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COCREATION AND ENGAGEMENT: WHAT FESTIVALGOERS WANT IN THE UK ROCK FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

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This article seeks to better understand the festivalgoers' experience by determining what festivalgoers want at UK rock music festivals. Examining the experience journey, important attributes were identified in pre-, peri-, and postfestival phases. Qualitative data were collected from 124 festivalgoers through semistructured group interviews that were conducted on site at three different UK rock festivals. Thematic analysis revealed the importance of cocreation and engagement through each phase of the festivalgoer experience. The practical implications of this study provide festival organizers with the opportunity to direct their management efforts on the strategic optimization of experiences that may promote preferred consumer behavior through positive word of mouth and future reattendance. Moreover, this article offers a conceptual model of the festivalgoer experience.

Key words: Event experience; Festivalgoer; Music festival; Rock music; UK

Introduction

Music festivals represent one of the best performing sectors of the UK leisure industry (Mintel, 2019). The most preferred music genre to festivalgoers in Europe is rock music (Statista, 2019), with the largest rock festivals in the UK, attracting over 100,000 festivalgoers each year (Consultancy.uk, 2017). However, this popularity of music festivals has led to concerns of a saturated market where festivalgoers are both spoiled for choice and bored of seeing the same thing and are consequently searching for alternative memorable festival experiences. As such, the UK festival industry is facing fierce competition where popular music festivals in other countries promise better weather and cheaper ticket prices (Jones, 2015). Thus, it is imperative for festival organizers to find a way to survive and succeed.

Significant academic attention has been paid to understanding the nature of experiences as a means by which to better understand consumers and their behavior. Numerous studies have consistently found a positive relationship between consumer's

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experiences and their future attendance, spending, and recommendation to others (Lin & Kuo, 2016). Within the context of festivals and events more generally, research has revealed similar findings (Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2010). However, many of these studies typically focus on the perifestival experience, neglecting pre- and postexperiences. Additionally, despite the popularity of rock music festivals in the UK, they receive very limited attention in academic literature. Existing studies of rock music festivals are often related to music culture and society (Tjora, 2016) with only recent exploration of digital experiences (Brown et al., 2020). Furthermore, existing studies often employ quantitative methodological approaches and neglect to explore more critically festivalgoers' perceptions, feelings, and experiences that are expressed through attitudes and emotions (Getz, 2012). To better understand the festivalgoers' experience, a more interpretive approach is required.

This article sets out to determine what festivalgoers want in their experience at UK rock music festivals. More specifically, it seeks to better understand the festivalgoers' experience by identifying important attributes at key phases of the festival journey, looking beyond the live experience that occurs on site, but also considers pre- and postexperiences. This research not only contributes to the current understanding of festivalgoers' experiences but also has practical implications. By identifying what is important to the festivalgoer in their experience, it identifies areas that festival organizers may wish to focus their efforts on to better ensure strategic management and delivery of experiences that encourage future attendance and preferred consumer behavior.

Theoretical Background

Event Experience

Event experiences have become a popular area of inquiry. Research in the early 2000s conceptualized event experiences from a management perspective within the "experience economy" (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). Developed from the works of Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Sundbo and Darmer (2008) among others, it encouraged practitioners to explore the concept of experiences in furtherance to competitive advantage and organizational success. Their research suggests that organizations can add value to their offer by providing memorable and transformational experiences. Although Pine and Gilmore's (1999) study was not based on empirical research and applied only a limited theoretical framework, their approach achieved popularity and has provided the foundation for much subsequent empirical research.

However, as research surrounding the management of event experiences has developed, it has become increasingly clear that not all elements can be controlled by providers (Gummerus, 2013). In fact, due to the "scarce and fragmented" (de Geus et al., 2016, p. 276) research in festivals and events, experience studies introduced a wider variety of perspectives and conceptualizations, and in turn, emphasized the interpersonal and emotional nature of experiences. Ethnography has often been used to study the festival experience (Cummings, 2007) as it enables researchers to immerse in the festival culture and explore the meanings that participants give to their experience (Holloway et al., 2010). Festival experiences can be examined from the following perspectives (de Geus et al., 2016): process or the event journey (experience consumption); content and context-specific attributes; personal responses including cognitive, affective, conative, sensory, and emotional responses; influencers (e.g., motivations, expectations); outcomes (e.g., consumer satisfaction, behavior); and meaning and value of experience interpretation.

Process of Event Experiences

The process of event experiences refers to the duration of the event journey. Andersson and Armbrecht (2014) referred to Jafari's (1987) "springboard" metaphor in defining the event experience, highlighting four phases in which experience is consumed: emancipation, animation, repatriation, and incorporation. Although this approach recognizes the journey of the attendee at the event, it refers only to the peri-experience. That is, it neglects to acknowledge pre- and postexperiences (Getz, 2008).

With regards to the preexperience stage, a consumer's event experience can commence at the first point of contact with an event. This may include

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specific occurrences such as exposure to marketing and promotional materials, information searching, the booking process, active or passive online engagement through online platforms, communication exchange with the event organization, reading reviews or other secondary sources of information, and traveling to the event destination (Brown et al., 2020). Cutler and Carmichael (2010) and de Geus et al. (2016) alternatively referred to "anticipation" as the preliminary phase of the consumer's experience journey. This term incorporates and, perhaps, better reflects the consumer's subjective feelings towards the upcoming event although, arguably, "anticipation" may not lead to a consideration of the more objective occurrences in the preevent phase that are influential to the consumer experience.

Following the end of an event, attendee experiences may continue after leaving the site. In the postexperience phase, eventgoers may continue to receive marketing materials or engage in further communications with the event provider, perhaps providing feedback upon their experience, and sharing photos and videos of the event with others. Cutler and Carmichael (2010) referred to this stage of the tourist experience as "recollection"; however, this term is usually perceived to signify the retrieval of memories of an experience, rather than any continued experience. Alternatively, Brown et al. (2020) explored how music festival experiences, in particular, have been extended online, enabled by the interactivity of Web 2.0 and online user-generated content platforms. In fact, it is asserted that "festival forums enable an extension of outdoor festivals, as temporally and geographically bound events, to events that can be experienced—anticipated, celebrated, and relived—all year round" (Morey et al., 2016, p. 251).

Although the process approach to conceptualizing the event experience attempts to determine the consumer's journey; it focuses on duration. That is, this approach refers to how an experience is consumed, rather than what it consists of. Alternatively, event experience can be examined in relation to content.

The Content of the Festival Experience

From a practical, objective perspective, the event experience consists of a combination of elements that occur within the event environment, which include the physical organization, event design and programming of activities, place, entertainment, products and services, and comfort amenities (O'Dell, 2007). However, festivals offer the opportunity to consume many intangible and external elements, and so experiences may also be conceptualized in relation to nonphysical content, including online and technological aspects (Hudson & Hudson, 2013), interpersonal interaction, relationships, communitas and other social attributes (Rihova et al., 2013), culture and identity (Andrews & Leopold, 2013), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the liminoid and "out of the ordinary" and ritual and rites of passage (Griffin et al., 2016), intensity and immersion (Dowd et al., 2004), and learning and transformation (de Geus et al., 2016). Extensive research exists that focuses on a variety and combination of festival-specific experience concepts, several of which are identified and reviewed by de Geus et al. (2016). However, such is the diversity and complexity of the contexts, dimensions, and variety of content that to present them all would be a difficult, if not impossible task.

Event experiences are also conceptualized as a mental process or a state of mind, embodying symbolic value and challenging the senses (Sundbo & Darmer, 2008). As such, they are also examined from a more subjective, consumer-based perspective of personal response.

Personal Response to Event Experiences

Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) believed consumer experiences to be a "subjective state of consciousness" shaped by hedonic responses, symbolic meanings, and aesthetic criteria. More specifically in the context of events, Getz (2012) conceptualized the experience as embracing three interrelated dimensions: (1) the conative (behavior); (2) the cognitive (perceptions, understanding, and awareness); and (3), the affective (attitudes, moods, and emotions). However, Filep et al. (2015) argued that it is easier to undertake the affective study of emotions and emotional responses than to capture the cognitive dimensions of experience. More significantly, emotions are regarded as an important dimension of the event experience as they contribute to the individuals' subjective evaluations,

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satisfaction, and future consumer behavior (Filep et al., 2015). Furthermore, consumers' emotional responses to experiences also incorporate a social perspective. Specifically, the highly social nature of music festivals has encouraged the examination of emotional responses to social contexts (Grebenar, 2020) and considers the wider implications thereof. In particular, the impact on satisfaction and consumer behavior.

Influencers and Outcomes of Event Experiences

As previously mentioned, event experiences have been found to have a direct relationship with satisfaction and subsequent consumer behavior in terms of loyalty, repurchase intention, willingness to pay or invest more, as well as recommendation to others (Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2010). A number of different approaches to conceptualizing customer satisfaction and behavior have been developed from a range of different disciplines. Although the measurement of expectations and perceptions is one of the most popular methods (Zeithaml et al., 1988), it is not suited to the festival industry due to the largely infrequent, complex, and multidimensional nature of events. Instead, examining motivations, performance, or the importance of attributes provides more useful results (Brown & Sharpley, 2019). Festival research has also determined that participation and engagement have a significant impact on the value and meaning of the experience (Hudson et al., 2015). Contributing to preferred outcomes and influences on event attendance, value, and meaning provide a deeper understanding of the event experience concept.

Value and Meaning of the Event Experience

Ziakas and Boukas (2014) believed that the core phenomenon of events is the meaning attached to the experience. This is often explored using an ethnographic approach to "gain insight into the lived experiences of participants" and as such obtains more descriptive and rich detail into the meanings and perspectives of participants by immersing into their social world (Stadler et al., 2013, p. 91). However, the cognitive and conative dimensions of experience are difficult to capture as not everyone is able to accurately explain, articulate, or communicate and reflect upon their thoughts, feelings, and emotions, while at the same time individual interpretations may be challenging to decipher or translate (Löbler, 2011). Alternatively, Getz et al. (2017) referred to the importance of value in relation to the event experience. Holbrook (1999) defined consumption value as an "interactive relativistic preference experience" (p. 5). The evaluated experience that is assigned value and meaning is determined to be an integral part of the experience and is viewed as an "antecedent to future event tourism behavior" (Getz, 2008, p. 414).

Consequently, the study of experience value has become a popular area of research and has been conceptualized into a number of approaches. For example, Gummerus (2013) divided value research into two broad categories: value outcome determination (value determination) and value creation process (valuing). Within the outcome-oriented perspective, traditional consumer behavior research presents value as an exchange or "trade-off" between benefits and sacrifices (Zeithaml et al., 1988) in relation to the economic, functional, and psychological aspects of a product or service (Moufakkir & Pernecky, 2014). However, more recently, event experience research perceives value in relation to symbolic and emotional aspects. Getz et al. (2017) conceptualized value in relation to extrinsic and intrinsic benefits, profit or economic value, personal or semiotic value, and social value. Sheth et al. (1991) suggested five dimensions of value: functional, conditional, social, emotional, and epistemic, while Holbrook (1994) developed eight: (1) efficiency; (2) excellence; (3) status; (4) esteem; (5) player; (6) aesthetics; (7) ethics; and (8) spirituality.

Event experience research supports value as a multidimensional concept. For example, in Lee et al.'s (2011) research, an association was identified between emotional value and the festival program and natural environment, while convenient facilities were determined by functional value. Similarly, Gursoy et al. (2006) also found that hedonic and utilitarian values determined festival attendance. However, it has been argued that the value outcome perspective alone is not enough in understanding festivalgoers' experiences as it does not recognize the dynamic and complex nature of social experiences. In other words, this outcome-orientated

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value perspective views providers as the sole producer of value and customers as passive recipients (Moufakkier & Pernecky, 2014). In contrast, more recent research into the value creation process recognizes attendees as value cocreators (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017).

Cocreation of Event Experiences

Vargo and Lusch (2008) conceptualized value outcome and process within a service-dominant logic whereby customers are active resource integrators who collaborate with organizations to collectively cocreate value (Moufakkir & Pernecky, 2014). The service-dominant logic views providers as facilitators or supporters of customers' cocreated value processes and experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In this sense, value is situational, contextual, meaning laden, and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). However, Moufakkir and Pernicky (2014) also highlighted that value can be socially constructed through the multitude of networked actors within the experience. Value creation increasingly occurs within the consumers' sphere in which providers' efforts are merely platforms for customer-to-customer value creation (Gummerus, 2013). In the context of festivals, value and experience can be dependent on whom the festivalgoer attends with as well as how they are feeling (Moufakkir & Pernecky, 2014). For example, Pettersson and Getz's (2009) study found that social interaction "shaped" the event experience, while Nordvall et al. (2014) found that social interaction, whether known-group, external, or audience based, all had a significant impact on the festival experience.

Therefore, Heinonen et al. (2013) recommended a customer-dominant logic whereby the focus of value moves away from provider and consumer cocreation, instead adopting a more interpretive approach to understanding the role of events in consumers' lives (Rihova et al., 2013). On this basis, value is not determined on an intrasubjective (individual) level but an "intersubjective sphere that is subjectively determined on a shared level" (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2017, p. 48) taking into account the wider sociocultural context of consumers lives (Heinonen et al., 2013). Moufakkir and Pernecky (2014) consequently divided value creation perspectives into "cocreated value" and "socially constructed value" to recognize the role other people play in an individuals' sense of belonging, identity, and communitas at an event. Indeed, research into subcultures and shared values at events have demonstrated that people who share an interest or are "like-minded," also share beliefs and can influence what is valued by fellow consumers. Hence, if festival organizers understand what festivalgoers value in the festival experience and the values are shared collectively, this could be used to tailor and manage experiences.

Therefore, the festival experience can be conceptualized as comprising the process of the event, or the subjective journey, acknowledging the role of objective products, processes, services, culture, and other nonphysical attributes, which hold value and meaning. Of course, the meaning of an experience is individual to the consumer and, hence, it is challenging for festival organizers to evaluate collectively what they should focus their management efforts on. However, as Ziakas and Boukas (2014) asserted, experiences impact future consumer behavior through the creation of value (Andersson & Armbrecht, 2014). Therefore, it is clear that for festival organizers to succeed in generating future attendance, investment, and spending, they must be able to deliver experiences that are valued and are meaningful to the festivalgoer. However, to do so, they must understand what is important to festivalgoers in their experience (Newbold et al., 2015). Thus, this study examines what festivalgoers want in their experience at UK rock music festivals by identifying important attributes during key phases of the pre-, peri-, and postfestival experience. It does so by establishing what aspects of the "content" of the event generates personal responses that indicate value or meaning to the festivalgoer.

Methodology

For better understanding of experiences, experiential methods have been adopted as recommended by Getz (2012). For this research, a qualitative, thematic approach was utilized to provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There were three music festivals included in the study that were all multiday events with additional accommodation options available:

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HRH (Hard Rock Hell) United, Wales; Download Festival, UK; Leeds Festival, UK.

In total, 43 semistructured group interviews were completed with 124 festivalgoers. The interviews were conducted on site and were utilized as a part of a larger and more comprehensive study that adopted a pragmatic approach. This enabled the researcher to collect interview data from festivalgoers in the field setting for accessibility and convenience, although participant observation was not used (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Other methodological tools were considered, such as combinations of interviews and personal meaning maps as Van Winkle and Bueddefeld (2016) utilized in their study of cocreated festival experiences. However, to better accommodate the nature of music festivals and their audience and avoid the risks associated with bad weather, the more straightforward interview approach was preferred.

The festivals were selected through convenience sampling depending on the provided permission from festival organizers. Although only three festivals were used in this research, many of the participants had attended a variety of other music festivals previously. Interviewees were also selected using a convenience basis, as they were approached when relaxing away from any of the main stages to avoid disrupting their enjoyment of the music and enabling the dialogue to be heard and recorded. During the interviews, festivalgoers were asked to discuss various aspects of the pre-, peri-, and postphases of their music festival experience. This included a variety of both physical and intangible festival experience content including communication, engagement, booking process, image and branding, music, layout, facilities and comfort amenities, cleanliness, upgrades, merchandise, atmosphere, social aspects, and online media, to name a few.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematically coded and analyzed using the data analysis software NVIVO. Open and predetermined codes were used, specifically emerging and axial coding. The trustworthiness of the data were established as credibility and transferability of the research was revealed through the consistency of findings at each festival, and also in acknowledging similarities in other rock music festivals that participants had attended.

The research sample included festivalgoers between 18 and 59 years old, with 58.1% (72) of those in the 18–29 age range, and marginally more male (69, 55.6%) than female (55, 44.4%) participants.

Findings and Discussion

The findings were analyzed by the three phases of the event experience: prefestival, perifestival, and postfestival (Table 1). Within each phase of the experience, the physical and intangible features of the festival experience that invoked strong emotional responses and indicated value or importance to festivalgoers are discussed.

Prefestival Phase

At the prefestival phase, festivalgoers discussed the importance of planning their visit, demonstrating the importance of cocreation and engagement. Participants emphasized how they researched online to retrieve information about what they could expect at the festival such as the line-up, layout of the festival site, listening to the artists music, entertainment program, and exploring FAQs about what to bring. In particular, information was valued for its role in generating anticipation and the build-up of excitement (de Geus et al., 2016). Emotional responses were found to play an important role (Filep et al., 2015). In fact, the lack of or insufficient information induced negative emotional responses of stress, frustration, and anxiety as it prevented festivalgoers from preparing and organizing their visit. As such, the timeliness of festival information was important; however, festivalgoers differed in their opinion about the frequency of updates. Some preferred to be "drip fed" to maintain and build excitement while others complained that receiving frequent updates was the "most annoying part" of the festival experience:

> I think you want to know what to expect, who is on your timetable quite early on, and have a map so you can plan your weekend. A lot of the

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Table 1
Festival Experience Themes

Phase of the Festival Journey	Codes	Themes
Prefestival	Information; Planning; Updates; Communication; Booking process; Website; Image.	Planning the festival visit and receiving/retrieving key information about the festival; Timeliness and frequency of updates and information; Communication and engagement with the festival and other festivalgoer's (cocreation); Booking process, design, and functionality of festival website; Festival branding, image, and identity; Emotional response.
Perifestival	Atmosphere; Music; Social; Enjoyment; Fun; Happy; Relaxed; Community; Friends; Like-minded.	Atmosphere: Musixscape: quality of music, quality of the performance, music as a way to escape, variety of music, discovery and exploration of music, sharing music experiences, involvement and engagement with music, and physical and sensory responses to music. Socialscape: spending time with friends and family; meeting new people; feeling a sense of community, camaraderie and belonging; trust and safety; learning from others; shared interests, mindsets and being "like-minded"; and sharing experiences. Enjoyment: good times, fun, being happy, relaxed, sense of freedom, self-expression, new experiences.
	Comfort amenities; Facilities; Entertainment; Ethics; Environment; Sustainable; Image; VIP; Merchandise; Accommodation; Camping.	Supporting attributes: comfort amenities, other forms of entertainment, ethical considerations such as environmental sustainability, the perceived image of the festival, other aspects of added value in the form of additional accommodation options, VIP packages, merchandise, and the weather.
Postfestival	Information; Updates; Feedback; E-mail; Social media; Communication; Loyalty; Memories.	Receiving information regarding upcoming events; Communication and engagement with festival and other festivalgoers (cocreation); Frequency of communication; Opportunity to feedback about experience; Loyalty recognition; Relive, reminisce, and extend experience.

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> excitement comes from the fact that most festivals don't announce the line-up in one go. I like, and I expect them to leak bands, like drip feed them through . . . when they release bands every couple of months it builds your excitement . . . that's one of the most important parts in the build-up for me.

Thus, it is suggested that the prefestival experience might perhaps be improved if festival organizers developed an "opt-in" during the booking process so that festivalgoers may choose their preferred frequency and method of updates. Doing this may prevent negative responses for those who do not value the "drip-feed" method while still allowing others to enjoy the build-up of excitement, cocreation, and engagement during this anticipatory phase of the experience.

The booking process was noted for its important role in the prefestival phase. When ordering tickets, festivalgoers valued the design and functionality of the festival's website as efficiency, clarity, and ease of use is vital. Participants indicated that the booking process was often associated with anxiety and referred to the importance of: online security, ticket confirmations, the ability to book multiple and personalized packages easily, and clear communication around ticket delivery and wristband collection. Festivalgoers suggested potential ways of increasing reassurance and reducing stress through this process, such as the sending of e-mail or text updates indicating ticket status and delivery, the ability to select different packages in one transaction, real-time updates on the availability of particular options and upgrades, and the ability to change delivery options after the transaction is complete:

> Just ease from when you book . . . you want it to be hassle-free but also get order status updates about your ticket. A lot of people stress when they buy the ticket . . . you want to be able to track your ticket online . . . some festivals tickets get dispatched quite late, that's not what you want, you want to be at ease when you know you have bought it it's going to come in time.

This confirms the importance of communication during the prefestival phase of the experience (Brown et al., 2020; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). From the research, it is evident that the prefestival phase is inherently intangible and, as such, has the potential to cause anxiety and generate uncertainty. The provision of information, updates, and efficient delivery establishes trust and faith in the festival, reassuring festivalgoers. Therefore, organizers should ensure that they provide sufficient assurances during this phase to ensure that festivalgoers feel confident and excited.

How festivalgoers retrieved information about the festival was also of significant importance. The methods used varied from waiting to receive direct e-mails to proactively seeking information from external sources such as online message boards, forums, social media platforms, and other festivalgoers. In fact, the most valued method of festival experience planning was through others. Participants frequently discussed the importance of obtaining recommendations and advice from others (cocreation) on social media platforms, and how this influenced their sense of communitas and generated further excitement and anticipation (Brown et al., 2020):

> It could be quite good if they could do advice for new people from people that have been the year before like the best ways to get there, best places to stay etc., you could just ask people that had already done it before.

Festivalgoers also identified the importance of social media platforms being kept "up to date" all year round, and the reassurance that was provided by having the ability to communicate directly with festival organizers, confirming research by Morey et al. (2016). The exchange of information between the festival and festivalgoer, or between festivalgoers themselves, is thus of paramount importance as it contributes to building excitement and anticipation before traveling to the festival through cocreation and engagement (Moufakkir & Pernicky, 2014).

The general feel and nature of a festival's online presence also added value and increased engagement. For example, many participants commented on the Download Twitter account and how the Download dog "mascot" is used to engage with festivalgoers on a more informal platform:

> Yes, I love Download Twitter. I love the fact that they are on there and available all year just tweeting about various stuff and it's quite light-hearted.

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It emerged that the language and image of the festival that is presented online is important to festivalgoers as it relates to their social identity. That is, they felt that their interests and values were reflected in the festivals online content, and as such, this enhanced the connection between themselves and the festival (Quinn, 2006). As such, online engagement reinforces the individual and social identity of festivalgoers before they attend the festival. This affirms the literature on the importance of identity and its role in music festivals (Newbold et al., 2015). Furthermore, this connectivity and familiarity promote a higher level of engagement between brand and consumer (Leenders, 2010).

It can be deduced that festivalgoers seek to enter into a cocreated festival space prior to arriving at the physical festival place through online engagement. Online sources of information and platforms for engagement, such as social media, apps, and websites, are key to enhancing the festivalgoers' experience through identity affirmation and the ability to plan and prepare for the festival (Brown et al., 2020). Therefore, cocreation and engagement at the prefestival phase are important in contributing to building expectations and excitement, and preparing festivalgoers for the next phase of their experience, when they arrive on site at the festival.

Perifestival Phase

The most important attribute to festivalgoers during the perifestival phase was the festival atmosphere. However, when asked to define what the festival atmosphere was, festivalgoers offered a combination of experiential elements. As such, the festival atmosphere was perceived as an overarching term used to explain multiple and interrelated festival experience attributes. Specifically, three attributes were identified as the main contributors to creating the festival atmosphere and were also identified as individually important attributes: music-related features, social experiences, and enjoyment.

Music-Related Features. Unsurprisingly, music was valued as an important aspect of the overall festival experience. In further discussion of the value and significance of music, the following subthemes emerged: quality of music, quality of the performance, music as a way to escape, variety of music, discovery and exploration of music, sharing music experiences, involvement and engagement with music, and physical and sensory responses to music. To capture all of these music-related aspects of the festival atmosphere, this research refers to them collectively as the musixscape. Thus, the musixscape is the overarching term used to collectively refer to music-related features of the experience.

As the core activity at a music festival, its importance in the festivalgoers' experience is supported in the literature (Lee et al., 2011). However, what was revealed throughout the subthemes of the musixscape was the role of cocreation and engagement. In reference to the quality of music and performance, festivalgoers identified that the sound and stage presence of artists enhanced the feeling of engagement and involvement at the festival:

> I was never a big fan of Slipknot, but after seeing them and their stage presence . . . when they are live you've got the atmosphere, everything and everyone there doing the show and it just makes it so much better.

It was also noted that it was important for festivalgoers to explore and discover new music and share the music experience with others:

> It's great . . . seeing other people enjoying it. That's as much entertainment, seeing other people enjoy the bands.

Experiencing music with others is a significant aspect of the cocreation of festival experiences and promotes further engagement and involvement, which supports the findings in the current literature (Morgan, 2008). Indeed, of equal importance to the festival experience as musixscape, and also identified as part of the festival atmosphere, is the social dimension of the festival experience.

Social Experiences. In defining the festival atmosphere, many social elements were discussed, which included: spending time with friends and family; meeting new people; feeling a sense of community,

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camaraderie and belonging; trust and safety; learning from others; shared interests, mindsets and being "like-minded"; and sharing experiences. These social aspects of the festival experience are defined in this research as the "socialscape" of the festival. The socialscape is the overarching term used to collectively refer to social-related features of the experience.

The socialscape demonstrates that cocreation of the experience with other festivalgoers is of significant importance. Spending time and sharing experiences with other people was consistently identified as an important aspect of the festival experience, whether that was with friends or family, or in meeting new people and making friends. In fact, many revealed that they believed this to be more important than the music:

> A lot of it is to do with who you go with . . . the bands are second priority . . . who you are with is the first priority because everyone likes the same kind of music, that's why you're at this particular festival.

Meeting new people and making friends was identified as being a result of shared mindsets, interests, values, and hobbies that were typical among festivalgoers who shared preference and interest in similar music genres. This reflects previous research by Gelder and Robinson (2009) on the importance of "similar mindsets" and the "likeminded" nature of the collective festivalgoer community. Sharing commonalities with others contributed to the sense of community and belonging at music festivals, confirming studies by Finkel (2010). Participants also referred to other festivalgoers as being more caring and friendly, often telling stories of how others had helped to erect tents, offering toilet roll, finding lost wallets, and rescuing those in distress. The shared values and interests, friendliness, and caring attitude of other festivalgoers is key to establishing trust and feeling safe at the festival (Esu & Array, 2009). This also enables festivalgoers to feel more involved and engaged with the festival.

Thus, consistent with previous studies by Rihova et al. (2013) and Van Winkle and Bueddefeld (2016), the socialscape demonstrates the importance of shared experiences and cocreation in the festival experience. However, much of this cannot be managed or controlled by festival organizers; it is cocreated between festivalgoers. Thus, festival organizers are able to only support and assist in facilitating these opportunities within the festival environment. The third element also identified as important to the overall festival experience, and the atmosphere was enjoyment.

Enjoyment. Besides the musixscape and socialscape, participants discussed the importance of enjoyment in the festival atmosphere. They referred to "good times," the "buzz," "being happy," "relaxed," and "chilled." Enjoyment at the festival was often associated with a sense of freedom, which enabled festivalgoers to feel as though they could invert their behavior compared to the everyday:

> It's an element of freedom, where you are just enclosed, but also surrounded by like-minded people. I think it's the whole thing that the rules are a bit more relaxed at the festival.

This confirms previous research regarding the liminality of festival spaces (Griffin et al., 2016). Festivalgoers went on to explain how they behaved differently at festivals:

> It's a real let go of all the baggage; there is a real freedom about it that you can only get in that type of environment that is key to having a good time.

This difference in behavior was described as being "more themselves," indicating that everyday life limited their authentic self, while the festival encouraged self-expression and enjoyment. Therefore, it is suggested, in line with Griffin et al.'s (2016) research, that music festivals provide a liminal space wherein festivalgoers feel free to express their identity in a safe place that reflects their interests:

> Everyone here is relaxed and promotes a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere; you're comfortable to be yourselves and speak your mind.

The fun and enjoyment felt at the festival was also discussed with reference to stories of witnessing peculiar behavior:

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> Mankini knees was my favorite last year! There was this guy in massive biker boots with massive great big hair wearing a Mankini.

> We saw someone walking around yesterday with no shoes on, he was [intoxicated] in the mud and the rain with all of his stuff off, and it was like ten in the morning.

Therefore, experiencing unusual behavior at the festival is another form of entertainment and cocreation that provides feelings of fun and enjoyment and encourages further engagement with the festival. When respondents discussed the importance of enjoyment and freedom at the festival, it was always associated with music or social elements. In other words, it is the combination of the musixscape and socialscape that creates enjoyment and fun at the festival. Therefore, from this research, it is evident that most important to the festivalgoer in the perifestival experience is cocreation and engagement, which involves immersing in the festival atmosphere through the musixscape, socialscape, and enjoyment. However, festivalgoers also discussed other periexperiential attributes outside of the festival atmosphere.

Supporting Attributes. Although other supporting attributes of the festival experience were not valued as the most desirable aspects of the experience; they were important all the same. These included: support services such as comfort amenities, other forms of entertainment (e.g., fairground rides, wrestling), ethical considerations such as environmental sustainability, the perceived image of the festival and other aspects of added value in the form of additional accommodation options, VIP packages, merchandise, and the weather. Although these supporting elements are considered to be of less-perceived value within the festival experience, they are not to be disregarded as they still play a significant role in the cocreation and engagement of festivalgoers' experiences (Brown & Sharpley, 2019). As suggested by Crompton (2003), if poor, these can have a negative influence on the festival experience. However, what festivalgoers value in their experience is not limited to the constraints of the actual festival time and space. Thus, attention was also paid to the experiential attributes within the postfestival experience.

Postfestival Phase

Cocreation and engagement are also found to be an important factor in the postfestival experience. The importance of receiving pertinent information regarding details about upcoming related events and the following years festival elicited a similar discussion as in the prefestival phase. Although there was a difference of opinion on the desired frequency of communication from the festival, information was used to maintain engagement with the festivalgoer, influencing their overall experience, relationship with, and perception of the festival:

> I want continual updates to say, look, this is what is happening. The integrity of the festival actually depends on the fact they do keep in contact for me . . . it's about being there and actually communicating with your fans after (and before) the festival, it's not just them times of the year, it's throughout. You have to keep us knowing that you are there.

Postfestival communication with festivalgoers is important as it contributes to the cocreation of future festival experiences, especially through the ability to provide feedback. Although many acknowledged that it was unlikely that they would "actually bother to fill in a survey," it was agreed that requests for feedback from festival organizers led to a feeling that the festival cared about them (Yi & Jeon, 2003):

> The last one we went to sent me an e-mail afterwards saying, we realize we made mistakes with this, sorry about that, if there's anything else you can suggest, you have the chance to give feedback. I quite like that. Even if they don't listen to it, it's the valuing; it makes me feel like they care.

The importance of loyalty recognition was also demonstrated through suggestions of loyalty cards, discounts on tickets, or food or merchandise at the festival, limited edition merchandise, additional access, advanced access to information, and/or packages or cash back.

Festivalgoers also expressed the importance of reliving and reminiscing their experience using various platforms such as watching highlights on TV, their own recorded videos or engaging with content on social media, festival websites and forums, and sharing stories with others. In fact, there were some

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complaints about the lack of access to view official photos after the festival, expressing a desire to maintain links after the event (MacKay et al., 2017). Overall, it was clear that festivalgoers valued their memories and continued to extend, cocreate, and engage in the festival experience by reliving the festival through other means:

> We will see some bands today, and in a couple weeks we will bring out some songs and listen to what we heard today and say, "oh you remember this song!"

Many festivalgoers also discussed the importance of being able to engage with new festival-related content after their attendance. They enjoyed viewing additional content they had not experienced at the festival such as behind the scenes interviews, or particular bands and artists performances. The festival experience also continued through cocreation and engagement with other festivalgoers after the festival, whether in reality or online:

> It's good to go on Facebook and then see other people that you might not have met, but you like the photos and comments and then have things that you can talk about together.

In this sense, the postfestival experience promotes the opportunity for festivalgoers to continue to cocreate and engage with the festival by extending or enhancing their overall festival experience outside of the festival site (Brown et al., 2020).

Further Discussion

Festivalgoers discussed the important experiential aspects by highlighting the value or meaning (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014) of particular physical and intangible aspects (content) of the festival (de Geus et al., 2016) and their personal response (Filep et al., 2015). Cocreation and engagement (Moufakkir & Pernecky, 2014) are of consistent importance throughout the pre-, peri-, and postphases of the festival. These findings demonstrate that festivalgoers value the importance of various attributes that are presented in the experience value model (Fig. 1). The model visually demonstrates the relationship between various interacting aspects of the festival experience and incorporates the importance of pre- and postfestival experiences. The pre- and postfestival phase is continual and overlaps; that is, the postfestival phase morphs into the subsequent prefestival phase when planning commences for the next festival in a continual, circular process. This cyclical process is also discussed in tourism literature by Sharpley (2006), who described how the experience and memory from one holiday feeds into and influences the anticipation and experience of the next one. Festivalgoers merely dip in and out of the pre- and postfestival experience over time as they engage with the festival on their own terms. During the "off-site" (pre- and post-) phase, festivalgoers determine themselves how involved or engaged with the festival they wish to be, and through which processes, methods, or platforms they wish to do so.

Regardless of festivalgoers' level of engagement, it is clear that they design, cocreate, and manage their own experience. Individually festivalgoers value elements differently based on their own desires; collectively, however, they place highest importance and value on the cocreation of the experience with other festivalgoers through a shared interest in music, and immersion into the festival atmosphere. The quality of other experience attributes such as services support the experience but are not the most valued attributes. Therefore, the model developed in Figure 1 illustrates the importance of specific areas of the festival experience, the most important of which, atmosphere, is at the center. It shows the cyclical and continuous nature of festival experiences on and off-site and considers both influential and personal realms (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). That is, it addresses experiential aspects in both festival production and festivalgoers' consumption.

Conclusions

The contribution of this research fills a gap in the literature by providing a conceptual model of the most important experiential attributes of the UK rock music festival. This study reveals that cocreation and engagement are important to the festival experience. This includes during the organization and planning of the prefestival phase, through the cocreation of the festival atmosphere (musixscape,

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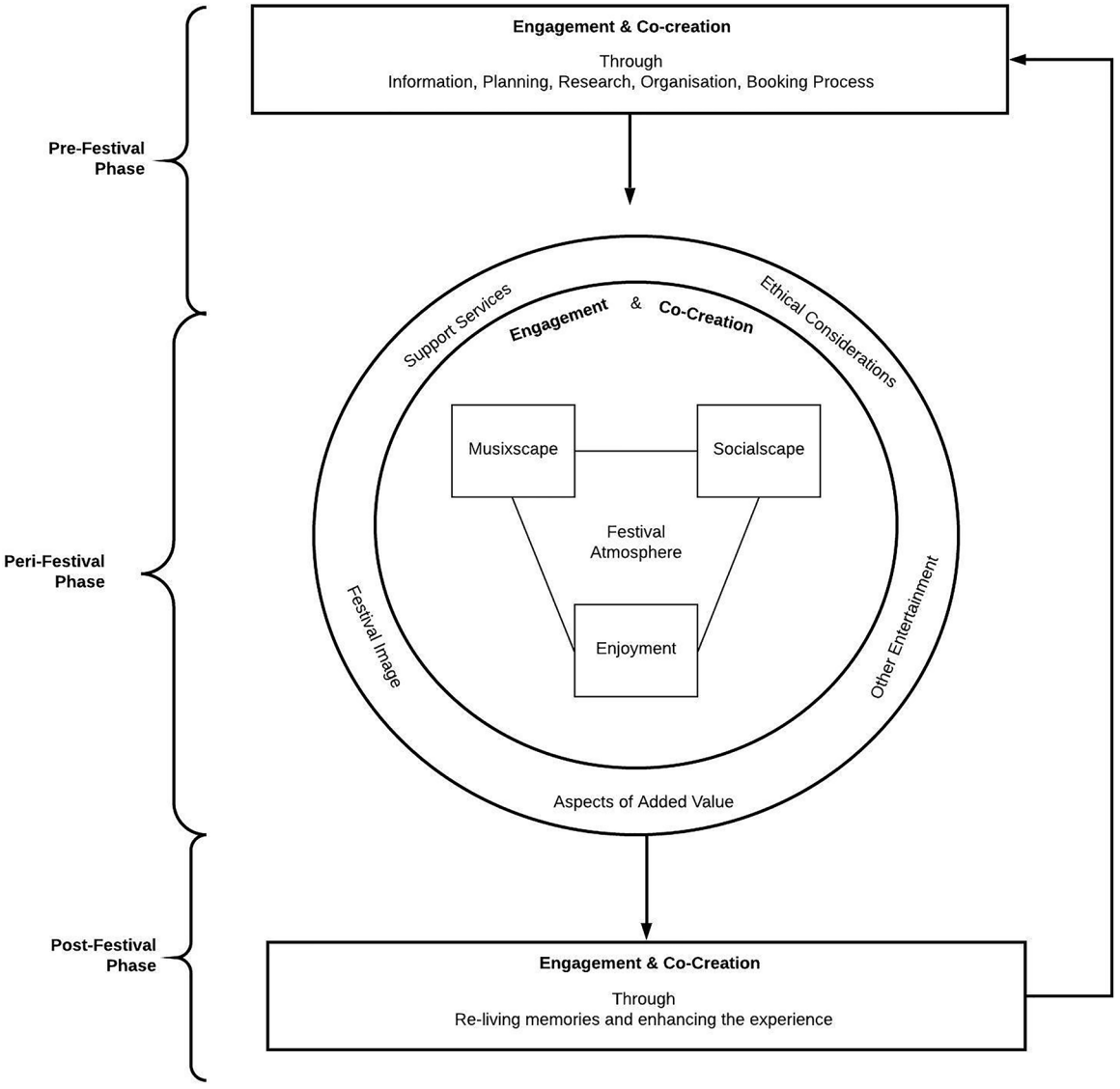


Figure 1. Experience value model.

socialscape, and enjoyment), and in the postfestival phase where festivalgoers relive their memories and continue their experience online, enabling them to engage at any point, time, level, or depth that they desire. As such, by identifying festivalgoers' most important areas of the festival experience provides practical implications for festival organizers so that they can more strategically manage and optimize experiences, promoting preferred consumer behavior through future reattendance and positive word of mouth.

General limitations of this study include the intrinsic bias of personal motivations, social norms, and clarity in articulating and interpreting individual meanings in qualitative research (Löbler, 2011). Similarly, external factors may have influenced festivalgoers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, although arguably any potential impact on the importance of festival experience attributes would still be valid. The data collected were also limited to three rock music festivals in the UK; however, it is important to note that the majority of festivalgoers

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that participated in the research drew upon various previous festival experiences to better explain what they desired in their experience.

To further confirm the reliability of this study, it is recommended that future researchers adopt different research approaches and methodological designs such as social media content analysis or ethnography. In considering the engagement and involvement of festivalgoers, it is recommended that further research is undertaken to explore the relationship between festivalgoers' motivations and frequency of attendance with their level of engagement with a festival. The study can also be applied in different countries for international sociocultural comparisons, or also in different festival contexts looking at different genres of music festivals, or other festival types such as film, art, and other cultural events.

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