

# The nature of the social experience at popular music festivals: Bestival a case study

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# Rationale, Aim & Objectives

- ▶ The aim of this research was to explore the nature of attendee's socialisation at music festivals.
- ▶ Winkle and Woosman (2013) stated that festival literature emphasises examining the economic impacts and therefore downplays the social implications of festivals on attendees.
- ▶ Music festival differentiation can be achieved through understanding attendees socialisation within the music festival, due to the importance of the social experience on the holistic event experience.

## ▶ Objectives

- ▶ To identify what is already known about the music festival experience.
- ▶ To explore further socialisation at music festivals with particular reference to Packer and Ballantyne's (2011) four facets of the music festival experience (music, festival, social and separation) and Nordvall et al.'s (2014) concepts of known-group socialisation, external socialisation and audience socialisation.
- ▶ To identify how the findings from the research can be used by festival organisers, especially Bestival, to enhance the social experiences of popular music festival goers.

# Literature Review



- ▶ The close proximity of the live music amplifies the natural capacity of music to evoke emotional experiences and influence mood (Laiho 2004). This is created within a socially intensive and emotionally heightened environment (Havel 2013).
- ▶ Festival goers undergo socialisation when attending music festivals; socialisation is the process of being social. Defined as “the acquisition, maintenance, and modification of the social beliefs, attitudes, and values that form the core of an individual’s understanding of social reality” (Hansen and Hansen 1991, p.1).
- ▶ The literature review detailed the importance of the consumption of the music festival experience, dependent upon the intertwining of the 4 facets of music festival experience (Packer and Ballantyne 2011).
- ▶ And how the shared experience amplifies emotions and experiences due to the socially intensive and emotionally heightened environment of music festivals (Goulding et al. 2009; Havel 2013).
- ▶ The literature stated that socialisation is an eminent motive for attending music festivals, although there is a need for knowledge detailing the factors most predominate in effecting their socialisation.

# Methodology

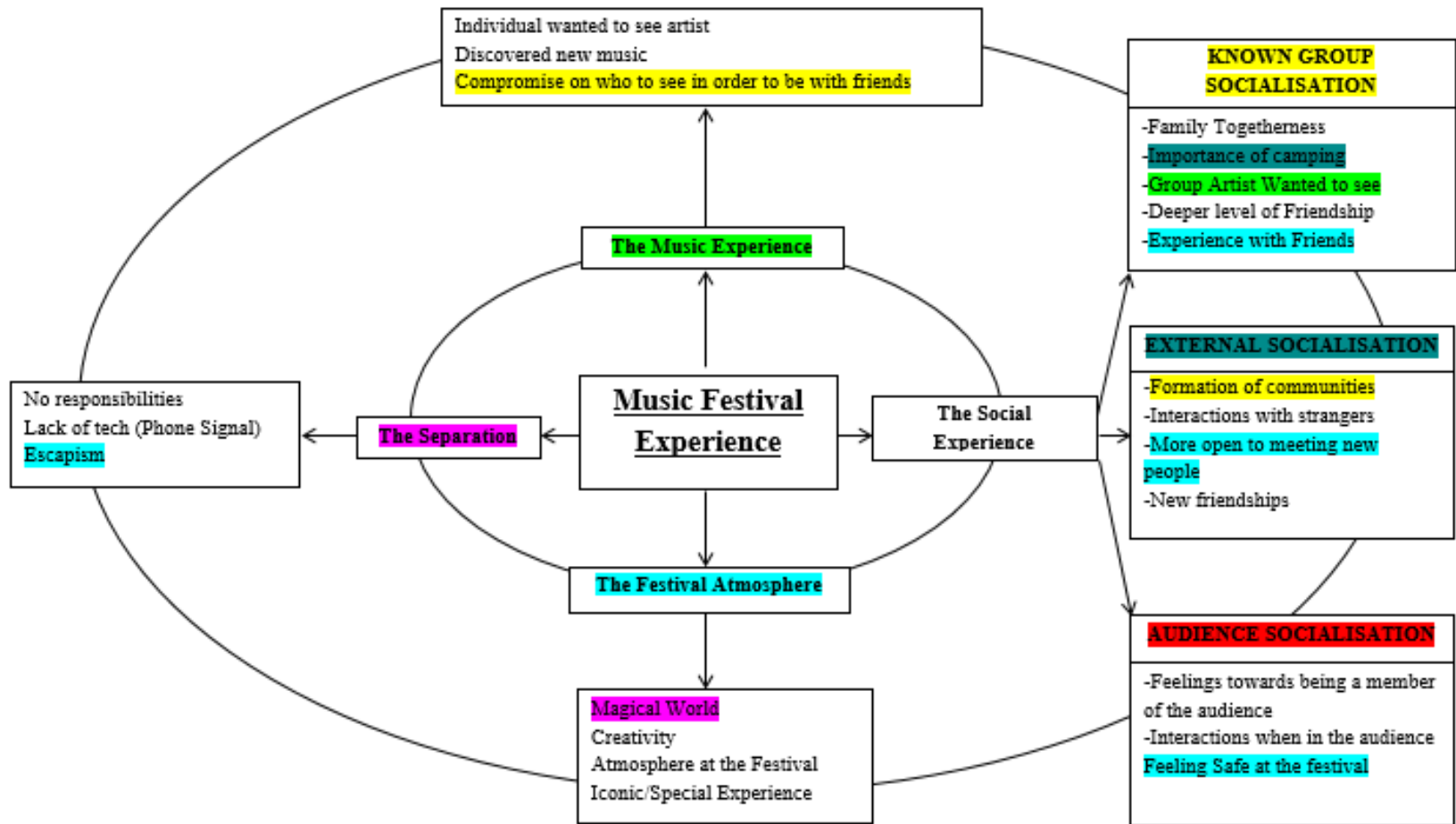


- ▶ A qualitative approach and by conducting semi-structured interviews.
- ▶ To gather in depth information regarding participant's social experience at Bestival by examining subjective experiences in detail through discussion of their experience (Hennink 2011) and how this affects their social experience at Bestival.
- ▶ The population was 'festival goers' who attended Bestival 2014 aged 20 - 23. A population must conform to similar criteria (Blaikie 2000). This ensures that participants are within the same 'scene' (Bennett and Peterson 2004).

# Findings

Predominate Area of Research	Theme	Sub-Theme
The Four Facets of Music Festival Experience	Music	Individual wanted to see artist
		Discovered new music
		<u>Compromise on who to see in order to be with friends</u>
	Festival Atmosphere	Magical World
		Creativity
		<u>Atmosphere at the Festival</u>
		Iconic/Special Experience
	Separation from Everyday Life	No responsibilities
		Lack of technology (Phone Signal)
<u>Escapism</u>		
The Social Experience	Known-Group Socialisation	Family Togetherness
		Importance of camping
		<u>Group Artist Wanted to see</u>
		Deeper level of Friendship
		Experience with Friends
	External Socialisation	Formation of communities
		Interactions with strangers
		<u>More open to meeting new people</u>
	Audience Socialisation	New friendships
		Feelings towards being a member of the audience
		Interactions when in the audience
		<u>Feeling Safe at the festival</u>

# Conceptual framework



# Conclusions

- ▶ Music festivals are shared social experiences that attendees immerse themselves in by communally escaping reality in the pursuit of united happiness and social acceptance.
- ▶ Attendees form communities based on shared social values to deepen their level of friendship, meet new friends and positively interact with the individuals around them.
- ▶ This is aided by the relaxation of feeling safe at Bestival which makes people feel friendly and happy creating a positive 'vibe' aiding socialisation.
- ▶ Social experience has a strong influence on all other facets of the music festival experience.
- ▶ Recommendations for practice:

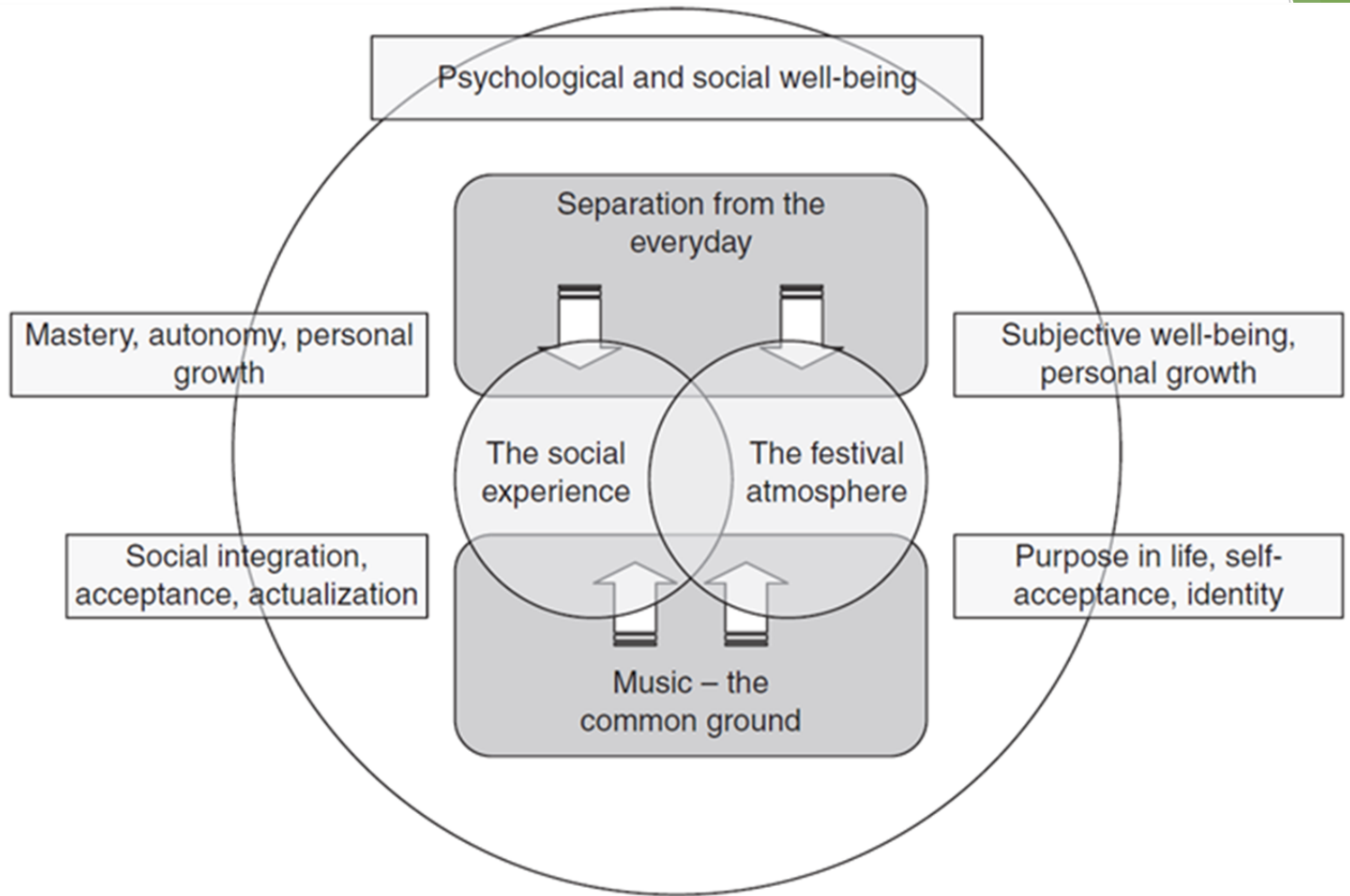


# Main questions

- ▶ What new findings did you discover of Packer & Ballantyne and Nordvall?
- ▶ Relevance academically and theoretically
- ▶ Recommendations for practice

# References





The Four Facets of Music Festival Experience (Packer and Ballantyne 2011, p.173)