

Tirgan Festival

Economic and Social Impact of Tirgan Festival 2019 FINAL REPORT

October 2019

by
Nordicity

for
Tirgan



Executive Summary

The sixth edition of the Tirgan Festival took place from July 25th-28th, 2019. The festival comprised of live music events, dance performances, theatre productions, children's workshops, talks, an academic history conference, visual art exhibitions, film screenings, traditional tea houses and a bazaar with diverse crafts and food vendors. It was held across four venues in Toronto: Harbourfront Centre, the Distillery District, the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and the Michener Institute of Education.

Tirgan 2019 saw more visitors than any previous festival. A majority of visitors came from Toronto (51%) and nearly a third were residents of the Greater Toronto Area (30%), while 14% came from outside of Canada, including 7% from the US, 5% from Iran and 2% from other countries in the world.

In total, the festival attracted an estimated **162,000 visitors across four venues**. This was an 8% increase from 150,000 visitors in the previous festival year of 2017, and a 175% increase over the 60,000 visitors the festival received in its inaugural year of 2008.

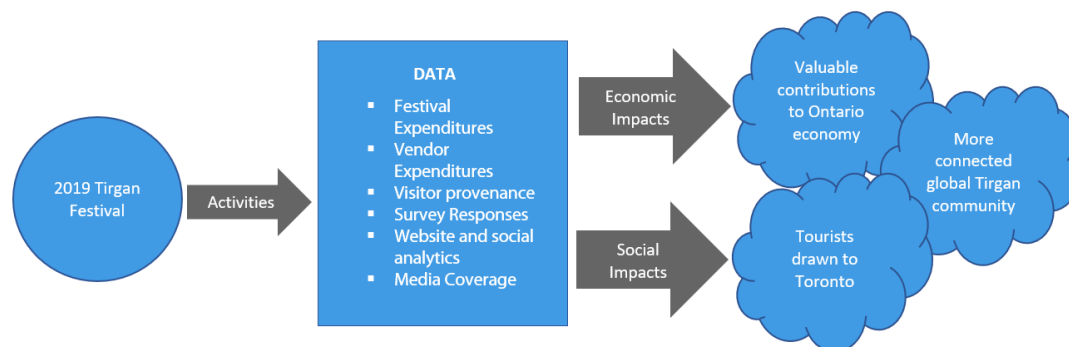
The festival's virtual presence further engaged audiences from around the world, with **35,276 individual website users** accessing the website over the two weeks encompassing the festival, and **27,086 people engaging with the Tirgan Facebook page** during that same two-week period. The festival was also covered by Iran International TV (IITV), which broadcasts around the world.

Tirgan received visitors young and old, with a majority between the ages of 25-44 years old. Festival attendees skewed more female, although at one of the venues – Distillery District – the attendance was gender-balanced with both men and women making up around 49% each of the attendees.

An overwhelming majority (95%) of the visitors were of Iranian descent, with a large majority (88%) of those with Iranian origins indicating that they were first-generation immigrants. The festival conference held at Michener Institute – which had panel discussions on the history and evolution of intellectualism in Iran – had more visitors with non-Iranian origins (9%) than other venues.

Overall, the 2019 festival contributed significantly to the economy, society, tourism and culture in Toronto, for the province of Ontario and Canada as a whole. The festival's impacts were assessed through the analysis of several data points that came from the festival's activities, as outlined in the diagram below:

Figure 1: Impact Analysis Methodology



Economic Impacts

The 2019 Tirgan Festival contributed towards the economic prosperity of the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the whole of Canada. The festival had a **total economic impact of \$1 million in GDP**, 34 full-time equivalent (FTEs) jobs, \$288,000 in contribution to taxes, and has **significant social and cultural impacts** resonating across Toronto, Canada and the world.

These impacts were assessed through an analysis of Tirgan's operating expenditures, the sales made by food, beverage and bazaar vendors during the festival, and the number of out-of-town visitors. The festival's economic impact inputs for 2019 were as follows:

- Tirgan's annual operating expenditure was an estimated \$1.06 million.
- Tirgan's food and beverage vendors (including Tirgan's Teahouse) earned over \$180,000¹ in sales and the craft vendors at the bazaar earned almost \$50,000 from the festival.
- Tirgan's attendance estimates were estimated by Nordicity from previous estimates provided by Tirgan. These visitor counts were categorized by provenance from the visitor survey, and then used as input to MTCS' Tourism and Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM), which provided economic impact estimates as output. A "tourist" is defined, for the purposes of this report, as a person who travelled from 40 KM or more away.

The impacts of these inputs for festival operations culminated in \$849,000 in contribution to GDP, \$563,000 in labour income, 30 FTE jobs and the generation of \$256,000 in tax revenues. The vendor sales culminated in \$166,000 in contribution to GDP, \$101,000 in labour income, 4 FTE jobs and the generation of \$32,000 in tax revenues.

Table 1: Summary of Festival Economic Impacts

	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Impact	Labour Income	Employment (FTEs)	Taxes
Festival Operations	\$849,000	\$563,000	30	\$256,000
Vendor Sales	\$166,000	\$101,000	4	\$32,000
Total	\$1,015,000	\$664,000	34	\$288,000

Tourism

The festival drew in nearly half of its attendees (49%) from outside Toronto (with 19% of those surveyed from outside of the GTA, and 13% from outside Canada). The festival had a direct impact on people coming to Toronto, with 61% of those surveyed indicating it was their primary reason for visiting the city. The festival had a notable tourism impact, with tourist spend contributing **\$10.3 million in GDP, \$6.0 million in labour income, 118 FTE jobs and the generation of \$2.6m in tax revenues.**

¹ Tirgan received a percentage of these sales as commission.

Table 2: Summary of Visitor Spending Impacts

Types of Impact	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Impact	Labour Income	Employment (FTEs)	Taxes
Direct	\$5,742,892	\$3,067,404	79	\$936,932
Indirect	\$2,128,239	\$1,371,051	20	\$1,432,054
Induced	\$2,466,157	\$1,535,940	19	\$184,249
Total	\$10,337,288	\$5,974,395	118	\$2,553,235

Social Impacts

Tirgan festival also has a significant social impact, which is not evidenced in the economic impact analysis, including its contribution to the lives of its attendees, volunteers, artists and the city of Toronto's cultural fabric. Illustrating the festival's social significance, 82% of those surveyed indicated that "Tirgan makes me proud of my culture", and 73% said that "Tirgan positively impacted my perception of Iranian culture."

The volunteers at Tirgan have been instrumental to the festival's success and through symbiosis the festival has been very important to volunteers as well. 45% of volunteers were returning volunteers from previous years, with 27% having volunteered at three or more previous iterations of the festival, and 13% of volunteers have been with Tirgan for over five years. That volunteers return year after year is evident of a strong and loyal community that has been growing directly because of the festival, particularly younger people. Nearly half of Tirgan's volunteers were young people (49%) aged between 25-34.

Tirgan supports the careers of artists that perform as part of the programming. More than one-third (38%) of the artists surveyed indicated that Tirgan exposed them to new audiences '*a lot*', and almost one in three artists indicated that performing at Tirgan helped to develop their careers '*a lot*'.

The benefits of the festival extend beyond the broader Toronto cultural landscape. The festival brought attendees to four cultural venues in various parts of the city, with one-third of those surveyed visiting at least two of the four festival venues (and one in ten visited three venues). Tirgan inspired people to subsequently visit those venues again, particularly Harbourfront, with 94% of visitors there indicating they would visit that venue again in the future.

The Tirgan community is growing beyond the physical festival as well. The 2019 festival, along with the Iranian American Women Foundation and Iranian Alliances Across Borders, partnered with international entrepreneurship conference iBRIDGES to put on its first conference in Canada. The festival also has a wide network of 46 affiliated organizations from around the world, including the Edinburgh Iranian Festival, Persian Arts and Cultural Society of Ottawa, Persian Students in Stockholm, Sazmanab Centre for Contemporary Art, and the Association of Iranian American Professionals, broadening the reach of the festival.

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1. Introduction

1.1 About Tirgan

Tirgan is a non-partisan, non-religious, charitable non-profit organization committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogue between Iranian-Canadians and the global community and advancing the public's appreciation of Iranian art, culture and heritage. Tirgan conducts year-round cultural programming to support its mission, including hosting the signature Tirgan Festival every two years. Since its inception 12 years ago, Tirgan has held 480+ events, and seen over 700,000 visitors, made possible by the dedication of over 2,000 volunteers and 900 artists².

A wave of Iranian diaspora have made their homes in new countries and cities around the world over the last 30-40 years, not least of which in Toronto. Amongst the Iranian diaspora in Toronto there was a desire to bring the community together in some way. Initially founded in 2006 and run by students as an indoor festival (Nowruz Festival) with approximately 25,000 attendees, two years later the organization formalized as Tirgan Festival in 2008.

In the years since, the festival has grown exponentially, fueled largely through word-of-mouth and a dedicated base of community and volunteers. The biennial festival now draws people from across the Greater Toronto Area and from around the world, seeing approximately 162,000 attendees in its sixth running from July 25th-28th, 2019.

Expanding from previous years, the 2019 festival was held at four venues across Toronto, including Harbourfront Centre, the Distillery District, the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts and the Michener Institute of Education. The festival offered live music, dance shows, theatre productions, children's workshops, talks, an academic history conference, film screenings, visual art exhibitions, traditional tea houses and a bazaar with crafts and diverse food vendors. The 2019 festival year was the first in which Tirgan hosted a one-day conference featuring international academic experts in the history and evolution of intellectualism in Iran from around the globe. The 2019 festival, along with the Iranian American Women Foundation and Iranian Alliances Across Borders, partnered with iBRIDGES to put on its first tech focused conference in Canada. iBRIDGES is "worldwide high-tech entrepreneurial community, focused on those of Iranian descent, to exchange knowledge, best practices, and innovative thinking."³ Events such as this, and future expansion such as a book fair with publishers from around the world, will move the festival toward its goal of "becoming the cultural Mecca for Iranians and the world to experience the Iranian culture".⁴

"They are doing an excellent job; I love the improvement and the yearly expansion of Tirgan."

- Attendee

² <https://tirgan.ca/about/>

³ <https://ibridges.org/canada/>

⁴ Mehrdad Ariannejad, President, Tirgan.

With a mission of enhancing “Unity and Strength through Diversity”, Tirgan Festival 2019 attempted to be as inclusive and accessible as possible, and offered all talks, workshops and film screenings to audiences free-of-charge, as well as 70% of its live performances.

1.2 About this Study

Tirgan is the largest festival celebrating Iranian art and culture outside of Iran. To fully understand its reach and impact, Tirgan commissioned Nordicity to undertake an impact study of the summer 2019 Tirgan Festival. While Tirgan also conducts year-round programming, the scope of this analysis focuses on the impacts of the 2019 Tirgan Festival. The purpose of this study was to estimate the economic and social impacts of the festival, to help Tirgan evaluate its progress towards achieving its mission, to quantify its impact for reporting to funders⁵, and to equip the festival with strategic insights to strengthen its operations, future planning and festival programming.

1.3 Summary of Methodology

Nordicity analyzed the impacts of the festival through the angles of economic, tourism, social and cultural impact by deploying primary and secondary research over the summer of 2019. The research included an intercept survey, analysis of festival spend, interviews and desk research.

Intercept Survey

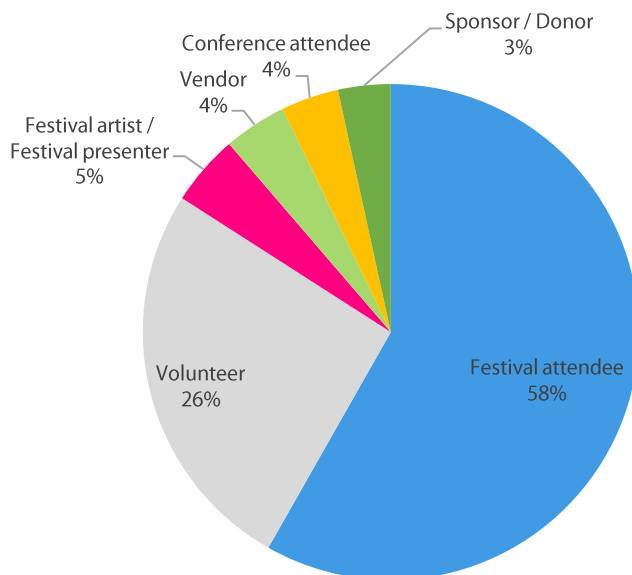
Nordicity designed an intercept survey and trained Tirgan volunteers to administer it on site at all festival venues for the duration of the festival. The survey collected information from festival attendees, volunteers, artists, donors and vendors. The survey data was used in the cultural and social impact analysis. The survey received a total of 646 usable⁶ responses and 584 complete responses.

Respondents were asked their primary role at the festival; half of responses (58%) were from festival attendees, followed by just over a quarter from festival volunteers (26%). Meanwhile, festival artists and presenters accounted for 5% of survey responses, followed by festival vendors and conference attendees (4% each), and Tirgan’s sponsors/donors (3%). The breakdown of respondents is illustrated in the figure below, and much of the subsequent insights in this report about the aforementioned groups were determined through survey results.

⁵ Tirgan Festival receives grants from multiple organizations including Celebrate Ontario, Canadian Heritage, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts council and Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Creates and Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund.

⁶ Usable responses are those that have answers to a part of the survey, but not all the questions.

Figure 2: Breakdown of survey respondents (complete responses only)



n = 584

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Tirgan Festival Expenditure

Tirgan provided Nordicity with its annual expenditure and the percentage of the amount related to producing the festival in 2019. Nordicity's MyEIA™ impact tool was used to estimate the impact of this spending. A detailed explanation of the methodology can be found in Appendix A.

Visitor Spending

The impact of visitor spending was estimated using MTCS' Tourism and Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM). The number of visitors from Ontario (from 40 KM or more away), Canada, USA and Overseas were input into the model, along with the number of nights of stay, and the model provided economic impact estimates as output.

Vendor Sales

Tirgan provided Nordicity with food and beverage sales figures and the survey responses provided craft vendor sales. Nordicity's MyEIA™ tool was used to estimate the impact of these sales.

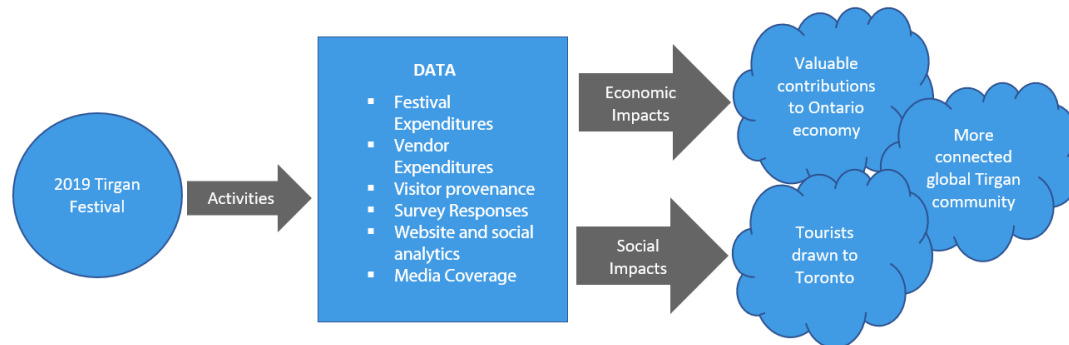
Consultations and Supporting Information

Nordicity conducted consultations with key stakeholders including Mehrdad Ariannejad, President of Tirgan, to understand more about the social and cultural impacts of the festival. Iran International TV (IITV) were also consulted for data.

Tirgan provided Nordicity with important information regarding attendance in previous years, ticket sales, marketing activities, social media analytics and press coverage.

The primary and secondary research combined to form a holistic picture of the festival and its impacts, as illustrated in the graphic below:

Figure 3: Impact Analysis Methodology

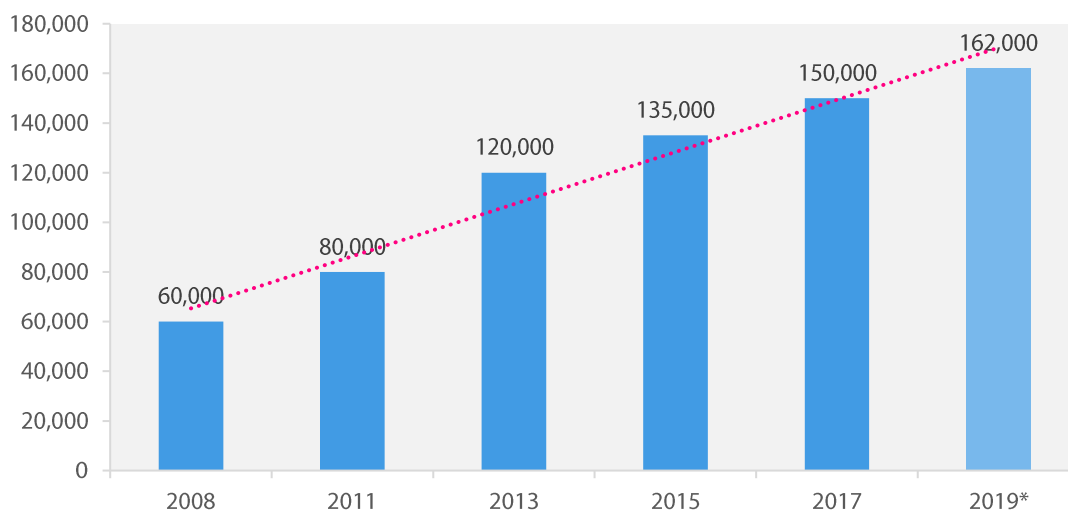


2. Tirgan Attendees

2.1 Number of Attendees

In 2019, the three-day festival welcomed an estimated 162,000⁷ visitors amongst its four venues. This was an 8% increase from 150,000 visitors in the previous festival year of 2017, and a 175% increase over the 60,000 visitors the festival received in its inaugural year of 2008.

Figure 4: Festival attendance from 2008 to 2017 and estimated for 2019



Source: attendance figures for 2008 to 2015 received from Tirgan; figures for 2017 and 2019 forecasted by Nordicity

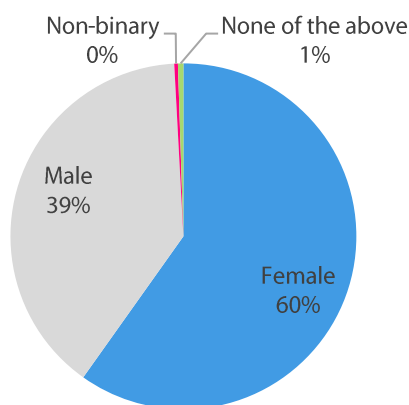
⁷ Nordicity derived the 2019 visitor estimate from attendance data provided by Tirgan for previous years. Please see the appendix for a detailed explanation.

2.2 Demographics of Visitors

Tirgan has a loyal base of attendees that come back to the festival year after year. More than two-thirds (69%) of visitors to the 2019 festival who responded to the survey indicated that they had attended it previously. Meanwhile, Tirgan has expanded its audience reaching new attendees, with almost one-third (31%) of 2019 survey respondents reporting they were first-time visitors to the festival.

The festival's programming aimed to satisfy a diverse audience, with a range of events for different age groups (such as daytime children's shows and evening events for adults), art forms and genres. The festival attendance skewed more female, as seen in the figure below. Notably, at one of the venues – Distillery District – the attendance was gender-balanced with both men and women making up around 49% each of the attendees.

Figure 5: Breakdown of visitors by gender

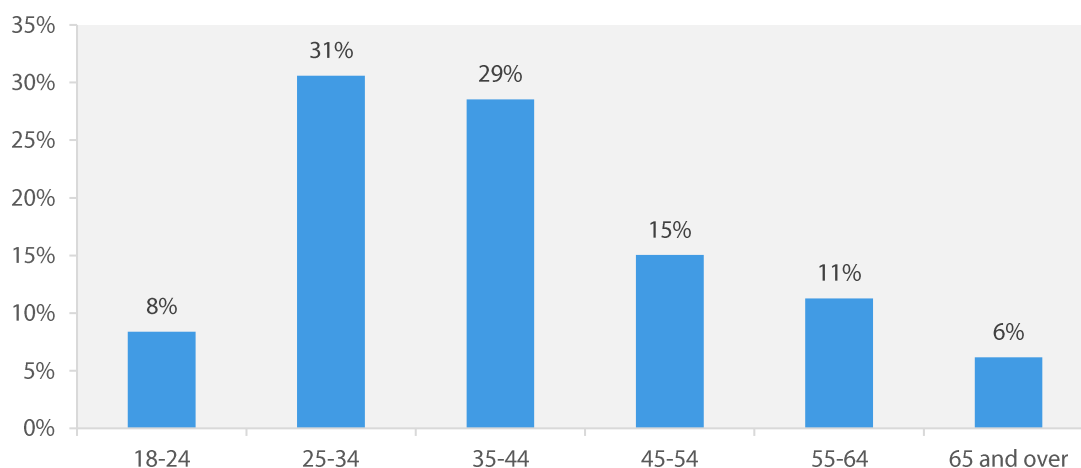


n = 590

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

In terms of age, Tirgan received visitors young and old, with a majority between the ages of 25-44 years old, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 6: Breakdown of festival visitors by age

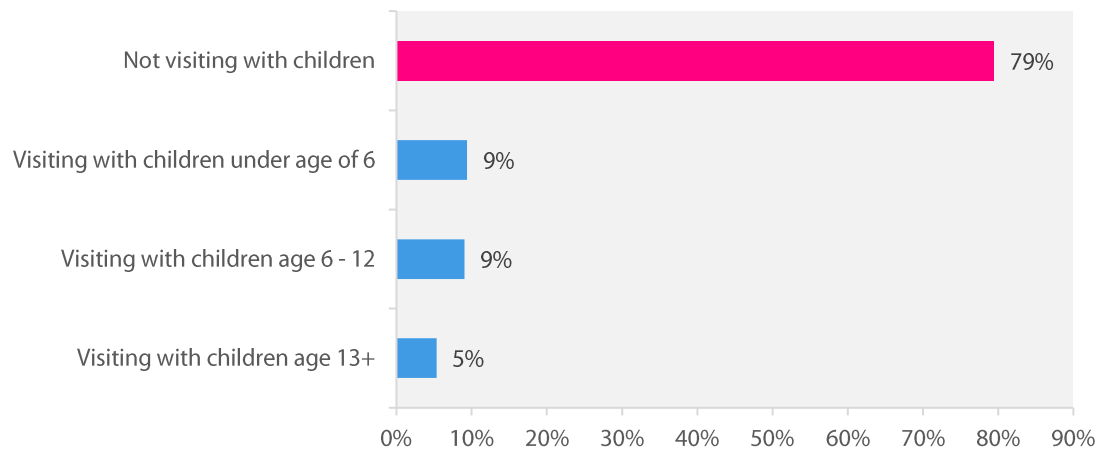


n = 585

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

According to survey results, the average age of festival attendees was 40 years old, with the age groups 25-34 constituting nearly a third (30%) and 35-44 constituting over a quarter (28%) of the total. Around one-fifth (21%) of the visitors who responded to the survey reported attending with children.

Figure 7: Visitors attending with and without children

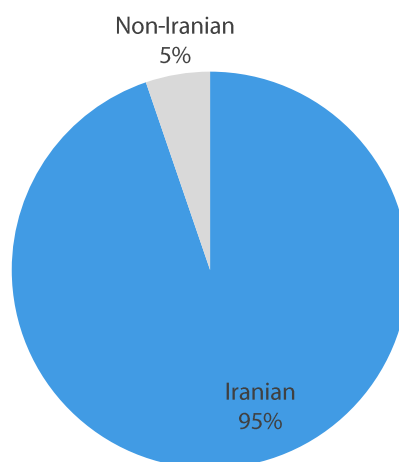


n = 597

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

An overwhelming majority of the visitors were of Iranian descent, as seen in the figure below. Interestingly, the conference held at Michener Institute – which had panel discussions on the history and evolution of intellectualism in Iran – had more visitors with non-Iranian origins (9%) than other venues.

Figure 8: Ethnic origin of festival visitors

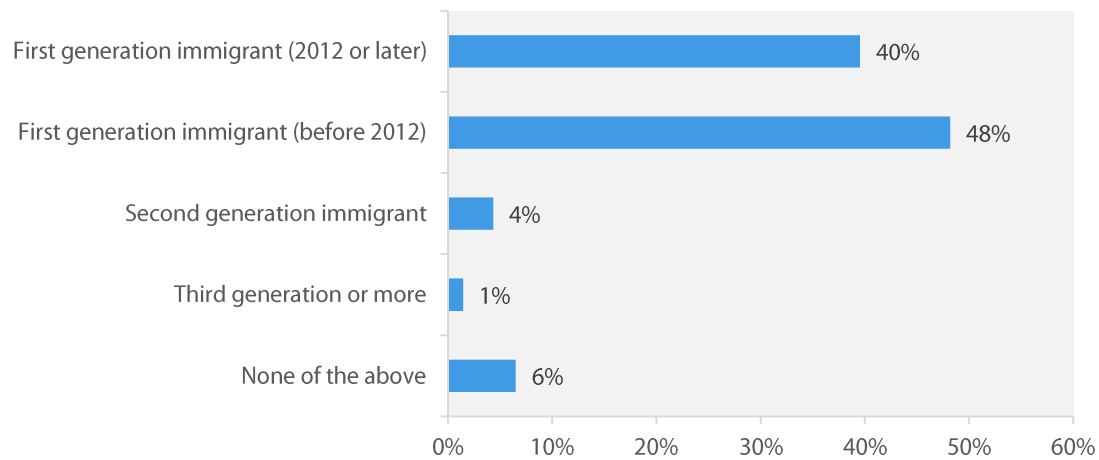


n = 591

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Of those with Iranian origins, a large majority (88%) indicated that they were first-generation immigrants.

Figure 9: Visitor breakdown by immigrant status



n = 554

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

3. Impacts of the 2019 Festival

The 2019 Tirgan Festival contributed towards the social and economic prosperity of Toronto, Ontario and Canada. The festival **had a total economic impact of \$1.0 million in GDP**, 34 full-time equivalent (FTEs) jobs, \$288,000 in contribution to taxes, and has **significant social and cultural impacts** resonating across Toronto, Canada and the world. These impacts are highlight below and explored in detail in the proceeding sections.

Figure 10: Selected impacts of Tirgan Festival in 2019⁸



⁸ Tourists= Anyone who travelled from 40 km or more away.

3.1 Economic Impact

The festival generates economic impacts that can be expressed in terms of GDP, labour income, employment and taxes. These impacts come from Tirgan's operations expenditure, vendor sales and visitor spending, and are comprised of direct, indirect and induced impacts.

The main source of direct economic impact in any economy is money paid to or generated by individuals. As such, the direct impact contributed by an organization comes from salaries and wages paid to its employees, as well as any profits it earns from its operations (which can be understood as income for the companies' owners).

In addition to the direct impact, economic activity also has what can be called "spin-off" impacts, which represent the ripple effects that an industry has on the broader economy. These impacts include indirect impacts (the employment and value added by suppliers from which companies purchase goods and services), and induced impacts (the re-spending of labour income earned from a company and its suppliers).

The economic impact of the operations of Tirgan Festival and its vendor sales is summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Summary of economic impact of Tirgan Festival in 2019

	Type of impact	Operations	Vendor Sales	Total
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Direct	\$259,000	\$109,000	\$368,000
	Indirect	\$367,000	\$42,000	\$409,000
	Induced	\$223,000	\$15,000	\$238,000
	Total	\$849,000	\$166,000	\$1,015,000
Labour Income	Direct	\$240,000	\$77,000	\$317,000
	Indirect	\$216,000	\$19,000	\$235,000
	Induced	\$107,000	\$5,000	\$112,000
	Total	\$563,000	\$101,000	\$664,000
Employment (FTEs)	Direct	10	3.5	14
	Indirect	10	0.4	10
	Induced	10	0.1	10
	Total	30	4	34
Taxes	Federal	\$125,000	\$24,000	\$149,000
	Provincial	\$93,000	\$7,000	\$100,000
	Municipal	\$38,000	\$1,000	\$39,000
	Total	\$256,000	\$32,000	\$288,000

Source: Expenditure information provided by Tirgan and modeled using Nordicity MyEIA Model and Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

The total GDP impact of Tirgan Festival is estimated to be \$1.0 million, with direct impacts constituting 36% of the total, or \$368,000. The total labour income impact is estimated to be 664,000, and in terms of employment, Tirgan supports an estimated 34 full-time equivalent jobs (FTEs).

The economic activity described above generates tax revenue at federal, provincial and municipal levels through multiple channels, namely, personal income taxes, corporation income taxes (based on profits), consumption taxes and local property taxes. Tirgan's total fiscal impact is an estimated \$288,000 in tax revenues.

This economic impact contains two components: (i.) the impact of the festival's operations; and (ii.) the impact of vendor sales. These two impact components are described in the following sections, followed by the impact of visitor spending.

3.1.1 Festival Operations

Tirgan's annual operating expenditure as it relates to the 2019 festival is an estimated \$1.06 million.⁹ Salaries and wages paid to Tirgan employees and contractors contribute to this impact. The **total GDP impact** of this expenditure is an estimated **\$849,000**.

Other impacts can be found in the table below.

Table 4: Economic impact of Tirgan Festival operations

	Type of Impact	Amount
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Direct	\$259,000
	Indirect	\$367,000
	Induced	\$223,000
	Total	\$849,000
Labour Income	Direct	\$240,000
	Indirect	\$216,000
	Induced	\$107,000
	Total	\$563,000
Employment (FTEs)	Direct	10
	Indirect	10
	Induced	10
	Total	30

⁹ Tirgan provided its annual expenditure to Nordicity and also specified the percentage of its annual expenditure that related directly to putting up the Tirgan Festival in 2019.

	Type of Impact	Amount
Taxes	Federal	\$125,000
	Provincial	\$93,000
	Municipal	\$38,000
	Total	\$256,000

Source: Expenditure information provided by Tirgan; Nordicity MyEIA Model, Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

The total labour income impact of Tirgan is an estimated \$563,000 and the total employment supported by Tirgan's festival operations is an estimated 30 FTEs. Tirgan directly employs 10 FTEs¹⁰, and supports 10 FTEs at the indirect and induced levels. Tirgan's operations also contribute to tax revenue at the federal, provincial and municipal level which is estimated to be a combined fiscal impact of \$256,000.

3.1.2 Vendor Sales

The festival had food and beverage vendors, as well as arts and crafts vendors at two of its four venues – Harbourfront Centre and Distillery District -- on all days of the festival. The food and beverage vendors (including Tirgan's Teahouse) earned over \$180,000¹¹ in sales and the craft vendors earned almost \$50,000. In total the vendors contributed \$166,000 in GDP impacts, 4 FTEs in employment impacts and \$32,000 in taxes.¹²

The table below contains a detailed breakdown of the impacts.

¹⁰ Employment impacts are measured in terms of FTEs, which are not the same as the number of people employed. Please refer to the appendix for a definition of full-time equivalent (FTE).

¹¹ Tirgan received a percentage of these sales as commission.

¹² The sales made by Tirgan's Teahouse and the commission earned by Tirgan were not included in the vendor economic impact. Instead, these are part of the operations impact of the festival.

Table 5: Economic impact of Tirgan Festival vendors

	Type of Impact	Amount
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Direct	\$109,000
	Indirect	\$42,000
	Induced	\$15,000
	Total	\$166,000
Labour Income	Direct	\$77,000
	Indirect	\$19,000
	Induced	\$5,000
	Total	\$101,000
Employment (FTEs)	Direct	3.5
	Indirect	0.4
	Induced	0.1
	Total	4
Taxes	Federal	\$24,000
	Provincial	\$7,000
	Municipal	\$1,000
	Total	\$32,000

Source: Vendor sales information from Tirgan and Survey; Nordicity MyEIA Model, Statistics Canada, federal and provincial government accounts.

3.1.3 Visitor Spending

The impact of visitor spending was estimated using MTCS's Tourism and Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM). The number of visitors from Ontario, Canada, USA and Overseas were input into the model, along with the number of nights of stay, and the model provided economic impact estimates as output (these inputs and outputs can be found in the appendix). For visitors from Ontario, this includes all visitors from 40 km or more away, while those from the GTA¹³ are considered same-day visitors. All other visitors from beyond the GTA are overnight visitors.

The total GDP impact of visitor spending is an **estimated \$10.3 million**.

Similarly, labour income impact of visitor spending is an estimated \$6 million. Visitor spending also supported 118 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in employment impacts.

¹³Technically, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) consists of Toronto and 25 surrounding municipalities distributed among four regional municipalities: Durham, Halton, Peel, and York. In the context of this question, provenance in the GTA was self-defined by the person completing the survey.

Visitor spending generated an estimated \$2.6 million in tax revenue, as seen in the table below.

Table 6: Economic impact of visitor spending

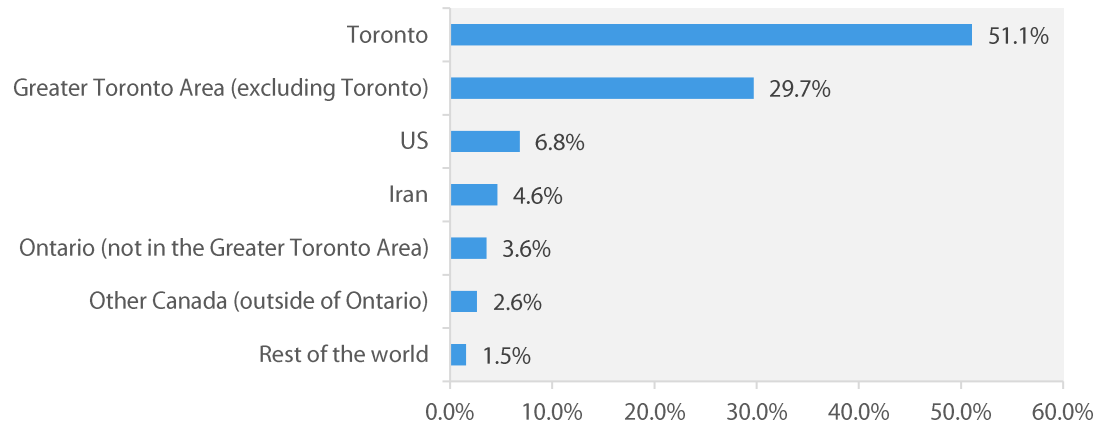
	Type of impact	Amount
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Direct	\$5,742,892
	Indirect	\$2,128,239
	Induced	\$2,466,157
	Total	\$10,337,288
Labour Income	Direct	\$3,067,404
	Indirect	\$1,371,051
	Induced	\$1,535,940
	Total	\$5,974,395
Employment (FTEs)	Direct	79
	Indirect	20
	Induced	19
	Total	118
Taxes	Federal	\$936,932
	Provincial	\$1,432,054
	Municipal	\$184,249
	Total	\$2,553,235

Source: Total attendance forecast by Nordicity from data provided by Tirgan. Provenance of visitors determined from the visitor survey. Estimates from MTCS Tourism and Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM).

3.1.4 Tourism Impact

Of the festival's 162,000 visitors, nearly half (49%) came from outside of Toronto, as seen in the chart below.

Figure 11: Provenance of visitors to Tirgan in 2019

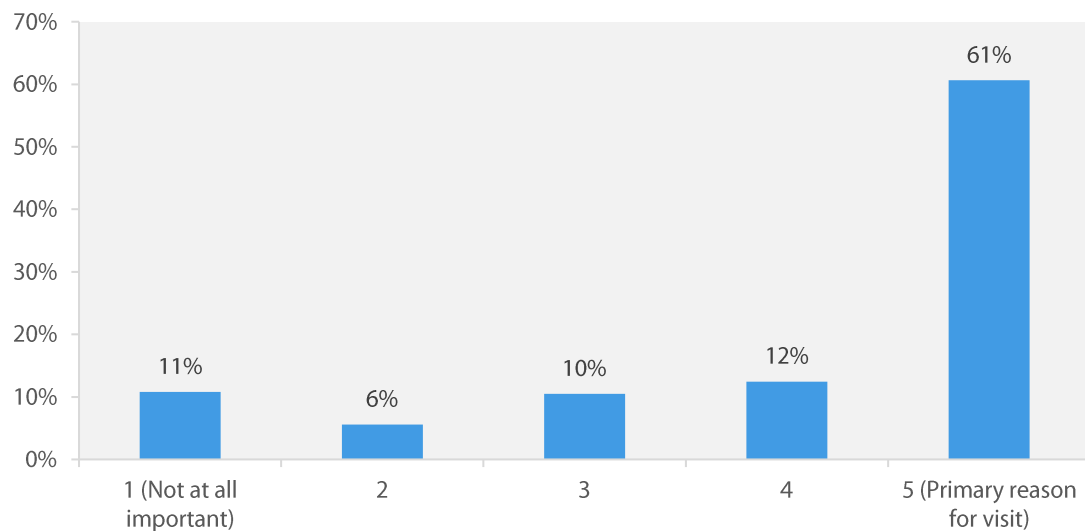


n = 646

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Apart from local residents, the festival attracted tourists from the United States, Iran, and other countries. For a majority of visitors from outside Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area, the festival was the most important reason for coming to the city, as shown in the chart below.

Figure 12: Importance of Tirgan in visitor's decision to come to Toronto



n = 305

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

3.2 Social Impacts

3.2.1 Cultural Impact

In addition to its economic impact, the festival has a significant social impact. The festival's impact ripples out to the Iranian community and well beyond. The festival has a wide network of 46 affiliated arts, student, professional and community organizations from around the world, including the Edinburgh Iranian Festival, Persian Arts and Cultural Society of Ottawa, Persian Students in Stockholm, Sazmanab Centre for Contemporary Art, and the Association of Iranian American Professionals, which broaden the reach of the festival. The festival also has an impact through the venues and artists it works with, and contributes to the cultural community in Toronto and the careers and sustainability of artist and the cultural sector.

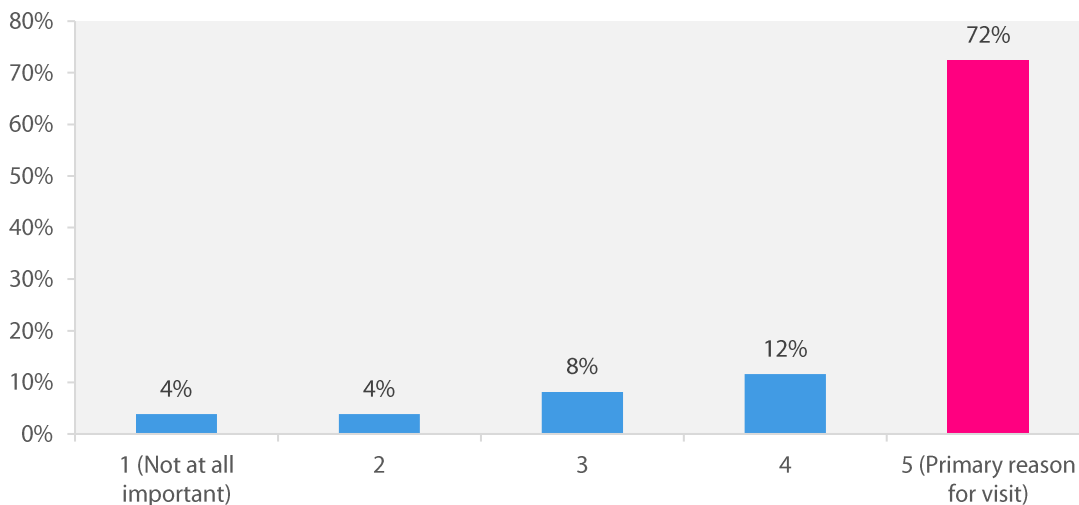
Venues Impact

The festival brings with it new and diverse audiences to its partner venues that these venues may otherwise not have, attracting people to the festival and integrating the festival within the larger cultural fabric of the city of Toronto. Throughout the festival, audiences attended performances and events at multiple venues. While some people may have stumbled upon the festival by chance, of those surveyed at these venues, almost three-quarters came to the venue specifically to attend a Tirgan Festival event.

"Tirgan makes me love Toronto even more."

- Attendee

Figure 13: Importance of Tirgan in decision to visit venue



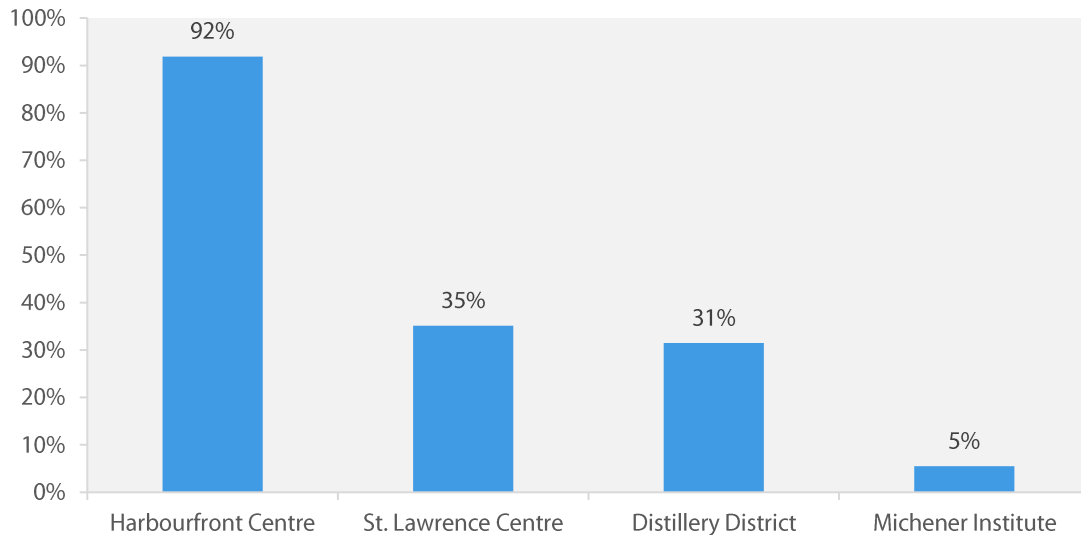
n = 490

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Harbourfront was the central focal point of the festival, with more than nine out of ten visitors attending events at the Harbourfront Centre, as seen in the figure below. Harbourfront, due to its central location, open spaces and variety of events helps the festival achieve its goals of bringing the Iranian and broader community together. Anecdotally, Nordicity observed numerous people wander into Tirgan events just by nature of walking through Harbourfront Centre. Many passersby stopped

and engaged with the festival, and while there aren't clear estimates, the festival appears to have been experienced by more than just the people who would identify themselves as "attendees."

Figure 14: Attendance at all four festival venues

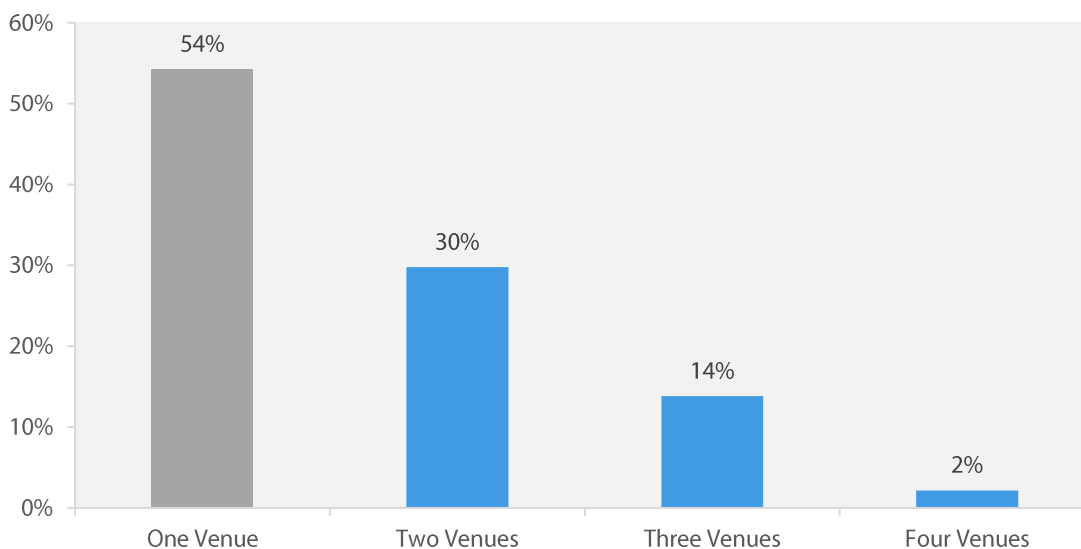


n = 601

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

A large proportion (46%) of attendees visited more than one venue, with one in three visiting two venues, and more than one in ten visiting three venues in all. The reach of the festival has grown, and by hosting attendees at multiple venues across the city, Tirgan was better able to promote Iranian culture in the city and become more integrated into the cultural milieu of the city of Toronto.

Figure 15: Number of venues visited by festival attendees

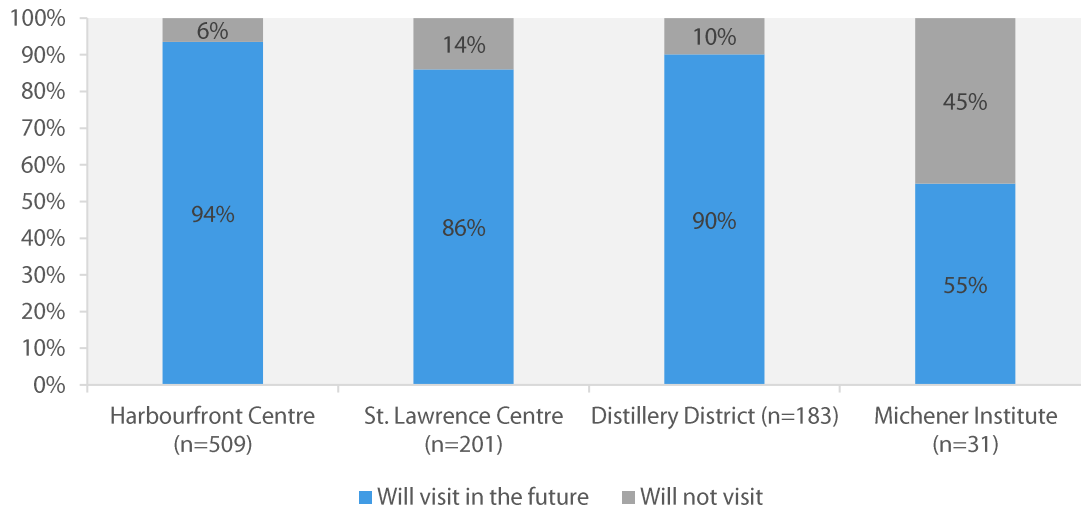


n = 601

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Moreover, a large majority of attendees indicated that they intend to visit these venues in the future, with 94% of visitors to Harbourfront Centre planning to do so. While it is not known how many of these attendees may have been to these venues in the past, it does appear that the festival's impact has a ripple effect, with audiences expecting to engage with additional cultural experiences at these venues in the future because of their positive experience at Tirgan.

Figure 16: Visitors' intentions to visit venues in the future

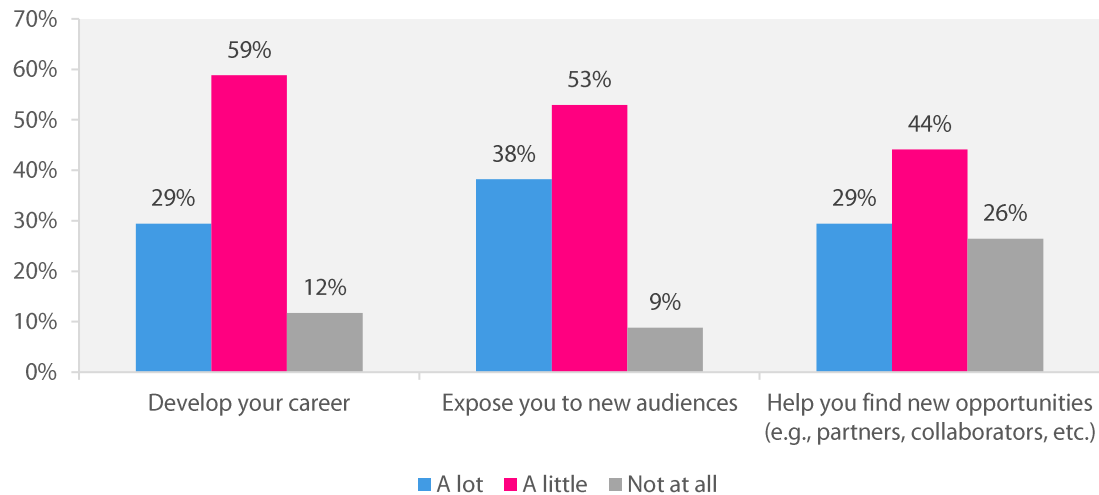


Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Artist Impact

240 artists performed at the Tirgan Festival in 2019. The festival provides opportunities to artists to develop their career, expose them to new audiences and help them find new partners or collaborators. As highlighted in the chart below, the majority of artists who performed at Tirgan 2019 felt that the festival had at least some effect on their career, and often a large effect. More than one-third (38%) of the artists indicated that Tirgan exposed them to new audiences '*a lot*', and almost one in three artists indicated that performing at Tirgan developed their career '*a lot*'.

Figure 17: Impacts reported by artists performing at Tirgan



n = 34

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

3.2.2 Community Impact

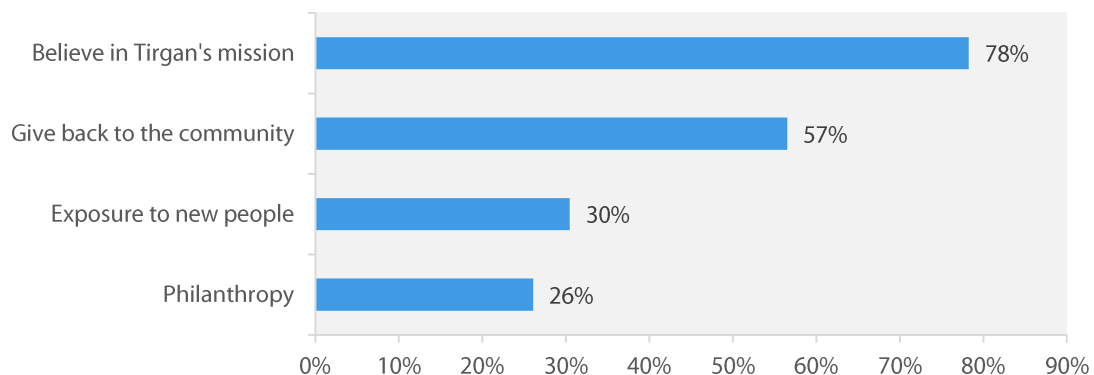
Tirgan provides an opportunity for people to connect with their roots, give back to their community and meet new people. In the spirit of giving back, one festival donor bought festival tickets for families with children, for the performance of 'Zahhak: The Legend of the Serpent King'. As a result of this generosity, approximately 200 people, mainly children from disadvantaged backgrounds, were able to attend the festival and the venue, engage with the community, and experience art and culture, who would not have otherwise been able to.

"A great event put-together with the love and affection of the many volunteers who tirelessly devoted their time and effort to bring this festival to life. Job well done everyone."

- Sponsor

Tirgan's impact on the community is evident through the strong financial support it has from community members. There is a dedicated group of donors and sponsors who contribute to Tirgan for a variety of reasons ranging from believing in its mission to reaching new people. A majority (78%) of sponsors reported that they *believe in Tirgan's mission* and over half (57%) indicated that they want to *give back to the community*. More than half of the sponsors (70%) for the 2019 festival have sponsored Tirgan previously, with the average being three years.

Figure 18: Reasons for Sponsoring or Donating to Tirgan

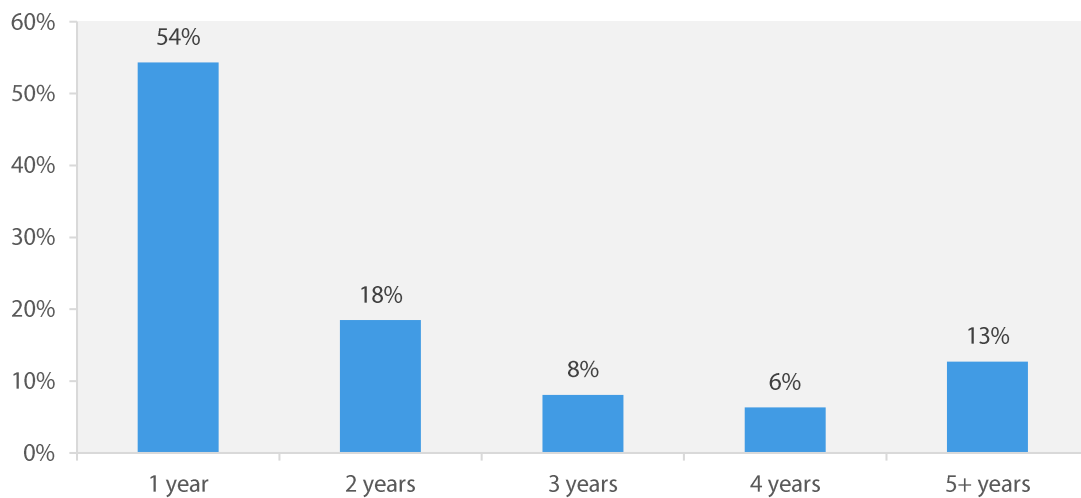


n = 23

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

The festival was also supported by over 400 volunteers, a majority of whom were volunteering at Tirgan for the first time. As mentioned earlier in this report, the dedication of the volunteers has been critical to the attendance and growth of the festival over the years. The festival has a place of importance to many of its volunteers, as nearly half (46%) have been donating their time for multiple festivals (as shown in the chart below).

Figure 19: Volunteer breakdown by number of years volunteered at Tirgan

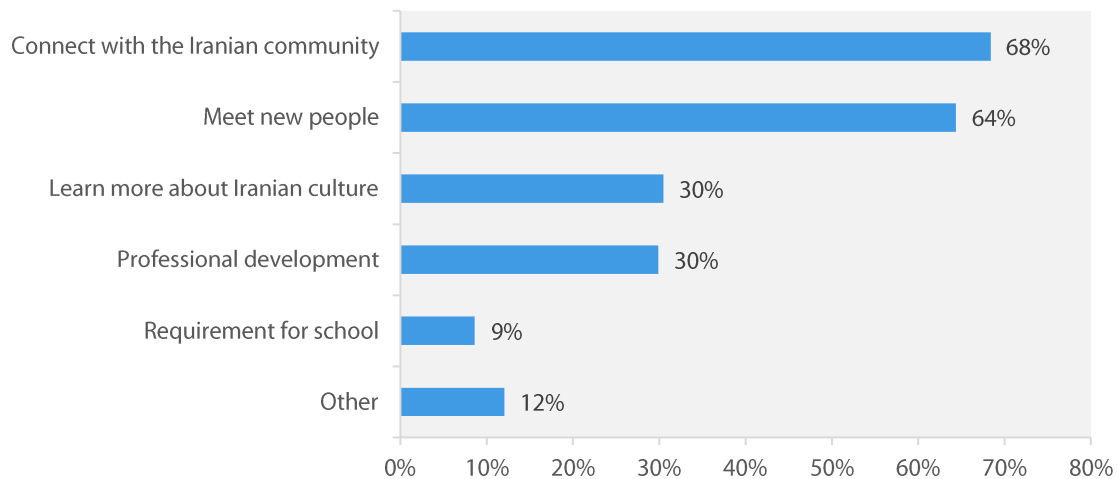


n = 173

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Volunteers indicated multiple reasons for volunteering at Tirgan, with more than two-thirds (68%) doing so to connect with the Iranian community, and a similar number seeking to meet new people.

Figure 20: Reasons for volunteering at Tirgan



n = 174

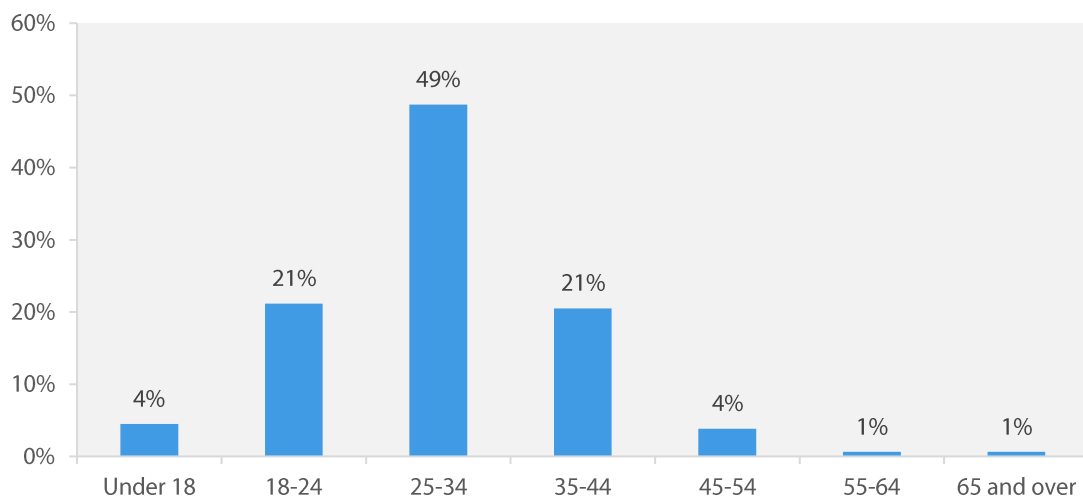
Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Other reasons for volunteering included giving back to the community and promoting arts and culture. Women made up almost two-thirds (63%) of the volunteers, and almost all (97%) of the volunteers were of Iranian origin. The festival is also an important touchpoint for younger people to connect with Iranian culture, as evidenced by the majority of the volunteers being under the age of 35. The average age of volunteers was 30 years.

"Tirgan 2019 was a reminder that Iranians can and will continue to promote Iranian art and culture by being an inspiration for everybody regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation."

- Volunteer

Figure 21: Volunteer breakdown by age



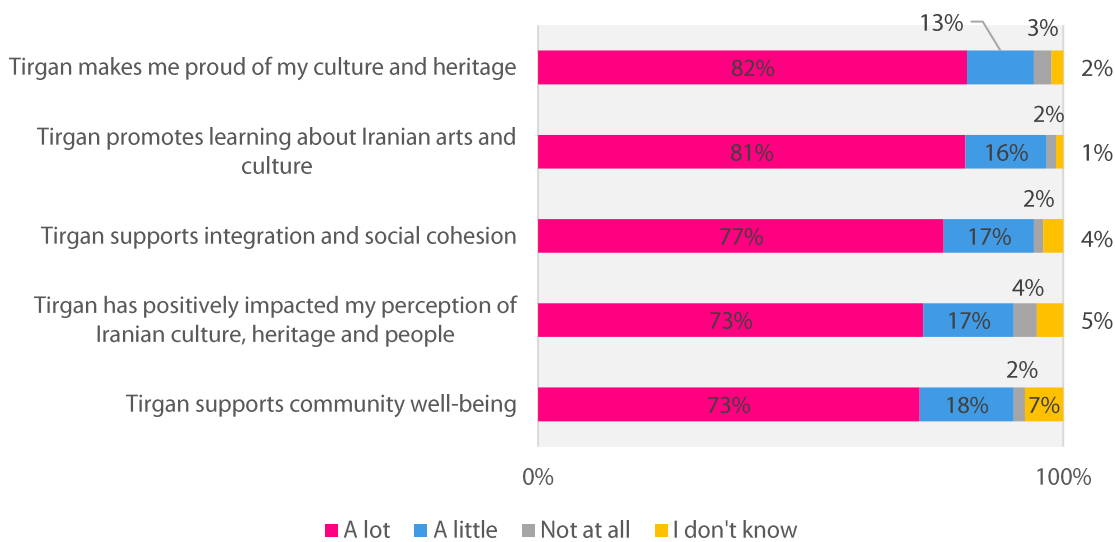
n = 156

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

It is not just volunteers that feel the festival connects them to their Iranian community and heritage. Festival visitors overwhelmingly agreed that the community impacts of the festival are strong (as evidenced by the chart below).

In particular, more than four out of five (82%) visitors agreed strongly with the statement *Tirgan makes me proud of my culture and heritage*, and a similar proportion (81%) agreed strongly with the statement *Tirgan promotes learning about Iranian arts and culture*.

Figure 22: Visitors' rating of Tirgan's impacts on the community



n = 574

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

3.2.3 Environmental Sustainability

Tirgan is raising the importance of environmental sustainability across the organization. The festival is environmentally conscious and organizers are continually looking at ways to make the festival more environmentally friendly.

As the festival evolves, organizers are seeking ways of reducing the waste, energy and consumption associated with its events, and introducing more ways to reuse and recycle materials year-round. The next festival will seek to reduce printed and paper materials by 30%, and will introduce an app for attendees to access the program. Meanwhile, for accessibility and inclusivity, the festival will continue to provide physical programs, such as for people who are not digitally connected, have vision impairment and other needs).

"It is refreshing to see such a well-organized festival using volunteers to celebrate Iranian culture. I hope that in future Tirgan can better promote itself within the Canadian communities much like many other ethnic groups have done."

- Attendee

Additionally, the festival organizers aim to reduce plastic consumption and waste by introducing new schemes including the provision of reusable beverage containers and by ushering in sustainability

policies across its venues and vendors to enhance positive environmental practices. With these greening strategies in place, the festival can continue its sustainable growth.

3.3 The Reach of the Festival

To assess the full impact of the Tirgan Festival Nordicity also looked at how many people engaged with the festival outside of its physical context, through other channels—including the website, social platforms, media and influencers—to gather a fuller sense of the reach of the festival.

3.3.1 Website Engagement

Tirgan’s website is the primary hub for information on the organization, its year-round events, and the main biennial festival. Event tickets can be purchased through the site which hosts the venue’s digital images and videos.

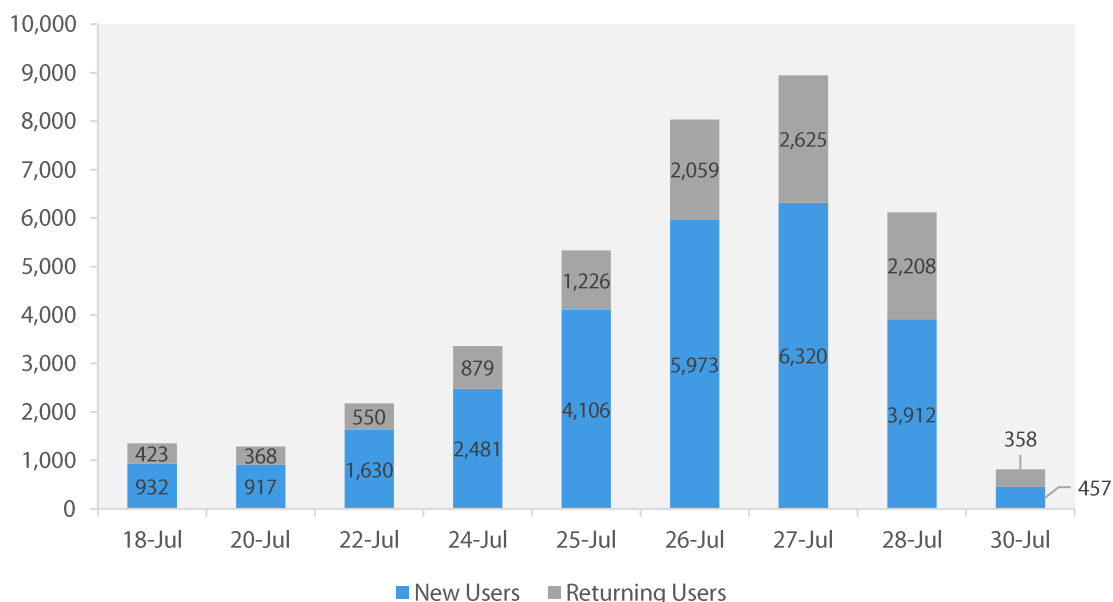
In order to assess Tirgan’s engagement through its website in relation to the festival, Nordicity analyzed website engagement for a week prior to and a week after the festival (from July 18th, 2019 to August 1st, 2019). Overall, 35,276 individual users accessed the website over these two weeks, of which 91% were first-time users.

Website visitors spent an average time of two minutes and fifty-two seconds on the site. The most frequently engaged with parts of the website were the 2019 Tirgan Festival pages for tickets, event listings and attendance details. This illustrates how the festival is a leading driver website traffic, with less continued engagement outside of the festival period.

Website Usage

The website reached a peak number of users at the mid-point of the 2019 festival as shown in the chart below. New website users echo this trajectory, indicating that new users to the site drove this growth.

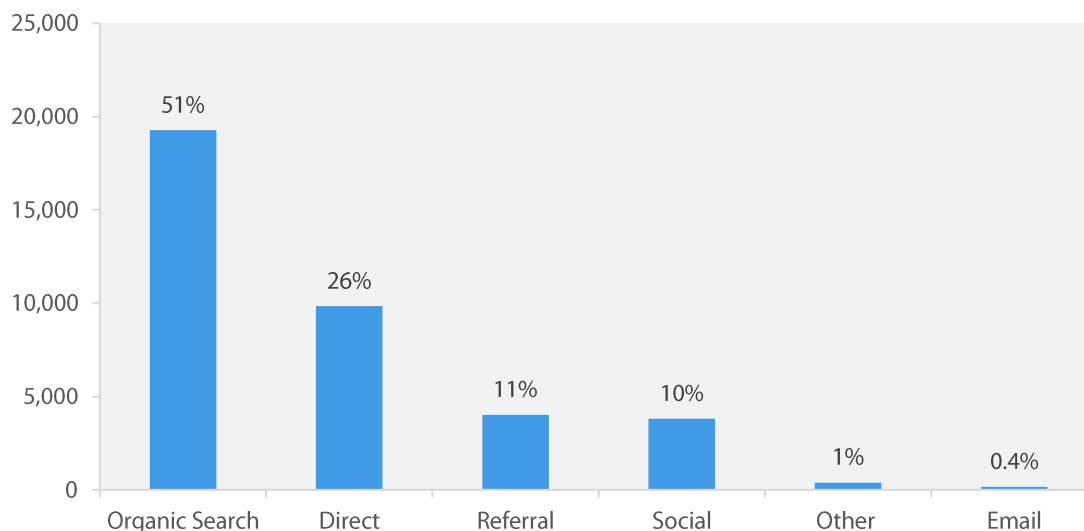
Figure 23: Website Users (one week prior and post festival)



Source: Tirgan Google Analytics

As shown in the figure below, the majority of users found the website via an organic search. Many of the organic hits were derived by visitors having searched the term “Tirgan”, suggesting that most people who access the website have a pre-existing awareness of the festival before they go online. Direct links (i.e. a link to tickets), followed by referral links (i.e. from Harbourfront Centre’s website) were the next most common sources of website visitors. Social (media) was not a significant avenue through which users were accessing the website, but when they did, they came mostly (63%) from Facebook, followed by Instagram (21%).

Figure 24: Channels through which users access website



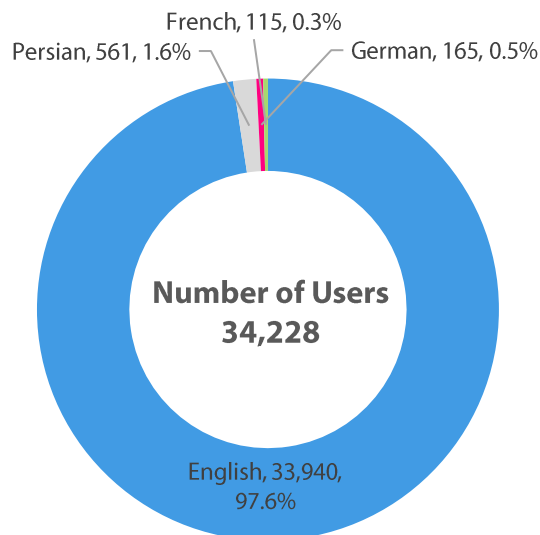
Source: Tirgan Google Analytics

New user acquisition channels are similar to returning user channels. There were slightly more new users coming from email (29% of new users come from email, vs. 19% of returning users), and social (10% of new users and 6% of returning). Returning users more frequently accessed the website through direct search. So, channels such as email and social were helping to expand the reach of the festival online in an incremental way.

Website User Demographics

Those using the website for the most part were English speakers (as their primary language). Persian-speakers made up the second largest group while German and French were the next largest groups of users by languages used.

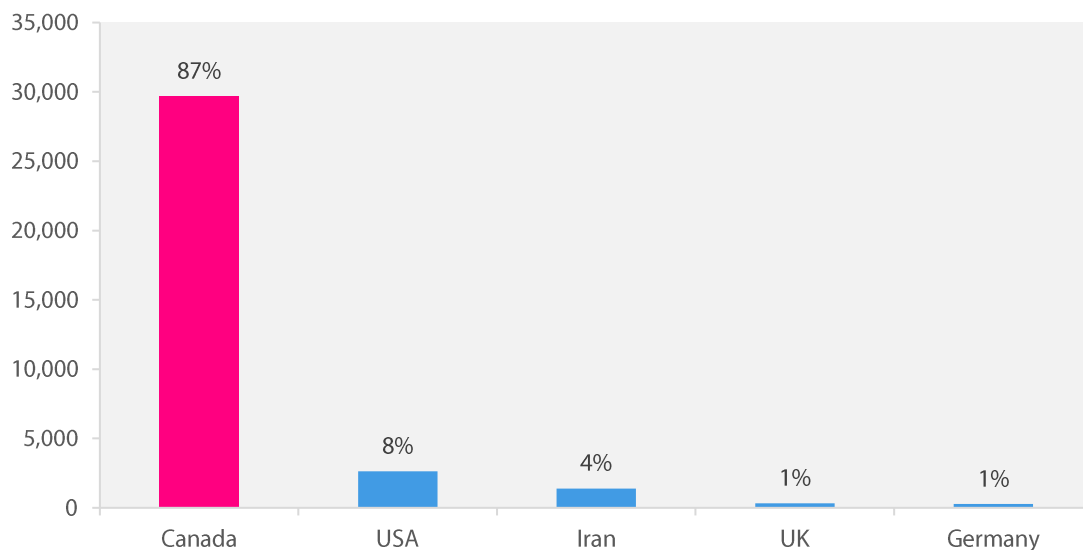
Figure 25: Primary language of website users



Source: Tirgan Google Analytics

The Tirgan website attracts users from across a number of countries. Canada was, not surprisingly, the most frequent, but USA beats out the rest of the world for second most users, at 2,630 or 8% of total. The breakdown seen above roughly mirrors the provenance of festival visitors seen in Figure 11.

Figure 26: Country of website users



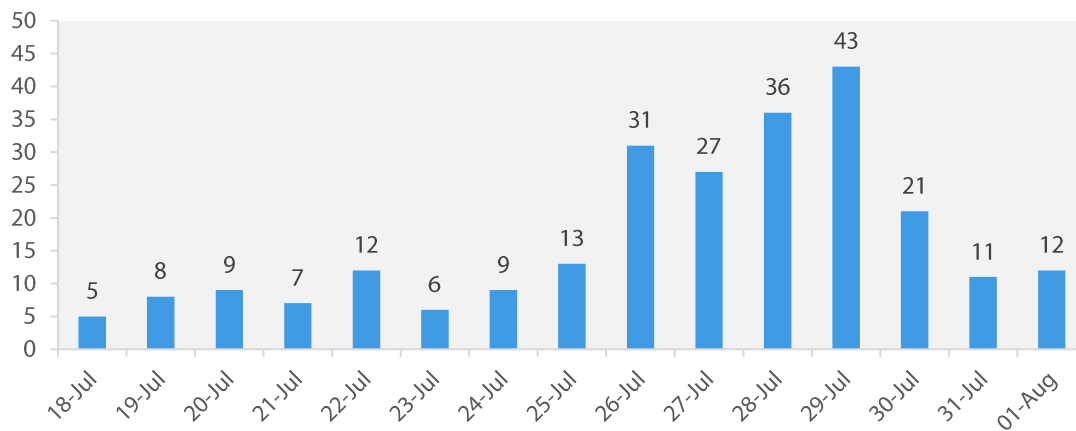
Source: Tirgan Google Analytics

Through the website, Tirgan also attracts a relatively young demographic. While demographic data is only known for 31% of website users, the largest (39%) were between 25-34, and 68% were under 44. There is an almost even split between genders, 53% male and 47% female. 72% are accessing the website through a mobile device.

3.3.2 Facebook

Tirgan's Facebook page had over 14,000 followers a week after the festival (reaching 14,352 as of September 24th, 2019). The number of Facebook followers grew in the time period reviewed, by 205 followers, with the actual festival days and the day immediately after seeing the biggest daily jump in followers (in the period reviewed).

Figure 27: New followers by day (one week pre and post festival)

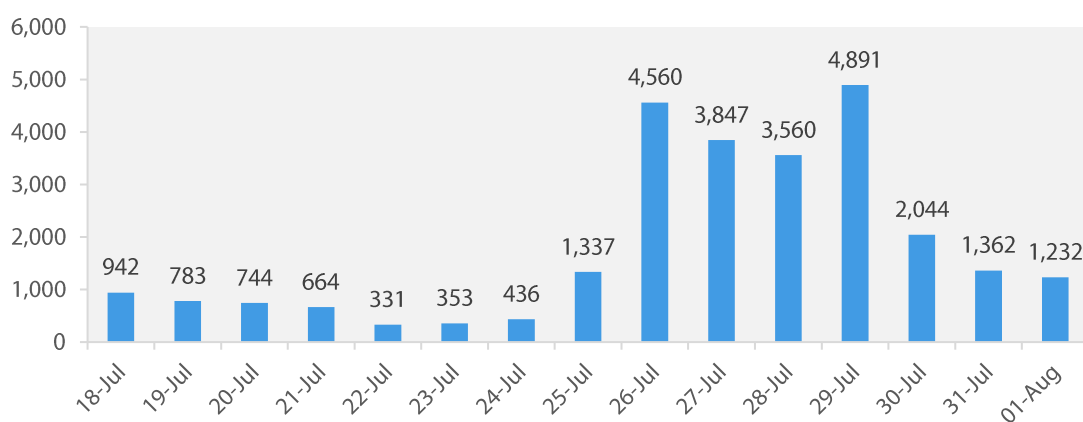


Source: Tirgan Facebook Page Analytics

Engagement on the page

Engagement in the form of any interaction from a digital user (such as a 'like', comment, share, etc.) peaked the day after the festival. The festival appears to have contributed to increased engagement with Tirgan on Facebook. Tirgan posted 17 posts on Facebook on the 29th, which was consistent with the number posted in previous days. People were likely more engaged following their time at the festival (posts included roundups of photos and videos from the past three days of the festival). The festival expanded the reach of Tirgan with increased followers and encouraged increased engagement.

Figure 28: Number of Engaged Users to Facebook page (one week pre and post festival)

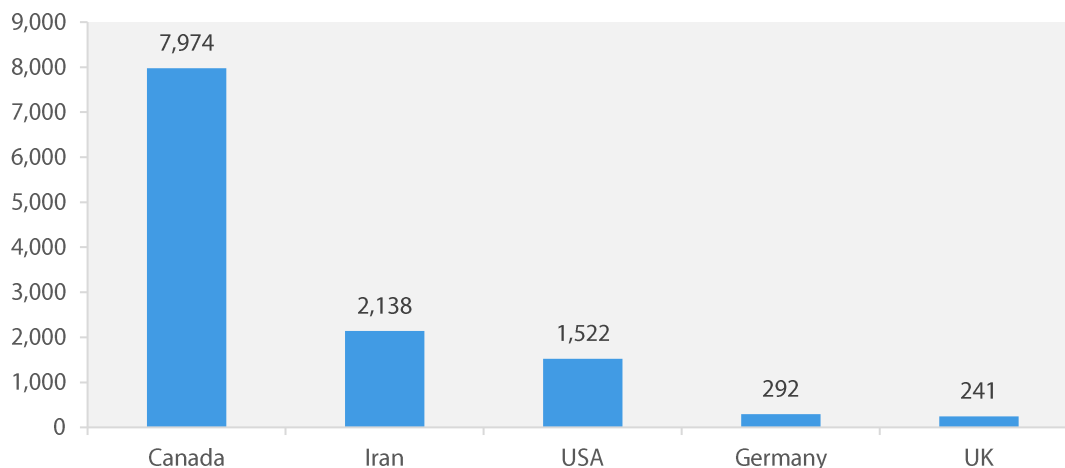


Source: Tirgan Facebook Page Analytics

Demographics of Facebook Users

Followers of the Tirgan Facebook page came from 46 different countries around the world. 17% of Facebook followers were from countries other than Canada, the US and Iran, compared to the 2% of festival attendees. In this way, Tirgan is reaching a more global community through its online presence than its physical.

Figure 29: Top Countries of Facebook Users



Source: Tirgan Facebook Page Analytics

Facebook followers represented 54 languages. English was the largest group (85%), while a significant portion were Persian-speakers (9%), followed again by German (1%) echoing the primary languages spoken by website users, and French (1%) speakers.

The Facebook user group skews more female than the website user group, reflecting the gender breakdown of festival attendees (which skewed more female). The largest demographic groups were females between 35-44 (22%), followed by females between 25-34 females (16%). Males between 35-44 (15%) were the third largest group of Facebook followers.

3.3.3 Instagram and Influencers

Tirgan had a total of 12,400¹⁴ followers on Instagram. Throughout the festival, Tirgan engaged with attendees and followers online through posts and Instagram stories, streaming portions of events.

Tirgan also partnered with key social media influencers to expand the reach of the festival. These influencers posted pictures and stories about the festival. Through these partnerships, Tirgan reached 153,400 people online as outlined in the chart below.¹⁵

¹⁴ As of reporting.

¹⁵ Note: there is potential overlap between influencers followers and Tirgan followers, so not all these 153,400 are unique followers.

Table 7: Influencers Tirgan Partnered With

Name	Description	Followers ¹⁶
Iranizone	"Iranian Canadian Info Zone"	14,300
Sahar_golshani	Digital Creator and Designer	114,000
Kikifitness_	Fitness Trainer and Brand Ambassador	8,000
Kajeh	Visual Artist and Photographer	17,100
Total		153,400

Images of the influencers' posts can be found in Appendix C at the end of this report.

While deep analysis on streaming was beyond the scope of this study, it is important to note that Tirgan's YouTube channel has ~6000 subscribers¹⁷, and streams content from the festival. Videos from the 2019 festival have generally seen between 500-1000 views, and one video has just over 50,000 views ("Shahin Najafi at Tirgan Festival"¹⁸).

3.3.4 Local, National and International Media Coverage

An additional medium Tirgan reached people outside of the physical festival was through press and media coverage.

Tirgan Festival accrued 38 mentions in the global press (online newspapers, and television news). The majority of this coverage was in USA and Canada, which tracks with attendance, as the main goal of this press was to raise awareness prior to the festival. Coverage of the festival was also sent out through the Associated Press, which contributed to significant post-festival coverage, particularly across publications in USA. Publications included the Toronto Star, The San Diego Union-Tribune, Asia News Day, My San Antonio News, and the Chicago Tribune. Select images of some of the coverage can be found in Appendix D.

Significantly, major broadcaster Iran International TV (IITV) broadcast Tirgan during the festival through GLWiz (a global satellite station and streaming platform for live TV, radio, on-demand series and movies). IITV's channel is currently the second most watched channel on GLWiz. The Tirgan Festival's dedicated channel on GLWiz attracted 106,388 projected monthly unique viewers.¹⁹ IITV reports that it "heard and continues to hear a lot of positive anecdotal comments from [their] audiences on [their] coverage of Tirgan."

¹⁶ As of festival, reported by Tirgan.

¹⁷ As of reporting.

¹⁸ As of reporting (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PORnwyuo3_E).

¹⁹ This number is projected, as the channel was not up the whole month. This number was calculated based on the actual daily viewership for the period that channel was up.

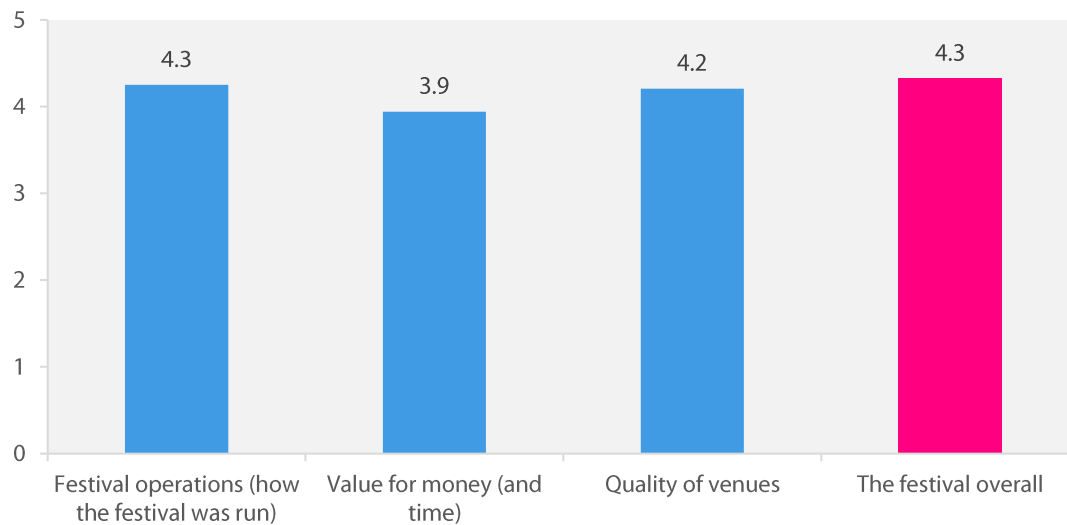
3.4 Feedback for Tirgan 2019

The festival in 2019 was well-received by attendees with survey respondents rating the festival 4.3 on average, on a scale of 1 to 5.

"My first time attending Tirgan. It was an amazing and well-organized festival. I heard great music and saw great performances at every corner!"

- Attendee

Figure 30: Visitors rated the festival on a scale of 1 to 5

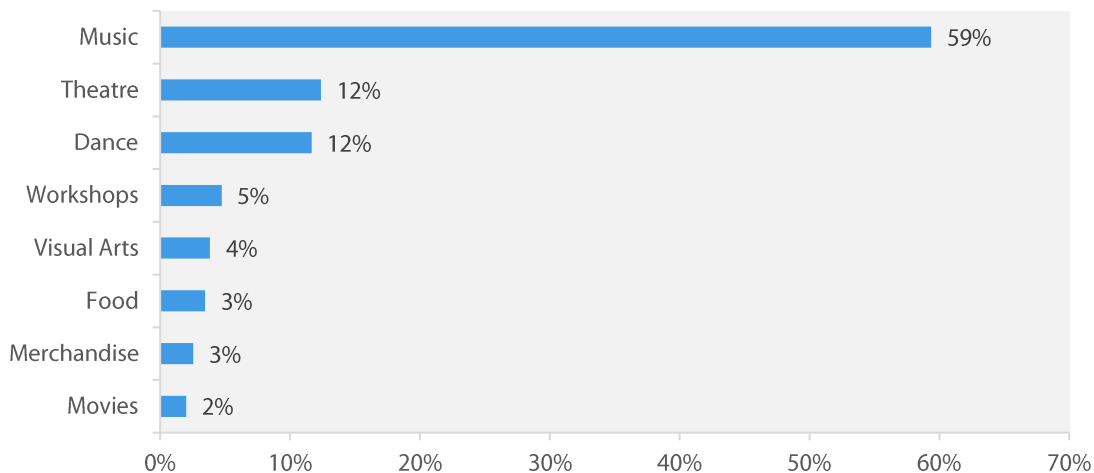


n = 516

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

A majority (59%) of visitors indicated that they enjoyed the festival's music events the most, which is more than visitors who indicated they enjoyed the theatre, dance and other events combined.

Figure 31: Types of programs visitors enjoyed the most

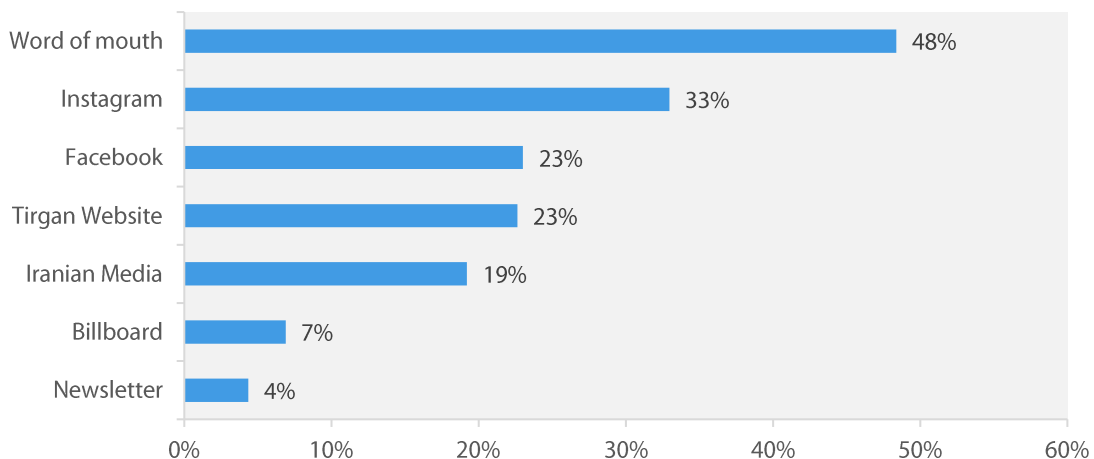


n = 549

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

Of all the methods of festival promotion, visitors reported hearing about Tirgan through word-of-mouth most, followed by Instagram. This suggests that previous attendees have had a positive experience and are helping to spread awareness, which speaks highly of the experience that Tirgan provided for its attendees.

Figure 32: Visitors heard about Tirgan from various channels



n = 552

Source: Tirgan Survey 2019

3.5 Conclusion

Tirgan Festival 2019 saw 162,000 visitors, more attendees than ever before. The festival brought attendees to four cultural venues in various parts of the city, and attracted 21,000 tourists to Toronto from outside Canada.

The strong support for the festival from the Iranian diaspora is evident. An overwhelming majority (95%) of the visitors were of Iranian descent, with a large majority (88%) of those with Iranian origins indicating that they were first-generation immigrants. And Tirgan's audience is growing beyond a dedicated group-- 31% of those surveyed indicated this was their first Tirgan Festival.

Through an increased number of partners-- sponsors, donors, other conferences, affiliate organizations--the network of the festival is expanding well beyond its physical locations. Tirgan Festival is growing and nurturing a community of people with a love for the rich cultural and artistic offerings of the Iranian people in new ways. The festival has been extending its impact through partnerships with the iBRIDGE and the Tirgan conference alongside its digital and broadcast reach, expanding its support in connecting and educating Canadians in new ways. And these efforts appear to be working. The conference at the Michener Institute saw more visitors with non-Iranian origins (9%) than the other three venues.

Beyond the attendees, the festival impacted artists, by providing a platform for reaching wider audiences for their work, and its volunteers by creating opportunities for connection with the Iranian community. From an economic perspective, the festival contributed \$1 million in GDP impacts as a result of its operations and vendor sales. The impact of visitor spend was an estimated \$10.3 million. The festival's ability to draw tourists to the city is clearly strong, and cements Tirgan as a laudable cultural asset for the city of Toronto and the province of Ontario.

With these strong impacts, Tirgan moves closer to its goal of "becoming the cultural Mecca for Iranians and the world to experience the Iranian culture".

Appendix A. Economic Impact Methodology

There are two components of the economic impact of the Tirgan Festival:

1. Festival operations - impact of wages paid to employees and all expenditures incurred by Tirgan in putting on the festival; and
2. Tourism and visitor spending – impact of visitor spending in Toronto that can be attributed to the presence of the festival.

The impacts are estimated at three levels:

- Direct: The economic activity generated directly by Tirgan.
- Indirect: The increased economic activity generated by business sectors broadly associated with festivals and live events in Ontario - i.e., sectors that are supplying goods and services to Tirgan.
- Induced: The increased economic activity attributable to re-spending of labour income within an economy by workers at the direct and indirect levels. In other words, people employed at the direct and indirect level take home salaries and re-inject that income into the economy through their day-to-day spending.

A.1 Festival Operations

Tirgan provided Nordicity with the following information:

- Categorized annual expenditure
- Number of employees
- Average salary paid to full-time employees
- Percentage of total expenditure attributed to Tirgan Festival 2019
- Operating budget (or revenue)

Nordicity adjusted the categorized expenditure and operating budget by the percentage that was attributed to the festival, to estimate the expenditure related to the festival. These adjusted amounts and average salary were used as inputs to Nordicity's MyEIA™ tool. The tool generates estimates of the economic impact in terms of GDP, labour income, employment (full-time equivalent) and taxes.

About the MyEIA Model™

Nordicity's MyEIA Model™ is a customized economic impact analysis tool that utilizes the 2013 input-output tables published by Statistics Canada, along with other economic data (e.g. median wages by industry) to estimate how increased expenditures in any industry translate into additional employment, labour income, and GDP. The MyEIA Model™ also provides estimates of the additional federal, provincial and local tax revenue generated by any additional economic activity.

The customized nature of the MyEIA Model™ means that it can provide reliable estimates for any industry, even if that industry is not among the industries that comprise Statistics Canada's 2013 input-output tables. With detailed data on expenditures within an industry or any type of economic shock, the MyEIA Model™ can generate estimates of direct, indirect and induced impacts.

The MyEIA Model™ uses an inverse Leontief matrix based on Statistics Canada's 2013 input-output tables to derive estimates of the indirect impact generated by purchases of goods and services. The model uses Type II impact ratios published by Statistics Canada to derive induced impacts.

The MyEIA Model™ generates estimates of provincial/territorial and Canada-wide impacts. It also incorporates sub-provincial location quotients to estimate local regional economic impacts.

A.2 Visitor Spending

Tourists contribute to the local and provincial economy by spending on food, accommodations and travel. From survey responses, Nordicity determined the provenance of the visitors and classified all visitors from outside Toronto as tourists.

Tirgan provided attendance estimates from previous years using which Nordicity forecasted attendance for 2019. By applying the provenance breakdown to the estimated attendance, Nordicity was able to calculate the number of tourists.

The number of visitors from each region – Ontario, Canada, USA and Overseas – and the number of nights of stay (2 nights) were entered into MTCS' Tourism and Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM), which provided economic impact estimates as output.

Attendees from GTA were counted as same-day visitors from Ontario.

A.3 Vendor Sales

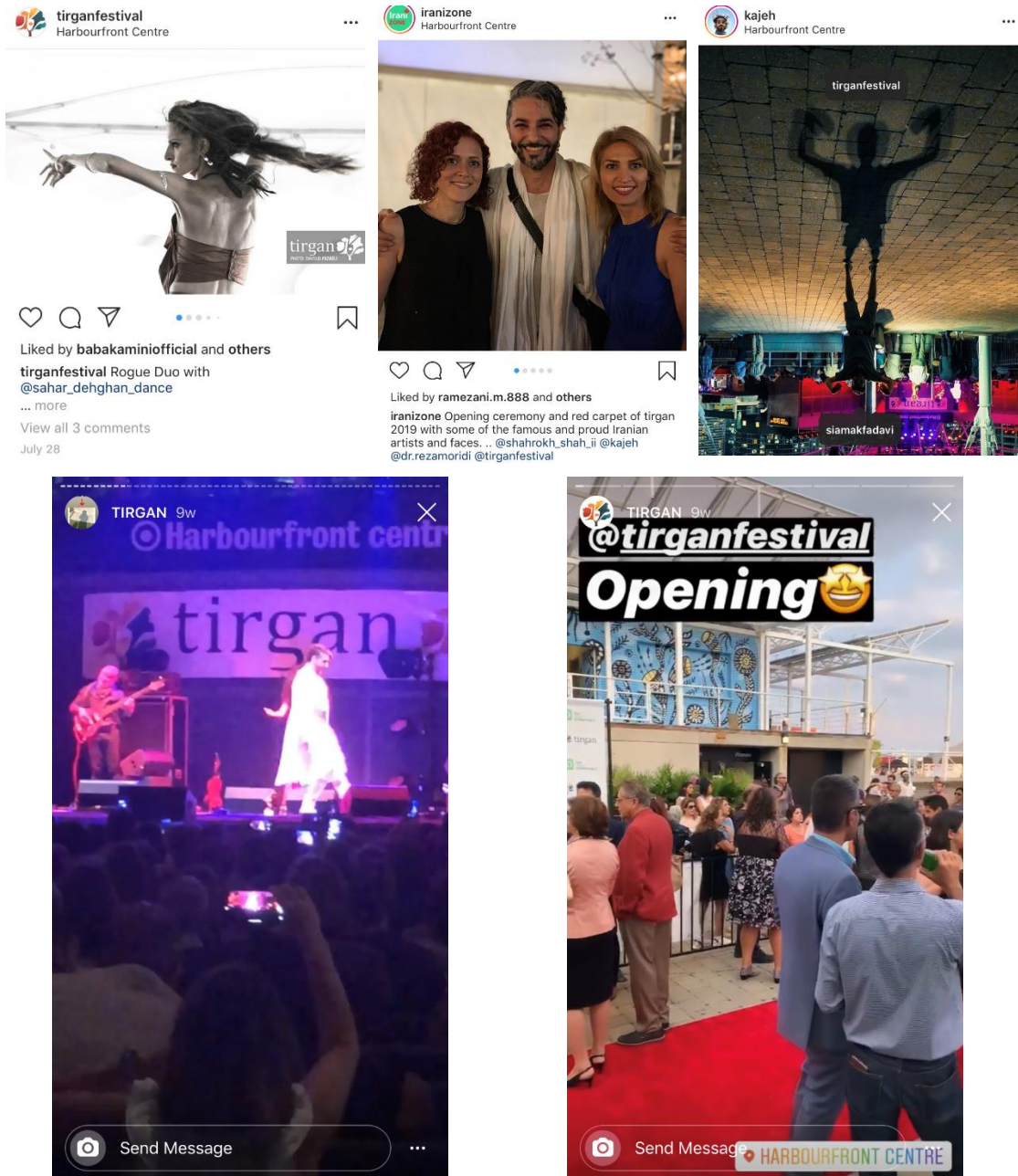
For some types of Festival vendors – particularly merchandise vendors – the Festival may act more as a "marketing" initiative intended to generate B2C or B2B sales at a later date. To capture this type of business and economic benefit, Nordicity asked vendors to provide sales data during the Festival. Given challenges around collecting financial information during an intercept survey, Nordicity used previously developed expenditure profiles for arts and crafts vendors to estimate the expenditure. Nordicity's MyEIA™ was used to estimate the economic impact of the vendor revenue.

A.4 Attendance Estimate

Tirgan provided Nordicity visitor estimates from years 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. Nordicity forecasted for 2019 using this time-series data and arrived at a range of reasonable estimates –

162,000 to 190,000. Based on Tirgan's own estimation, Nordicity decided to go with the most conservative forecast – 162,000 - that showed a growth of 7% over 2017 attendance.

Appendix B. Instagram and Influencers Posts



Appendix C. Press Clippings

Associated Press

AP PHOTOS: Toronto festival highlights Iranian culture, food

By KAMRAN JEBREILI August 9, 2019



Blog TO

July 25-28

Tirgan Festival

Harbourfront
Centre

A big celebration Iranian artist and culture on with a four-day festival that includes music, dance, theatre, movies, food and a marketplace.

Snapt Toronto






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Tirgan Festival

The 6th biennial Tirgan Festival is the largest celebration of Iranian arts and culture in the world and kicked off with a beautiful opening reception and concert by Manushan Band set alongside the shores of Lake Ontario at the Harbourfront Centre. The festival continued for 3 jam packed days of 100+ performances and workshops, over 230 artists, free events, children's programming, 8 restaurants, and two traditional teahouses. Tirgan Festival takes great pride in its group of over 400 dedicated volunteers who put their heart and soul into this festival and their message of unity as a non-political and non-partisan organization is to maintain that we are united as people of one planet. Featuring some of the best and most unique cultural experiences at Harbourfront Centre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Performing Arts, the Distillery district and Michener Institute this was one of the most vibrant weekends of the summer! For more information please visit www.tirgan.ca

