism experiences that considers those experiences to be coproductions of the community and the tourists, thereby emphasizing the significance of interaction and event planning for value co-creation. For this study, researchers will analyze dimension-specific variables by considering 11 items associated with the quality of the experience, according to Sugiama et al. (2024).

The gender-related issues in relation to adventure tourism have been thoroughly examined within contemporary tourism studies literature. According to Apollo et al. (2023), there is a distinctive feature regarding genders' participation in competition related to adventure sports since females demonstrate the same success rate of accomplishing objectives as their male colleagues; a matter concerned rather with access barriers rather than the quality of experience. Additionally, as reported by Maklári et al. (2024), female endurance athletes value access and affordability, whereas according to Kontić and Kontić (2024), gender (being male) is one of the most prominent predictors of engaging in adventure sport tourism (OR = 2.11). Clarke et al. (2021) and Saffari et al. (2022) reveal that the deterministic understanding of adventure tourism as being masculine ignores the predictive effect of female participation on social, economic, and political empowerment. Finally, in Muslim countries, other issues need to be considered since the factors that shape the practice include cultural, religious, and socio-economic aspects (Aman et al., 2019). As mentioned before, the near-total predominance of males in Cholistan Rally may be explained by various limitations imposed on women including the absence of facilities designed with women in mind, social and cultural norms that can be overcome through legislative measures.

Safety can be identified as one of the preconditions that should be met by a tourist destination and its event in order to provide the best experience for visitors (Wang et al., 2019). Grigoriadis et al. (2025) state that sensitivity to risks decreases willingness to participate in any tourist activity because of security concerns. Furthermore, according to Matiza (2023), perceived safety is one of the key mediators between host behavior and hospitality. The cultural aspect of the Cholistan Rally such as music, camels, and crafts also correlates with the theories presented by Zuo et al. (2022) and Richards (2018) about intangible cultural heritage tourism.

4. Research Methodology

In this study, a quantitative cross-sectional research design was used, which is based on the positivist epistemology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A self-completed structured questionnaire was used, created according to established scales from event tourism and visitor satisfaction literature and divided into five parts: (1) socio demographics; (2) logistics of the visit; (3) evaluation of experience quality on 5-point Likert scale with eleven dimensions; (4) attitudes and perceptions; (5) behavioral intention measures. The eleven dimensions for the assessment of experience quality included safety and security, venue access, food and refreshments availability, sanitation, affordability, accommodation, transportation, cultural heritage promotion, event organization, and mobile internet access.

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For data collection, a convenience sampling method was used, and interviews were conducted among the rally visitors throughout the event period in various locations at the venue; sightseeing areas, cultural exhibition zones, camping sites, and food booths. The sample size used for data collection was 200 people. But during the interviews, there were few respondents who did not respond to some of the questions. Following the principle of free consent, respondents were not forced to respond to each question. Thus, there is variation in the total frequencies from table to table. Analysis of data was done using three methodologies, namely Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviation); chi-square (χ^2) tests for association with Cramer's V effect sizes (V <.10—negligible; .10–.20—weak; .20–.40—moderate; V>.40—strong); binary logistic regression to assess predictors of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention.

5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected was done using SPSS software version 25. Descriptive statistical techniques like frequencies and percentages were utilized to provide descriptions of the demographic variables and the variables of interest in the study. Inferential statistical methods were applied to find out the relationships and predictors between the different variables. Chi-square statistical method was used to determine the significant relationship between the categorical variables, whereas binary logistic regression analysis was done to predict the outcome variable.

Table 1
Frequency Distributions of Demographic Characteristics

Category	F	%
Gender		
Male	196	99.0
Female	2	1.0
Total	198	100.0
Age Group		
Under 18	8	4.0
18–25	60	30.2
26–35	91	45.7
36–45	34	17.1
46–55	5	2.5
56 and Above	1	0.5
Total	199	100.0
Education Level		
Secondary or Below	45	23.6

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Intermediate	86	45.0
Bachelor's Degree	49	25.7
Master's Degree	11	5.8
Total	191	100.0
Role at Event		
Tourist/Spectator	126	68.1
Team Member	32	17.3
Driver/Participant	15	8.1
Media Representative	5	2.7
Other	7	3.8
Total	185	100.0

The respondents were mainly men (99.0%), with most of the subjects falling in the age category of 26-35 years old (45.7%). The high frequency of those with an intermediate level of education (45.0%) and the Tourist/Spectator behavioral type (68.1%) leads us to conclude that the respondents have a general interest in the event socially rather than competitively.

Table 2
Frequency Distributions of Visit Logistics

Category	F	%
Visiting As		
Solo	26	14.9
With Friends/Colleagues	133	76.0
With Family	7	4.0
With Organized Group	9	5.1
Total	175	100.0
Length of Stay		
One Day	56	28.1
2–3 Days	108	54.3
4–5 Days	29	14.6
More than 5 Days	6	3.0

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Total	199	100.0
Accommodation Type		
Camp Site	102	60.7
Hotel in City	15	8.9
With Friends/Relatives	30	17.9
Rented Local House	11	6.5
Daily Commute (No Overnight)	10	6.0
Total	168	100.0
Accommodation Arranged By		
Self-Arranged	134	69.1
Host	35	18.0
Tour Operator	22	11.3
Event Organizers	3	1.5
Total	194	100.0

This table describes that the friend/colleague trips accounted for 76.0% while campsite accommodation was preferred by 60.7% shows that the rally is a more socially focused event than a commercially based one. The high percentage of self-organized accommodation (69.1%) and two-to three-day stays (54.3%) supports the notion that the event is an organic one created by friends. While two-thirds of the participants were repeat customers, indicating the event's popularity, it is also evidence of its self-perpetuating nature.

Table 3
Frequency Distributions of Attitudinal and Behavioral Outcomes

Category	F	%
Perceived Safety During Visit		
Completely Safe	68	34.5
Mostly Safe	117	59.4
Somewhat Safe	12	6.1
Total	197	100.0
Rally Suitability for Families		
Highly Suitable	21	10.6

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Somewhat Suitable	99	49.7
Not Very Suitable	51	25.6
Not Suitable at All	28	14.1
Total	199	100.0
Event is Female-Friendly		
Strongly Agree	15	7.6
Agree	61	31.0
Neutral	47	23.9
Disagree	48	24.4
Strongly Disagree	26	13.2
Total	197	100.0
Event is More Male-Oriented		
Strongly Agree	44	22.3
Agree	109	55.3
Neutral	37	18.8
Disagree	7	3.6
Total	197	100.0
Overall Satisfaction		
Very Satisfied	55	27.5
Satisfied	139	69.5
Neutral	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0
Intention to Revisit		
Definitely	84	43.5
Probably	95	49.2
Not Sure	14	7.3
Total	193	100.0

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It is evident that there is a paradox in the way the information is portrayed. On the one hand, there is an exceptionally high level of satisfaction at 97%. Moreover, the safety level among those involved is equally high at 93.9%. On the other hand, the level of inclusiveness of the women within the program is quite poor. For instance, 38.6% believe that it is not woman-friendly while 77.6% believe that it is male-dominated. Similar is the issue regarding whether it is family-oriented or not.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Distributions of Experience Quality Ratings

Experience Dimension	N	M	SD	1 f(%)	2 f(%)	3 f(%)	4 f(%)	5 f(%)
Overall event experience quality	183	3.50	0.78	3(1.6)	3(1.6)	96(52.5)	61(33.3)	20(10.9)
Safety and security measures	183	3.15	0.97	6(3.3)	38(20.8)	80(43.7)	41(22.4)	18(9.8)
Accessibility of venue	184	2.85	1.00	19(10.3)	40(21.7)	84(45.7)	31(16.8)	10(5.4)
Availability of food/refreshments	185	2.71	1.01	23(12.4)	51(27.6)	75(40.5)	28(15.1)	8(4.3)
Sanitation and hygiene facilities	184	2.61	1.08	29(15.8)	62(33.7)	50(27.2)	37(20.1)	6(3.3)
Affordability of services/products	183	2.36	1.00	29(15.8)	92(50.3)	37(20.2)	17(9.3)	8(4.4)
Accommodation quality	183	2.80	0.82	10(5.5)	49(26.8)	97(53.0)	22(12.0)	5(2.7)
Transportation and road conditions	184	3.02	0.87	5(2.7)	46(25.0)	80(43.5)	46(25.0)	7(3.8)
Cultural and heritage promotion	183	3.25	0.80	11(6.0)	4(2.2)	101(55.2)	63(34.4)	4(2.2)
Event organization and management	185	3.41	0.76	1(0.5)	10(5.4)	104(56.2)	52(28.1)	18(9.7)
Mobile/internet connectivity	183	3.09	0.83	5(2.7)	32(17.5)	95(51.9)	43(23.5)	8(4.4)

Note. Scale: 1 = Very Poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Average/Neutral, 4 = Good, 5 = Excellent. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. f(%) = frequency (percentage).

The quality scores show a clear distinction between the inherent value of the event itself and the shortcomings of its ancillary infrastructure. The event is well organized, with an average rating of 3.41, promoting cultural heritage with a score of 3.25, while the quality of the entire experience has been evaluated to be 3.50 on the scale. The areas where there is significant room for improvement are affordability, which has been rated at 2.36, followed by sanitation, which has an average score

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of 2.61, then food availability, with an average rating of 2.71, and accommodation, scoring at 2.80. Venue accessibility has been scored at 2.85. It should be noted that almost two-thirds of the participants rated affordability poorly.

Chi-Square Tests of Association

Table 5

Summary of Chi-Square Tests of Association

Association	χ^2	df	N	P	Cramér's V	Sig.
Gender × Overall Satisfaction	0.88	2	198	.645	0.067	
Gender × Revisit Intention	6.42	2	191	.040	0.183	*
Gender × Perceived Safety	1.38	2	195	.503	0.084	
Gender × Family Suitability	2.00	3	197	.572	0.101	
Gender × Female Friendliness	4.44	4	195	.350	0.151	
Gender × Tourism Benefits Pakistan	1.47	3	197	.689	0.086	
Gender × Event is More Male-Oriented	1.55	3	195	.672	0.089	
Gender × Purchased Cultural Products	0.00	1	197	1.000	0.000	
Education Level × Overall Satisfaction	12.23	6	191	.057	0.179	**
Event Role × Overall Satisfaction	13.01	8	185	.111	0.188	
Length of Stay × Overall Satisfaction	9.42	6	199	.152	0.154	
Length of Stay × Revisit Intention	16.31	6	192	.012	0.206	*

Note. χ^2 = chi-square statistic; df = degrees of freedom; p = p-value; Cramér's V = effect size. Significance: * p < .05; ** p < .10 (marginal).

Out of twelve chi-square test results obtained, two were statistically significant. There was a significant relationship between gender and revisit intention ($\chi^2(2) = 6.42$, p = .040, V = .183) such that male respondents had a greater probability of reporting a definite revisit intention although this effect is weak and should be taken with caution since there were virtually no females among the participants. Significant medium effect was observed in relation to the relationship between length of stay and revisit intention ($\chi^2(6) = 16.31$, p = .012, V = .206) whereby those who stayed longer expressed greater levels of loyalty to the resort. Level of education had a significant relationship with satisfaction (p = .057).

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Binary Logistic Regression

Table 6

Binary Logistic Regression Models Predicting Tourist Satisfaction (Model 1) and Revisit Intention (Model 2)

Predictor	B	SE	z	P	OR	95% CI [LL, UL]	Sig.
Model 1: Predicting Overall Satisfaction (N = 187; $\chi^2(7) = 8.737$, p = .272; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.165$)							
Intercept	17.847	22727.988	0.001	.999	9999.000	[0.000, 9999.000]	
Gender (Male = 1)	−18.229	22727.988	−0.001	.999	0.000	[0.000, 9999.000]	
Age	0.139	0.099	1.401	.161	1.149	[0.946, 1.395]	
Education Level	−0.327	0.595	−0.550	.582	0.721	[0.224, 2.316]	
First Visit (Yes = 1)	−1.142	1.009	−1.131	.258	0.319	[0.044, 2.307]	
Purchased Products (Yes = 1)	1.176	1.220	0.964	.335	3.242	[0.297, 35.411]	
Perceived Safety	−0.050	0.784	−0.064	.949	0.951	[0.205, 4.418]	
Community Perception	0.429	0.696	0.616	.538	1.536	[0.392, 6.010]	
Model 2: Predicting Revisit Intention (N = 180; $\chi^2(7) = 30.021$, p < .001; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.305$)							
Intercept	−5.714	2.838	−2.013	.044	0.003	[0.000, 0.860]	*
Gender (Male = 1)	2.107	1.394	1.511	.131	8.220	[0.535, 126.388]	
Age	0.072	0.059	1.219	.223	1.074	[0.957, 1.206]	
Education Level	0.699	0.531	1.317	.188	2.013	[0.711, 5.700]	
First Visit (Yes = 1)	−1.162	0.776	−1.497	.134	0.313	[0.068, 1.433]	
Purchased Products (Yes = 1)	−0.640	0.699	−0.914	.360	0.527	[0.134, 2.078]	
Perceived Safety	1.504	0.604	2.491	.013	4.501	[1.378, 14.699]	*
Community Perception	−0.276	0.507	−0.543	.587	0.759	[0.281, 2.053]	

Note. B = unstandardized logistic coefficient; SE = standard error; z = Wald z-statistic; p = p-value; OR = odds ratio; 95% CI = confidence interval for OR. Significance: * p < .05. Model 1 gender coefficients are unstable due to quasi-complete separation.

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The Model 1, which predicted overall satisfaction, did not emerge as statistically significant overall ($\chi^2(7) = 8.74$, $p = .272$), nor did any of its predictors individually. The variable 'gender' gave rise to very high standard errors because of quasi-complete separation due to the extreme imbalance between genders (99% male), and hence the coefficients cannot be trusted. Model 2 predicting revisit intention was statistically significant ($\chi^2(7) = 30.02$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.305$), accounting for around 30.5% of the variance. Perceived safety was the only significant predictor in this model (B = 1.504, OR = 4.50, 95% CI [1.378, 14.699], p = .013), suggesting that tourists who considered the event to be safer were four-and-a-half times more likely to report definite/probable revisit intention. However, the variable gender had a large but statistically insignificant positive effect (OR = 8.22, p = .131).

6. Discussion

The overwhelming male audience (99.0%) undoubtedly constitutes one of the most prominent results of the current research. Although the prevalence of males in adventure sport competitions is quite common (Apollo et al., 2023), the extent to which it has been registered in this case, almost 98 to 1, stands out compared to other events in this sphere. According to Yang et al. (2025), males favor engaging in adventures and sports events due to socialization processes. Additionally, as shown by Aman et al. (2019), religion and culture of Pakistan limit women's access to participation in public life even more. Crucially, 77.6% of participants viewed the event as a male-centered activity, implying that its gender nature was deliberately constructed by both visitors and organizers. Moreover, a higher percentage of people traveled in groups of friends/colleagues (76.0%) compared to those traveling in families (4.0%), indicating that the event served to strengthen masculine bonds. On the contrary, according to Maklári et al. (2024), females participating in endurance races are usually accompanied by their family members and take part in tourism activities too.

The results for the service quality analysis present a dichotomy that can be interpreted within the context of EDT and SDL theories. Spectacle-related attributes, namely event organization (M = 3.41) and cultural heritage marketing (M = 3.25), meet the main demands of tourists, whereas infrastructure attributes, including affordability (M = 2.36), sanitation (M = 2.61), food availability (M = 2.71), and accessibility (M = 2.85), lie beneath the middle point of the measurement scale and form an ecosystem of peripheral services, which are consistently underdeveloped in remote locations lacking adequate resources. The most prominent deficiency concerns affordability (M = 2.36); indeed, at 66.1%, it received the highest rate of poor or very poor evaluations, which aligns with the conclusion by Maklári et al. (2024) on how crucial affordability is for females in choosing events and Bayih & Singh's (2020) findings on the importance of value perception for loyalty formation among tourists. Sanitation, the second most problematic attribute (M = 2.61), is universally acknowledged as a major obstacle to the female attendance of outdoor events.

That perceived safety becomes the only significant variable affecting revisit intention (OR = 4.50, p = .013) is consistent with research in the field of risk perception. According to Wang et al., concern about danger assumes great importance in adventure tourism. On the other hand, Grigoriadis et al. reveal that safety concerns are exaggerated among the risk-sensitive sub-groups such as females. Given that perceived safety is a significant variable independently predicting revisit intention after taking other factors into account, namely gender, age, education level, and visit experience, perceived safety should be considered an overall predictor of loyalty to the event as opposed to being specific to any particular segment. That there is a significant relationship between length of stay and revisit intention (V = .206, p = .012) is purely theoretical in nature, and that the more time a person spends, the more

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likely he/she becomes attached. There is absolutely no doubt that deserted heritage tours, camel safaris, and visits to the Derawar Fort will make great programs.

The heritage aspect of the event, measured by the community friendly nature that earned a positive rating from 89.4% of participants and the cultural activities noted by 48.8% of respondents as their reason for attending the event, presents an untapped resource. It corresponds to the 'creative turn' in cultural tourism advocated by Richards (2018) and the rise in festival events as a popular area of research in the realm of intangible cultural heritage highlighted by Zuo et al. (2022).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current research provides a systematic investigation of tourist experience, satisfaction, and gender dynamics during the Cholistan Desert Jeep Rally. There are five important findings that can be highlighted from the present study. Firstly, the predominance of males (99.0%) and their orientation towards the event (77.6%) indicate inequity and missed business potential. Secondly, although the satisfaction levels are very high (97.0%), there are several aspects related to the quality of services that need immediate improvement, such as affordability (M = 2.36), sanitation (M = 2.61), food availability (M = 2.71), and accessibility (M = 2.85). Thirdly, perceived safety (OR = 4.50, p = .013) is the only factor affecting the intention to visit the site again and therefore needs particular attention. Fourthly, there is a strong relationship between the duration of stay and the intention to revisit the location (V = .206, p = .012). Lastly, the cultural significance of the rally can be explored further to attract more visitors.

It is necessary to develop a plan to ensure inclusiveness in the rally event by having female-friendly sanitary and prayer facilities, providing gender-specific spectator areas, and organizing cultural activities aimed at enticing families and women. Here, cultural exhibits can be used as platforms for incorporating women into the rally event without engaging in motor racing competitiveness. Furthermore, organizers should prioritize measures such as controlling the prices charged by vendors, installing adequate sanitation facilities with separate arrangements for males and females, and maintaining acceptable standards of food quality when making budget allocations. With safety being the sole determinant of revisit intention, event organizers will find great value in putting up safety signs, using uniformed security personnel, setting up first-aid stations, and running safety communication campaigns. Organizers must recognize the importance of pre- and post-rally attractions as a means of increasing revisit intention, including tours of the Cholistan desert, safaris using camels, visits to Derawar Fort, and other cultural attractions.

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