



The Festival Customer Experience: a conceptual framework

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Introduction

Creating customer experiences has attracted significant interest among researchers and practitioners in recent years (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Events are recognised as platforms where attendees can build a connection with a brand through memorable experiences (Whelan and Wohlfeil, 2006). Hedonic events such as festivals provide a pleasurable, temporary escape from day-to-day life where customers may be more receptive to experiences (Morgan, 2008). However, Mair and Weber (2019) note that despite the natural fit between festivals and customer experience, the domain of experiential marketing at festivals remains under-researched. Festivals provide a valuable opportunity for brands to engage and build relationships with prospective and existing customers however research on brand experiences in event marketing contexts is limited (Tafesse, 2016). Therefore, this paper responds to the call for more academic attention on event experience and specifically, building a connection between the customer experience at festivals and the brand experience (Getz et al., 2010; Mair and Weber, 2019).

Schmitt and Zarontello (2013) differentiate between customer experiences, which are marketing-related such as brand activations at festivals, and consumer experiences which focus on the consumer's perception of their experience. This paper takes the customer experience perspective since we aim to contribute to the conceptualisation of festival customer experience from a marketing viewpoint. The customer experience at festivals can be examined from various perspectives however the few studies that exist tend to overlook the organiser's role in key areas of the festival experience (Rivera et al., 2015; Semrad and Rivera, 2018), such as the social environment or digital use. Alternatively, studies tend to focus solely on those areas rather than considering the holistic festival experience and its dimensions (Sun et al., 2019.; Hoksbergen and Insch, 2016). There is little theoretical work which explicitly connects the digital, physical and social realms of customer experience (Bolton et al., 2018) yet it is essential to consider all three realms when successfully managing the customer experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). There are two main objectives of our paper. First, to contribute to theory by creating a new conceptualisation of festival customer experience based on adapting Bolton et al.'s (2018) framework of digital, physical and social realms. Second, to identify the interrelationships between the concepts in our

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3 framework to provide insights on how festival organisers can be more effective in
4 providing optimal conditions for brand experiences at festivals.
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7 We begin by discussing the concept of customer experience and defining it in the
8 context of an event or festival. Next, we propose our conceptualisation of the festival
9 customer experience and identify different aspects of the experience based on the
10 interrelationships between the three dominant concepts in our framework. Finally, we
11 suggest implications for theory and practice based on our proposed conceptualisation.
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17 **The customer experience**

18 The importance of experiences in people's lives has long been recognised by scholars
19 (Abbott, 1955; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The seminal works of authors such as
20 Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999) have changed the way we view
21 economies and popularised the idea of the customer experience as providing a
22 competitive advantage to brands and organisations. These works have continued to
23 influence researchers into the 21st century (Tasci and Milman, 2019), and established
24 the concept of experiential marketing wherein value is located in the consumption itself
25 and provides the basis for an experience-centred relationship with the customer (Chou,
26 2009; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). From 2000 onwards,
27 customer experience has also been prioritised by firms as they have become more
28 customer-focused, recognising the value of customer experience in brand relationships
29 as influencing behavioural outcomes such as value creation, motivation, satisfaction
30 and loyalty (Berry and Carbone, 2007; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Palmer, 2010; Walls,
31 2013).
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43 Customer experience has been variously defined and conceptualised in the literature.
44 Experiences can be seen as outcomes that are perceived phenomenologically by
45 individuals and are subject to psychological factors such as their mood, prior
46 experiences and culture (Schmitt, 2011; Wolfe et al., 2019). Pine and Gilmore (1998,
47 p. 99) define experiences as "inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an
48 individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even
49 spiritual level" later adding that experiences are the events that stimulate the recipient
50 on a personal level (Pine and Gilmore, 2011). On the other hand, many authors
51 consider the customer experience from the firm's point of view (LaSalle and Britton,
52 2003; Shaw and Ivens, 2005; Stuart and Tax, 2004), where the organisation designs
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3 and delivers an experience (Bolton, 2016). Meyer and Schwager (2007, p. 2) define
4 the customer experience as “encompassing every aspect of a company’s offering—
5 the quality of customer care, of course, but also advertising, packaging, product and
6 service features, ease of use, and reliability.” This can encompass the brand (Brakus
7 et al., 2009) as well as the customer’s interaction with communication platforms made
8 available by the firm (McCarthy and Wright, 2004).
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14 The customer experience can also be conceptualised as a relationship between the
15 customer and a firm’s offerings. Lemon and Verhoef (2016, p.71) define it as “a
16 multidimensional construct focusing on a customer’s cognitive, emotional, behavioural,
17 sensorial, and social responses to a firm’s offerings during the customer’s entire
18 purchase journey.” Although an experience can be considered as happening during a
19 particular moment in time (Tuan, 1977), several authors consider the cocreation of the
20 customer experience as happening across every direct and indirect interaction
21 between the individual and the organisation at various touchpoints, and not just during
22 the purchase journey (Bolton et al., 2014; Chandler and Lusch, 2015; Gentile et al.,
23 2007; Homburg et al., 2017). The customer journey, through all the value-creating
24 services offered, is distinct from but influences the lifeworld of the customer and
25 together they determine the value experienced (Helkkula et al, 2012).
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37 As the total customer experience is an accumulation of multiple processes that involve
38 restorative, introspective, transformative, and cognitive facets, defining it from a holistic
39 point of view is appropriate as it incorporates the individual’s and organisation’s points
40 of view (Schmitt, 2003; Schmitt et al., 2015; Packer and Ballantyne, 2016). Several
41 scholars also acknowledge the role other customers or customer-to-customer (C2C)
42 interactions play in the formation of the customer’s experience (Getz, 2007; Nguyen et
43 al., 2020; Pandey and Kumar, 2020). Edvardsson et al., (2010) take this a step further
44 by acknowledging not only the role of social interaction but also the growing importance
45 of technology within the total customer experience, which can span across digital,
46 physical and social realms (Bolton et al., 2018).
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55 *The festival customer experience*

56 Several scholars propose that for certain industries, such as music, culture, travel,
57 hotels, theatres and especially events, customers have higher expectations of
58 customer experience than product or service performance (Ayob et al., 2013);
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3 Edvardsson, 2005; Holbrook, 2006; Sandström et al., 2008). The literature on
4 customer experience in these sectors differs from the business and marketing-focused
5 customer experience literature due to their complexity as well as the involvement of
6 individual and multiple stakeholders in the overall experience. (Carlson et al., 2016; De
7 Geus et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2017; Walls et al., 2011). From a holistic
8 perspective, events and festivals are considered to be dynamic temporary ecosystems
9 within which the customer experience is affected by various components and how well
10 they work together (Liu et al., 2017; Biaett and Richards, 2020). Liu et al. (2017) found
11 that sensory experience, novelty, entertainment and fun, physical environment and
12 human interaction have an impact on the customer experience. De Geus et al. (2015),
13 on the other hand, propose the core of the customer experience at an event involves
14 the personal expectations and motivations of the customer as well as the event
15 environment which consists of the physical environment, the social environment and
16 the service environment. The engagement, involvement and interaction between the
17 customer and the event environment determines the event experienced by the
18 customer. There have been numerous quantitative and qualitative studies on the
19 customer experience at events however defining and conceptualising it still remains a
20 challenge (Biaett and Richards, 2020).
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35 The customer experience from an event perspective has been defined as “an
36 interaction between an individual and the event environment (both physical and social),
37 modified by the level of engagement or involvement, involving multiple experiential
38 elements and outputs (such as satisfaction, emotions, behaviours, cognition,
39 memories and learning), that can happen at any point in the event journey.” (De Geus
40 et al., 2015, p. 277). Incorporating the digital realm into this definition would extend the
41 phenomenological experience of the contemporary live event. Additionally, the
42 increasing integration of technology and digital interaction within events as well as
43 conceptualisations such as smart event experiences, live-streaming theatre and the
44 ‘phygital’ world also warrant inclusion (Bustard et al., 2019; Gyimóthy and Larson,
45 2015; Hammelburg, 2021; Mele et al., 2021; Mueser and Vlachos, 2018; Ryan et al.,
46 2020). The advancement in digital devices coupled with the experience of Covid-19
47 has resulted in social media, digital technologies and the virtual space as a whole to
48 grow in relevance and be crucial to the event customer experience (Ballantyne and
49 Nilsson, 2017; Davies, 2021; Koetsier, 2020; Stileman and Nyren, 2020; Leeuwen et
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al., 2020). The customer experience has now moved beyond the physical boundaries of the event and into the online digital environment wherein the experience can have even more of an impact on customer outcomes than the actual experience itself (Benoit et al., 2017; Sands et al., 2011; Wood and Kenyon, 2018); therefore the digital environment needs to be included in the contemporary festival customer experience.

Brand experience at festivals

Organisations recognise the potential of the customer experience at festivals to form strong brand relationships which lead to positive brand attitudes and brand loyalty amongst attendees (Ballouli et al. 2018; Chen et al., 2011; Shin et al., 2018). By understanding and managing the key aspects that form the customer experience at festivals, event managers can provide the optimal conditions for brands to form stronger relationships with their target audience (Manthiou et al., 2014; Rivera et al., 2015). Brand experiences are contextually embedded (Tafesse, 2016) so brands must be carefully placed within festival settings to evoke the best brand experience with prospective and existing customers.

Conceptual Framework

We follow Jaakkola's (2020) advice in adopting a research design which provides a systematic approach to fulfil the objectives of our conceptual paper: 1. to propose a conceptualisation of festival customer experience and 2. to draw on this conceptualisation to provide insights into how festivals can better manage customer experiences. We have selected the theory adaptation research design (Jaakkola, 2020) since we intend to adapt an existing theory of customer experience to the specific context of festivals. First, we begin with Bolton et al.'s (2018) conceptualisation of the customer experience within the digital, physical and social realms developed for business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets. The literature suggests that festivals may be different than traditional marketing contexts due to their complexity, stakeholder involvement and customers' higher expectations (see previous section on Festival Customer Experience). Therefore is a need to adapt this theory for festivals. Second, we conduct a literature review on customer experience and experiential marketing relating to the leisure, tourism and events industries between 2000-2021 using Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature (Elsevier, 2021). It was not the aim of our paper to conduct a systematic literature

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3 review, rather to gain an overview of the main areas of literature which can support our
4 conceptual framework for festival customer experience. We conducted searches using
5 keywords such as “customer”, “attendee”, “experience”, “experiential”, “marketing”,
6 “events” and “festivals” which were variously combined and entered into Scopus to get
7 the initial articles which all had at least one of the keywords present in the title, abstract,
8 or keywords. Third we refined our initial key word searches by selecting articles which
9 included any of Bolton et al.’s (2018) three realms of customer experience: digital,
10 physical or social realms. During this phase, it became apparent from reviewing the
11 literature that for events and festivals, the physical realm was encompassed within the
12 larger concept of event design. Event design has a larger conceptual scope as it
13 includes aspects of the physical realm but also other aspects that are beyond the
14 physical environment such as the design of programmes and connecting attendees’
15 values with the event’s experiential initiatives (Björner and Berg, 2012; Morgan, 2008;
16 Pearce and Zare, 2017; Wong et al., 2014). Therefore, we replaced the physical realm
17 with event design in our conceptualisation of the festival customer experience.
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30 Our review of the literature clearly identified three dominant, recurring and interrelated
31 concepts which are integral to the festival customer experience: event design, social
32 environment and digital environment (see Figure 1) along with the relevant literature
33 supporting them (listed in Table 1). Table 1 shows that existing studies which provide
34 insights into the event customer experience generally focus on one or two of these
35 concepts but not all three. Therefore, there is a gap for a conceptualisation of festival
36 customer experience which includes all three concepts. The literature reviewed shows
37 event design, social environment and digital environment to be dominant concepts
38 underpinning the festival customer experience. However, in order to manage customer
39 experience successfully, we need to understand the interrelationships between these
40 concepts (Bolton et al., 2018). Therefore we analysed the literature selected to find the
41 bases for interrelationships between the concepts of event design, social environment
42 and digital environment. We found five bases for interrelationships which we present
43 in the Findings section, drawing on relevant literature which offers insights into the
44 management of the festival customer experience. We then discuss the theoretical and
45 managerial implications of these interrelationships in the context of festival customer
46 experience and brand experiences at festivals.
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6 **Findings**

7 *Embedding design in planning and controlling the customer experience*

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10 Using an event design perspective in planning can ensure a holistic view of the event
11 ecosystem within which the event experience is embedded. Event experience
12 designers recognise a potential gap between the event experience organisers would
13 like to deliver and the actual event experienced by the customer (Berridge, 2012). The
14 event experience design framework, proposed by Berridge (2020), calls for more
15 design awareness by organisers during the planning and managing of the event so
16 that design forms the basis of all the actions taken in planning the experience. Festival
17 organisers can benefit from tools such as the visitor journey method, blueprinting,
18 journey mapping and the experience design board to help create emotionally appealing
19 customer experiences and bring about real design changes to enhance the event
20 experience (Halvorsrud et al., 2016; Lim and Kim, 2018; Petermans et al., 2013;
21 Peperkamp et al., 2015; Stienmetz et al., 2021). Design elements, when employed the
22 right way, facilitate the positive creation of experiences and emotional connection for
23 attendees (Nelson, 2009). When they are effectively used for experiential sponsorship
24 activations within events, design principles can overcome the unpredictable nature of
25 sponsorship (Gillooly et al., 2017).
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39 The social environment within which customers operate is where experiences are co-
40 created and collective consumption takes place (Närvänen et al., 2014; McColl-
41 Kennedy et al., 2015a; Verhoef et al., 2009). In addition to interactions between festival
42 customers which happen organically or due to a shared kinship by a subgroup of
43 attendees, festival organisers can design staged customer-to-customer (C2C)
44 encounters which positively affect the customer experience (Wei et al., 2017b). Event
45 design elements should not be limited to the event location but most also involve the
46 digital environment (Richards et al., 2014). Developments in technology now allow the
47 evaluation of customers' experiences in real-time which in turn facilitates the
48 application of event design principles to affect customer behaviour in real-time as well
49 (Brown and Hutton, 2013). Using a design perspective in event planning allows for
50 more of the experience to be designed to satisfy pre-determined outcomes and less of
51 the experience to be unpredictable.
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Involving stakeholders in co-creating value and avoiding value destruction

Orefice (2018) suggests that events practitioners should push their thinking on event design past problem solving and towards the active involvement of stakeholders as co-designers of value, and synchronise the resources involved in the event. If the design elements are not unified and coordinated or if customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions are not well designed and managed, this could lead to the co-destruction of value and negative customer experiences (Grove et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2017). Designing festivals that connect with values shared by the audience, such as green initiatives and waste management increases the perceived value of the experience and can result in increased spending (Morgan, 2008; Pearce and Zare, 2017; Wong et al., 2014).

Experiential events can facilitate the co-creation of brand value and experience by providing avenues to develop customer generated content that is disseminated using online platforms such as Instagram (Koivisto and Mattila, 2018; Roncha and Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016). Brands and sponsors can build strong relationships with customers when positive festival experiences are combined with active online engagement (Hudson et al., 2015; MacKay et al., 2017). Online platforms and technology at events should be designed to contribute to the attendees' experience and memories rather than interfere with them (Winkle et al., 2019). Social media platforms can be used to engage with attendees on inputs for event activities (e.g. crowdsourcing) or create communities amongst the event attendees for a better experience before, during and after the event (Carlson et al., 2016; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015b). Disengaged customers may not fully enjoy the event experience so organisations need to incorporate creative experiential offerings to strengthen the customer experience (Nardini et al., 2019). For example, the Boomtown festival offers coach services from popular cities such as London to the festival location which adds to the overall festival experience through providing stress-free transport with onboard entertainment and opportunity for social interaction (Boomtown, 2022).

Providing opportunities for customer-to-customer engagement and interaction

Customer-to-customer (C2C) experiences and interactions have been found to positively influence future behavioural intentions (Kharouf et al., 2020). Interactions amongst customers play a major role in the experience of the individual so parts of the event, such as programmes and services, should be designed to create positive

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3 experiences associated with the interactions (Nordvall et al., 2014). Designing
4 interactive event programmes can lead to positive co-creation of participant experience
5 and turn passive audiences into active participants (Björner and Berg, 2012). Festival
6 organisers should consider three major opportunities for social interactions which
7 involve customers: socialising with groups or people they know; socialising with new
8 people they meet; and interacting with the entire audience as a whole (Nordvall et al.,
9 2014). The different ways in which customers connect with each other can affect the
10 overall experience differently. Designing group experiences needs to take into account
11 that the number of people sharing the experience can positively or negatively affect
12 the individual experience as it may be crowded for some but lonely for others (Tombs
13 and McColl-Kennedy, 2003). Customers tend to socialise with people they know even
14 if meeting new people may bring them pleasure or benefits (Wei et al., 2017a). The
15 customer's social level of comfort must be correctly predicted to facilitate the right
16 amount of C2C interaction (Levy, 2010). When social spaces within an event are
17 provided to facilitate interaction and a positive experience, they can facilitate positive
18 emotions (Doyle et al., 2016). The level of excitement amongst customers in a group
19 setting can also have an impact on the event and, to a certain extent, on their behaviour
20 as well (Kim et al., 2019).

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22 Knowledge exchange and social-emotional support influence the customer experience
23 and group identity; with social-emotional support having greater significance (Wei et
24 al., 2017a). Due to the advancement of digital devices, customers can move beyond
25 physical boundaries and cultivate a social presence online (Benoit et al., 2017; Sands
26 et al., 2011). C2C interactions can positively or negatively affect customer
27 expectations, and in turn their experience, or the organisation's objectives through
28 word of mouth and online reviews (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2011). Furthermore,
29 online competitions that engage fans and facilitate interaction can bring about positive
30 emotions and relationships that enhance customer experiences (Doyle et al., 2016).
31 For customers who experience events online, the content engagement,
32 communication and C2C interaction are factors that affect the online experience as
33 well as current and future behavioural intentions (Kharouf et al., 2020).

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57 *Personalising festival experiences for different customer segments and needs*
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Customer experience may differ depending on the status of the attendee within a group or subculture and their level of knowledge about the product or service therefore, marketing and design initiatives should be tailored towards different types of customers within an event (Koch and Sauerbronn, 2018). Social media can be used to satisfy different functional, social and emotional needs of attendees (Wei et al., 2017c). Digital technologies allow for the personalization of content and immersive experiences for customers (Parise et al., 2016). This advancement does, however, lead to higher customer expectations and demand for changes in experience delivery by organizations to meet customer needs on an instant basis (Lemon, 2016; Parise et al., 2016). Online engagement and digital device use vary from customer to customer due to various factors such as performance expectancy, pleasure derived from using digital devices, habit and age. Understanding these variations amongst customers and using online platforms as well as technology in line with the variations can enhance the customer experience (Winkle et al., 2019). For example, for older customers, events have been found to be more significant than online tools in building brand relationships and experiences; digital technologies may complement face-to-face interactions but not replace them (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). However, for younger customers, digital marketing strategies and festival integrated marketing communications that positively communicate the brand and provide customer service through social media can strengthen brand experience, brand image transfer and brand relationship quality, (Strand and Robertson, 2020).

Online communities provide a good starting point to initiate C2C interactions from which customer information and expectations can be gathered to help provide a more satisfying tailored experience (Torres and Orłowski, 2016). Websites such as Meet Up can be used to foster such relationships as they provide online spaces for communities of people with common interests to be formed (Meetup, 2020). Shared customer experiences at brand community events can enhance the brand's image as well as the relationships amongst brand community members (Stokburger-Sauer, 2010).

Enabling customers to design their own experience

Digital technologies allow for the personalization of content and immersive experiences for customers (Parise et al., 2016). Digital tools such as applications on mobile devices as well as big data analytical software allow customers to map their customer journey

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3 through various formats that can range from pictures to locations which in turn allows
4 for the evaluation of the touchpoints within and facilitates thorough journey mapping.
5 (Stickdorn et al, 2014; Stienmetz and Fesenmaier, 2019; Stienmetz et al., 2021).
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7 Mobile applications that are customer focused enhance experiences of festivals if they
8 provide a functional requirement such as scheduling as well as personalization of
9 content delivery pre, during and post event (Luxford and Dickinson, 2015). Boomtown's
10 festival app allows for the personalisation of programme timetables to be created within
11 the app as well as features to chat, locate people physically and socialise with other
12 attendees thus enhancing the overall festival experience (Boomtown, 2019).
13 Depending on the complexity of the content to be shared, the online platforms can be
14 utilised with or without moderators to enhance the customer experience whilst being
15 cost effective for the organization (Malek et al., 2018). These online platforms for
16 events provoke as well moderate online word-of-mouth and, depending on the
17 relationship built, influence customers' emotions, attachment and experience (Hudson
18 et al., 2015). Designing opportunities to create and share memories of the experience
19 online can have more of an impact on customer attitude and behaviour than the actual
20 experience (Wood and Kenyon, 2018).
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32 33 **Implications for the Festival Customer Experience**

34 **Theoretical contributions**

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37 We propose a new conceptualisation of the Festival Customer Experience adapted
38 from Bolton et al.'s (2018) depiction of the customer experience within the digital,
39 physical and social realms. Our review of the literature found that in the context of
40 festival customer experience, event design encompasses the physical realm but also
41 other aspects such as the values which connect attendees with the event's
42 experiential activities. Therefore, we conceptualise the festival customer experience
43 as based on three interrelated concepts: event design, social environmental and
44 digital environment. Based on evidence from the literature, we consider each concept
45 to be core to the festival customer experience and propose that it is crucial to
46 recognise the interrelationships between them as they offer further insights into the
47 management of festival customer experience. Previous studies from the leisure,
48 tourism and events industries have focused on one or two of these concepts as the
49 basis for customer experience but not all three together. Focusing on all three
50 aspects provides a more holistic understanding of the contemporary festival
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3 customer experience as well as its intersections and how they can be managed to
4 improve the overall experience. We have identified five areas within the festival
5 customer experience based on the interrelationships between event design, social
6 environment and digital environment: embedding design in planning and controlling
7 the customer experience; involving stakeholders in co-creating value and avoiding
8 value destruction; providing opportunities for customer-to-customer engagement and
9 interaction; personalising festival experiences for different customer segments and
10 needs; and enabling customers to design their own experience.

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12 Our discussion of these five areas based on our conceptual framework provides a
13 starting point for researchers to build understanding of how interrelationships
14 between event design, social environment and digital environment can be managed
15 to create effective festival customer experiences. As brands are contextually
16 embedded within festivals, the customer experience provides a unique opportunity to
17 form a connection between the festival and brand. As this area has been under-
18 researched (Getz et al., 2010; Mair and Weber, 2019), we propose further research
19 needs to be conducted to refine these interrelationships, examine how they are
20 related and so further develop our understanding of the festival customer experience
21 concept.

22 **Managerial Implications**

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24 Managing the event design, social environment, digital environment and their
25 interrelationships is key to successfully managing festival customer experience and
26 brand experiences at festivals. We have identified five interrelated areas of the festival
27 customer experience based on our conceptual framework which offer managerial
28 implications for festival organisers and guidance on improving the management of
29 brand experiences at festivals.

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31 First, building event design into the event planning process can ensure that there is
32 more control over the event experience so pre-determined outcomes are more likely
33 to be achieved. The brand experience needs to be built into this process of design
34 planning to achieve the brand's and festival's objectives. Second, brands are a key
35 stakeholder in co-creating value and avoiding value destruction in the festival
36 experience therefore customer value needs to be considered when designing
37 sponsorship or promotional activities for brands at festivals so as to enhance the

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3 festival experience and form a connection with a specific brand. Third, brands can
4 place a key role in enhancing customer engagement and interaction. The example of
5 Youtube Shorts at Wireless Festival shows how brands can encourage engagement
6 through offering customers something of value. Youtube shorts offered fans prizes
7 such as artist meet and greets, upgrading to VIP tickets or tickets for the following
8 year's festival for attendees who created online content on Youtube Shorts of
9 themselves or their friends with the tag #Wireless (Courtney, 2022).

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16 Fourth, festival organisers and brand managers need to acquire a deep understanding
17 of customer segments and their needs in order to personalise their experiential
18 marketing strategies based on customer preferences. It is important not to adopt a "one
19 size fits all" approach since experiential marketing may not always yield positive results
20 when associated with brands depending on the customer profile and subculture. Fifth,
21 enabling customers to design their own experiences, requires knowledge of customer
22 behaviour as well as the skills and resources to manage and coordinate festival and
23 brand communications and digital technologies so the festival customer experience
24 appears seamless. This can be a challenge as the timeline of the festival customer
25 experience has been extended due to the ubiquitous digital environment which enables
26 customers to co-create their festival experience in their own time through their
27 preferred channels.

37 **Conclusion**

38
39 Our paper contributes to the customer experience and event experience literature by
40 extending our conceptual understanding of the festival customer experience based on
41 the interrelationships between event design, social environment and digital
42 environment. By managing these interrelationships, marketers can take advantage of
43 the positive effects of the festival customer experience and create stronger
44 relationships with customers for sponsoring brands. Festival organisers and brand
45 managers can coordinate and harmonise the event design, social environment and
46 digital environment to provide an optimal festival customer experience. This paper
47 conceptualises a framework for festival customer experiences and provides a basis for
48 further research in this emerging and promising area.
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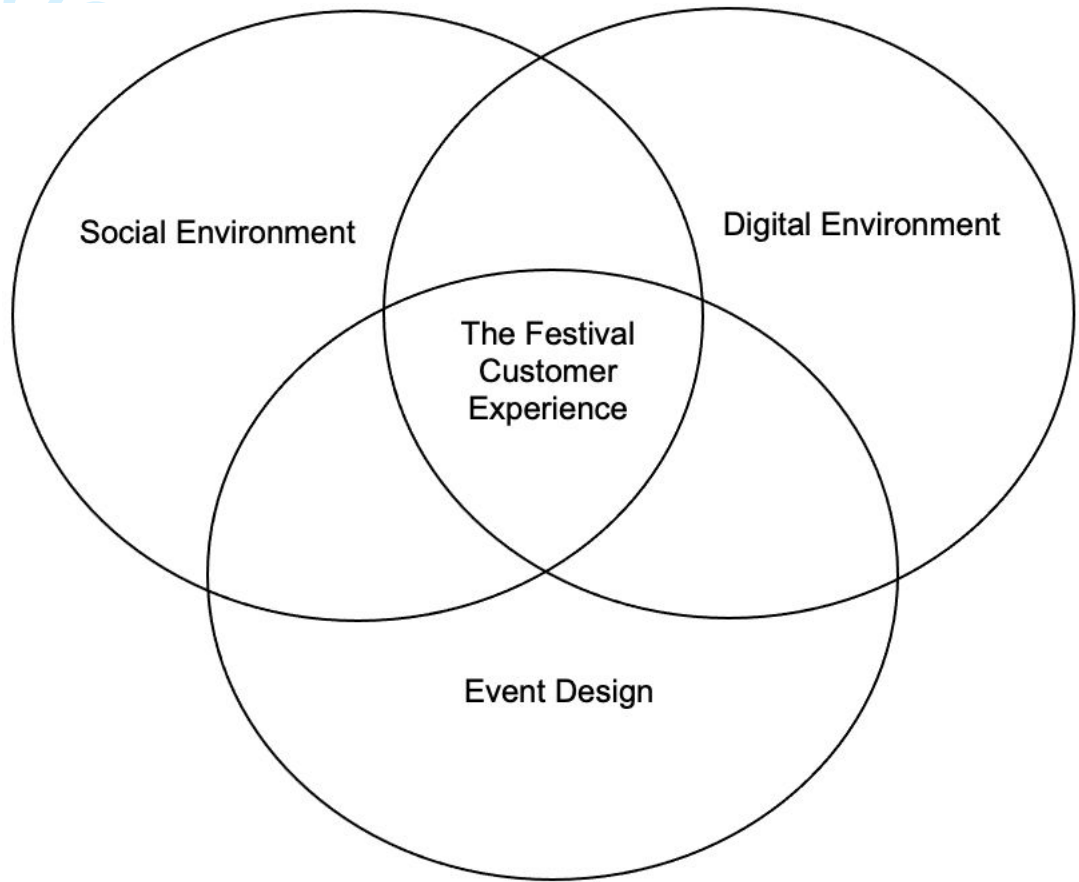


Figure 1. Conceptual framework: the Festival Customer Experience

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nd Festival Management

Table I Supporting literature for the festival customer experience conceptualisation

Concept	Relevant Literature
Event Design	Ballantyne and Nilsson, 2017
	Berridge, 2012
	Berridge, 2020
	Björner and Olof Berg, 2012
	Brown and Hutton, 2013
	Davies, 2021
	Gillooly et al., 2017
	Grove et al., 2012
	Halvorsrud et al., 2016
	Lim and Kim, 2018
	Liu et al., 2017
	Morgan, 2008
	Mueser and Vlachos, 2018
	Nardini et al., 2019
	Nelson, 2009
	Orefice, 2018
	Pearce and Zare, 2017
	Petermans et al., 2013
	Peperkamp et al., 2015
	Richards et al., 2014
Stienmetz et al., 2021	
Winkle et al., 2019	
Wong et al., 2014	
Wood and Kenyon, 2018	
Social environment	Benoit et al., 2017
	Carlson et al., 2015a
	Carlson et al., 2015b
	Carlson et al., 2016
	Chanavat and Bodet, 2014
	Doyle et al., 2016
	Drengner et al., 2012
	Kasavana et al., 2010
	Kharouf et al., 2020
	Kim et al., 2019
Koch and Sauerbronn, 2018	
Levy, 2010	

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3		McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015a
4		McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015b
5		Närvänen et al., 2014
6		Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2011
7		Sands et al., 2011
8		Stokburger-Sauer, 2010
9		Tombs and McColl-Kennedy, 2003
10		Verhoef et al., 2009
11		Wei et al., 2017a
12		Wei et al., 2017b
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19	Digital	
20	environment	Arriagada and Concha, 2019
21		Davies, 2021
22		Doyle et al., 2016
23		Hudson et al., 2015
24		Kharouf et al., 2020
25		Koivisto and Mattila, 2018
26		Leeuwen et al., 2020
27		Luxford and Dickinson, 2015
28		MacKay et al., 2017
29		Malek et al., 2018
30		Meire et al., 2019
31		Moor, 2003
32		Parise et al., 2016
33		Roncha and Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016
34		Stickdorn et al., 2014
35		Stienmetz and Fesenmaier, 2019
36		Stienmetz et al., 2021
37		Stileman and Nyren, 2020
38		Stokburger-Sauer, 2010
39		Strand and Robertson, 2020
40		Torres and Orłowski, 2016
41		Wei et al., 2017c
42		Williams et al., 2015
43		Winkle et al., 2019
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