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## UNDERSTANDING FESTIVAL-GOERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE AT UK MUSIC FESTIVALS

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This article explores the influence of sociodemographic characteristics in determining the perceived importance of attributes of the UK music festival experience to festival-goers. Quantitative data were collected through an online survey using a cluster, snowball sampling technique and 586 respondents completed the survey. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to identify factors of the festival experience, whereas linear regression and structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed the relationship between the sociodemographic characteristics of festival-goers and the resulting experience constructs against the overall evaluated experience. From eight major factors, seven hypotheses were identified. The results revealed the most important factors to the overall experience to be entertainment, added value, and music, whereas the remaining factors did not have a direct impact. Conversely, the sociodemographic characteristics contributing to the dependent constructs were primarily age and gender, followed by education and marital status. The location where festival-goers grew up and their employment status had minimal impact. The practical implications of this study provide the opportunity for festival organizers to direct their strategic management efforts towards the elements of the festival experience that are most important to their targeted or typical festival-goers. This article also addresses a notable gap in the literature by evaluating the importance of specific experience attributes in the context of popular UK music festivals. Moreover, it examines the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics of festival-goers and the importance of experience attributes to the overall UK music festival experience.

**Key words:** Music festival; Experience; Festival-goer; Event management

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### Introduction

Festivals in general have long been considered in the academic literature (see, e.g., Crompton & McKay, 1997; Falassi, 1987; Pieper, 1965; Vaughan, 1979). However, popular music festivals

in particular have enjoyed more limited academic scrutiny, a notable omission given their increasing incidence, not least in the UK where such festivals annually attract around 10.4 million music tourists who spend £3.7 billion (UK Music, 2016). Moreover, music festivals in the UK are not only

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numerous but also enormously diverse in scope, scale, and type and, hence, audience. It is surprising, therefore, that few if any specific attempts have been made to explore critically the festival-goer; that is, who they are and what experiences they seek.

This article, therefore, sets out to propose a model that depicts the relationship between the festival-goers and their experience. More specifically, it seeks to examine the extent to which the festival-goers' sociodemographic characteristics determine the importance of specific attributes in the UK music festival experience, thereby identifying particular aspects of the festival experience upon which festival organizers might directly focus their management efforts. To achieve this, this research examines UK festival-goers in general. That is, it does not focus on a specific type of music festival, genre, size, or location, because although these festival attributes may influence the sociodemographic make-up of the festival audience, popular music festivals in the UK offer a wide range of genres and subgenres, and festival-goers generally attend multiple festivals.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used to identify factors of the festival experience, and linear regression reveals the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics of festival-goers and the resulting experience constructs against the overall evaluated experience. In so doing, this article not only addresses a notable gap in the literature by evaluating the importance of specific experience attributes in the context of popular UK music festivals, but also has practical implications for festival organizers wishing to better direct their management and marketing efforts more strategically towards the elements of the festival experience that are most important to their targeted audience.

#### Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

As the research surrounding consumer experiences has developed over recent years, it has become increasingly clear that not all elements of the consumer experience can be controlled by providers (Verhoef et al., 2009). Therefore, it has become recognized that it is necessary to focus on understanding the variety of factors that influence the consumer's experience. Putting it another way,

evaluating festival-goers' experiences at a festival from a marketing and management perspective provides limited understanding of what they want and value in their experience; hence, it is necessary to consider the importance of individual experience attributes (Barsky, 1992; Martilla & James, 1977; Oh & Parks, 1997).

Research by J. Wong, Wu, and Cheng (2015) and Wu, Cheng, and Hsu (2014) revealed that, in general, festival dimensions are not equally important to the festival-goer; that is, that some elements are more or less important than others. However, studies in general have examined only a small number of experiential dimensions, typically focusing on experiential attributes that occur during the festival, with minimal study of pre- or postfestival experiences and as such limits the analysis of such diverse attributes within an event experience (Son & Lee, 2011; Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2005; J. Wong et al., 2015). Moreover, studies have revealed significant relationships between sociodemographic characteristics and the importance of festival attributes (Formica & Uysal, 1998; Yolal, Çetinel, & Uysal, 2009). At the same time, other studies have focused specifically on the relationship between the importance of attributes to satisfaction or consumer behavior, though typically based on a single festival case study (Crompton & Love, 1995; Smith & Costello, 2009; Tkaczynski & Stokes, 2010; Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010; Yuan & Jang, 2008). In contrast, to gain a better understanding of the festival-goer, this research focuses more generally on exploring who the festival-goer is and what is important to him/her in determining their overall experience, and not limiting the research to one case study festival. However, it is first necessary to introduce the dimensions of the festival experience as a basis for proposing hypotheses to be explored in the research.

#### *Music & Entertainment*

Previous studies that have explored the dimensions of the festival experience typically refer to the festival-specific theme or genre, or the characteristics by which the festival is identified. Generally, such studies have found that festival-unique features are most strongly related to satisfaction and behavioral intent (Papadimitroui, 2013). Moreover,

the unique features of core activities at a festival have also been found to be strong motivational factors, which are known to have the strongest or most significant relationship with satisfaction and, in some cases, future behavior (see, e.g., T. H. Lee & Hsu, 2013; Savinovic, Kim, & Long, 2012; Schofield & Thompson, 2007; Smith, Costello, & Muenchen, 2010). Examining music festivals more specifically, some have found that the importance of music varied between different clusters of festival attendees, dependent on their motivations for attendance (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). Conversely, others have found that music quality strongly influences satisfaction and future behavior (Thrane, 2002) and that music performance produces more value than other aspects of the festival (Andersson, Armbrecht, & Lundberg, 2012). Thus, music as the core feature at popular music festivals is a key factor to be considered when evaluating the overall festival experience and, subsequently, leads to the development of the first hypothesis:

**H1:** The importance of music attributes has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

As music festivals often provide a multitude of activities in addition to music, these other forms of entertainment are identified as a significant element of the festival experience. This includes the quality and variety of other things to do and activities beyond music. D. A. Baker and Crompton (2000) found that both generic and specific entertainment features of a festival have a greater potential to increase satisfaction and are more likely to motivate attendees to return. Cole and Chancellor (2009) similarly found entertainment features to have a stronger impact on visitors' experience whereas Wan and Chan (2013) and Wu and Ai (2016) determined it to be a key component of and positively influence festival quality. Similar findings were confirmed by D. A. Baker and Crompton (2000), Chen, Lee, and Lin (2012), Cole and Illum (2006), and Yoon et al. (2010). Furthermore, Uysal, Gahan, and Martin (1993) and Yolal et al. (2009) identified a significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and the importance of festival attributes. They found that as age and education level increased, so did the importance of event novelty among festival-goers. Backman,

Uysal, and Sunshine (1995) and Formica and Uysal (1998) also found relationships between festival motivations and age, income, and marital status. Therefore, as another significant element of the festival experience, the significance of entertainment leads to the development of the second hypothesis:

**H2:** The importance of entertainment has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

Although music and entertainment are a core part of the festival experience, the festival cannot be staged without the support of additional services. Thus, the support services provided at festivals are another element of the festival experience deserving examination.

### *Service*

Early research proposed that the quality of service determined consumer satisfaction and behavior (Cole & Illum, 2006; Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; J-S. Lee, Lee, & Yoon, 2009). In fact, satisfaction was often considered to be commensurate with perceived quality, satisfaction being regarded as the (desired) result of service delivery (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000). However, as service quality research began to be applied within an events context, it became clear that service was but one of multiple determinants of satisfaction (Brown, 1988; Crompton & Love, 1995). Pine and Gilmore (1999) were among the first to argue that services, as an externally managed dimension, may influence a customer's experience but that personal and memorable experience is a response or outcome to the service delivered (Cole & Chancellor, 2009). Therefore, services may or may not influence consumers' feelings and senses, or their thinking, actions and relationships, which are dimensions of experience (Schmitt, 1999).

Within the context of festivals, services have been identified as a determinant of festival quality (Wan & Chan, 2013) and value (Yoon et al., 2010). Typically, festival service attributes include friendliness and professionalism of staff, information, signage, food, facilities, and comfort amenities (Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Crompton & Love, 1995; Tanford & Jung, 2017). In some studies, food

is assessed as a separate construct; however, this is usually in the context of a food festival where food is evidently core to the experience. In contrast, however, the support services provided at festivals are regarded by Crompton (2003) to be “maintenance” attributes. He suggested that these maintenance attributes, such as the physical environment, information services, and comfort amenities, are perceived to meet a minimum threshold level of quality before festival-goers can be satisfied through motivator attributes or further sociopsychological benefits from an event. Therefore, although services may not be identified as an important determinant of satisfaction, if deficient they may undermine the whole festival experience (Crompton, 2003). Hence, the importance of services to the festival-goer is another factor that should be considered in relation to the overall festival experience. Based on the empirical findings discussed in literature, the third hypothesis in this study is:

**H3:** The importance of service attributes has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

According to Crompton (2003), the sociopsychological benefits that provide greater meaning and value to the festival-goer’s experience include involvement, which can be achieved through engaging with and participating in the festival.

### *Engagement*

Poulsson and Kale (2004) argued that successful experiences are those that engage the consumer and have personal relevance, offering novelty and surprise. More specifically, and in contrast to a focus on satisfaction as a key driver of financial performance and consumer behavior, Fleming and Asplund (2007) proposed engagement as an emotional construct reflecting human behavior. Their concept of “human sigma” proposed that engagement creates a longer lasting, more meaningful, deeper connection between organizations and consumers, increasing the probability of preferred consumer behavior. This has been confirmed in further studies such those by Y. H. Kim, Duncan, and Chung (2015), Kumar et al. (2010), Ralston, Ellis, Compton, and Lee (2007), and I. A. Wong and Tang (2016). Although the human sigma concept has not been applied to

a festival or event context, empirical research suggests that engagement and participation at festivals positively influences the value and meaning of the festival-goer experience (Bennett, 2012; Berridge, 2007; Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015; Mannell, 1999; Shamir & Ruskin, 1984; Sundbo & Darmer, 2008), the perceived quality of a festival, satisfaction, and consumer behavior (Y. H. Kim et al., 2015; Lei & Zhao, 2012; Packer & Ballantyne, 2011; Pitts & Spencer, 2008; J. Wong et al., 2015; Wu & Ai, 2016; Wu et al., 2014; Wu & Ko, 2013). As communication and interaction between the festival-goer and the festival influences emotional attachment and engagement, this is a vital component of the festival experience. Thus, festival organizers should arguably consider how best to engage their consumers to provide valued, deeper and more meaningful festival experiences that satisfy and delight. However, engaging with the festival as a dimension of the festival experience may or may not be of intrinsic value or importance to the festival-goer. Thus, the review of the literature surrounding engagement informs the development of the following, fourth hypothesis:

**H4:** The importance of engagement has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

Whereas engagement with the festival may influence festival-goers’ overall experience, there are other additional attributes that may add value but that do not fall into the core festival activities, entertainment, or services.

### *Added Value*

Value may be added to the festival experience through the availability of souvenirs (Yoon et al., 2010), VIP packages and upgrades, good weather (Leenders, 2010), and other personalized aspects. Souvenirs in particular are identified as a key element of the festivalscape (Y. Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008) and, as such, have been examined as an element of the festival environment and a key dimension of the festival experience. Specifically, research has found that souvenirs have an indirect effect on satisfaction (Özdemir & Çulha, 2009), a significant effect on value (J-S. Lee et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2010), and reinforce revisit intentions

through satisfaction (Choo, Ahn, & Petrick, 2016). Souvenirs are also regarded as contributing to the personalization of experiences and added value (Pralhad, 2004).

The experience at music festivals may also be personalized through active participation and the access and availability of personalized accommodation options, VIP access, and other upgrades. However, there is little research regarding these additional elements of the festival experience. Although these attributes add value to the experience, their importance to the festival-goer has not been established. Yet, there has been some research to demonstrate that sociodemographic characteristics, such as age, have been significant in relation to tourist wants and needs (Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002). Therefore, based on previous research regarding the relationship between attributes that add value and the overall experience, the discussion leads to the development of the fifth hypothesis:

**H5:** The importance of added value has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

Nevertheless, festival activities, services, and added value are not the only aspects of the festival experience. The image and branding of a festival is also found to be a component of the festival experience.

### *Image and Branding*

Image is referred to by Wu and Ai (2016) as the overall impression of an organization that is “left in the customers mind as a result of accumulative feelings, ideas, attitudes and experiences with the organisation” (p. 362). The overall perception of an organization generates meaning for the consumer and may induce an emotional response as memories associated with the organization are recalled (Bravo, Montaner, & Pina, 2009; Dowling, 1988; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Wu and Li (2015) and Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) found that the overall image on an organization may be determined by the consumer’s evaluation of the quality of their experience. Thus, research has found that image consequently impacts on satisfaction (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Aziz, Ariffin, Omar, &

Siow, 2011; Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015; J. Wong et al., 2015; Wu, 2013, 2014), on consumer behavior, and on behavioral intention (Huang, Li, & Cai, 2010; J. Wong et al., 2015). Thus, the image and branding of a festival generates consumer expectations, from which the congruity between consumer expectations and perceptions contributes to the overall festival experience (Chon, Christianson, & Lee, 1995; J. Lee & Beeler, 2006). However, whereas the influence of image and branding on the consumer experience is evident, it remains unclear whether it is an important attribute of the experience for festival-goers, let alone whether there is any relationship between festival-goers’ sociodemographic characteristics and festival image. Nevertheless, tourism research has revealed some significance between age and destination image (Beerli & Martin, 2004; S. S. Kim & Morrison, 2005). Hence, this leads to the development of a sixth hypothesis:

**H6:** The importance of image and branding has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

In considering the image and branding of a festival, the literature has also highlighted the ethical aspects of the music festival as an area in which festival-goers may or may not acknowledge and influence their experience and/or consumer behavior.

### *Ethics*

There is an increasing awareness of the ethical and environmental issues surrounding festivals (Getz, 1997). Mair and Laing (2012), for example, reported that consumer demand is one of the main reasons that festival organizers pursue environmentally sustainable practices at music festivals, while Sharpe’s (2008) research found environmental responsibility to be an important dimension of music festivals. Other studies have identified a positive relationship between environmentally sustainable practices and decision-making processes (e.g., do Paço & Raposo, 2009; Y. Kim & Han, 2010; Song, Lee, Kang, & Boo, 2012). The role of corporate sponsorship at festivals has also been discussed in relation to festival experiences. Johansson and Toraldo (2017), for example, referred to sponsorship as a countercultural and inauthentic element

of festivals that may impact negatively on festival-goers' perceptions and experience. In contrast, however, Anderton (2011) found that it can add value to the festival-goer's experience, encouraging ethical and environmental engagement. Rowley and Williams (2008) also found that festival-goers attribute particular values with sponsors, and that congruence between festival-goers' values and the festival is important to meet consumers' expectations. However, they did not specifically examine the impact of sponsorship on the consumer experience. In addition, although the role of sponsorship is subject to debate in terms of an "authentic" festival experience, the concept of authenticity itself has been found to influence festival-goers' experiences (Anderton, 2007; Matheson, 2008; Raybould, Digance, & McCullough, 1999) as they desire an experience that "entails the feeling of a 'must see' or 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience" (Getz & Cheyne, 2002, p. 142; see also Getz, 2008). What is regarded as "authentic" and how important this is within the festival experience, however, may only be perceived by the festival-goer. Following the discussion on ethical considerations and their role in the festival-goer's experience, a seventh and final hypothesis is proposed:

**H7:** The importance of ethics has a positive relationship to the overall experience.

Although the importance of the experiential dimensions of the festival experience examined here may provide insight as to what festival-goers want and desire, it is of fundamental importance to understand what the overall festival experience is.

### *Overall Experience*

Intangible, continuous, personal, and subjective in nature (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; O'Dell, 2007), as a tacit concept (Jennings, 2006) the term "experience" is complex to define (Manthiou, Lee, Tang, & Chiang, 2014). Various perspectives and approaches have resulted in multiple definitions of the term that are dependent on the context in which it is examined. The overall festival experience in the context of this research adopts a service quality approach that incorporates consumer

satisfaction and festival quality. Geus, Richards, and Toepoel (2016) emphasized that experiences produce outcomes as they trigger physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual reactions (Getz, 2008; Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). As an outcome to experience, satisfaction is defined as a response to the evaluation of an experience (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Many studies have continued to find satisfaction to be a key determinant of consumer behavior and behavioral intent (Oliver, 2010; Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Satisfaction is therefore an important representation of a consumer's experience. Research has similarly shown that the perceived quality of a product or service has a positive relationship to both satisfaction and consumer behavior. In the context of festivals, numerous studies exploring the festival experience confirm a positive relationship between festival quality, satisfaction, and consumer behavior (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000; Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Cole & Illum, 2006; J. Lee & Beeler, 2006; S. Y. Lee, Petrick, & Crompton, 2007; Yoon et al., 2010; Yuan & Jang, 2008). Ueltschy, Laroche, Eggert, and Bindl (2007) discussed how different consumers express diverse levels of satisfaction for the same experience, as satisfaction is inherent to the consumer's perceptions of attributes of an experience and how they relate to the individual (Boshoff & Gray, 2004). Hence, this research focuses on exploring the relationship between the importance of festival specific attributes to the overall festival experience. In doing so, it analyzes the influence of festival-goers' sociodemographic characteristics to determine any significant relationships and to better understand festival-goers' wants and needs.

### Proposed Model

In event research, experience is becoming a popular field of academic exploration (Geus et al., 2016), as it is increasingly recognized to be a critical component in future consumer behavior. For festivals in particular, experience is a primary determinant of repeat attendance (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000), recommendation to others (Y. Lee et al., 2008), and spending habits (Yi, 1990). Therefore, understanding what influences the overall

experience is vital if festival organizers are to strategically manage and improve their festivals. Just as many have found that the perceived quality and satisfaction of individual attributes contribute to the overall visitor experience, so too has research revealed that the importance and value of attributes to festival-goers also plays a significant role in the overall experience (Getz, 2008; Gummerus, 2013; Moufakkir & Pernecky, 2014). In other words, the elements of the event experience that are valued by consumers may have a stronger influence on the overall experience and, therefore, future behavior (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014).

The overall festival experience can be perceived as the outcome of the amalgamation of various experiential attributes (Geus et al., 2016). Music, as the central focus of popular music festivals, along with other entertaining features are perceived as key factors that have a strong influence on the overall experience (Andersson et al., 2012; Thrane, 2002; Wan & Chan, 2013; Wu & Ai, 2016). Supporting services and other elements that add value are also found to impact on the overall experience (Wan & Chan, 2013; Yoon et al., 2010), including a perceived focus on ethical considerations (Mair & Laing, 2012; Sharpe, 2008). However, their importance to the festival-goer has received only limited academic attention. Furthermore, the engagement with an organization along with image and branding are also found to have a significant impact on the overall experience (Bennett, 2012; Huang et al., 2010; Hudson et al., 2015; Sundbo & Darmer, 2008; J. Wong et al., 2015), yet similarly, these factors have not been studied in relation to importance and value to the festival-goer. The importance of specific attributes of the festival experience may therefore play a significant role in the overall experience.

Figure 1 presents the test model for this study. It proposes that the overall experience of festival-goers at UK music festivals is influenced by the importance of: (1) music, (2) other entertainment, (3) services, (4) engagement, (5) added value, (6) image and branding, and (7) ethics. The model also takes into consideration the influence of seven sociodemographic variables (gender, age, where the festival-goer grew up, level of education, annual income, marital status, and employment status) on each of the experience factors.

## Methods

### *Research Characteristics*

Data were collected through a self-administered, online survey. This data collection method was employed owing to the practical limitations associated with administering a paper or electronic survey in person at a music festival. Similarly, this enabled a wider and broader scope of festival-goers to be included in the study, as opposed to limiting to particular festivals. Specifically, an online survey avoids issues associated with security, privacy, and storage of data among potentially intoxicated festival-goers and adverse weather conditions. Furthermore, it may avoid any bias associated with the high-spirited nature of music festivals, allowing sufficient time for attendees to reflect upon their experience. While many authors discussed the importance of collecting data during the lived experience (Jackson, 2014; O'Neill, Getz & Carlsen, 1999), according to consumer behavior research, purchase decisions are often based on the recalled, evaluated experience (Gardial, Clemons, Woodruff, Schumann, & Burns, 1994; Larsen, 2007). Therefore, the online survey was timed to be live from September to October 2014 (i.e., at the end of the typical UK music festival season). This was to allow for a suitable period of time to have passed following festival attendance so that festival-goers will have been able to reflect and evaluate their experience with minimal emotional bias (or “postfestival blues”), yet without forgetting too much of their experience. However, the survey incorporated attributes of pre-, peri-, and postfestival experience.

The first page of the online survey detailed the aims and guidelines of the research and declared how the data would be used and stored. Rubin (2000) discussed the issues of privacy in utilizing online surveys; however, participants were not required to leave any information that would directly identify them and, as such, anonymity and confidentiality were assured.

The online survey was disseminated using a cluster, snowball sampling technique via social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, and festival-specific online forums and discussion boards such as the “Download Fan Forum” and the “E-Festivals” websites. As a result, a total 792 responses were received with 586 completed surveys.



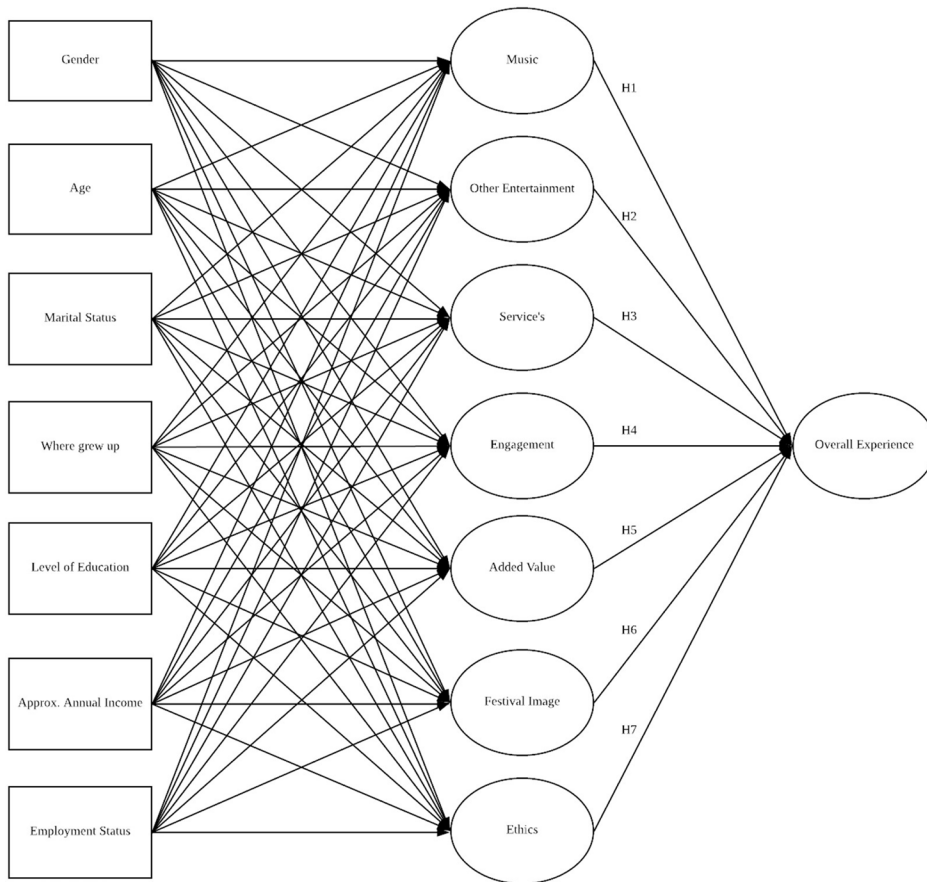


Figure 1. The proposed model.

### Sample Size Determination and Justification

Fundamental to determining sample size is appropriate representation. As the population of UK music festival-goers is unknown, the researcher is recommended to choose a conservative response format of 50/50 to determine sample size (Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996). In other words, it is assumed that 50% of the respondents have negative perceptions, and 50% do not. Akis et al. (1996) explained that the maximum acceptable sampling error should not exceed 5%. Thus, a confidence level of at least 95% and a sampling error of 5% were selected. Furthermore, in research that has a minimum 95% confidence level (and 5% sampling error), the *t*-table gives cumulative probability (*Z*) of 1.96 (Sekaran

& Bougie, 2016). According to Akis et al.'s (1996) sample determination formula, the sample size was

$$N = \frac{Z^2(\text{hypothesis})}{S^2} \Rightarrow N = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.5)^2} \Rightarrow N = 384.16 \text{ (rounded to 400)}$$

As the calculation of sample size is independent of the total population size, the sample size determines the error (Aaker, Kumar, & Day, 1990). Participants self-selected to complete the online survey and from 792 responses, 586 were completed (response rate: 73.99%). The overall statistical error for the sample population was 4.05%.

### *Survey Development and Selection of Variables*

The dependent variables were drawn from themes and issues emerging from a review of extant literature. More specifically, the variables examining the overall experience were developed from Y. Lee et al. (2008), Manthiou et al. (2014) and Yoon et al., (2010). The pre-festival experience variables were adopted from Bowen and Daniels (2005), Burr and Scott (2004), and Otto and Ritchie (1996). During the festival was subdivided into: festival product, festival services, festival enhancers, and festival emotions. These importance-rated questions were adapted from D. A. Baker and Crompton (2000), Chen et al. (2012), Cole and Chancellor (2009), Crompton and Love (1995), Y. Lee et al. (2008), Morgan (2008), Otto and Ritchie (1996), Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), and Tkaczynski and Stokes (2005). The post-festival experience questions were developed from Hudson and Hudson (2013), Y. Lee et al. (2008), Leenders (2010), and Manthiou et al. (2014).

The research also selected seven independent variables based on their relevance in previous related studies. Faulkner, Fredline, Larson, and Tomljenovic (1999) and Pegg and Patterson (2010) suggested that gender may influence the importance and value of specific elements to an event visitor, and Formica and Uysal (1995) also found age plays an important role. Marital status has also been found to influence visitor preferences (Swinyard & Smith, 2003). C. Lee, Lee, and Wicks (2004) noted nationality to influence decision-making and satisfaction, whereas Reisinger and Turner (2012) and Litvin, Crotts, and Hefner (2004) found more specifically that where someone grows up, adopting local cultural norms, and behavior to have more influence. Finally, level of education (Moutinho, 1987), annual income (Li, Huang, & Cai, 2009), and employment status (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001) have also been found to influence perceptions of value and consumer behavior. Therefore, this article takes into consideration these seven sociodemographic characteristics and adopted these constructs from Decrop (1999).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The survey consisted of 50 statements. These were divided into two categories: sociodemographic

information and evaluations of the festival experience. The seven sociodemographic constructs included: age, gender, marital status, where the festival-goer grew up, level of education, approximate annual income, and employment status. The festival experience constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important) and were divided into six sections. The first section addressed the pre-festival experience (11 attributes); during the festival (36 attributes) was subdivided into festival product, service, enhancers, and emotions; and, finally, the post-festival experience (3 attributes). Overall experience questions were also on a 5-point Likert-scale; however, 1 was anchored at low quality or very dissatisfied with 5 at high quality or very satisfied. Both basic and advanced statistical tests were conducted including descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and linear analysis structural equation modeling (SEM) for hypothesis testing. Validity and reliability were examined using chi-square, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO)–Bartlett test, varimax rotation loadings, and Cronbach’s alpha. The findings were significant at the 0.05 level of confidence.

### Findings

#### *Overall Experience Through Importance of Experience Attributes*

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic profile of the respondents. The respondents were between 18 and 60 years old, slightly more males than females, and with most having grown up in the North West of England. As shown in Table 2, the descriptive statistics revealed that the most important attributes of the festival experience are atmosphere, and the quality of music and performance, followed by memorable experiences, quality of sound and lighting, and feeling safe and secure. The least important aspects of the festival experience were having a commercial experience, having access to VIP packages and upgrades, and whether the festival is sponsored and/or by whom. Generally, most experiential attributes are regarded to be between moderate to extremely important. Examining the importance of experience attributes in

Table 1.  
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Survey  
Respondents ( $N=586$ )

| Characteristics                               | Percent |
|---|---------|
| <b>Age</b>                                    |         |
| 18–20   | 11.4%   |
| 21–29   | 36.0%   |
| 30–39   | 19.3%   |
| 40–49   | 21.5%   |
| 50–59   | 10.1%   |
| 60+   | 1.7%    |
| <b>Gender</b>                                 |         |
| Male  | 57.0%   |
| Female  | 43.0%   |
| <b>Marital status</b>                         |         |
| Married                                       | 31.2%   |
| Cohabiting with significant other             | 24.1%   |
| Single  | 44.7%   |
| <b>Where grew up</b>                          |         |
| Scotland                                      | 4.3%    |
| Wales   | 4.3%    |
| Northern Ireland                              | 1.2%    |
| North East England                            | 7.8%    |
| North West England                            | 42.5%   |
| East Midlands                                 | 4.1%    |
| West Midlands                                 | 5.8%    |
| Yorkshire and the Humber                      | 3.2%    |
| East of England                               | 3.4%    |
| South East England                            | 10.8%   |
| South West England                            | 6.7%    |
| London  | 2.6%    |
| Outside the UK                                | 3.4%    |
| <b>Level of education</b>                     |         |
| No schooling completed                        | 0.9%    |
| GCSEs, O levels or equivalent                 | 12.3%   |
| A-Levels, college certification or equivalent | 24.9%   |
| Trade, technical, or vocational training      | 6.0%    |
| Foundation degree                             | 6.3%    |
| Bachelor's degree                             | 32.4%   |
| Master's degree                               | 9.9%    |
| Doctorate degree                              | 1.9%    |
| Professional degree                           | 5.5%    |
| <b>Employment status</b>                      |         |
| Employed                                      | 84.5%   |
| Unemployed                                    | 15.5%   |
| <b>Annual income</b>                          |         |
| <£14,999                                      | 25.4%   |
| £15,000–£29,999                               | 39.2%   |
| £30,000–£44,999                               | 22.2%   |
| £45,000–£59,999                               | 8.0%    |
| >£60,000                                      | 5.1%    |

relation to sociodemographics, most of the statistical significances were associated with age, followed by gender, with where the festival-goer grew up and employment status with the least statistical significances.

### Factor and Regression Analysis

To further analyze the variability among the correlated, observed variables and further define factors (unobserved variables) of experience attributes, factor analysis was implemented (see Table 3). Focusing on the important components of the research, absolute values of less than 0.400 were suppressed for higher coefficients. The correlation matrix revealed numbers larger than 0.400 over almost all statements; only three items were eliminated due to low factor loading ( $<0.400$ ). The KMO of sampling adequacy was 0.893, which is higher than the minimum 0.6 required for further analysis, whereas statistical significance also existed (0.000), suggesting conversion validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Concerning the validity of variables, Cronbach's alpha values (Table 3) indicated satisfactory levels of internal consistency, revealing overall reliability as 0.928 and all variables were over 7 (minimum value 7; Nunnally, 1978). Chi-square was used for model fit, which showed  $\chi^2 = 14965.75$ . To establish validity in the variables, exploratory factor analysis was also performed with varimax rotation, of which most of the loadings were relatively high.

Eight components emerged from the factor analysis, which were subsequently labeled according to the characteristics associated with the attributes. These were comprised as: overall experience, music, other entertainment, services, engagement, added value, ethics, and festival image. The examination of the components revealed that the total  $R^2 = 0.388$ . This score reveals the importance of this research (Fig. 2).

Regression analysis was statistically significant in accordance to ANOVA, producing the following results: music (sig.  $< 0.01$ ), other entertainment (sig.  $< 0.01$ ), services (sig.  $> 0.05$ ), engagement (sig.  $> 0.05$ ), added value (sig.  $< 0.01$ ), ethics (sig.  $> 0.05$ ), festival image (sig.  $> 0.05$ ), which reveals the importance of festival attributes to the overall experience. The standardized coefficients indicate that the primary factor influencing overall experience is other entertainment, followed by added value and music. The other factors do not have a significant relationship with the overall experience. As a result, only three of the seven hypotheses presented in Figure 1 are confirmed.

Table 2  
Descriptive Statistics

| Statement   | Mean | SD    | G Sig.       | A Sig.       | MS Sig.      | WGU Sig.     | Ed Sig.      | I Sig.       | Em Sig.      |
|---|------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Prefestival experience</b>                           |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| (Pre)Communication & engagement                         | 3.36 | 0.998 | 0.812        | 0.423        | 0.995        | <b>0.031</b> | 0.499        | 0.824        | 0.617        |
| (Pre)Booking process                                    | 3.63 | 1.050 | <b>0.002</b> | 0.105        | 0.294        | <b>0.003</b> | <b>0.039</b> | 0.382        | 0.492        |
| (Pre)Website  | 3.36 | 1.135 | 0.015        | <b>0.047</b> | 0.377        | 0.840        | 0.059        | 0.371        | 0.576        |
| (Pre)Branding   | 2.74 | 1.131 | 0.072        | <b>0.000</b> | 0.490        | 0.316        | 0.836        | 0.250        | <b>0.004</b> |
| (Pre)Location   | 3.28 | 1.138 | 0.311        | 0.288        | 0.891        | 0.187        | 0.993        | 0.608        | 0.512        |
| (Pre)Trust  | 3.80 | 0.919 | <b>0.010</b> | 0.191        | 0.301        | 0.845        | 0.587        | 0.161        | 0.056        |
| (Pre)Faith  | 3.67 | 0.927 | 0.541        | 0.795        | 0.280        | 0.444        | <b>0.036</b> | 0.552        | 0.238        |
| (Pre)Line up  | 3.91 | 1.009 | 0.886        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.002</b> | 0.151        | 0.263        | <b>0.002</b> | <b>0.043</b> |
| (Pre)Value  | 3.59 | 1.014 | 0.052        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.006</b> | 0.202        | 0.255        | <b>0.000</b> | 0.182        |
| (Pre)Ethics   | 3.42 | 1.113 | 0.305        | 0.472        | 0.454        | 0.828        | <b>0.020</b> | <b>0.002</b> | 0.404        |
| (Pre)Sponsorship  | 1.91 | 1.156 | 0.557        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.049</b> | <b>0.018</b> | <b>0.001</b> | 0.783        |
| <b>Festival product</b>                                 |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Access & availability of facilities & comfort amenities | 3.77 | 0.920 | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.002</b> | 0.606        | 0.250        | <b>0.037</b> | 0.281        | 0.111        |
| Quality of facilities & comfort amenities               | 3.60 | 0.960 | <b>0.001</b> | <b>0.008</b> | <b>0.024</b> | 0.272        | 0.382        | 0.701        | <b>0.003</b> |
| Variety of food and beverages                           | 3.47 | 0.954 | 0.103        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.009</b> | 0.414        | 0.052        | 0.119        | 0.131        |
| Quality of food and beverages                           | 3.62 | 0.932 | 0.105        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.016</b> | 0.141        | 0.054        | 0.336        | 0.064        |
| Variety of things to do                                 | 3.64 | 0.996 | <b>0.003</b> | 0.149        | 0.184        | 0.069        | 0.296        | 0.241        | 0.722        |
| Quality of other entertainment & activities             | 3.44 | 1.071 | <b>0.032</b> | 0.250        | 0.571        | 0.211        | 0.282        | <b>0.032</b> | 0.283        |
| Quality of sound & lighting                             | 4.14 | 0.839 | 0.519        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.002</b> | 0.931        | 0.082        | 0.798        | <b>0.028</b> |
| Quality of music & performance                          | 4.46 | 0.645 | 0.714        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.020</b> | 0.083        | 0.000        | 0.231        | <b>0.031</b> |
| Souvenirs   | 2.00 | 1.060 | 0.971        | <b>0.018</b> | <b>0.025</b> | 0.796        | <b>0.010</b> | <b>0.081</b> | <b>0.033</b> |
| Cleanliness   | 3.35 | 1.054 | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.007</b> | <b>0.048</b> | <b>0.009</b> | 0.501        | 0.254        | <b>0.007</b> |
| VIP & upgrades  | 1.87 | 1.149 | <b>0.006</b> | <b>0.041</b> | 0.511        | <b>0.002</b> | <b>0.006</b> | 0.177        | 0.315        |
| <b>Festival service</b>                                 |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Friendliness of staff                                   | 3.68 | 0.863 | <b>0.012</b> | <b>0.003</b> | 0.128        | 0.096        | <b>0.031</b> | <b>0.004</b> | <b>0.002</b> |
| Professionalism of staff                                | 3.70 | 0.874 | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.043</b> | 0.146        | 0.475        | 0.272        | 0.636        | 0.353        |
| Personalized ex   | 3.06 | 1.128 | 0.757        | <b>0.011</b> | 0.075        | 0.175        | 0.706        | <b>0.003</b> | 0.167        |

(Continued)

Table 2 (Continued)  
Descriptive Statistics

| Statement                                   | Mean | SD    | G Sig.       | A Sig.       | MS Sig.      | WGU Sig.     | Ed Sig.      | I Sig.       | Em Sig.      |
|---|------|-------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Festival improvement                        | 3.33 | 0.989 | 0.063        | <b>0.000</b> | 0.016        | 0.521        | <b>0.004</b> | <b>0.019</b> | 0.117        |
| Communication & engagement                  | 3.31 | 0.991 | 0.033        | <b>0.041</b> | 0.725        | 0.616        | <b>0.021</b> | 0.138        | 0.264        |
| Environmentally friendly                    | 3.17 | 1.156 | 0.086        | <b>0.007</b> | 0.075        | <b>0.011</b> | 0.322        | 0.186        | 0.381        |
| <b>Festival enhancers</b>                   |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Visual appearance                           | 3.48 | 0.889 | <b>0.026</b> | <b>0.022</b> | 0.075        | 0.557        | 0.535        | 0.063        | 0.396        |
| Atmosphere                                  | 4.47 | 0.616 | 0.304        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.005</b> | 0.057        | 0.268        | 0.406        | 0.775        |
| Site layout                                 | 3.83 | 0.891 | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.000</b> | 0.105        | 0.288        | 0.208        | <b>0.008</b> | 0.696        |
| Programming & schedule                      | 3.88 | 0.837 | 0.196        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.042</b> | 0.569        | 0.160        | 0.209        | 0.791        |
| Signage & information services              | 3.56 | 0.927 | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.011</b> | 0.164        | 0.322        | 0.102        | <b>0.008</b> | 0.224        |
| Grass roots                                 | 2.93 | 1.130 | <b>0.041</b> | 0.079        | 0.245        | 0.177        | <b>0.037</b> | 0.067        | 0.400        |
| Commercial                                  | 1.70 | 0.948 | <b>0.041</b> | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.042</b> | 0.055        | 0.087        | <b>0.006</b> | 0.133        |
| Traffic control                             | 3.32 | 1.097 | <b>0.000</b> | 0.217        | <b>0.003</b> | 0.275        | <b>0.038</b> | 0.435        | 0.822        |
| Crowd control                               | 3.69 | 1.043 | <b>0.001</b> | <b>0.000</b> | 0.205        | 0.286        | <b>0.007</b> | 0.419        | 0.185        |
| <b>Festival experience and emotions</b>     |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Sense of community/belonging                | 3.58 | 1.004 | 0.609        | 0.141        | 0.889        | 0.428        | 0.201        | <b>0.036</b> | 0.928        |
| Memorable experience                        | 4.31 | 0.716 | 0.661        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.005</b> | 0.773        | <b>0.001</b> | <b>0.014</b> | 0.243        |
| Unique experience                           | 3.66 | 1.058 | <b>0.029</b> | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.007</b> | 0.118        | <b>0.014</b> | 0.072        | 0.609        |
| Valued and respected by festival            | 3.69 | 1.003 | 0.154        | <b>0.040</b> | 0.783        | 0.411        | <b>0.016</b> | <b>0.023</b> | 0.836        |
| Surprised                                   | 3.21 | 1.122 | 0.313        | <b>0.028</b> | 0.105        | 0.774        | 0.827        | 0.183        | 0.445        |
| Festival feels familiar                     | 3.07 | 1.119 | 0.052        | <b>0.042</b> | 0.845        | 0.538        | <b>0.001</b> | 0.249        | 0.365        |
| Feel safe & secure                          | 4.13 | 0.868 | 0.002        | 0.163        | 0.261        | 0.597        | <b>0.000</b> | 0.168        | 0.880        |
| Socializing                                 | 3.98 | 0.890 | 0.699        | <b>0.000</b> | <b>0.000</b> | 0.159        | 0.216        | 0.074        | 0.865        |
| Alcohol & drugs                             | 3.12 | 1.228 | <b>0.031</b> | <b>0.013</b> | <b>0.033</b> | 0.554        | 0.099        | 0.747        | 0.271        |
| Weather                                     | 3.26 | 1.120 | 0.058        | 0.220        | 0.221        | 0.326        | 0.105        | 0.731        | 0.455        |
| <b>Postfestival experience</b>              |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| (Post)Social media communication            | 2.83 | 1.195 | 0.130        | 0.110        | 0.115        | 0.499        | 0.056        | 0.084        | 0.642        |
| (Post)Opportunity to feedback               | 3.13 | 1.197 | 0.205        | <b>0.032</b> | 0.134        | <b>0.004</b> | 0.051        | 0.094        | 0.613        |
| (Post)Festival cares about my repeat custom | 3.44 | 1.158 | 0.454        | 0.280        | 0.350        | 0.345        | <b>0.037</b> | 0.675        | 0.699        |
| <b>Overall experience</b>                   |      |       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |
| Quality of your experience                  | 4.39 | 0.705 | 0.299        | 0.746        | 0.858        | <b>0.041</b> | 0.548        | 0.747        | <b>0.020</b> |
| How satisfied are you with your experience  | 4.45 | 0.629 | 0.887        | 0.837        | 0.870        | 0.096        | 0.614        | 0.642        | 0.220        |
| Current level of quality at festivals       | 4.07 | 0.825 | <b>0.008</b> | 0.594        | 0.311        | 0.071        | 0.221        | 0.753        | 0.062        |

Note. G. = gender; A. = age; MS. = marital status; WGU = where grew up significance; Ed = level of education significance; I = approximate annual income significance; Em = employment significance. The values shown in bold indicate a statistical significance at the 0.05 level of confidence.

Table 3  
Importance of Experience Attributes

| Statement   | Cronbach's Alpha | Skewness | Kurtosis | Factor Loading |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| <b>Music</b>  | <b>0.753</b>     |          |          |                |
| (Pre)Line up  |                  | -0.622   | -0.283   | 0.664          |
| (Pre)Value  |                  | -0.464   | -0.170   | 0.564          |
| Quality of sound & lighting                             |                  | -0.955   | 0.988    | 0.593          |
| Quality of music & performance                          |                  | -1.104   | 1.659    | 0.670          |
| Site layout   |                  | -0.594   | 0.263    | 0.501          |
| Programming & schedule                                  |                  | -0.510   | 0.068    | 0.580          |
| <b>Other entertainment</b>                              | <b>0.780</b>     |          |          |                |
| Variety of things to do                                 |                  | -0.608   | 0.111    | 0.571          |
| Quality of other entertainment & activities             |                  | -0.402   | -0.458   | 0.562          |
| Atmosphere  |                  | -1.034   | 1.795    | 0.618          |
| Memorable experience                                    |                  | -0.918   | 1.168    | 0.632          |
| Unique experience                                       |                  | -0.573   | -0.094   | 0.658          |
| Surprised   |                  | -0.268   | -0.544   | 0.595          |
| Socializing   |                  | -0.725   | 0.377    | 0.595          |
| Alcohol & drugs   |                  | -0.266   | -0.799   | 0.492          |
| <b>Services</b>   | <b>0.874</b>     |          |          |                |
| Access & availability of facilities & comfort amenities |                  | -0.435   | -0.120   | 0.630          |
| Quality of facilities & comfort amenities               |                  | -0.296   | -0.272   | 0.687          |
| Variety of food and beverages                           |                  | -0.243   | -0.258   | 0.736          |
| Quality of food and beverages                           |                  | -0.385   | -0.116   | 0.730          |
| Cleanliness   |                  | -0.185   | -0.509   | 0.639          |
| Signage & information services                          |                  | -0.298   | -0.164   | 0.428          |
| Traffic control   |                  | -0.287   | -0.602   | 0.545          |
| Crowd control   |                  | -0.556   | -0.190   | 0.509          |
| <b>Engagement</b>                                       | <b>0.876</b>     |          |          |                |
| Friendliness of staff                                   |                  | -0.574   | 0.306    | 0.435          |
| Professionalism of staff                                |                  | -0.532   | 0.225    | 0.508          |
| Festival improvement                                    |                  | -0.307   | -0.145   | 0.450          |
| Communication & engagement                              |                  | -0.286   | -0.318   | 0.604          |
| Sense of community/belonging                            |                  | -0.579   | 0.107    | 0.427          |
| Valued and respected by festival                        |                  | -0.686   | 0.154    | 0.573          |
| Festival feels familiar                                 |                  | -0.176   | -0.598   | 0.460          |
| Feel safe & secure                                      |                  | -0.847   | 0.315    | 0.518          |
| (Post)Social media communication                        |                  | -0.114   | -0.896   | 0.653          |
| (Post)Opportunity to feedback                           |                  | -0.285   | -0.788   | 0.733          |
| (Post)Festival cares about my repeat custom             |                  | -0.558   | -0.433   | 0.693          |
| <b>Added value</b>                                      | <b>0.682</b>     |          |          |                |
| Souvenirs   |                  | 0.834    | -0.106   | 0.559          |
| VIP & upgrades  |                  | 1.192    | 0.461    | 0.597          |
| Personalized ex   |                  | -0.132   | -0.624   | 0.408          |
| Commercial  |                  | 1.303    | 1.144    | 0.710          |
| Weather   |                  | -0.187   | -0.457   | 0.454          |
| <b>Ethics</b>   | <b>0.741</b>     |          |          |                |
| (Pre)Ethics   |                  | -0.405   | -0.519   | 0.715          |
| (Pre)Sponsorship  |                  | 1.154    | 0.401    | 0.686          |
| Environmentally friendly                                |                  | -0.170   | -0.716   | 0.685          |
| Grass roots   |                  | -0.122   | -0.699   | 0.687          |
| <b>Festival image</b>                                   | <b>0.722</b>     |          |          |                |
| (Pre)Communication & engagement                         |                  | -0.403   | -0.144   | 0.459          |
| (Pre)Booking process                                    |                  | -0.613   | -0.126   | 0.620          |
| (Pre)Website  |                  | -0.476   | -0.442   | 0.616          |
| (Pre)Branding   |                  | 0.060    | -0.716   | 0.602          |
| (Pre)Faith  |                  | -0.647   | 0.368    | 0.416          |
| <b>Overall experience</b>                               | <b>0.782</b>     |          |          |                |
| How would you rate the quality of your experience       |                  | -1.003   | 0.932    | 0.821          |
| How satisfied are you with your experience              |                  | -1.207   | 2.814    | 0.812          |
| Current level of quality at festivals                   |                  | -0.736   | 0.611    | 0.728          |

The independent variables (gender, age, marital status, where grew up, level of education, approximate annual income, and employment status) also influence the factors of analysis, which can be seen in Figure 2. More specifically, age followed by gender mainly influence the importance of experience attributes, with employment status only influencing the importance of added value.

*Hypothesis Testing*

As shown in Figure 2, only three of the seven hypotheses have been confirmed. These include the relationship between other entertainment, added value, and music to the overall experience. More specifically, the importance of other entertainment

has a positive impact on overall experience (H2: = 0.287,  $p < 0.01$ ). Conversely the importance of added value (H5: = -0.134,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the importance of music (H1: = -0.087,  $p < 0.01$ ) has a negative influence on the overall experience. Four hypotheses were not confirmed. The importance of services (H3: = -0.041,  $p > 0.05$ ), engagement (H4: = 0.112,  $p > 0.05$ ), ethics (H6: = -0.056,  $p > 0.05$ ), and festival image (H7: = -0.022,  $p > 0.05$ ) did not have a significant influence on the overall experience.

Discussion and Implications

The results from the research reveal a direct relationship between the importance of music experience-related attributes to the overall experience at UK music festivals. Therefore, the

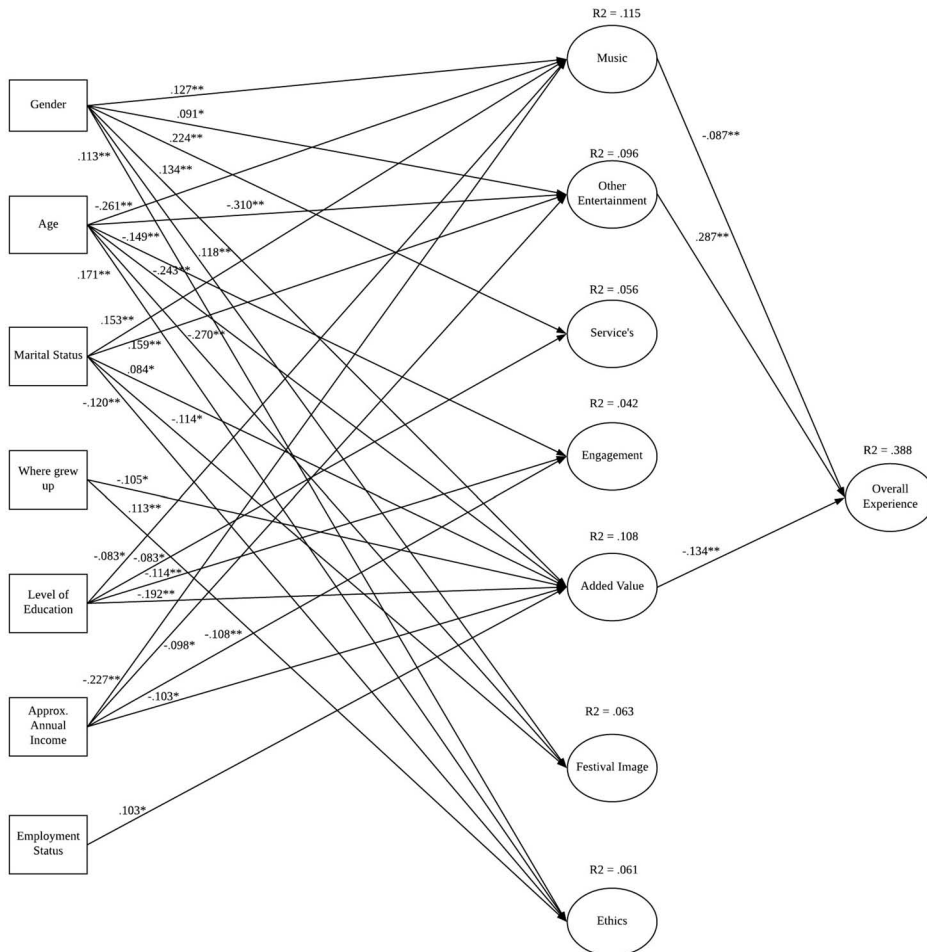


Figure 2. The influential factors to the festival-goers overall experience.\*Coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level.\*\*Coefficients are significant at the 0.01 level.

heightened importance of music may have a stronger influence on the overall experience than other festival experience attributes. Specifically, the results show that the more important the music is to the festival-goer, the lower the overall experience is rated. These results were consistent across all festival-goers, regardless of the different sociodemographic characteristics. This finding confirms the studies of Andersson et al. (2012), Papadimitroui (2013), and Thrane (2002) that music has a strong influence on the festival-goer's experience at music festivals and is of high importance and value.

Confirming studies from J-S. Lee et al. (2009), Özdemiş and Çulha (2009), and Yoon et al. (2010), the importance of added value attributes has also been revealed to have a similar, direct relationship with the overall experience. The research shows that the more important added value is to the festival-goer, the lower the experience is rated. That is, the importance of experiential attributes that add value, such as souvenirs, VIP upgrades, and personalized experiences, is found to negatively influence the overall festival experience. This is similarly consistent among all festival-goers.

This research demonstrates that festival-goers who assign higher value and importance to the music-related or added value attributes of the festival do not rate their overall experience as highly as others. This suggests that they are either much more critical and harder to please than other festival-goers, or perhaps their expectations in these areas are higher. Either way, if festival organizers wish to improve the overall experience for these festival-goers, they need to focus and invest their management efforts into the core, music-related aspects and added value elements of the festival.

Another finding from the research demonstrates that the importance of entertainment has a direct relationship to the overall experience. This finding confirms studies from D. A. Baker and Crompton (2000), Cole and Chancellor (2009), and Wu and Ai (2016) in that entertainment positively influences festival-goers' perceptions of their experience. Specifically, entertainment is pivotal in influencing attendees' experiences, inducing responses of laughter and joy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), providing fun, enjoyment, and enriching experiences

(Cole & Chancellor, 2009). This suggests that either festival-goers who place higher importance on entertainment are more easily pleased, or that their expectations are being met (or exceeded). In turn, this suggests that if festival organizers wish to improve the overall experience, they must find other ways to do so for those who do not place high importance on entertainment attributes of the music festival.

Although other factors (services, ethics, engagement, festival image) of the festival experience are still valued by festival-goers, these were not found to have a direct influence on the overall experience, suggesting festival organizers should focus on music, added value, and entertainment aspects of the festival.

Examining the relationship between sociodemographic and attributes of the festival experience also revealed some significant findings. For gender, the research revealed that, generally, festival experience attributes are more important to females than males, supporting previous related studies on gender differences in tourism such as K. L. Baker and Draper (2013) and Patino, Kaltcheva, Pitta, Sriram, and Windsor (2014). In examining the relationship with age, most attributes of the festival experience are more important to younger festival-goers, except for festival ethics, which is typically more important to older festival-goers. This contrasts previous research by Uysal et al. (1993) but supports studies by Gibson and Yianakakis (2002) and Sikula and Costa (1994). Single festival-goers valued music, other entertainment, and added value more than those in a relationship, supporting Backman et al.'s (1995) research. However, the festival image and ethics were least important to single festival-goers. No previous significant research has analyzed the relationship between marital status and image or ethics at a festival; therefore, this fills a gap in the literature. Similarly, there has been no empirical research into the relationship between where festival-goers have grown up and the importance of experience attributes. However, this research reveals that festival-goers who grew up in the south of England or abroad rate ethics to be more important than those living in the north of the country. Those who grew up in the north of England and internationally rate "added value" to be more important, whereas this



is least important for those in the south of England. In examining the relationship between education and experience attributes, the results show that as the level of education increases, the importance of attributes decreases. In contradiction to K. L. Baker and Draper's (2013) study, as approximate annual income rises, the importance of experiential attributes decreases. Finally, unemployed festival-goers rated added value attributes to be more important than employed festival-goers, perhaps due to the value of their investment in attending a music festival. No previous research has examined the relationship between employment status and the importance of experiences.

#### *Overall Festival Experience Through the Importance of Festival Attributes*

The research findings also demonstrate the hierarchy of festival attributes in influencing overall festival experience. The most important variable is other entertainment, followed by added value and music. The importance of the findings is also revealed by the direct influence of those factors (other entertainment, added value, and music) on the overall festival experience. Figure 3 displays the influence of the importance of other entertainment, added value, and music to the overall festival experience. The findings confirm that the more important other entertainment is to the festival-goer, the higher rated the overall festival experience is. This correlates with other studies such as Chen et al. (2012), Cole and Chancellor (2009), and Tkaczynski and Stokes (2010) among others. Conversely, the more important music and added value is to the festival-goer, the lower rated the overall festival experience is. The findings suggest that as the importance of music and added value factors increase, the overall experience decreases. This may be explained by the value of these attributes to individual festival-goers, in that as the importance increases it has a more significant effect on the festival-goer and, therefore, they may be more at risk of being disappointed if their expectations are not met (J-S. Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011; Smith & Costello, 2009). Other factors of service, ethics, image, and engagement do not impact on the overall experience; however, that is not to say that they should be disregarded. As Cole and Chancellor

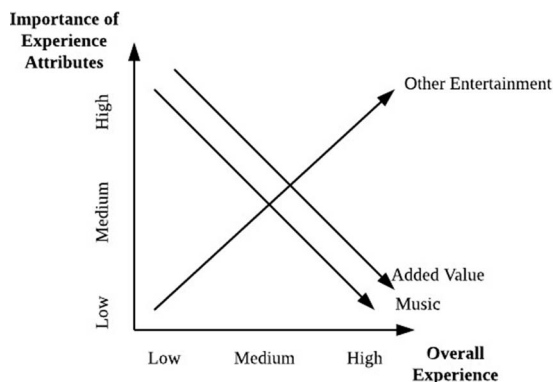


Figure 3. Model of relationship between importance of experience attributes and festival-goers overall experience.

(2009) determined in their research, services and amenities are provided for visitors, but may not be as enjoyable and engaging as other elements of the festival experience. Therefore, they may not have as much impact on the overall experience. The sociodemographic characteristics of festival-goers, such as gender, age, marital status, where the festival-goer grew up, level of education, approximate annual income, and employment status can all influence the importance of factors of the festival experience; however, the overall rationale remains the same. Therefore, the visual representation in Figure 3 offers significant value for festival organizers to better understand the contribution of the examined factors to the overall festival experience.

This study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, it confirms previous research regarding the importance of core festival activities such as music and entertainment, as well as revealing the importance of added value to the overall festival experience. It also determines the relationship between the importance of festival attributes and the overall festival experience. More specifically, it focuses on providing conceptual evidence through the examination of a model depicting the importance of festival attributes to the festival-goer in determining their overall experience. Moreover, it fills a gap in the literature by examining the influence of the importance of festival attributes (including pre-, peri-, and postfestival) to determining overall experience, while also revealing the impact of sociodemographic characteristics to the importance

of festival attributes. On a practical level, the research provides information to festival organizers that may influence the strategic management and design of the festival. Based on the findings, festival organizers may direct their efforts more efficiently towards the specific areas of the festival experience that are regarded as most important to their targeted or typical festival-goer while also acknowledging the impact of these factors to the overall festival experience. Festival organizers may also promote and advertise festivals more efficiently, attract specific market segments, and better understand their festival-goers needs and desires.

#### Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

This research has contributed to knowledge and filled a gap in the understanding of festival-goers and the experiences they seek by examining socio-demographic characteristics of festival-goers and exploring the influence on the importance of festival experience attributes (including pre-, peri- and postfestival) to the overall festival experience at UK music festivals. More specifically, it reveals that the importance of music, entertainment, and added value are crucial in determining the overall festival experience. Regardless of the festival-goers' socio-demographic characteristics, these factors remain a consistent influence on the overall festival experience. The importance of other entertainment has the most influence on the overall festival experience, followed by added value and music. However, although the importance of other entertainment has a positive influence on the overall experience, the importance of music and added value negatively influences the overall experience. Whereas other attributes (services, ethics, engagement, and festival image) of the festival experience are important to the festival-goer, these do not appear to have a significant relationship to the overall festival experience. That is not to say that these elements do not play a role in the overall experience, as they are still regarded important to the festival-goer and should be managed appropriately. Therefore, in exploring the festival-goer's experience, it can be understood that attributes of the festival are valued differently among festival-goers. Understanding what determines the overall festival experience is essential to the efficient and effective management

and design of festivals to maximize success and deliver optimal experiences for festival-goers.

The main significance of this study to festival organizers is that it enables them to predict the value of the overall festival experience based on the importance of festival attributes to their targeted or typical festival-goer. Furthermore, festival organizers can focus on the design and management of specific areas of the festival to deliver better experiences for their festival-goers, ultimately to maximize their success financially and experientially for the festival-goer. In so doing, they can strategically improve their festivals, attracting increased attendance and repeat visitation to more demanding festival-goers and improve profit margins. In addition, the festival industry can better understand the needs and desires of their festival-goers and how this may impact on the overall festival experience.

Despite these outcomes, the limitations of the study need to be highlighted. In particular, online surveys lack personalization and are limited to the standardized format of collecting surface opinions and, hence, are unable to clarify or delve deeper into responses. Therefore, qualitative research may provide further understanding of festival-goers' preferences. Using an online method also limits the sample to the internet population, which may inadvertently bias the research due to the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the online population, although it can be argued that most of the UK population has internet access. Similarly, the researcher's background and sharing of the survey on their own social media platforms within their social circle has also had an influence on the geographic makeup of the sample. It could also be surmised that the researcher's social network may share interests and sociodemographic characteristics that may also contribute to the resulting sample. However, the validity and reliability of the research has been confirmed through KMO, Cronbach's alpha, and chi-square.

The findings also point to the need for further research to determine other factors that may influence the overall festival experience. Potential further research could focus on the impact of festival-goers' psychographic characteristics such as motivations, frequency of attendance, and preferred music genre. Distinct types of festivals may attract different types of festival-goers who may

individually and/or collectively value particular attributes of the festival. The model proposed may also be utilized for further examination of different festivals or events, which will strengthen the theoretical and practical importance of the model. This could contribute towards the development and improvement of the model while also enabling the comparison of findings and perspectives.

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