



An exploration of brand love in the South African boutique music festival scene

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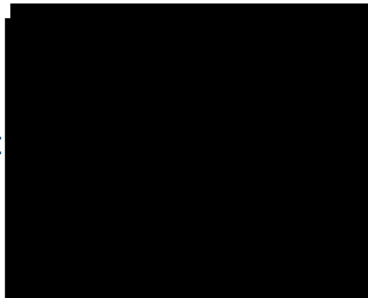
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the **Research Report** submitted for the **BCom Honours in Strategic Brand Management** to The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for a postgraduate qualification.

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors, one which is beaming with opportunity. This tourism sector holds large potential for employment and offers the country a catalyst for growth. The country's vast South Africa's terrain offers both local and international tourists a wide range of enriching experiences, including boutique music festivals which is one of the most thrilling. Despite still being in growth phase, South Africa is home to some of the most sought-after boutique music festivals in the world.

Unfortunately, due to Covid, all fun was prohibited for almost two years, as outdoor events were cancelled. Instead of breaking the industry, Covid did the contrary. The forced closure of events put many big festival brands out of business, but it also opened the door to newcomers who spotted a gap in the market. With the massive hype surrounding the industry, it began to expand at a rapid rate. The sudden flurry of new activity has, however, left the music festival market saturated. It is, therefore, more important than ever, for brands to set themselves aside from their competitors. This point of differentiation has given rise to the boutique music festival scene.

This study aims to close the gap in research found in the local boutique music festival scene. It sets out to uncover the most important elements for building brand love in this experiential space.

A qualitative approach was utilised to gain an understanding of what brand love looked like, from both the consumers' and producers' perspective. To achieve this, ten participants were individually invited to partake in a face-to-face interview. These participants included five festival organisers and five festival attendees.

The study concluded that there was a strong correlation between the success of boutique music festival brands and their ability to incorporate mystery, sensuality and intimacy. Alongside this the study was able to uncover two types of people that attend these events. Some attendees were enticed by the social aspect, while the others were more attracted to the genre of music and the artists being showcased. Lastly the power of social media prevailed, as an important factor, for the success of these events.

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INTRODUCTION

CONTEXTUALISATION

Events and festivals have risen in popularity over the past two decades, playing an increasingly important role in society – by adding a social sphere to the communities in which they are situated (Portugal, Correia & Águas, 2022). These festivals provide a space where people can connect with one another, express themselves and escape from their everyday worries (Portugal et al., 2022). Mair and Weber (2019) emphasise the importance of these festivals, by explaining their role in the packaging of a destination for tourists. These events/festivals help attract visitors to the region, contributing to the economic and social well-being of the local society (Mair & Weber, 2019).

South Africa is well known for its outdoor festivals, attracting thousands of tourists from far and wide (Mail & Guardian, 2017; Kruger, Viljoen and Saayman, 2018). These include boutique music festivals, which cater for niche markets - targeting specific music genres and the sub-culture groups that follow them. Boutique music festivals are facing increasing demand – significantly contributing to the tourism sector and the South African economy (Kruger et al., 2018). Research suggests that the boutique music festival sector is a growing market that deserves a lot more attention (Mair & Weber, 2019).

However, over the past two years, Covid-19 has brought the industry to its knees - forcing a stop to all gatherings for some time (Fregona, 2021; Orea-Giner, González-Reverté & Fuentes-Moraleda, 2022). During this period many well-known outdoor music festival brands have gone out of business, whilst other newcomers have taken the opportunity to enter the market. The rise and the fall of these brands has created a curiosity around the makings of a great music festival brand – one that is loved by its consumer (Fregona, 2021). Brand love relating to music festivals is a social construct, consisting of multiple perspectives and interpretations. These views will naturally vary from person to person (Maree, 2020).

This research paper sets out to understand what boutique music festival brands are doing to build brand love amongst their customers. With these insights, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the most important deliverables that help brands distinguish themselves from their competitors, in an attempt to keep customers coming back for more (Roberts, 2005). According to Roberts (2005), a brand that is loved will gain competitive advantage over its peers.

RATIONALE

The contribution this study makes is one of industry relevance, gaining insight into the practice of building brand love and generating knowledge around building sustainable boutique festival brands.

According to Mair and Weber (2019), the rapid growth in the event and festival industry has not been matched with sufficient research - suggesting that large gaps exist. Based on the secondary research conducted for this study, it quickly becomes apparent that not much work has been done on researching the South African music festival scene - with only a few papers published to date (Kruger et al., 2018). Of those covering the international music festival scene, most build on motivations for attending music festivals, however none focus on the elements making one stand out from another (Borges, Cuhna & Lopes, 2021). These papers are also predominantly focused on quantitative research (Kruger et al., 2018).

In addition to these findings, Palusuk, Koles and Hasan (2019) believe that the concept of brand love is also undeveloped - mentioning that research on this topic is scarce. All of which provide great motivation for the researcher to explore a qualitative study in the boutique music festival space.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Covid has unexpectedly changed the world, robbing everyone from dancing and socialising with their friends for two years. As the world returns to normal, music festivals are coming back in full force. Currently the competitive landscape seems saturated, with many, new opportunistic event organisers entering the fray. Therefore,

the question is, how does a music festival brand go about creating a brand that is loved, one that can set itself aside from the rest?

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to understand which factors/elements are most important in building a long-lasting, loved brand that will keep music festival attendees coming back for more.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary Question

- What are the most important touchpoints festival organisers should focus on, when building a loved music festival brand?

Secondary Questions

- How do elements of mystery, sensuality, and intimacy influence festival attendees' outdoor experiences?
- What impact does social media have on brand building in the festival space?
- What factors are affecting the consumers decision making process?

OBJECTIVES

- Determining what factors add value when building brand love at music festivals.
- Evaluating how influential social media is in attracting and retaining customers.
- Understanding what drives the consumers decision to purchase/re-purchase.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Lovemarks' Theory is a concept created by Kevin Roberts, the former CEO of the international advertising agency, Saatchi & Saatchi (Sheehan, 2022). The model is based on the idea that consumers create emotional connections with brands and that all brands should aspire to be loved by those that use their products (Roberts, 2005). According to Roberts (2005) brand love can be measured on a love/respect axis and ratings can be altered by creating memorable experiences which contain mystery, sensuality, and intimacy (Cabras, 2019). The theory argues that consumers hold the power and that they decide which brands are worthy of Lovemark status. Brand love is earned by respected brands that continuously deliver on their promises, whilst providing a 'wow' factor to their customers (Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) postulates that brands do this by adding mystery, sensuality and intimacy.

Mystery

For a brand to master the element of mystery, it needs to involve great stories incorporating the past, the present and the future. The brand also needs to tap into the consumers dreams by making use of icons and myths to inspire its customers.

According to Roberts (2005: 84), "the great thing about mystery is that it is beyond rationality, beyond calculation". He believes that mystery gives relationships their texture, adding complexity and it encourages people to open up emotionally (Roberts, 2005).

Great stories provoke strong emotional connections with the potential of touching one's customers. People all love a great story. Roberts (2005) describes stories as the "gift of human attention" - with an ability to connect one another (Roberts, 2005).

H&M provides a great example of storytelling with their sponsorship at Coachella Music Festival (Perrella, 2017). H&M created a pop-up store next to the main electronic stage during the 2015 edition of Coachella. This pop-up provided

consumers with an air-conditioned space, where they could buy new festival outfits and freshen up before acts (Perrella, 2017). This was an example of how to win over new customers by co-creating new stories and memories.

Whilst leveraging these stories, brands should utilise the past, present and the future. Roberts (2005) emphasises the importance of brand heritage by explaining how the past shapes the future. Lovemarks' leverage this by inspiring passion through their rich legacies (Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) is of the belief that Lovemarks appreciate with time.

Lovemarks theory understands that successful businesses are not just numbers (Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) emphasises the importance of understanding one's customers - by listening carefully. Without this kind of understanding, one cannot inspire consumers or empower them (Roberts, 2005).

A loved brand holds the power to transform lives. Roberts (2005: 99) believes "the most important thing any adult can do for any child, any leader can do for his or her people, any product can do for its owner, any event can do for its audience, is to inspire them."

Sensuality

Sensuality is the second vital component of a Lovemark. Sensuality relates to all the human senses including elements of sound, sight, smell, touch and taste. Over the years, these have been paid increasing attention by brand builders and rightfully so (Roberts, 2005).

It is a proven fact that senses heighten one's emotions and memory (Robert, 2005). In Roberts own words (2005: 105), "They are direct, provocative, immediate. Tough to fool. Even tougher to override. The senses speak to the mind in a language of emotions, not words." Hence why all Lovemarks contain these (Roberts, 2005).

Sight is one way to absorb vast amounts of information. Interestingly the human brain processes information through imagery, not words. Color enhances this sense and is very important when marketing a product (Roberts, 2005).

When it comes to sound, Roberts (2005) argues that music is the soundtrack to life as it has the power to enhance all memories. This is heightened through lyrical recollection, especially when it is relevant to the current situation (Roberts, 2005). Perrella (2017) strengthens the idea of brands utilising music to connect with customers by stating that it is extremely effective, especially when targeting millennials (Parella, 2017).

Skin is the largest organ in the human body which allows one to identify different textures. The fingertips are packed with nerve endings which allow touch to be possible. According to Roberts (2005), this is one sense that brands have been neglecting - as they look to improve product experience by reducing touchpoints (Roberts, 2005).

Taste remains one of the toughest senses to measure, as it is a deeply subjective one. Roberts (2005) predicts that taste and smell have huge potential when creating Lovemarks. He mentions the fact that Apple named their different colored computers after fruit flavors, adding an element of taste to their marketing – a very clever feat!

Intimacy

Intimacy is the third and final factor needed to gain Lovemark status. This is an intricate one that needs to be treated with care. Intimacy relates to commitment, empathy and passion.

According to Roberts (2005) the world needs more trust and a sense of closeness. This is regarded as the personal touch. Commitment should be centred around forming long-lasting relationships (Roberts, 2005). Roberts (2005) admits that it is one of the most demanding aspects of a Lovemark, one requiring constant attention.

Crucially, brand managers need to understand that the brand/consumer relationship is collaborative. This reciprocal relationship is a fundamental component required in sustaining emotional connections, through intimacy (Roberts, 2005).

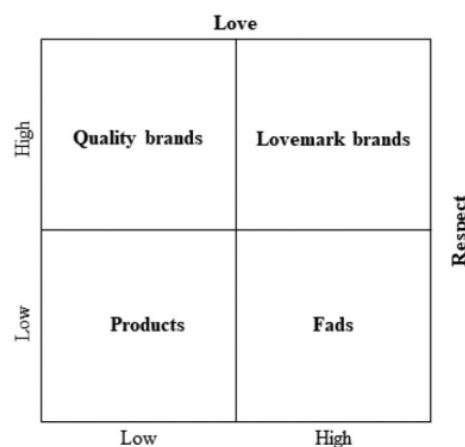
In terms of empathy, listening is the only way to understand anyone. Without empathy, there can be no emotional commitment and no intimacy. Roberts (2005) states that a brand's most common downfall is often the fact that it does not listen to its customers.

Passion is also of utmost importance for a brand that wants to gain Lovemarks status. Passion is an intensity which aids the rush of emotions. Without passion, the brand will eventually die (Roberts, 2005). Passion can be magnified when handing it from one person to another. Roberts (2005) explains that like any intimate relationships, power is ironically gained by giving it away.

Creating a boutique music festival experience is a work of art, one which includes numerous touchpoints and stakeholders. In order to build brand loves it is vital that the organisers understand the market they are targeting and the specific needs that they are trying to fulfil. Alongside this, they need to get creative when it comes the elements of mystery, sensuality, and intimacy (Roberts, 2005).

Love/ Respect Axis

Brand love can be measure on a love/respect axis, with respect plotted on the y-axis and love plotted on the x-axis. This is a way of mapping a brand's relationship with its customers (Robert, 2005).



(Roberts, 2005)

Brands that are found in the lower-left quadrant are those with low love and low respect. They are merely commodities. Those that are found in the lower right quadrant are known for having low respect, but high love, which are known as fads (Roberts, 2005). They create attention, but eventually fade away. In the upper-right quadrant one will find brands that are known as 'blands'. Blands have gained customers respect, however they aren't loved, as little emotion is attached to them (Roberts, 2005). The high life is situated in the upper right quadrant which is where the magic happens. These brands are characterised by high levels of love and respect. These are the Lovemarks. These are the brands that stand the test of time (Robert, 2005).

PREVIOUS LITERATURE REVIEW

The section that follows is centred around brand love in the outdoor music festival space. Focus will be placed on brand communities, experiential marketing, social media marketing and how brand love can be created in these areas.

Brand communities

Festivals provide an important social space that creates a sense of community. A space which is crucial on both an individual and societal level (Mizzau et al., 2019). Höpner, de Almeida and Brasil (2022) confirm this, by alluding to the importance of creating a sense of belonging, suggesting that this is key to a positive festival experience. Wood and Kinnunen (2020) touch on this too, when relating to "festival communities" as being carefree and without inhibitions. Music festival organisers look to provide extraordinary experiences, in safe spaces, allowing attendees to let go of their worries and express themselves (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020).

Muhs, Osinaike and Thomas (2020) also mention these festival communities, describing them as temporary communities characterised by social equality, intimacy and passionate collective experiences. Muhs et al. (2020) takes this one step further arguing that the subcultures created by these music festivals most often become part of the individual's identity, influencing their values and beliefs (Muhs et al., 2020)

Wood and Kinnunen (2020) second this idea, highlighting the importance of exuberant brand communities and collective value creation. In addition to this, Wallace et al. (2022) suggests that the best way to build a long-lasting relationship with customers involves building brand communities. Memories are co-created, re-enforcing the idea of brand/festival communities. These festival 'followings', play an integral role in building a boutique music festival brand. This idea of a 'following' is also highly relevant to artists and their individual brands.

Roberts (2005) is of the opinion that intimacy has been lost with the rise of mass markets. Too much focus has been placed on the numbers and not on the relationships at hand. This is a very relevant factor which is believed to add to the success of the boutique music festival business.

Social media marketing

Ryan, Feton, Ahmed and Scarf (2020) makes mention of the 'triple revolution' which is centred around higher levels of smartphone ownership, the increased use of social media and faster Internet speeds. All of which, continue to create a more connected experience for brands and people.

Mizzau et al. (2019) highlight the importance of social media, stating that it is key communication tool that can extend the social atmosphere of a festival beyond the actual event. Providing an opportunity to increase attendees' social identification and engagement (Mizzau et al., 2019). According to Wallace et al. (2022) customer engagement is a must for any brand looking to compete in this digital era. They advise that companies take advantage of all opportunities presented by social media, as these foster strong brand relationships – especially with the younger generations (Wallace et al., 2022).

One of the key takeout's from Mizzau et al. (2019) study was the impact four social influencers posts had on the coverage of the event. These posts had far-reaching effects, accounting for most of the festival's media traction. The posts created by the four influencers, generated 40% of the total impressions online (Mizzau et al., 2019).

This result outlines the effectiveness of social media's reach and the importance of attracting the right people to the event.

Co-creation is another important component of product development (Perrella, 2017). Roberts (2005) suggests that the customer/brand relationship is reciprocal. It is therefore essential that brands understand what drives customers and their emotions (empathy). Wallace et al. (2022) suggests co-creation is voluntary and interactive, something that is critical in the development of brands nowadays.

Wood and Kinnunen (2020) believes that co-creation begins prior to the experience, during the planning phase, in anticipation of the event. This then continues throughout the experience and is extended thereafter through shared memories and storytelling. This is an example of word-of-mouth marketing (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020). All of which, points to the importance of understanding the true value of co-creation during the ideation phase of content creation.

Wood and Kinnunen (2020) also emphasise that brands should place more focus on the post-consumption media content, as this provides an opportunity for attendees to reminisce on their past festival experiences. Sharing these stories, has the potential to attract future potential customers for the brand (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020).

Experiential marketing

It is important to note that experiential marketing and brand experience are two interchangeable terms that focus on experience as the core marketing strategy. These experiences allow consumers to live, breathe and feel the brand in real-time (Perrella, 2017).

Kohli, Khandai, Yadav and Kataria (2021) point out that experiential marketers see their consumers as sensible and enthusiastic beings who are interested in fulfilling experiences. In contrast, conventional marketers believe customers are more concerned about practical highlights and benefits (Kohli et al., 2021).

Experiential marketers look to target sensory experience which relates to one's senses including sight, smell, touch, taste and the ability to hear (Kohli et al., 2021). This increased focus of appealing to customer senses has revolutionised the marketing industry and will have a massive impact on the marketing of boutique music festivals (Perrella, 2017). Roberts (2005) confirms that brands that fail to incorporate these elements of sensuality, run the risk of becoming redundant.

Companies are investing large amounts of money into sensual innovation, as it is seen to be an essential element of brands today. Roberts (2005) believes that biotechnology has barely scratched the surface and that the breakthroughs will only come when sense combinations are unleashed. These combinations include taste and texture, sight and sound, smell and sight. He mentions that senses work together and when stimulated simultaneously, the results are mind-blowing (Roberts, 2005).

Boutique festivals contain several touchpoints which can be exploited. Event organisers can capitalise on the sensory elements and are spoilt for choice when curating interactions with customers along the customer journey.

Parella (2017) makes mention of Heineken's house party activation at Coachella which included multiple consumer touchpoints. It consisted of a party within a party. A space which provided multiple experiential moments.

The house had a cold storage area, where festival campers could store their drinks for the duration of the festival. It also had a delivery service, whereby customers could order beers (Parella, 2020). These beers would then be delivered by bicycle, to any location within the festival. In addition to this it had a graffiti wall, where customers could get creative and express themselves (Parella, 2017).

Anwar and Jalees (2020) state that consumer experience can be a pleasant or unpleasant one. These experiences directly affect the consumers future purchasing decisions. A good experience can potentially enhance the repurchase decision and may even lead to brand love. This should happen if the brand consistently delivers on its promises whilst supplying superior benefits (Anwar & Jalees, 2020). Kohli et al.

(2021) points to the fact that the sensory organs, can evoke such emotions such as love or hate, which have to potential to position brands accordingly.

Wood and Kinnunen (2020) back this form of marketing, suggesting that festival brands can prolong engagement with customers well after the actual event by hosting after-parties which allow festival goers to reminisce on their past experiences.

Celuch (2021) explains the notion of an 'experience economy', advising marketers to focus on the value of co-creation and personalisation. This value creation process starts with the build-up to the event, involving every touchpoint in the consumer's journey. These touchpoints include the purchasing of tickets and marketing posts leading up to the event (Celuch, 2021).

Experiential marketing's role is centred around helping customers experience the brand, with the objective of forming a long-lasting, memorable connection (Mair & Weber, 2019). Mair and Weber (2019: 211) say that "Festivals offer an unrivalled opportunity for organisations to showcase their brands and build a connection in the mind of the consumer between the festival experience and the brand experience".

CONCEPTUALISATION / OPERATIONALISATION

In this section the researcher sets out to describe all the main concepts forming the basis of this research paper. These include boutique music festivals, brand love, brand communities, experiential marketing, and social media marketing.

Boutique music festivals

Brown and Sharpley (2019) describe outdoor music festivals as gatherings centred around music, providing a space for attendees to sing, dance and socialise with their loved ones. Mizzau, Montanari, and Massi (2019) believe music festivals make up a part of the human social fabric, stating that these festivals have shaped humans' leisure pursuits for a very long time. Muhs, Osinaike and Thomas (2020: 163) explain that "Festivals can provide a temporary occasion for participants to act out of the norm and explore the realms of the forbidden.

Whilst there is not much research surrounding boutique music festivals, Albetto (2018) describes them as festivals that deliberately seek out a niche market through its select offering. This element of selectivity includes the type of venue, the music or even the concept (Albetto, 2018). Thus, catering for a specific crowd.

Brand love

According Palusuk, Koles and Hasan (2019) brand love is referred to as the personal relationship that a brand has with its customer. This relationship is similar to the emotional connection found between two loved ones. Anwar and Jalees (2020) take a similar stance on brand love, suggesting that people can fall in love with brands in the same way that they fall in love with others. Kohli et al. (2021) strengthen this idea, mentioning that brand love is an intense emotional bond shared with a satisfied consumer. Roberts' (2005) work affirms these viewpoints, arguing that the relationship between a brand and its consumers is an intimate two-sided relationship.

Brand love goes beyond loyalty. Understanding this strong emotional attachment can help the researcher pinpoint the elements that keep festival goers coming back for more (Roberts, 2005).

Social media marketing

Social media has become increasingly important in a world that continues to progress digitally. Nowadays customers play a more active role in the development of products/services and the marketing thereof. Consumers like and share their favourite brands online, advocating them to their friends (Mizzau, Montanari & Massi, 2019). Mizzau et al. (2019) claim that researchers have been placing increasing focus on social media marketing as it offers huge potential for winning over new customers, whilst retaining old ones. One way they can enhance engagement is by recreating past experiences. Wallace, Torres, Augusto and Stefurn's (2022) thoughts align with this idea, mentioning social media's ability to connect people by offering them an opportunity to share ideas and express themselves.

Experiential marketing

Kohli et al. (2021) are of the belief that traditional marketing techniques are slowly losing their influence on customers, as the focus shifts towards experiential marketing. This is a concept that has gained large interest in recent years. Nowadays, brands are looking to strengthen their ties with customers by providing them with memorable experiences. These experiences are focal throughout the purchasing process, they can occur before buying the product/service, during the purchasing phase or after this decision (Palusuk et al., 2019). In the eventing space this could include after-parties that are reminiscent of the event.

Activating during the event is also a great way to create a memorable moment with the brand. Perrella (2017) strongly suggests that without adapting to experiential marketing, brands face the risk of 'falling out of love' with the consumers.

Brand communities

For a brand to be loved, it needs to have a following. One way to achieve this kind of status entails building brand communities according to Wallace et al. (2022).

Brand communities foster participation and amplify one's passion towards a brand. According to Roberts (2005) fan clubs are usually a tell-tale sign of a Lovemark. Brand advocates go out of their way to promote these brands to others which is also known as positive 'word of mouth' (Palusuk et al., 2019). This kind of effort signals a strong commitment towards the brand.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH PARADIGM

Interpretivism

Love is a concept that is subjective by nature. Love can take many shapes and forms and its intensity differs from person to person. The theory of Lovemarks' is based on the premise that the consumer has the power to determine whether a brand is loved or not (Roberts, 2005).

Interpretivism was therefore the most appropriate option for the purpose of this study, as it allowed the researcher to explore the emotional attachments consumers had towards boutique music festival brands (Roberts, 2005).

Interpretivism assumes that knowledge is something that needs to be experienced and therefore obtains meaning through real-life experiences (Nel, 2018). Based on this assumption the researcher was able to explore how the elements of mystery, sensation and intimacy impacted ones' experiences at boutique music festival (Roberts, 2005). These elements included various touchpoints, such as venue layouts, line-ups and social interactions (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020).

Epistemology

The epistemology was centred around interactions with festival attendees and those creating the spaces. The researcher took the opportunity to interview festival attendees and the organisers to gain an understanding of their differing views and experiences (Maree, 2020). These alternative viewpoints provided valuable insights about building brand love in the boutique music festival space.

Initially the event organisers were interviewed, providing a good idea of what success looked like. The same procedures were undertaken when interviewing festival attendees with minor changes made to the questions that were asked. These changes

involved framing the questions from a consumer's perspective, as opposed to the producer's perspective.

This two-pronged approach provided the researcher with a holistic view of the factors considered important by both the consumers and producers of these festivals. Specific focus was placed on the factors that were seen as unique and desired (Nel, 2018; Roberts, 2020).

The researcher had to be attentive in order to derive the deep meanings behind the participants answers. The researcher did this by carefully listening to the participants choice of words and by observing their body language (Maree, 2020). The researcher was then able to pinpoint key distinguishing factors between these loved brands.

Ontology

Brand love towards music festivals was categorised as social construct, consisting of multiple perspectives and interpretations, one which varied from person to person (Maree, 2020). The reality was subjective by nature, and it was therefore important for the researcher to be mindful of this fact. The participants perspectives differed due to their background, cultural beliefs and the era of their upbringing. The researcher understood that each perspective was equally valid and valuable (Nel, 2018).

Axiology

This included the role the researcher's own values played in acquiring knowledge in the research topic. In this case the researcher had almost a decade of experience in the entertainment industry. It was vital that the researcher remained mindful of these personal biases and judgements, ensuring that his perspectives did not influence the results of the study (Maree, 2020). It was also important to note that the subject/researcher relationship was cooperative/interactive by nature, so the researcher had to ensure that the interview questions did not limit the scope of the participants answers. Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to express themselves (Nel, 2018).

RESEARCH DESIGN / APPROACH

The research approach was qualitative by nature as it looked to explore meaning behind the participants' love for boutique music festival brands. Qualitative analysis was used as the data was non-numerical and could not be solved using mathematical calculations (Maree, 2020; see 5 types of qualitative research design – Evan Ortlieb, 2021).

In terms of design, the researcher opted for phenomenology by utilising qualitative interviews. This type of design focuses on lived human experiences which are driven by the fascination for meaning (Maree, 2020). Focus was therefore placed on the participants experiences and perspectives, in order to see the world through their eyes (Maree, 2020).

The approach taken, was an inductive one (Maree, 2020). Initially the social phenomenon had to be observed. Therefore, the data was examined with the intention of finding trends/patterns. With the use of these observations/findings, a theory was developed to explain the phenomenon (Maree, 2020). Inductive research began with the research question which was then followed by the collection of empirical data.

This study was an exploration into the field of boutique music festivals. The researcher was therefore open-minded to the themes that arose. As the study progressed, the criteria and themes became clearer (Maree, 2020).

The exploratory nature of the study provided the researcher with an opportunity to find meaning in consumers love for certain boutique music festival brands. This allowed the researcher to understand the essence of the experience (see 5 types of qualitative research design – Evan Ortlieb, 2021).

The unit of the analysis included studying several individuals, who had shared similar experiences, by attending boutique music festivals in South Africa (see 5 types of qualitative research design – Evan Ortlieb, 2021).

POPULATION

The study's population consisted of all festival goers who had attended at least 3 boutique music festivals in South Africa over the past five years. The study included both males and females, aged between 18 and 40. These members included those from all ethnical backgrounds. The approach ensured that the researcher was provided with a wide range of differing perspectives which added context to the outcome of the study (Maree, 2020).

With focus being placed on the boutique music festivals, it was imperative that the participants had a good understanding of the concept and could confirm that they had attended at least 3 boutique music festivals in the past 5 years (Maree, 2020).

SAMPLING

Non-probability sampling was the method of choice. In this method of sampling, not all members of the population had an equal chance of participating in the study (Maree, 2020). Participants were purposively sampled based on the active role or influence they had in the boutique music festival scene. The method of sampling was best suited as the participants views added value to the outcome of the study (Maree, 2020). Handpicking the organisers was extremely important as the study set out to understand what made these festival brands successful. Therefore, the researcher needed to ensure that the top organisers were recruited.

The researcher was able to recruit 10 participants which was in line with the initial objective. These 10 participants were divided into two groups. Each group consisted of 5 participants. One group included 5 local boutique music festival organisers and the other group included 5 avid boutique music festival attendees.

The interviewer then individually interviewed each participant from the two groups which provided the researcher with a holistic understanding of brand love from both the producer and consumer's perspective.

Gaining access to these participants was easily attained, due to fact that the researcher had an active role to play in the industry (Maree, 2020).

The researcher was able to obtain a sample that ranged in age and ethnical background (Maree, 2020). However, due to distance and time constraints, the researcher was unable to interview two of the selected females which resulted in the sample being skewed in favour of male participants.

DATA COLLECTION

Initially the researcher was set on taking a multi-provincial approach to gain nationwide insights into building brand love, in the boutique music festival space. However due to the sharp rise in fuel prices and the looming deadline, the researcher was forced into taking a regional approach which focused primarily on participants living in and around Durban area.

Each one of the participants was personally invited to participate in the study via a telephonic call. Upon acceptance, participants were sent an email providing them with the consent forms and a follow-up message to confirm the meeting point for the interview.

Each participant was interviewed face-to-face and given the option of choosing the location. This was done to ensure that the participants felt comfortable in their surroundings, this encouraged participants to open up and reminisce on their past boutique music festival experiences.

Of the 10 interviews, 2 were not possible 'in-person'. Due to logistical reasons, the researcher was only able to conduct 8 of the 10 in person. The remaining two interviews took place over video call with the use of the same guidelines.

The intention of the face-to-face interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals' perspectives (Maree, 2020). This required paying close attention to the participant's body language and facial expressions. Large emphasis was also placed on the participants choice of words (Maree, 2020).

Semi-structured interviews were used for the study. These interviews comprised standard set of questions which helped uncover valuable insights (Maree, 2020). The researcher asked 5 questions relating to boutique music festival brands and the experiences that were created whilst creating/attending them. With the semi-structured approach, there were opportunities for the researcher to ask follow-up questions to probe the participants for more information (Maree, 2020).

The study made use of a two-tiered approach. The first phase involved interviewing the five boutique music festival organisers to gain an idea of the important factors that they had placed focus on. This then provided the researcher with guidance, on what to look for, when interviewing the festival attendees. The second phase involved interviewing the avid festival goers to gauge what brand love meant to them. Ultimately attendees were the ones that held the power when it came to brand love which was another reason for interviewing them after the organisers. For each group, the questions were worded differently to accommodate for both the consumers and the producers' perspectives.

One obstacle that the researcher faced was the fact that it took longer than expected to interview all the festival organisers, this was due to differing schedules, sickness and unexpected travel times.

Throughout the interview process the researcher remained mindful of his role and the potential impact that his perspective and judgements could have had on the outcome of the study. It was noted that the quality of the discussion and the value of the insights were dependant on his ability to facilitate the interviews without influencing the answers given by the participants (Maree, 2020). This was done in a very professional manner.

One potential weakness may have included the chosen sample and their ties to the researcher. Due to these social ties, one could argue that their likes and dislikes could correlate somewhat. This could be seen as a topic to explore in future research. One could look to interview random festival attendees on festival sites.

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Qualitative data analysis is a non-linear ongoing process, implying that data collection, analysis and interpretation were all intertwined (Maree, 2020). The goal of the analysis was to summarise what was seen and heard.

Thematic analysis was the method of choice, as it allowed the researcher to uncover trends and draw inferences based on categorised themes/concepts (Maree, 2020). This approach was suitable because non-numerical data needed to be analysed (Maree, 2020).

The first step was the arrangement of the groups. As mentioned, the 10 participants were segmented into two groups. The one contained 5 boutique festival organisers and the other contained 5 avid boutique music festival attendees. For analytical purposes, the groups were split under two headings, namely, organisers and attendees. Each group member was then assigned a number from 1 to 5. This allocation allowed the researcher to differentiate between participants whilst ensuring their anonymity (Maree, 2020). Dividing them into groups allowed the researcher to make minor changes to the questions asked. Question 1 was framed differently for the two sets of groups. For the organisers it asked why they curated festivals while it asked the festival goers why they attended. Question 3 asked the organisers what factors they found most important when creating boutique music festivals whilst it questioned attendees on factors they consider when choosing a boutique festival brand. Again, question 4 looked at the situation from both a consumer and a producer's perspective. This helped the researcher to understand the thoughts of both sides.

The second step focused on transcribing the data (see Thematic analysis – Victoria Clarke, 2018). The researcher obtained the participants' consent for the recording of interviews. These interviews were later transcribed which provided the researcher with an opportunity to analyse the scripts multiple times. This thorough approach allowed the researcher to dissect the data word for word.

During this step, the researcher was presented with an obstacle. Initially the idea was to make use of technology to help speed up this step of the process. However, it

quickly became apparent that the web-based application, which was used to transcribe all the interviews, had trouble recognising some of the participants voices, this might have been due to the background noises or the differing pitches of their voices.

Eventually the researcher opted for a manual approach which entailed manually typing out each of the interviews with to help of the pause button. This did take copious amounts of time and resulted in additional pressure being added to the time-bound deadline.

The third step involved coding the data (Maree, 2020). The researcher did this by identifying the main ideas and grouping each of them using color codes. The interviews were re-read several times and the process was only exhausted once each line related to a different idea. The different colors represented the following ideas: yellow = social aspects, green = music elements, pink = production value, blue = setting, orange = experiences and purple = marketing.

Next, the researcher was required to summarise the data. He did this by methodically reviewing each question one-by-one. All the main aspects were highlighted, alongside any information which stood out for its uniqueness (Maree, 2020).

The fifth step involved interpretation (Maree, 2020). The researcher was tasked with taking the findings and relating them to the initial themes. This was done by uncovering the underlying meanings behind the answers. Large focus was placed on the word choices and the variations in each of the answers. Attention was also placed on the groupings of the ideas and the frequency of their use (see Thematic analysis – Victoria Clarke, 2018).

Once the themes had been reviewed and the boundaries had been defined. The final step involved creating a narrative around these findings (see Thematic analysis – Victoria Clarke, 2018). This was done by linking the findings to past research and exploring new patterns/ideas which previously went unnoticed (Maree, 2020). This was all done with the intention of answering the research questions set out in the beginning of the study.

VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

For qualitative studies, the key to validation lies in the transparency of the procedures undertaken during the research process. This transparency allows the readers to follow the chosen processes.

The researcher did this by creating a clear trail of the decisions and interpretations made during the study (Maree, 2020). The researcher did this successfully by following through on his objectives.

With the use of purposive sampling the researcher ensured that each of the participants was relevant and that their input was valuable to the outcome of the study. The researcher made a concerted effort to follow the guidelines set out at the beginning of the study. No material changes took place during this time period. The only minor change involved two participants that were unable to make it to the face-to-face interviews. With no other choice, the researcher was forced to opt for a video call. While video calls were not initially planned, the researcher was of the belief that this did not affect the outcome of the study.

According to Maree (2020) there are four criteria which result in a trustworthy study. These four criteria include credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability.

Credibility dealt with the finding's congruency with reality. It included the adoption of a suitable research method and design. It was essential that the approach aligned with the research questions (Maree, 2020). The researcher enhanced the credibility of the study by using a well-defined, detailed data collection plan (Maree, 2020).

In addition to this, the researcher had regular debriefing sessions with the supervisor to ensure that the study accurately reflected outcomes set out in the beginning of the study (Maree, 2020). To add credibility, the researcher added all instruments and consent forms to the end of the report. These additions were made with the aim of adding to the trustworthiness and integrity of the study (Maree, 2020).

Maree (2020) asserts that qualitative research rejects generalisation as an outcome. Instead of generalisation, focus was placed on transferability. Transferability allows a reader to draw inferences between elements of the study and their own experiences (Maree, 2020). To improve transferability, the researcher placed focus on how typical the participants were to the phenomenon being studied. In this case they were either avid boutique music festival goers or they were very successful organisers. With this context and a clear plan, readers were able to explore the research document and determine whether the findings are relevant and transferable to their setting (Maree, 2020).

Dependability relates to the research design and its implementation, as well as the methodical detail and reflection of the process (Maree, 2020). During the research process, the design or methodology did not change which added to the strength of the researcher's argument (Maree, 2020).

Confirmability relates to the degree of neutrality in the study. It pertains to the how the results were shaped around the participants' perspectives, as opposed to that researcher's interests or motivations (Maree, 2020). It was necessary for the researcher to admit to his predispositions to reduce the probability of bias creeping into the study. The researcher made use of member checks and aligned with the supervisor to avoid any issues. Another critical step involved keeping an audit trail, this provided readers with an understanding of the research process and allowed them to follow (Maree, 2020). All the recordings and transcripts were stored and are available should they be required.

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Q1: Why do you attend/curate music festivals?

Organiser 1 stated that he had been curating music festivals since his days at university which opened his eyes up to the potential that the sector offered. He also mentioned that he had a very creative side and that he enjoyed providing people with unique experiences. Organiser 3 also mentioned his passion for people and his ability to bring people together.

Organiser 2 said that all festival experiences were unique and that they were special because they happen less frequently than club nights. The organiser also made mention of the scale of music festivals, suggesting that the size of production was larger due to the size of the budgets. Organiser 3 was also drawn in by the scale of the productions.

Organiser 4 attended music festivals for networking purposes and to experience the different types of atmospheres. Organiser 5 stated that he had no real interest in attending events, but hosted them because he had discovered a lucrative, gap in the market.

Attendee 1 attended music festivals for the enjoyment of music. He emphasised his love for all music and suggests that boutique music festivals were an environment where like-minded people could go and appreciate the art form and socialise with one another. Attendee 4 shared this passion for music, mentioning that these festivals gave him the opportunity to see artists push their boundaries.

Attendee 5 described boutique music festivals as a mini society, which allowed like-minded people to come together and have a good time. This participant was reminded of the importance of social connection and the impact that covid had on this part of life. She also spoke about her love for dance and the friendly nature of these festival

environments. Attendee 2,3, and 4 shared similar views. Each alluded to the social aspect of mingling with others.

Q2: What is your favorite boutique music festival and why are they your favorite?

Organiser 1 had great respect for the Rocking the Daisies brand, he applauded the brand for its agility and its active approach to transformation. Organiser 2 saw Rocking the Daisies in a similar light, commending the brand's attention to detail and its vast offering which catered for many unique experiences. Both attendee 2 and 4, agreed with these views, they made mention of the festival brand's ability to partner with the right sponsors and the brand's focus on artist line-up.

Organiser 3 had an attachment towards We Love Summer and Ultra. These brands appealed to him because the offerings appeal to his lifestyle. He enjoyed the intimacy and the choice of venues.

Organiser 4 spoke highly of Pangea and Africa Burn. Africa Burn was seen in a unique light because it included an element of participation. The organiser explained how nothing was sold at the festival and that attendees participated by bringing items of value which were then shared and traded with others. He applauded both brands for their creative art focus and their attention to décor.

Organiser 5 named Durban Daydreaming as the best brand because of its unique daytime focus set it aside from other local boutique festival brands.

Attendee 2 was an advocate for Vortex, alluding to the fact that the multi-day event allowed for a real sense of relaxation with no time-pressure. Production scale was another element which became prominent in the participant's reasoning.

Kinky Disco was attendee 3's favorite brand. This was the brand of choice because of its intimacy and the select crowd which attended.

Attendee 5 added two other boutique music festivals namely, Lighthouse and Bazique. The affection towards these two brands was based on their choice of venue and the emphasis that was placed on the production.

Q3: What factors does one consider when choosing/creating a boutique music festival brand?

Organiser 1 was of the belief that the success of a festival lay in its logistical operations. The organiser stated that without infrastructure, access and ablutions, no festival would last.

Organiser 2 placed more focus on entertainment. He elaborated on the importance of creating a good atmosphere. Aside from this, the organiser placed emphasis on the curation of the line-up. In his view the music should take the attendees on a journey, one which progressed with time.

Organiser 3 spoke of the importance of marketing a brand to one's target market. This organiser explained the effectiveness of aligning a brand with an occasion/lifestyle, to create relevance for consumers.

Organiser 4 believed that emphasis should be placed on the creative elements and the experiential side of events. He said about creating unique experiences. These views were shared with organiser 5, who stated that the space needed to be aesthetically pleasing and that photographable moments were important.

Attendee 1 took a strong stance on production value and artist line-up. The fourth attendee agreed with this idea. In his view the headliner and the supporting acts had a massive pull factor. The second attendee spoke about the importance of genre when choosing brands. This attendee went on to say that the sound/genre was more important than the line-up. In addition to this, the attendance of friends played a major role in the decision-making process.

Attendee 5 stated that the most important factor was the setting of the event. She explained that the festival backdrop enticed her into going. For this reason, online

research was normally done before picking a brand. All other attendees strengthen this idea, mentioning that the venue/location was a factor they considered.

Q4: What impact does social media have on the decision-making process?

Organiser 1 went into great depth describing the power of social media, he touched on the function of marketing reach and the fact that it could have positive and negative spin-offs. He also spoke about it from a safety and management perspective, explaining that the event page can be used to locate lost people and items and that it can also be used to help monitor the conditions of toilets and other areas.

All the other organisers agreed that social media had a massive impact on the decision-making process. Organiser 2 explored the social element of music festivals and pointed out that people wanted to go to places where they were seen by others and that event's success is determined by the crowd it pulls. Organiser 3 emphasised the importance of being active on social media, he said it was the only way to grow a brand. The fourth organiser pointed to a shift in social media, stating that Facebook had become less effective and that Instagram and TikTok were now more effective.

Attendees 2 and 3 had contrarian views, they said that social media had little to no impact on their decision-making process. In their view, the brand choice was purely based on social participation and that it was advocated through word-of-mouth marketing.

Attendee 1,4 and 5 agreed with the organisers. Attendee 4 elaborated on social media's ability to reconnect people. While attendee 5 mentioned that it gave her an opportunity to scout the venue and get a gauge of the people attending.

Q5: Describe your favorite festival experience and explain what made it so special?

Organiser 1 advocated an overseas festival called Board Masters and gave it a great review based on the festival's sheer size and logistical operation.

Organiser 2 reminisced on a time when he partied to a genre which he had never partied too before. He was adamant that the friends he was with played an integral role in his memory.

Organiser 3 relived his experience in Cape Town at a part called We Love Summer. He attributed the incredible experience to the setting and the group of friends that he was with.

Organiser 4 described a time at the Cape Town Castle. According to him, the unique setting and sounds were largely the reason for it being so memorable.

Attendee 1 and 4 both described experiences which took place at Rocking the Daisies and stated that the experience was underpinned by great brand activations and interactive spaces. Brand activations including Castle Light, Jägermeister and Red Bull.

Attendees 2 and 3 both mentioned different brands but what they had in common was the fact that it was their friends that made the memories so special. Attendee 2 added to this by describing the beautiful seaside setting.

Attendee 5 advocated Bazique. She believed that the setting had a large part to play in her love for the brand and that this was aided by good company and great production value.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Social Aspect

The social aspect around attending events became very clear from the outset. All the attendees earmarked this as an important factor. It was seen as a very common reason for attending boutique music festivals.

Attendee 4 said, “A lot of people go there to have a good time and dance. It’s a kind of escape, a little oasis away from reality”. He also mentioned it is an opportunity to “forget your problems at the front door and just dance your worries away”.

Attendee 1, 2 and 3 all referred to the festival attendees as “like-minded”, this implied that all those that attended the festival had similar interests. They all wanted to go and have fun, while socialising with others. According to attendee 2, boutique music festivals are judgement-free zones where individuals can express themselves.

Attendee 3 said that “one reason I go, is for the social aspect. I think that people who go, are like-minded. They enable you to have a good time, socially you are thinking the same things, listening to the same music and you vibe on the same level”. Whilst discussing his decision-making process he said, “the way I got coaxed into it was definitely a social thing”.

When reminiscing on her favorite memory, Attendee 5 said “the people also played a big part in making it very special. I have been to many festivals where I didn’t know anyone and its very different when you go with good people”.

From the organisers’ perspective, this theme was brought up less frequently. This could have overlooked since they were in the business of creating social spaces. Therefore, this element could be seen as a norm. The main reason for curating these boutique music festival experiences was centred around having a passion for people and the ability to bring them together by offering memorable experiences.

Music element

Organiser 2 was adamant that music was the most important element in building brand love. He spoke about the importance of taking listeners on a journey. He said that “the music should progress as the night goes on, it should start chilled and elevate upwards to a harder sound, ending in a proper rave.” He believed that the mistake that many brands made, related to the line-up curation, stating that the crowd was often not given a chance to warm-up which prevented the headliner from having a chance to shine.

Organiser 4 was aligned to this idea, adding that it is important to offer something unique. He explained their brand strategy, saying that “our focus is providing something that is new, maybe bringing to South Africa, something that is not normally found here”. This correlated to his favorite boutique festival memory, where he made

mention of the type of music, describing it as “less commercial compared to other parties” and that the headliner had played live instruments during his set.

Attendee 1 spoke of his devotion to music. He attended festivals for the “appreciation of the art form and the artists themselves”. When talking about his favorite brand he alluded to the good mix between local talent and international artists, adding that this was a big motivator for him. Attendee 4 was also a huge fan of music. He rated line-up as the number one factor when choosing a brand. He confessed “I love, love, love music and I just want to see artists push their boundaries”.

Attendee 2 believed that the genre held more weight than the individual artists. He said “I’m there for the genre of music rather than a certain person playing. It’s the genre that attracts me.” Attendee 3 shared this thought. He was less interested in the actual artist line-up, and he proved this by stating that “the music genre encapsulates me towards the experience. Music is the fundamental driver of why I go. It must be the right kind of music, that is imperative to me”.

Production value

Another common theme related to production value. The first organiser reckoned that the most important factors when creating a boutique music festival were infrastructure, access and ablutions. He compared festivals to the computer game Sim City. He said “It’s pointless building a house if you haven’t got a road to the house or access to water and power. In his view, the most important part in creating a brand was about getting the basic services right, then came the elements of music, food, drinks and experiences. He ended the interview off by saying that “it is basically a logistical operation, so if you get that right, then everything else just operates seamlessly.”

Organisers 2 and 3 also mentioned production, alluding to the potential that come with outdoor spaces. According to them these spaces allowed for much larger productions, in terms of stage, sound and lighting. Organiser 2 stated, “production is very important, you need to make it visually appealing”. Organiser 4 explored the element of décor. He explained that his favorite brand had paid great attention to detail, especially from

an art perspective. This was something that he felt strongly about and insisted that he would like to do more of it at his events.

Attendee 1, 3, 4 and 5 all made mention of production. Attendee 1 noted the importance of aligning production value with artist selection. He pointed to a time when great artists were booked but weren't appreciated because of the poor production.

Attendee 2 attended these events for the quality of sound he said, "it's rare that you find good quality sound because a lot of music is listened to on small speakers at home or in the car. So, you don't get the full magnitude of what the artist is trying to achieve". Attendee 5 also expressed the importance of production. When answering about her favorite festival brand she said, "In terms of set-up and production, I would say Bazique because it's like a mini town inside the desert which probably didn't look like anything five days before. It was also very artsy; you could see there was a lot of creativity that went into production."

Setting

Setting was another theme which was not common in the organisers answers but came up regularly with the attendees. Organisers 1, 2 and 5 didn't have much to say on this topic, besides the time when organiser 1 mentioned his fondest memory which took place at festival located on a cliff edge overlooking the sea.

Organiser 3 and 4 touched on the topic. When speaking about his favourite brand, organiser 3 highlighted We Love Summer as the brand of choice, pinning their success "to the way they put the brand together, their choice of venues and the intimacy of their events". When describing his favorite memory, he also related this back to the setting and said it was his first time at the venue.

Organiser 4 amplified the importance of offering something unique. He suggested that this could involve artists, décor or the setting. When reminiscing on his best memory he mentioned that it took place in the Castle of Cape Town, which was quite extraordinary.

What became prominent was the fact that all 5 attendee's named location as one of the important factors when choosing a boutique music festival brand. Attendee 2 mentioned that he always checked to see where the location was situated. In his view the closeness of water was very important, especially for a multi-day festival.

When describing one of her favorite brands, attendee 5 said, "I would say Lighthouse Festival, just for the views. It was the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen. On the right you could see the mountains and on the left you could see the sea and then you had a stage centred in the middle of this natural beauty".

Attendee 3 added to this by stating that "I think the venue really matters, they usually change them around, so long as the venue is good." This suggests that new venues are refreshing and that it is vital for organisers choose well.

Experiences

Organiser 1 pointed out that there were so many opportunities for him to use his creative edge to "wow" people with experiences. On the topic of multi-day festivals, he said that "It's not just about the music, it's about the ablutions and the power available, it's about the food experience, it's about the drink experience and basically every other experience that goes into living for 4 days".

Organiser 2's thoughts aligned with this. Apart from the music, he believed that the people went for the food, they went to meet people and to engage with interactive entertainment. He insisted that the entertainment and the atmosphere played a core role in the experience. He explored options mentioning, "face painting, drinking games, running competitions and having stores that sell multiple products."

The fourth organiser spoke about why Africa Burn was so successful. He said "Africa Burn is not just about partying. It's not just about experiencing in a one-sided capacity, it's about participating. So, everyone that goes to Africa Burn participates in some way, by bringing something to the table. So, you can expect a different kind of atmosphere at such an event." He added to this by saying that it's about offering different experiences which get people to talk.

The fifth organiser pinpointed the success of his festival to its daytime experience, this made it very different to those that go on all night. He highlighted that creating experiences was the most important factor when building a boutique music festival brand.

Again, this theme was explored by all the attendees. The standouts included attendee 1 and 4, who made mention of their interactive experiences with sponsored brands. When speaking about his festival highlight Attendee 1 described the Jägermeister House. A space that contained a chill area with bean bags. It also offered, a bar area, a stage and a place to take photos. Attendee 4 reminisced on the same festival but mentioned Castle Lite's activation. They offered consumers a chance to swap out warm campsite beers for ice-cold ones. The spaces also provided a space for attendees to freshen up.

Marketing

This theme came with many new learnings and valuable insights. Organiser 1 went into great depth about marketing. He emphasised the importance of it and the degree of relevance to each age group. He explained how some forms are more effective than others - depending on the age of the target audience. According to him direct marketing worked more effectively when targeting older generations. Direct marketing included emails, messages and even advertisements on sites like wind-guru and the financial times. He believed that social media marketing was a lot more effective for younger generations. He did however warn that social media could have both positive and negative effects on a brand, stating that one bad experience could turn a customer on a brand which could be fatal to the brand. Hence, the importance of correctly managing this channel.

In his opinion the best form of marketing is word-of-mouth marketing. He stated that "the best thing a brand can do for itself, is provide people with a great experience". He explained that these people will then become "on-foot marketers", who will advocate the event to all their friends. Organiser 5 added to this by saying, "it's about creating opportunities for posting on social media platforms and making something that patrons promote themselves." Organiser 2 agreed on this front. He strongly believed that

organic reach was more powerful than paid media reach. However, according to him, social media was very “clicky” and that to grow outside of these circles, one needs to make use of sponsored posts to reach new people. On this note he also advised that “the social media marketing needs to be visually appealing. If you have bad looking artwork, I think it will stray people away. I think that having a visual, informative post is important.”

Organiser 3 stated that to leverage off its power, he makes every effort to be as active as possible, on social media. He also mentioned that in order build a brand he believes that brand needs to “speak lifestyle”. He has a brand called Litchi Party which plays on the idea of appealing to the customers’ different senses. As Litchi’s are a delicious fruit which can be linked to summer and a good time.

Organiser 4 observed a change in the social media space. He mentioned that in years gone by, they would have thousands of people clicking “attending” on Facebook but that this has changed. In his view there has been a shift towards TikTok and Instagram. He added to this by saying, “I think social media is going through a transitional phase and I’m not 100% sure how it will end up.”

Amongst the attendees, there were mixed results. Some believed that social media played a big role in the decision-making process, whilst others stated that it had no impact. It must be noted that attendee 2 and 3 believed social media didn’t affect their decision. They felt very strongly about the social aspect and were influenced by their friends through word-of-mouth marketing.

Attendee 4 had a unique view, he explained that he used social media to gauge who was going and was often excited when old friends shared posts as it offered him an opportunity reconnect. This showed that social media was multifaceted and that it’s not only the event that played an active role in promoting the event but also the people that shared the content.

CONCLUSION

From a brand love perspective, the researcher was able to identify multiple commonalities between the theory and data collected during the interview process. This was evident by the fact that all three elements of the Lovemark's Theory appeared in the study.

The element of mystery was definitely an important component found in boutique music festival brands. Brands made used mystery when they chose décor, locations and artist line-ups. The artists sets were a mystery in themselves, as no-one knew what they would play next (Roberts, 2005). Organiser 4 alluded to the importance of mystery when he placed emphasis on providing attendees with unique experiences which often included international artists (Roberts, 2005).

Sensuality was equally important to the success of certain brands. Organiser 3 made his point clear when he spoke about his brands alignment to lifestyle. His brand Litchi Party takes to the idea of Lovemarks, by appealing to customers different senses (Roberts, 2005). A litchi is a delicious fruit that one often relates to summertime. Naming the party after the fruit was genius, as it helped market the party by appealing to more than one of the customers senses (Roberts, 2005).

Alongside this, sound was another important factor which appealed to one's senses. Roberts (2005) unpacked the importance of sound, highlighting how beneficial music was to one's soul. Great examples of this were seen in the answers given by attendee 1 and 4 when elaborating on their love for music.

The element of intimacy was also labelled as a key component that successful festival brands required. This was mentioned on numerous occasions by both organisers and attendees (Roberts, 2005).

Based on the findings, it became apparent that social media was also vital in building a festival brand. This finding was backed up by the study done by Ryan, Feton, Ahmed and Scarf (2020) on the 'triple revolution', which highlighted higher smartphone ownership, increased social media usage and faster internet speeds.

Mizzau, Montanari and Massi (2019) added to this by stating that passionate consumers often liked and shared their favourite brands online which was also relevant to boutique music festival brands.

The idea of co-creation also surfaced in the interviews, one example included organiser 5, who spoke of creating aesthetically pleasing spaces that provided photographable moments which helped promote the event. The second organiser strengthened this argument with his view on organic reach, suggesting that it was more impactful than paid reach. This all pointed to the fact that co-creation played an important role in the success of social media campaigns. This aligned to the work done by Wood and Kinnunen (2020) which did well to highlight that this interactive process could take place pre, post and during the event.

In addition to marketing, social media had many other uses including security measures for finding lost items or attendees. Alongside this it could be used to manage the conditions of bars and toilets, amongst other things. This proved the importance of social media.

In terms of factors affecting the decision-making process, it was clear that the consumers preferences differed. However, there were some prominent factors which arose time and time again. These factors included the artists, the curation of the line-up, the genre, the setting, the production value, the friends that attended and the experiences that were provided.

Prior to the interviews, not much focus was placed on the element of music however this had a massive impact on the outcome of the study. The setting was also heavily overlooked but was one to consider. Those that did confirm previous studies included the social aspect of boutique music festivals and the experiences which they offered.

The social aspect was covered multiple times in past literature, with the Lovemark's theory raising the idea of branded communities. These communities had a big part to play in the success of boutique festival brands. Followers of the festival brand and even the fans of artists, held great power in the success of an event. As

organiser 2 suggested, people go where there are crowds and that it was the social element that attracted attendees. Booking the right artists and attracting the right crowds was a crucial element in building a loved brand. Over time, these attendees could be converted into advocates or “on-foot marketers”, as organiser 1 would call them. These loyal advocates formed the basis of a branded community (Roberts, 2005). Muhs, Osinaike and Thomas (2020) described it best, referring to the festival communities as temporary communities characterised by social equality, intimacy and passionate collective experiences.

From an experiential side, the findings from the interviews aligned with the work done by Kohli, Khandai, Yadav and Kataria (2021) which argued that traditional marketing had lost its influence on consumers and that brands needed to adopt experiential marketing, due to its large impact. Perrella (2017) backed this up in the study centered around brand activations at Coachella which did a create job of highlighting the effectiveness of brand activation’s that made use of experiential marketing. Congruence was identified when attendee 1 and 4 highlighted specific brand activations in their favorite boutique music festival memories.

Another valuable insight obtained from the study related to the two different types of consumers that attended. One of the groups, contained those that were passionate about music and attended for the appreciation of the art form. These attendees were there to see their favorite artists push their boundaries.

On the other hand, there were attendees that were less interested in the line-up curation and more attracted by the social scene which provided an opportunity to meet new people, whilst having fun with friends.

Interestingly, price was hardly mentioned in factors affecting the decision-making process.

In closing, it can be said that the research was very successful. A strong correlation was discovered between successful boutique music festival brands and the 3 elements of a Lovemark (Mystery, Sensuality and Intimacy).

ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION

Boutique music festivals are a growing industry, adding significant value to the tourism sector of South Africa, a sector that is key to South Africa's economic prosperity (Kruger et al., 2018). Annually, these festivals attract thousands of tourists looking for curated experiences (Kruger et al., 2018).

The study took on a dual-pronged approach by gaining insights from both boutique music festival organisers and festival attendees. This allowed the researcher to better understand the key drivers of brand love in the local boutique music festival space.

The study contributed to the literature surrounding the music festival industry, adding valuable insights into the most important elements affecting consumers love for these experiential brands (Wood & Kinnunen, 2020).

According to the researcher, past literature had failed to cover the local scene in great depth. The aim of the study was therefore centred around filling this gap in literature whilst providing valuable insights which could assist local boutique festival organisers, build loved brands.

Based on the secondary research, it becomes clear that most studies had taken a quantitative approach. The researcher was therefore adamant that a qualitative approach could add significant value to the field of study, especially since the phenomenon of brand love involved emotional connections with customers (Roberts, 2005).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before starting the research process, the researcher had to obtain clearance on the research topic and design. This clearance was vital to the continuation of the study (Maree, 2020).

During the data collection phase, permission was required before interviewing all the participants (Maree, 2020). It was essential that the researcher made it clear that all

the interviews will be voice recorded. Alongside this, the objective of the study had to be made clear to all participants before including them in the study (Maree, 2020).

Anonymity and confidentiality were also important. Participants were assured that their identity and responses were confidential and that their information would not be shared with any unauthorised users. All data needed to be handled with care and was only used for the purpose of the study (Maree, 2020).

Alongside this, the researcher had to be mindful of the role played in the research. This mindfulness was important to ensure that the data was not skewed by personal views and beliefs (Maree, 2020). This was of utmost importance, as the researcher had an active role to play in the industry and therefore already had opinions on the matter (Maree, 2020).

In terms of accuracy, it was vital that the researcher ensured that no ethnical group was excluded from the study. Emphasis was therefore placed on gaining a multi-cultural perspective of the boutique music festival space.

Lastly, the researcher had to acknowledge other peoples' words and ideas when making use of their work as secondary research (Maree, 2020). This acknowledgment pertained predominantly to the academic papers written on music festivals.

LIMITATIONS AND EXPANSIONS

This specific study was focused on boutique music festivals within the boundaries of South Africa. Participants were therefore selected on the basis that they had attended more than 3 boutique music festivals locally. Further research could take an international approach, as the needs and wants of attendees could differ from country to country.

Alongside this, the researcher could place a deeper focus on specific genres of music selected for the boutique music festival. Kruger et al. (2018) states the importance of analysing the different genres individually, as the genre plays a significant role in determining the characteristics and behaviour of the crowd that attends (Kruger et al.,

2018). Further research can be done to explore the different behavioural patterns displayed by first time consumers verse repeat consumers. Kruger and Saayman (2018) have identified that there is a difference in behaviour seen between these two groups of customers. Both types of customers play an important role in the building of a boutique festival brand, but they have specific needs and therefore need to be catered for accordingly.

Another avenue for expansion could involve exploring other outdoor festivals that are not focussed on music.

The main limitation was the fact that the participants were limited to those that the researcher knew. This limitation could have had a constraint on the findings as the views of the participants may have been similar to that of the researcher's, due to the association with one another. The researcher could look to interview attendees while at festival sites, this would broaden the sample range and neutralise any probability of skewed data. Interviewing participants on site, would also add a level of authenticity, as it would enable the researcher to capture the euphoria of the festival.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A – RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Participant Group (A / B)

Date: _____

Participant Number (1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5)

Interview questions:

1. Why do you attend boutique music festivals?
2. What is your favorite boutique music festival brand and why are they your favorite?
3. What factors do you consider when choosing a boutique music festival?
4. What impact does social media have on your decision-making process?
5. Describe your favorite boutique music festival experience. What made it so special?

ANNEXURE B – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Date: 18/6/2022

Student name: Craig Schoeman

Student number: [REDACTED]

Campus: Vega School (online)

Re: Approval of RESE8419/RMET8429 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDip ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns, and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name: Michele O'Hara

Signature:

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Michele O'Hara.

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC) name: Dr Tish Taylor

Signature:

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Dr Tish Taylor.

ANNEXURE C – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is [INSERT FULL NAMES AND SURNAME] and I am a student at [INSERT THE IIE BRAND'S NAME]. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of (insert supervisor's name) about [INSERT AIM OF RESEARCH/ BRIEF SUMMARY OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE RESEARCHING]. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of [INSERT THE ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION THAT YOUR STUDY WILL MAKE]. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because (insert reason). If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to (explain exactly what participation will involve). You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your (insert what you are examining). If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at [INSERT THE IIE BRAND'S NAME], will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?
Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my [INSERT NAME OF THE IIE QUALIFICATION]. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.
What happens if I have more questions about the study?
Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT TELEPHONE NUMBER]

[INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS]

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

[INSERT NAME OF SUPERVISOR]

[INSERT TELEPHONE NUMBER OF SUPERVISOR]

[INSERT E-MAIL ADDRESS OF SUPERVISOR]

Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by [INSERT YOUR FULL NAMES AND SURNAME] about [INSERT AIM OF RESEARCH/BRIEF SUMMARY OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE RESEARCHING].

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature

Date

ANNEXURE D - CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow [INSERT YOUR FULL FIRST NAMES AND SURNAME] to audio record my interviews as part of the research about [INSERT AIM OF RESEARCH/BRIEF SUMMARY OF EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE RESEARCHING]. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private; • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer; and • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date