

## Designing and managing music festival experiences to enhance attendees' psychological and social benefits

Julie Ballantyne

Roy Ballantyne

Jan Packer

Published in *Musicae Scientiae*, 2014, Vol. 18(1) 65–83

DOI: [10.1177/1029864913511845](https://doi.org/10.1177/1029864913511845)

Published version found online at <http://msx.sagepub.com>

### **ABSTRACT:**

*Attendance and participation at popular music festivals has become an important and increasingly common experience for people in many Western societies, yet little is known about the kinds of benefits visitors perceive they gain as a result of attending. This research explores attendees' perceptions of the psychological and social benefits associated with their attendance at the Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland (Australia). Based upon the research findings, music festival management strategies are suggested to improve the design of festival experiences to better cater to the artistic, musical, social and psychological needs of attendees thereby increasing the impact and depth of the experience.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

World famous music festivals such as the Glastonbury Festival in the UK continue to rise in popularity, attracting hundreds of thousands of attendees each year. Tickets to such events typically sell out within hours of release, often up to 11 months before the event (BBC News, 2013). In Australia there has been a rise from 40%-47% in the number of visitors who attended at least one popular live music event in the last 5 years (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007). The "Big Day Out" music festival, for instance, was attended by more than 300,000 (mainly young) people in 2010 (Big Day Out, 2011) and as of September 2012, 269,672 people had signed up to the official Big Day Out Facebook site. In contrast, by September 2012, only 173,210 people had signed up to the official Wallabies (national rugby side) Facebook site. This suggests that music festivals are a significant site of participation and engagement for Australians and challenges the common perception that citizens (especially the young) are more engaged with sport than the arts.

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

Much of the available literature examining people's motivations for engaging in music-related activities and events focuses on the development and reinforcement of individual and/or community identity. Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald (2002) suggest that people increasingly use music as a means to formulate and express their individual identities, present themselves to others in a particular way, make statements about their values and attitudes, and express their views of the world. Young people in particular use music as a "badge of identity" (North & Hargreaves, 1999) and attend some types of music events in order to construct or express a sense of identity (Goulding, Shankar & Elliott, 2001). Laiho (2004), in discussing the ways in which music contributes to adolescent development and well-being, refers to similar psychological functions which she labels agency (feelings of mastery,

achievement and self-determination), the emotional field (including mood management, affective awareness and dealing with stress), interpersonal relationships (including a sense of unity and belonging) and identity (conceptions of self, asserting personality). However, the majority of research in the field of musical identities is still predominantly in the area of the classical music tradition.

Today, people negotiate life pathways that are increasingly fragmented, de-traditionalized and individualized. In such a world, music festival engagement provides an avenue through which people can connect with the arts and so discover a sense of identity, meaning and social integration (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). Such festivals provide an environment for young people in particular to gain positive psychological and social benefits from immersion in a musical experience, especially those who are unlikely to actively participate in traditional forms of musical engagement such as playing an instrument, listening to a classical music concert, or singing in a choir.

“Strong experiences of music” (Gabrielsson, 2001) are not specific to genres; the context, listener and music all contribute to the experience. Music festivals as a site of music - listening and participation offer unique opportunities for engagement with music that are quite different to those offered by other settings, and potentially provide a context within which peak experiences might occur. As Gibson and Connell (2012) remark:

*What makes festivals distinct is that they are usually held annually and generally have social rather than economic or political aims: getting people together for fun, entertainment and a shared sense of camaraderie. Most festivals create . . . a time and space of celebration, a site of convergence separate from everyday routines, experiences and meanings – ephemeral communities in place and time. (p. 4)*

Research into different aspects of festival experiences has increased since the late 1980's (Getz, 2007). In recent years, there have been several studies focusing on the impact of festivals (Arcodia & Lee, 2008; Arcodia & Whitford, 2007; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Moscardo, 2008; Tohmo, 2005), however, research examining the benefits for visitors is still very much in its infancy. A literature search of major journals in the field yields only a few studies that have explored aspects related to visitor attendance and behavior at festivals (Grappi & Montanari, 2010; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Saleh & Ryan, 1993; Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2010). Research conducted by Bowen and Daniels (2005) and Gelder and Robinson (2009) suggests that while the music choices made by festival managers are important, equally important to festival attendees are the adjunct aspects of music festivals – such as the atmosphere and opportunities to socialize.

Almost no research appears to have been undertaken with regard to the social and cultural impacts of music festivals (Lee, Arcodia, & Lee, 2012). This is surprising, as attendance and participation in popular music festivals is today the most widely accessed social musical activity for many youth in Western societies (Bennett, Emmison, & Frow, 1999; Gibson, 2001). Getz, in his 2010 review of literature on festivals, highlighted this as an important and promising line of research, noting that “because festivals are being used more and more to implement a wide range of public-sector policies (i.e., being conceived instrumentally as social marketing tools), researching the effects of attendance on persons has to be given much more profile” (p. 12). Such knowledge is important in order to inform the design and management of experiences that address the needs of attendees and satisfy not only their artistic and musical preferences but their social and psychological needs as well.

Arguably, there is clearly a need for festival organizers to gain a better understanding of the psychological and social functions of music within a social music/arts context outside of the classical music tradition. Over the past two decades, evidence has emerged regarding the positive influence of the arts in general, and music in particular, on participants' health and wellbeing (Baker, Wigram, Stott, & McFerran, 2009; Davidson, 2005; Dillon, 2006; Hallam, 2010; Lipe, 2002). Recent research by Lamont (2012) points to the positive experiences of listening to music that young people report, particularly when recalling experiences at live listening venues, such as "gigs" or festivals (p.241). Her research particularly focused on the long-lasting impacts of particular music experiences in terms of the listener's ongoing happiness, using the theoretical frameworks of Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) and Seligman (2002), and concluded that "Music listening . . . offers the potential to connect to different sources of happiness, and as such to reach a balanced state of authentic happiness without any apparent negative side-effects" (p. 244).

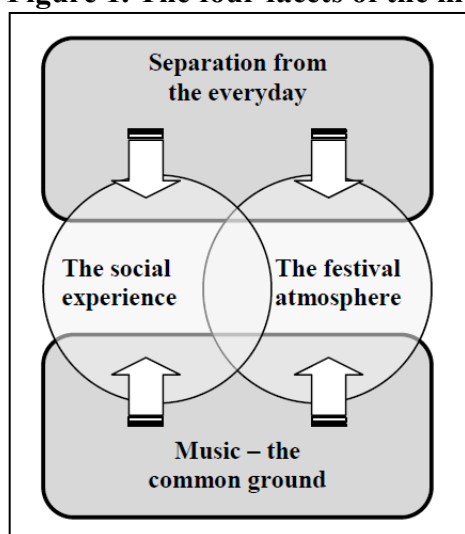
Packer and Ballantyne (2011) proposed a conceptual model for understanding the various facets of the music festival experience (see Figure 1). According to Packer and Ballantyne's (2011) model, which was developed through qualitative research with young people aged 18–30, social interactions, festival atmosphere, separation from the everyday, and the music itself are all important facets of the music festival experience. As illustrated in Figure 1, the music experience provides the common ground on which both the social experience and the festival experience are built, and facilitates a sense of connection among participants. The separation experience marks the festival event as different from everyday life and provides a sense of disconnection, which prompts reflection and self-understanding. Packer and Ballantyne suggest that together, these four facets have the potential to influence psychological, social and subjective well-being.

Ryan and Deci's (2000) review of the literature on research into well-being identifies two general perspectives: the hedonic approach, which defines well-being in terms of pleasure or happiness; and the eudaimonic approach, which defines well-being in terms of self-realization and personal growth. Others have used the terms "subjective well-being" and "psychological well-being," respectively, to characterize these approaches (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff 2002). **Psychological well-being** is conceptualized in terms of six elements: autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes 1995). **Social well-being** is considered to have five components: social coherence, social integration, social acceptance, social contribution and social actualization (Keyes, 1998). **Subjective well-being** refers to the more affective dimensions of positive functioning, such as happiness and life satisfaction (Keyes et al., 2002).

Packer and Ballantyne (2011) describe the interplay between the four facets of the music festival experience that constitute their model, and the psychological, social and subjective well-being outcomes reported by participants. They note that each of the four facets has implications for attendees' psychological and social outcomes. The music festival context potentially provides an environment that is conducive to positive **psychological outcomes** as attendees develop or reflect on their understanding of themselves, cultivate new expressions of self-identity, and learn about music (Karlsen, 2007; Karlsen & Brändström, 2008; Matheson, 2005). Thus, participants "reported feeling more positive about themselves, others, and life in general as a result of attending a music festival" and "for some participants the music festival experience was not only meaningful in itself, but gave meaning to the rest of

their lives” (Packer and Ballantyne, 2011, p. 178). These outcomes reflect the self-acceptance and purpose of life aspects of psychological well-being, as well as the social acceptance aspect of social well-being and the happiness and life satisfaction aspects of subjective well-being. Positive **social outcomes** may result as attendees connect with others who share similar or different beliefs, create a sense of community, participate in social activities, and engage in “intense and concentrated interaction” (Frith, 1996; C. Gibson & Connell, 2005; Santoro, Chalcraft, & Magaudda, 2008). Thus the social facet of the music festival experience provides a sense of positive relations (an aspect of psychological well-being) and social integration (an aspect of social well-being). The separation facet provides a context within which attendees become open to exploring new ways of understanding themselves (self-acceptance), new ways of perceiving others (social coherence), and new ways of dealing with the world (personal growth and mastery).

**Figure 1. The four facets of the music festival experience (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011)**



Packer and Ballantyne (2011) also suggested that the psychological functions of music in adolescence identified by Laiho (2004) could be integrated with the aspects of psychological, social and subjective well-being that were found to be important in the music festival context (Keyes, 1998; Keyes, et al., 2002; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The most commonly expressed psychological and social well-being outcomes identified in their study related to issues of identity, self-acceptance and positive relationships with others. These outcomes were common to both Laiho’s model and psychological and social well-being models.

This study extends that of Packer and Ballantyne (2011) by applying and testing their conceptual model in another festival context that attracts a different and more diverse group of attendees. It was intended to investigate differences (if any) between age groups, building on previous work by the authors, which suggested that this was a major issue in determining the quality and nature of the experience for music festival attendees. Crucially, this study investigates the music festival experience and its impact on psychological, social and subjective well-being; identifies ways in which a music festival experience supports social and psychological well-being; and derives guidelines for the design and management of music festival experiences to bring about improvements, however small, in attendees’ personal growth or well-being.

## METHOD

The aims of this study were to:

1. Apply the conceptual model developed by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) to a music festival experience attracting a greater diversity of attendees;
2. Examine the benefits perceived by attendees in this new festival context;
3. Investigate whether age, gender, frequency or length of attendance influence attendees' perceived experiences and/or benefits;
4. Explore the relationships between facets of the music festival experience as identified by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) and the subjective, social and psychological well-being outcomes perceived by attendees.

This research is guided by theoretical frameworks from the emerging field of positive psychology, which according to Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000), seeks to “understand and build the factors that allow individuals, communities, and societies to flourish” and thus “improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless” (p.5).

A questionnaire was administered to attendees at the Woodford Folk Festival - a multi-day (6 days/6 nights) music festival staged in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia. Although the focus of the Woodford festival is folk music, the festival has evolved over time to include musics from a wide variety of genres – from blues to jazz to indigenous musics and songlines, to rock and pop. Musical workshops are also a key feature of this festival – engaging festival participants in the construction of music as well as the consumption of music through listening. Every year, around 2000 performers are involved in 580 different events during the festival, which also include non-musical attractions alongside traditional music performances and workshops. The festival was chosen as a site of investigation due to its geographical proximity to the investigators, and the willingness of the festival organisers to allow the research to take place (it is, in the experience of the authors, difficult to gain access to music festivals for research purposes).

Attendees were approached at various locations within the festival site and invited to complete a questionnaire regarding their experiences at the festival. Participants completed the questionnaires and returned them to the researchers on site – 441 completed questionnaires could be used for analysis.

### Instrument

The questionnaire was based on that used by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) which measured outcomes of festival attendance in terms of psychological, social and subjective wellbeing (Keyes, 1998; Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) and the psychological functions of music (Laiho, 2004). It also measured the four facets of the music festival experience using a total of 16 items, four for each facet, however in the current study some changes were made to both the wording of the items and the rating scale. The reason for these changes was to shift from measuring how *important* each item was in contributing to the overall festival experience, to measuring the *extent* to which each item had been personally experienced. Thus for example, in the original version respondents rated how important “experiencing the festival atmosphere” was as part of the festival experience. In the modified version, they rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with statements such as “I have enjoyed the festival atmosphere”. It was reasoned that the original scale was more a measure of individual characteristics of the attendees (i.e., their motivations and values), while the modified scale

attempted to measure characteristics of the festival itself (i.e., the extent to which different types of experience were available to be enjoyed by participants). Other minor changes were made to tailor the items to the factor structure identified in the original study. An additional nominal measure was introduced, asking respondents to select which of the four facets (or an “other” option) had been the most satisfying aspect of the festival experience for them personally.

The 23 items used by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) to measure the theoretical constructs of psychological well-being, social well-being, subjective well-being and Laiho’s (2004) four functions of music were included unchanged with one exception. The psychological well-being (self-acceptance) item “I feel happier with myself as a person”, was split into two items: “I am more able to accept myself for who I am” (self-acceptance), and “I feel a sense of happiness or elation” (categorised as subjective well-being). This change was made in order to more clearly distinguish between these two constructs, and to provide a more reliable measure of subjective well-being. Respondents were also asked to select which of five benefit items designed to represent subjective well-being, interpersonal relations, identity, psychological well-being, social well-being, or an “other” option, had been the most important benefit they had gained as a result of attending the festival.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate how many days they would be attending the festival; whether this was their first, second, or third or more day at the festival; how often they attend music festivals in general; who came with them to the festival; their age; gender; education; and occupation.

### **Participants**

Of the sample ( $n = 441$ ), 61% were female, and 39% male. One third of the respondents had tertiary education degrees, one third had technical qualifications and one third secondary school qualifications. Despite the researchers’ efforts to obtain equal numbers of participants in the under 30 and over 30 age groups, it was found that attendees in the over 30 age group were less willing to complete and return questionnaires, resulting in 61% of respondents being under 30, and 39% over 30. More than half (52%) were in paid employment; 32% were engaged in home duties; 11% were retired; and the remainder were students or unemployed.

The majority of respondents (55%) had attended the festival with a group of friends. This was especially the case for those under 30 years of age. There was a significant difference between under 30’s and over 30’s in relation to the people who came with participants to the festival: over 30’s were more likely than under 30’s to attend alone or with a family group, while under 30’s were more likely to attend with a group of friends,  $\chi^2(4, N = 437) = 43.64$ ,  $p < .001$ . There was no significant difference between gender groups in relation to type of companions:  $\chi^2(4, N = 438) = 7.78$ ,  $p = .100$ .

Many respondents (60%) reported that they would be attending the festival for more than two days, and in fact, at the time of the survey, 54% indicated they were already into their third day. Respondents were approximately evenly split between first-time attendees to the Woodford Festival (42%) and repeat visitors (58%). Under 30’s were more likely to be first-time attendees than those in the over 30’s bracket and those under 30 were significantly more likely to be attending for more than one day,  $\chi^2(2, N = 437) = 17.21$ ,  $p < .001$ . Because of confounding between the number of days respondents *intended* to stay at the festival and the number of days they had *already been* at the festival, two distinct groups were formed for the purpose of comparison by length of attendance: those who were only attending for one day

(and thus had only been at the festival for one day), and those who were attending for multiple days and who had already been at the festival for more than two days. This accounted for 79% of the sample, with one-third in the “single day” category and two thirds in the “multiple day” category. The remainder (those who intended to stay for multiple days but were only on their first or second at the time of the survey) were excluded from these analyses, unless otherwise noted.

Respondents were asked how often they would attend music festivals generally, and were given the options of ‘hardly ever’, ‘once every couple of years’, ‘once or twice a year’, and ‘more than twice a year’. Nearly half of the respondents (40%) reported that they attend music festivals at least once every year. There was a significant difference in the frequency of attending music festivals between groups who are under 30 and who are over 30 years old: under 30’s attended music festivals more often than over 30’s,  $\chi^2(3, N = 437) = 24.09, p < .001$ . There was no significant difference in the frequency of attending music festivals between gender groups:  $\chi^2(3, N = 438) = .35, p = .950$ . Those who attended music festivals frequently were more likely than others to be attending Woodford for more than two days  $\chi^2(6, N = 441) = 33.91, p < .001$ . For the purpose of further analysis, frequency of attendance at music festivals was collapsed into a binary variable: more than once per year or less than once per year.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### (1) Applying Packer and Ballantyne’s model: four facets of the music festival experience

Respondents rated 16 items regarding their perceptions of their experience at the Woodford Folk Festival (see Table 1 for individual statements). Respondents rated the extent to which they had experienced each item from “1” = strongly disagree to “5” = strongly agree. These items reflected Packer and Ballantyne’s (2011) four facets of the music festival experience, as indicated in Table 1. As this table indicates, all items were phrased in a positive manner, thus if respondents rated that they ‘strongly agreed’ with a statement, it was interpreted that they had a *more positive* experience.

**Table 1: The four facets of the music festival experiences and associated items**

Experience items		Experience items	
<b>The music experience</b>		<b>The social experience</b>	
M1	The music has made me feel calm and relaxed	S1	I have enjoyed spending quality time with friends/family
M2	I have enjoyed listening to some new music	S2	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level
M3	I have been inspired by the music	S3	I have felt more open to meeting new people
M4	I have felt a personal connection with the music	S4	I have enjoyed being around people with similar interests
<b>The festival experience</b>		<b>The separation experience</b>	
F1	I have enjoyed the festival atmosphere	SE1	It has felt like being on an adventure

F2	The festival environment has been stimulating	SE2	I have enjoyed doing things I wouldn't normally do
F3	It has been exciting to see live performances	SE3	It has been fun to be able to try some new foods
F4	The festival experience has been different from anything you would find elsewhere	SE4	It has been good to be able to get away from my everyday environment

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (using AMOS) confirmed that the four factors identified by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) were an adequate fit to the data after two items were removed due to low factor loadings - “the festival experience has been different from anything you would find elsewhere” was removed from the festival subscale and “I have enjoyed spending quality time with friends/family” was removed from the social subscale. The resulting model conformed with accepted model fit indices (SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .07; CFI = .93;  $\chi^2/df = 2.83$ ).

Composite variables were created for each of the four factors, excluding the two items noted above. The effect of excluding these two items was to increase the mean of the composite Festival Experience variable and decrease the mean of the Composite Social Experience variable, however, the rank order of the four composite variables was not affected. The festival experience was rated most positively and the social experience least positively (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Mean scores on the four facets of the experience**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Festival Experience	4.51	.52
Music Experience	4.22	.59
Separation Experience	4.16	.58
Social Experience	3.94	.64

As well as rating the 16 individual items about their music festival experience, respondents were asked to self-select which of the four facets had been the most personally satisfying aspect of the festival (selecting from “being with friends or family”, “getting away”, “the music”, “the festival atmosphere”, or “other”. Results showed that the festival atmosphere was seen as the most personally satisfying, followed by the music and the social experience (Table 3).

**Table 3 Perceptions of the most personally satisfying aspect of the festival**

	% selected
The festival atmosphere (festival experience)	43.2
The music (music experience)	22.1



	% selected
The festival atmosphere (festival experience)	43.2
The music (music experience)	22.1
Being with friends or family (social experience)	19.2
Getting away (separation experience)	10.7
Other	4.8

It is interesting to note that although the festival experience was the strongest, most positive experience in terms of both composite scores and multiple choice selections, a consideration of the means of the 16 individual items revealed that the top four most highly rated items included one item from each of the four facets. These were “It has been good to be able to get away from my everyday environment” (separation experience); “I have enjoyed the festival atmosphere” (festival experience); “I have enjoyed listening to some new music” (music experience); and “I have enjoyed spending quality time with friends/family” (social experience). All of these items were rated on average as above 4.5 on a 5 point scale. What these results indicate for designers and managers of the music festival experience is that they need to ensure that they provide a ‘holistic’ music festival experience, focussed upon facilitating all four facets of the music festival. This will enhance the impact of the experience in terms of providing positive experiences for attendees.

## (2) Examine the benefits perceived by attendees in this new festival context

Social, psychological and subjective well-being outcomes together with Laiho’s (2004) four functions of music were measured by 24 items (Table 4). Of these, 22 were the same as those used by Packer and Ballantyne (2011) with attendees at a different music festival. The festival in the previous study had a very similar line-up of artists, and went for a similar length of time. Camping was a feature of both festivals, as was the presence of other arts and social activities. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they had felt or experienced each of the items as a result of attending the festival using a 5-point scale from 0 = “not at all” to 4 = “a large extent”. Endorsement of these items fell mostly between the third and fourth points on the five point scale (i.e., just above the midpoint of 2). Factor analysis indicated that these items formed one factor, thus making it possible to create a composite ‘benefits’ score as a mean of the 24 items.

**Table 4: Perceptions of functions of music and well-being benefit outcomes as a result of attending the festival.**

Functions of music	% experienced (rating > 0)	% experienced to a large extent (rating = 4)	Mean rating this study	Mean rating previous study
Interpersonal relationships				
<i>I feel a greater sense of belonging within my group</i>	86	11	2.11	2.03
<i>I feel more valued by those around me</i>	86	14	2.09	1.88
<i>I feel my relationships with others have grown/developed</i>	88	19	2.30	2.06
Identity				
<i>I have a greater understanding of who I am</i>	85	12	2.11	2.00
<i>I am more like the person I would like to be</i>	87	18	2.32	1.94
<i>I have a greater understanding of what is</i>	91	17	2.41	2.08

<i>important to me</i>				
Agency				
<i>I feel I have accomplished something</i>	86	17	2.19	2.06
<i>I have more strength to stand up for what I believe</i>	81	15	1.99	1.77
<i>I feel inspired to do something new or creative</i>	93	32	2.76	2.24
Emotional field				
<i>I have a greater understanding of my emotions</i>	80	14	1.91	1.91
<i>I feel better able to cope with stresses in my life</i>	82	15	2.01	1.89
<i>I have a greater understanding of the importance of music in my life</i>	91	28	2.60	2.30
<b>Social well-being</b>				
Social coherence				
<i>I am more able to make sense of what is happening in the world</i>	79	10	1.83	1.89
Social integration				
<i>I feel I have more things in common with others</i>	90	18	2.36	2.02
Social acceptance				
<i>I feel more positive about other people</i>	91	21	2.54	2.09
Social contribution				
<i>I feel I now have more to contribute to the world</i>	84	16	2.07	1.95
Social actualisation				
<i>I feel more hopeful about the way things are in the world</i>	85	17	2.21	1.92
<b>Psychological well-being</b>				
Autonomy				
<i>I feel a greater sense of confidence/control over my life</i>	81	11	1.92	1.92
Personal growth				
<i>I feel I have grown/developed as a person</i>	82	16	2.05	2.03
Mastery				
<i>I feel better able to deal with the demands and responsibilities in my life</i>	79	11	1.85	1.85
Purpose in life				
<i>I feel a greater sense of purpose in my life</i>	81	12	1.94	1.86
Positive relations (as for Interpersonal relationships)				
	88	19	2.30	2.06
Self-acceptance				
<i>I am more able to accept myself for who I am</i>	84	21	2.21	Item changed
<b>Subjective well-being</b>				
Life satisfaction				
<i>I feel more positive about my life</i>	91	25	2.55	2.08
Happiness				
<i>I feel a sense of happiness or elation</i>	95	33	2.81	Item added

Note. Most highly rated items are highlighted.

The most highly endorsed aspects in relation to psychological and well-being outcomes were “I feel a sense of happiness or elation” and “I feel more positive about my life” (subjective well-being); “I feel inspired to do something new or creative”, “I have a greater understanding of the importance of music in my life” and “I have a greater understanding of what is important to me” (functions of music relating to agency, emotional field and identity); and “I feel more positive about other people” (social well-being: social acceptance). These items are highlighted in Table 4. Interestingly, although participants in the Packer and Ballantyne (2011) study consistently rated benefits less highly than the participants in the present study, the top five benefits were the same for both samples (except for the item “I feel

a sense of happiness or elation” which was not included in the first study). This finding adds some weight to the conclusion that these are important benefits of music festival experiences in general.

These findings also confirm Laiho’s (2004) Functions of Music in a new context – that of music festivals. This highlights the importance of the adjunct functions of music beyond that of the quality of artists selected and has implications for managers who wish to design experiences at music festivals that facilitate well-being outcomes for attendees. It is recommended, for example, that festival managers structure their events to allow attendees opportunities to do something new or creative and reflect on the importance of music in their lives, rather than just focussing on the quality of the artists and music presented. Given the importance of the social aspects of the experience and subjective well-being outcomes, festival organisers could extend the beneficial impacts of music festival events by providing opportunities for attendees to form social-media facilitated communities before and after the event.

The overall differences in the mean ratings between the two festivals may be due to the nature of the festivals (e.g., one festival may convey more positive messages than the other), the characteristics of the attendees (e.g., one festival may attract people who are more likely to seek personal benefits), or sampling issues (data were collected during the festival in the present study and immediately after the festival in the previous study).

Respondents in the present study were also asked to select one of five items to indicate the most important personal benefit they had gained from attending the festival (Table 5). Responses confirmed that subjective well-being benefits were the most highly endorsed. The finding that 15% of respondents selected “none of the above” suggests that the constructs included in this study may be missing some important benefits. This needs to be further explored through qualitative research.

**Table 5: Perceptions of most important benefits gained from attending the music festival**

	% selected
Feeling happier or more positive about my life (subjective well-being)	32.0
Developing my relationships with other people (interpersonal relations)	18.7
Better understanding myself and what is important to me (identity)	13.5
Gaining new skills, beliefs or attitudes that will improve my life (psychological well-being)	12.6
Feeling a sense of belonging (social well-being)	7.8
None of the above	15.5

**(3) Impact of age, gender, frequency and length of attendance on perceived experiences and benefits**

Because of the confounding between independent variables, the impacts of age, gender, frequency and length of attendance on perceived experiences and benefits were examined using a series of two-way ANOVAs, in order to ensure all cell sizes were greater than 30. The results are reported in Tables 6 (experiences) and 7 (benefits).

### ***Perceived experiences***

Each independent variable was entered with each of the other three independent variables, separately for each of the four types of experience, yielding a total of 12 tests for the main effect of each independent variable.

Overwhelmingly, length of attendance (single day vs multiple day) had the strongest effect on all of the experience variables except the Separation experience (a summary of effect sizes is report in Table 6). In all cases, those who attended for multiple days had a stronger, more positive experience than those who attended for a single day. The finding that the effect of length of attendance was much smaller for the Separation experience than other types of experience was not expected. It is possible that experiences such as “doing things I wouldn’t normally do” and “getting away from the everyday environment” are achievable at a one-day event, while experiences such as “being inspired by the music” or “getting to know my friends on a deeper level” require more time.

Gender had a small but significant effect on the Separation experience, females reporting a stronger, more positive experience than males. Age had a small but significant effect on the Festival experience, under 30’s reporting a stronger, more positive experience than over 30s. There were no significant two-way interaction effects.

**Table 6. Summary of effect sizes of age, gender, frequency and length of attendance on perceived experiences.**

Type of experience	Age x Gender	Age x Freq	Age x Length	Gender x Freq	Gender x Length	Freq x Length
Festival	Age <sup>1</sup> (.02)	Age <sup>2</sup> (.02)	Age <sup>3</sup> (.01) Length <sup>4</sup> (.08)		Length <sup>5</sup> (.11)	Length <sup>6</sup> (.09)
Music			Length <sup>7</sup> (.10)		Length <sup>8</sup> (.11)	Length <sup>9</sup> (.10)
Social			Length <sup>10</sup> (.10)		Length <sup>11</sup> (.11)	Length <sup>12</sup> (.11)
Separation	Gen <sup>13</sup> (.03)		Length <sup>14</sup> (.02)	Gen <sup>15</sup> (.03)	Gen <sup>16</sup> (.04) Length <sup>17</sup> (.03)	Length <sup>18</sup> (.02)

Note. Age = under 30 vs over 30

Gender = male vs female

Freq = less than once per year vs more than once per year (any music festival)

Length = attending one day vs attending multiple days and already on at least third day

Significant effects only are reported; effect size is reported in table

- 1 F (1, 432) = 8.68, p = .003, partial eta squared = .020
- 2 F (1, 433) = 10.05, p = .002, partial eta squared = .023
- 3 F (1, 340) = 3.89, p = .049, partial eta squared = .011
- 4 F (1, 340) = 30.86, p < .001, partial eta squared = .083
- 5 F (1, 341) = 43.41, p < .001, partial eta squared = .113
- 6 F (1, 342) = 35.07, p < .001, partial eta squared = .093
- 7 F (1, 340) = 35.80, p < .001, partial eta squared = .095
- 8 F (1, 341) = 40.68, p < .001, partial eta squared = .107
- 9 F (1, 342) = 36.57, p < .001, partial eta squared = .097
- 10 F (1, 340) = 35.70, p < .001, partial eta squared = .095
- 11 F (1, 341) = 42.89, p < .001, partial eta squared = .112
- 12 F (1, 342) = 40.28, p < .001, partial eta squared = .105
- 13 F (1, 432) = 13.78, p < .001, partial eta squared = .031
- 14 F (1, 340) = 5.23, p = .023, partial eta squared = .015
- 15 F (1, 434) = 15.07, p < .001, partial eta squared = .034
- 16 F (1, 341) = 14.47, p < .001, partial eta squared = .041
- 17 F (1, 341) = 10.56, p = .001, partial eta squared = .030

When respondents' self-selections of the most-satisfying aspect of the festival were considered, there were no significant differences between under 30's and over 30's ( $\chi^2$  [3, N = 415] = 4.23,  $p = .238$ ); males and females ( $\chi^2$  [3, N = 416] = 2.74,  $p = .433$ ); frequent and infrequent festival-goers ( $\chi^2$  [3, N = 417] = 1.26,  $p = .739$ ); or between single day attendees and multiple day attendees ( $\chi^2$  [3, N = 329] = 6.04,  $p = .110$ ).

### ***Perceived benefits***

Again, length of attendance had the strongest effect on the perceived benefits gained from attendance (Table 7). Age also had a small effect, with those aged under 30 years of age reporting greater benefits than those over 30. Further exploration of the effect of number of days of attendance upon the perceived benefits of music festival attendance is illustrated in Figure 2. It was found that all benefits (subjective, psychological, social, emotional field, agency, identity and interpersonal relations) increased as a function of the number of days attended. Further exploration of the effect of age on perceived benefits was also carried out. It was found that all benefits decreased as a function of age, although effect sizes were small (.03-.04).

**Table 7 Summary of effect sizes of age, gender, frequency and length of attendance on perceived benefits .**

	Age	x	Age x	Age x	Gender	x	Gender	x	Freq	x
	Gender		Freq	Length	Freq		Length		Length	
Composite benefits score	Age <sup>1</sup> (.02)		Age <sup>2</sup> (.02)	Age <sup>3</sup> (.01) Length <sup>4</sup> (.07)			Length <sup>5</sup> (.08)		Length <sup>6</sup> (.08)	

Note. Age = under 30 vs over 30

Gender = male vs female

Freq = less than once per year vs more than once per year (any music festival)

Length = attending one day vs attending multiple days and already on at least third day

Significant effects only are reported; effect size is reported in table

<sup>1</sup> F (1, 429) = 7.94,  $p = .005$ , partial eta squared = .018

<sup>2</sup> F (1, 430) = 8.49,  $p = .004$ , partial eta squared = .019

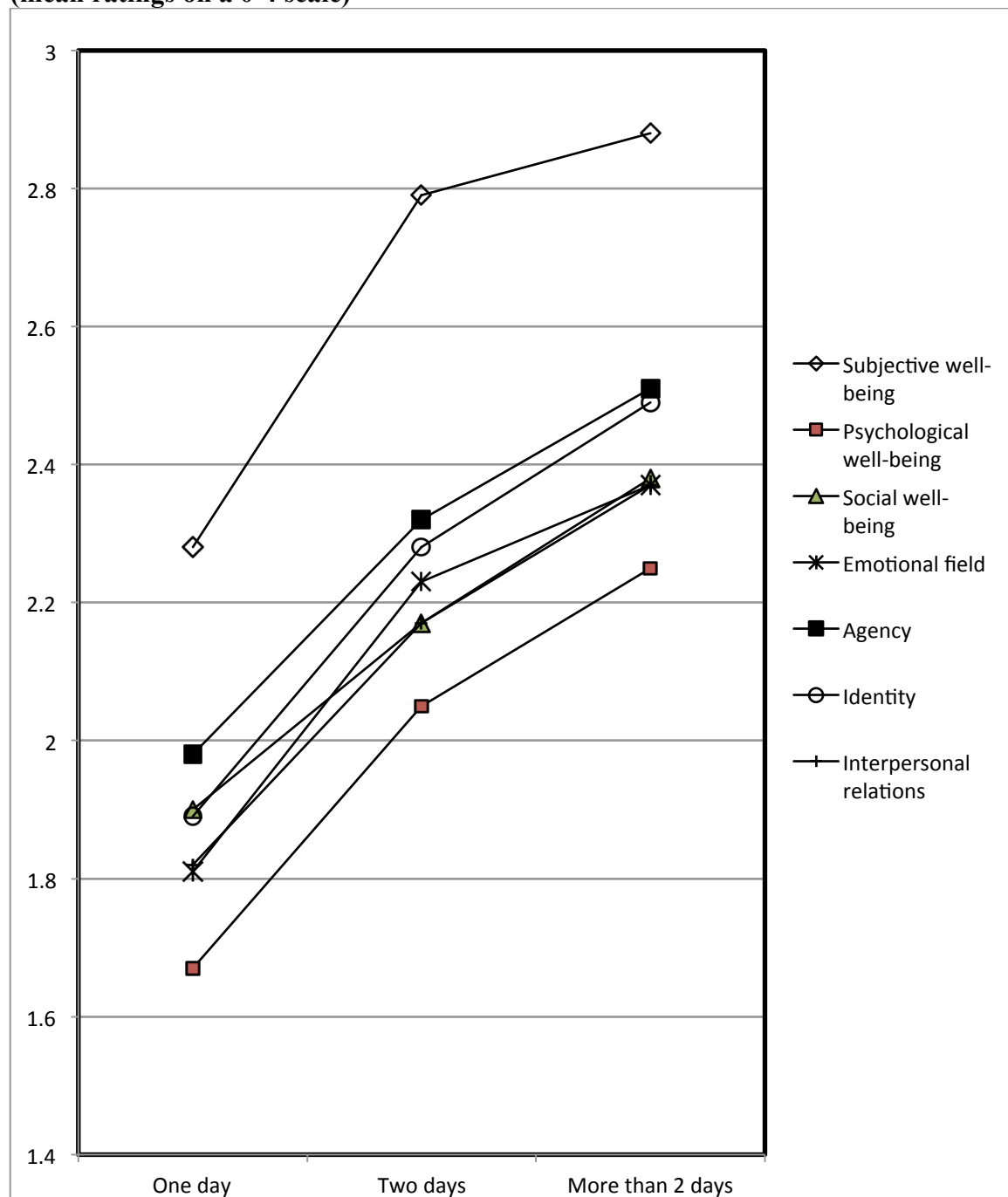
<sup>3</sup> F (1, 3337) = 4.59,  $p = .033$ , partial eta squared = .013

<sup>4</sup> F (1, 340) = 22.58,  $p < .001$ , partial eta squared = .065

<sup>5</sup> F (1, 338) = 28.43,  $p < .001$ , partial eta squared = .078

<sup>6</sup> F (1, 341) = 27.98,  $p < .001$ , partial eta squared = .076

**Figure 2: Impact of length of visit on the perceived benefits of music festival attendance (mean ratings on a 0-4 scale)**



Note. Mean ratings on a 0-4 scale, where 0 = Experienced the benefit ‘not at all’ and 4 = Experienced the benefit to ‘a large extent’.

As this figure is based solely on the number of days the respondent had already been at the festival (rather than their intended length of stay), all cases are included, not just the two groups used in other analyses.

To explore this phenomenon further, multiple day and single day attendees were compared in relation to the most important perceived benefit they selected from the options listed in Table 5. It was found that overall, both groups selected subjective well-being as the most important

perceived benefit. Multiple day attendees were, however, more likely than single day attendees to select items relating to identity, psychological well-being or social well-being while single day attendees were more likely to select interpersonal relations or “none of the above” ( $\chi^2 [5] = 27.4, p < .001$ ). This further suggests that some of the “deeper” well-being benefits are more likely to be attained by those who attend the festival for longer. These findings lead to the suggestion that organisers wishing to maximise the positive impact that their festivals have on attendees should aim to encourage attendance for more than one day.

#### **(4) Relationships between facets of the music festival experience and perceived benefits**

In order to investigate the impact of the music festival experience on the psychological/social outcomes for attendees, the four facets of the music festival experience, together with age group and length of attendance, were entered into a stepwise regression analysis as predictors of the composite benefits scale. The results of the regression indicated that four predictors explained 40.5% of the variance ( $R^2 = .405, F(4, 411) = 71.08, p < .001$ ). The social experience ( $\beta = .34, p < .001$ ), separation experience ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ), music experience ( $\beta = .15, p = .007$ ), and length of attendance ( $\beta = .11, p = .006$ ) were all significant predictors of benefits gained.

Each type of benefit was examined separately (Table 8), and the **social experience**, exemplified by the item “I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level” was overwhelmingly found to be the best predictor of a range of psychological and social benefits.

**Table 8. Relationships between the four facets of the music festival experience and the psychological and social benefits reported by attendees**

Type of benefit	Facets of the music festival experience that significantly predict each type of benefit with $\beta > .2$	Best individual item predictor
Subjective well-being <sup>1</sup>	Social experience (.24)	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level
Psychological well-being <sup>2</sup>	Social experience (.38)	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level
Social well-being <sup>3</sup>	Social experience (.33)	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level
Emotional field <sup>4</sup>	Music experience (.25)	I have felt a personal connection with the music
Agency <sup>5</sup>	Social experience (.29)	It has felt like being on an adventure
Identity <sup>6</sup>	Separation experience (.23)	I have felt like being on an adventure
Interpersonal relations <sup>7</sup>	Social experience (.33)	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level
	Social experience (.47)	I have gotten to know my friends on a deeper level

<sup>1</sup>  $R^2 = .304, F(5, 432) = 29.03, p < .001$

<sup>2</sup>  $R^2 = .285, F(3, 426) = 57.64, p < .001$

<sup>3</sup>  $R^2 = .345, F(4, 420) = 56.21, p < .001$

<sup>4</sup>  $R^2 = .322, F(3, 430) = 69.19, p < .001$

<sup>5</sup>  $R^2 = .362, F(4, 429) = 61.76, p < .001$

<sup>6</sup>  $R^2 = .331$ ,  $F(4, 430) = 54.28$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>7</sup>  $R^2 = .311$ ,  $F(3, 430) = 65.71$ ,  $p < .001$

Other important items that predicted positive benefits for those attending the music festival were: the influence of the **music experience**, exemplified by the item “I have felt a personal connection with the music” on emotional field benefits (which included items on understanding my emotions, better able to cope with stress, and understanding the importance of music in my life), and the influence of the **separation experience**, exemplified by the item “It has felt like being on an adventure” on agency benefits (which included items on feelings of accomplishment, strength to stand up for what I believe, and feeling inspired to do something new or creative). It is notable that despite being the strongest and most satisfying aspect for many participants, the **festival experience** was *not* strongly associated with psychological and social benefits. In contrast, the social experience was the weakest and the second least satisfying (see tables 2 and 3), but was overwhelmingly the most strongly associated with psychological and social benefits.

## Conclusions

This research investigated the relationships between four facets of the music festival experience and the psychological and social benefits attained by people attending a music festival (including the three dimensions of psychological well-being and Laiho’s four psychological functions of music). Better knowledge of the music festival experience will enable festival organisers and promoters to maximise opportunities to enhance positive psychological, social, and subjective well-being outcomes. The results of this study suggest that music festival organisers should provide attendees opportunities to engage with numerous facets of the festival experience as the social, separation and music experiences were all instrumental in facilitating positive psychological and social outcomes. Furthermore, the length of stay at the festival magnified all of these effects.

Although participants at this festival reported that they experienced the social facet least, this was found to be the best predictor of the social and psychological benefits gained. Providing greater opportunities for participants to connect with their friends on a deeper level is thus one way to improve the benefits likely to be gained by music festival attendees. For instance, it is suggested that workshops by musicians that encourage social interaction, involvement and personal reflection on music creation and communication could be planned in order to facilitate positive well-being outcomes.

The separation experience was found to be important in developing a sense of agency (one of Laiho’s, 2004, psychological functions of music, as well as an aspect of psychological well-being). In this regard, festival managers could provide opportunities for attendees to gain new skills by participating in new and challenging activities such as camping and self-catering. Attendees could also be engaged before the festival through ‘crowd sourcing’ and the use of social media to encourage a sense of ‘agency’ (‘having a say’) over the selection of music, musicians and the organisation of social activities (such as accommodation and the structure of other social experiences around music at the festival). The use of social media could facilitate such a process and promote a feeling of personal engagement and shared responsibility - this is ‘my’ festival - thereby developing a sense of shared identification and purpose with others at the festival (aspects of social and psychological well-being). As well as contributing to the separation experience, such an approach might also allow festival



organisers to extend the impact of their event, and to achieve well-being outcomes that are more lasting than a transitory increase in subjective well-being. Such approaches would also contribute to the sense of expectation and prediction identified by Lamont (2012) as having a significant bearing on participants' strong musical experiences.

The music experience could be heightened by providing activities that enable attendees to make a personal connection with the music. The results of this study show that for these participants, personal identification with the style/nature of the music presented at the festival is important in order to maximise some aspects of well-being outcomes. Inviting attendees to actively participate in musical performance activities at a festival may thus contribute to these outcomes. Some recommendations for social engagement include music-making workshops (playing and song-writing), master classes, audience participation in performances, and audience selection of musical content through online sourcing of opinions in real time.

Future research needs to be conducted across multiple music festival sites, to ascertain to what extent the unique Woodford Folk Festival experience may or may not account for the results reported here. However, it is encouraging that similarities between the findings of this study and Packer and Ballantyne's (2011) study support the generalisability of the results. Further qualitative work based on this framework should also be undertaken to explore and understand the processes through which music festivals contribute positively to the psychological and social well-being of those who attend. In this way, the potential of music festivals to impact not only on economic benefits for stakeholders, but also on the quality of life of participants, can be more effectively realised.

**Acknowledgements:** Many thanks to the Woodford Folk Festival for supporting this research by allowing us access to the festival participants. Thank you also to the University of Queensland for supporting this research through an early-career researcher grant.

## References

- Arcodia, C., & Lee, I. (2008). *The role of regional food festivals for destination branding: A critical review of the literature*. Paper presented at the global events congress III, Guangzhou, China.
- Arcodia, C., & Whitford, M. (2007). Festival attendance and the development of social capital. *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism*, 8(2), 1-18.
- Australia Council for the Arts. (2010). *More than bums on Seats: Australian participation in the arts*. Sydney: Australia Council for the Arts.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002). *Discussion paper: Social capital and social wellbeing*. Year Book Australia. Retrieved January 31, 2007, from [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007a). *Culture and recreation: Festivals*. Year Book Australia. Retrieved January 31, 2009, from [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007b). Sports Attendance, Australia, 2005-06, Australia, Oct 2010. Year Book Australia. Retrieved March 10, 2011, from [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)
- Baker, F., Wigram, T., Stott, D., & McFerran, K. (2009). Therapeutic songwriting in music therapy, Part II: Comparing the literature with practice across diverse clinical populations. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 18(1), 32-56.
- Bennett, A. (2002). Researching youth culture and popular music: A methodological critique. *British Journal of Sociology*, 53(3), 451-466.

- Bennett, T., Emmison, M., & Frow, J. (1999). *Accounting for Tastes: Australian Everyday Cultures*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Big Day Out (2011). Past BDO festivals. <http://www.bigdayout.com/past-bdo-festivals.php>.
- Bowen, H., & Daniels, M. (2005) Does the music matter?: Motivations for attending a music festival. *Event Management*, 9, 155-164.
- Bowman, W. (1998), *Philosophical perspectives on music*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, S. (1993). Ethnography and popular music studies. *Popular Music*, 12(2), 123-138.
- Davidson, J. W. (2005). Effects of group singing and performance for marginalized and middle-class singers. *Psychology of Music*, 33(3), 269-303.
- Dillon, S. (2006). Assessing the positive influence of music activities in community development programs. *Research in Music Education*, 8(2), 267-280.
- Falassi, A. (1987). *Time out of time: Essays on the festival*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Frith, S. (1996). *Performing rites: on the value of popular music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gabrielsson, A. (2001). Emotions in strong experiences with music. In P. Juslin & J. Sloboda (Eds), *Music and emotion. Theory and research* (431-449). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003). Strong experiences related to music: A descriptive system. *Musicae Scientiae*, 7(2), 157-217.
- Gelder, G., & Robinson, P. (2009) A critical comparative study of visitor motivations for attending music festivals: A case study of Glastonbury and V Festival. *Event Management*, 13, 181-196.
- Getz, D. (2007) Event tourism: definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 403-428.
- Getz, D. (2010) The nature and scope of festival studies. *International Journal of Event Management*, 5, 1-47.
- Gibson, C., & Connell, J. (2005). *Music and tourism: On the road again*. Cleveland: Channel View Publications.
- Gibson, C., & Connell, J. (2012) *Music festivals and regional development in Australia*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- Gibson, L. (2001). Cultural development meets rock and roll (or what government can learn from pop music festivals). *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 7(3), 479-492.
- Goulding, C., Shankar, A., & Elliott, R. (2001). Dance clubs, raves and the consumer experience: An exploratory study of a subcultural phenomenon. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 5, 203-208.
- Grappi, S. and Montanari, F. (2011) The role of social identification and hedonism in affecting tourist re-patronizing behaviours: The case of an Italian festival. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1128-1140.
- Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. *International Journal of Music Education* 28(3), 269-289.
- Hargreaves, D., Miell, D. & MacDonald, R. (2002). What are musical identities and why are they important? In R. MacDonald & D. Hargreaves (Eds.). *Musical identities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Karlsen, S. (2007). *The music festival as an arena for learning: Festspel i Pite Alvdal and matters of identity*. Lulea University of Technology, Pitea, Sweden.
- Karlsen, S., & Brandstrom, S. (2008). Exploring the music festival as a music educational project. *International Journal of Music Education*, 26(4), 363-373.

- Keyes, C. L. M. Shmotkin, D., & Ryff, C. D. (2002). Optimising well-being: The empirical encounter of two traditions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 1007-1022.
- Keyes, C.L.M. (1998) Social well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61, 121-140.
- Laiho, S. (2004). The psychological functions of music in adolescence. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 13(1), 47-63.
- Lamont, A. (2012) Emotion, engagement and meaning in strong experiences of music performance. *Psychology of Music*, 40(5), 574-594.
- Lamont, M. and Lareau, A. (1988). Cultural capital: allusions, gaps and glissandos in recent theoretical developments. *Sociological Theory*, 6, 153–168.
- Larsen, G. and O'Reilly, D (2009) Festival tales: Utopian tales. Paper submitted to the Paper submitted to the Academy of Marketing Annual Conference 2008. Found online at [http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/management/external/pdf/workingpapers/2009/Booklet\\_09-01.pdf](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/management/external/pdf/workingpapers/2009/Booklet_09-01.pdf)
- Lee, C., Lee, Y. and Wicks, B. (2004) Segmentation of festival motivation by nationality and satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 25(1), 61-70.
- Lee, I., Arcodia, C., & Lee, T.J., Benefits of visiting a multicultural festival: The case of South Korea, *Tourism Management*, 33(2), 2012, 334-340.
- Lee, C., & Taylor, T. (2005). Critical reflections on the economic impact assessment of a mega-event: the case of 2002 FIFA World Cup. *Tourism Management*, 26(4),595-603.
- Lipe, A.W. (2002). Beyond therapy: music, spirituality, and health in human experience: a review of literature. *Journal of Music Therapy*, 39(3), 209-240.
- Matheson, C., M. (2005). Festivity and sociability: A study of a celtic music festival. *Tourism, Culture and Communication*, 5(3), 149-163.
- Moscardo, G. (2008). Analysing the role of festivals and events in regional development. *Event Management*, 11(1e2), 23-32.
- North, A., & Hargreaves, D. (1999). Music and adolescent identity. *Music Education Research*, 1(1), 75-92.
- North, A.C. & Hargreaves, D.J. (2008). *The social and applied psychology of music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Packer, J., and Ballantyne, J. (2011) The impact of music festival attendance on young people's psychological and social well-being. *Psychology of Music*. 39(2) 164–181
- Ryan, R., and M. Deci. 2000. Self-Determination Theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist* 55(1): 68-78.
- Ryff, C.D., & Keyes, C.L.M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727.
- Saatchi and Saatchi (2000). *Australians and the Arts*. Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.
- Saleh, F. and Ryan, C. (1993) Jazz and knitwear- factors that attract tourists to festivals. *Tourism Management*, 14(4), 289-297.
- Santoro, M., Chalcraft, J., & Magaudda, P. (2008). *Music festivals: An interdisciplinary literature review*: University of Sussex.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.
- Tkaczynski, A. and Stokes, R. (2010) FESTPERF; a service quality measurement scale for festivals. *Event Management*, 14, 69-82.

Tohmo, T. (2005). Economic impacts of cultural events on local economies: an input-output analysis of the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. *Tourism Economics*, 11(3), 431-451.