

**Uses and Gratifications Theory Applied to Motivations to Attend Music Festivals**

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**Abstract**

This thesis aims to explore the motivations behind attending music festivals using the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) as a framework. UGT suggests that individuals actively seek out and consume media based on their personal needs and this study seeks to apply this theory to the context of music festival attendance.

Through a quantitative analysis approach, this study will use a survey to gather data about respondent's top motivations and will be followed by hypothetical music festival flyers that they will be asked to rank between 1 and 5 with 1 being the most motivational and 5 being the least. The data will be analyzed to compare the results of the top motivation and the flyer the respondents chose to support the idea that music festival attendees are influenced through their motivations to attend.

Overall, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on music festival attendance and the UGT by providing a more comprehensive understanding of why individuals attend these events and how they satisfy their needs through this consumption behavior. This research has implications for festival organizers and marketers in terms of tailoring their events to better meet the needs and expectations of attendees.

Keywords: Motivation, Uses and Gratifications Theory, music festivals, marketing, quantitative

## **Introduction**

A music festival is defined as “a community event oriented towards live performances of singing and instrument playing” (Definitions 1). As a community event, they have implications on people’s lives socially, financially, and mentally. Music festivals are becoming increasingly vital to local communities and local economies as well as help to increase cultural and social aspects of the nearby community. While these benefits are significant for communities, they also have a personal impact on those who attend frequently. In researching these events, Rudolph found that they “revealed human’s desire to belong and music” while also revealing music as “a global language” that forms “communities within music festivals” (Rudolph, 2016, p.21). These events should be studied because of the effect on the attendees as most of them describe music festivals as “life-changing experiences” (Rudolph, 2016, p.21). Even if music is not something everyone enjoys, they dramatically effect the economy around them, giving them a broader scope and impact than maybe originally intended. Music festivals bring in major revenue for the cities surrounding them and boosts the economy in those locations. So regardless of intent to visit music festivals, they should be studied for economic growth and societal growth. As we have seen, music festivals have economic, cultural, and social implications on both attendees and the surrounding communities. We must understand the motivations of these attendees to design and target messages in accordance with their motivations to attend. There is a lack of research within the music festival industry, specifically when it comes to connecting them to the communication discipline. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the connection between promotional materials and audience motivations and how they impact attendance and satisfaction.

There is a need for research within the global festival industry because mega events like these are a recent expenditure, especially academically and within the communication discipline. There is a lack of motivation research and communication theory within the music festival

industry. As aforementioned by Crompton and McKay (1997), there are a few reasons why understanding motivation for attending musical events and festivals is crucial to this era of event planning and organization. The first is the immediate benefit of understanding the consumers of these mega events and calibrating advertising material to gear toward them, making it that much more effective. By understanding motivations to attend, event organizers can design the event in a way that satisfies the needs and expectations of potential participants, making them more likely to attend (Crompton & McKay, 1997). The second purpose for understanding prominent motivation factors is to understand consumer satisfaction because, as mentioned by Crompton and McKay (1997), motives are usually a precursor to success and an indicator of satisfaction. These events draw in huge local crowds; therefore it is necessary to focus on revisitation because their satisfaction will determine whether or not they choose to attend in the following years. This is why studying their motivations is essential to encourage return. The last purpose for researching motivations is the basis of this study.

Understanding the audience's motives would strengthen the marketing material provided by the festival. Marketers should know people's motivations for attending music festivals because it can help them design marketing strategies using discursive and nondiscursive elements that better resonate with their target audience. By understanding why people attend music festivals, marketers can create messaging and experiences that appeal to attendee's specific needs and desires, ultimately leading to increased attendance and engagement. Conducting research in this area of the music festival industry will provide marketing insight concerning consumer motivation for attending these live music events so that they can be better positioned to improve "service, delivery and marketing promotions aimed at increasing satisfaction" (Perkins, 2013, p.6). The aim of this study is to show that uses and gratifications theory is successful in displaying motivation to attend music festivals using discursive and non-

discursive elements to display motivations. By the end of the study, participants should be choosing which music festival to attend based on their needs and wants for attending. Consumers are more likely to attend music festivals that display their motivations on the advertising material because of the uses and gratifications theory.

To reach the target attendance, music festivals must market their event because of the level of competition in the entertainment industry. In order to market music festivals in a way that is unique and specific to the audience, marketing teams at these festivals should use the uses and gratifications theory to match the motivation of attendees to the marketing of the event. Uses and gratifications theory is well defined by Katz when he suggested that researchers should flip the narrative and, rather than ask what the media does to people, we should ask what people do with the media. When thinking about what people do with the media, they could see a music festival poster and shrug it off because it is not appealing to their motivations for attending events similar to it. Attendees of music festivals have different reasons as to why they attend, it's the media's job to cater to those motivations and create promotional material that encourages them to attend through those motivations. Using audience motivation to form advertisements should, in uses and gratifications theory, motivate them to attend by displaying their needs and wants.

### **Music Festival Attendance and Revenue**

With the average music festival projected to gain \$10.7 million from ticket sales in 2022, it has become more important than ever to consider the audience and their wants and needs when marketing for an event of this magnitude. An average of 32 million people attend at least one music festival every year (Lynch, 2015). This makes it almost 10% of the entire United States

population, which is a significant amount of people, making it a large market and highlighting the need for research within that market. Since it is such a large source of income, researchers should explore what makes someone want to attend a music festival and what makes someone want to return the next year. Festival promoters need to ensure that the marketing for the music festivals is adjacent to what attendees find is their primary factor of attending or returning. If these values are not perpendicular, then possible attendees may be less likely to attend. The variables that cost the most for the organizer of the festival need to be the ones studied and reviewed by the attendees because they are the ones buying tickets, so to sell more tickets, they need to be heard and satisfied with their purchase in order to expand profit margins. With music festivals spending millions of dollars to put on a successful event, it is crucial that the audience is satisfied with it or at least interested in it enough to buy tickets because if they do not consider the audience, they will not make a profit. Therefore, research should be conducted into the field of audience preferences for music festivals and whether or not the marketing of these events can strongly influence turnout. Finding out what factors are important to the audience is necessary because of the amount spent on running music festivals each year. Music festivals invest a lot of money into their event, and they should feel prompted to use social media strategies and motivational factors to ensure adequate audience turnout.

### **Research on Motivation to Attend Music Festivals**

While limited extensive research has been conducted on these variables within the United States, there are plenty of international examples to choose from such as Borges, Cunha, & Lopes' (2021) research on motivation factors in Portugal. Research from Alicia Perkins (2013) of Australia has also proven to be helpful regarding methodology and focus group success within motivation research. The only research gathered from the US was conducted by Crompton &

McKay (1997) who stemmed from Texas and analyzed quantitative data that came from questionnaires handed out to residents of San Antonio. This specific festival studied, however, was a cultural festival, so the information is relevant in regard to motivation to attend events, but not relevant specifically to music festivals. Therefore, we cannot rely on past research to appropriately display the motivational patterns of music festival attendees. Crompton and McKay (1997) found that there is typically more than one motivational factor present when one chooses to attend the event, of course, there is a process of weighing out the benefits (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Crompton & McKay (1997) also chose to expand on the ideas of Uysal, Gahan and Martin by using the motivation factors they developed in their research. These motivation factors can be seen as ways to satisfy wants and needs in consuming media which is the idea of the uses and gratifications theory.

The uses and gratifications theory in mass media studies is defined as “people use media to gratify specific wants and needs” (Vinney, 2019, p.1). The premise of these studies analyzes what makes people want to attend, which reflects their “specific wants and needs”, as defined by the uses and gratifications theory (Vinney, 2019, p.1). When there is more and more motivation to attend, the more likely the person is going to attend. Borges, Cunha, & Lopes’ (2021) research ties in more directly to the music industry. They used a trusted and peer-reviewed questionnaire at the festival in order to use the target audience and get participants that have experience with the festival. The questionnaire included three separate sections. The first establishing the sociodemographic characteristics of the participant. The next is with a Likert scale of importance, which was found to be a common tool used within the previous studies of motives, so that method will be utilized within this study. Using a Likert scale is an effective way of measuring uses and gratifications because it sorts out what people tend to value and how much they are influenced by that motivation compared to others. Finally, the third section consisted of

the evaluation of the festival and the intention of the participant to return (Borges, Cunha, & Lopes', 2021). Instead of focusing solely on quantitative data, there are opportunities for effective research in this field through qualitative research methods.

Alicia Perkins of Australia contributed to this area of research with a unique methodology involving focus groups. The participants were first asked to recall their personal motives to attend concerts, they were then given a list of what others had said and they added to their answers with the assistance of this list. The things that they could think of off the top of their head were likely the most important factors to them, the others were ones they had not thought of at first, therefore probably not as important (Perkins, 2013). These mixed methods could help to narrow down the most successful research method for this subject, which is a survey, similar to the three sections of the Borges, Cunha, & Lopes' (2021) methodology outlining sociodemographic characteristics and highlighting age specifically, a Likert scale, and a few open-ended questions at the end. Similar results were found in regard to sociodemographic characteristics within both studies containing quantitative research, this being that the highest percentage of attendees reside within the under-35 age group (Borges, Cunha, & Lopes', 2021, Crompton & McKay, 1997). This under-35 age group also happens to be the prominent age of those who use social media. Using this knowledge, we can concur that social media is the primary medium used to recruit the target audience and influence them to buy tickets. The uses and gratifications theory exemplifies this because viewers are looking to satisfy wants and needs while scrolling on social media. In doing so, they are more captivated by marketing that stands out and highlights those wants and needs they are searching for.

### **Applying Motivations to Messages and Mediums**

When applying motivations to the message, it is assumed that the audience would feel more inclined to attend an event that displays their reason for going. Events should utilize these



motivations and use them to create targeted messages for their audience. An important part of the marketing of events is to discover and observe audience motives to attend, directly from the target audience, and use the marketing materials that match the audience to include these motivations. Doing so would utilize the uses and gratifications theory by using their wants and needs to mold the message. Using these motivations may not be enough to convince the audience to attend, so marketers should put these ads somewhere the target audience would see it. Since the audience, as shown by multiple studies, is comprised of mostly those under 35 years of age, social media messages could allow for a more targeted message directly to music festival audiences. It was found that about 71% of 18- to 29-year-olds use Instagram with Snapchat following at 65% and TikTok at 50% (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). If these high percentages of Gen Z/Millennials are using social media to stay up to date with events, then using that to push out targeted ads could be an effective marketing technique that utilizes the uses and gratifications theory. To ensure these targeted ads display the different motivation types, festivals should utilize social media because the majority of their audience is present and active on these social network sites.

### **Motivation to Attend Events**

Motivation is defined as “the impetus that gives purpose or direction to behavior and operates in humans at a conscious or unconscious level” (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2022). Pearce (2005), in his study regarding motivation, unveils the idea that motivation is essential to the study of tourism and event development, though much of the research regarding music festival motivation focuses primarily on monetary implications (Pearce, 2005, Thrane, 2002). While motivation research for events exist and is plentiful, motivation research for music festivals specifically is scarce, which is why there is a need for research in this field. Common festival motivations can stem from the research of Crompton & McKay (1997) with common

motivation factors being novelty, socialization, cultural exploration, and gregariousness. Similar factors can be found in Perkin's (2013) study of motivations for popular music concert attendance, such as social interaction, escape, and atmosphere. In order to accurately study motivation using prior research, while also uncovering a new realm of motivation studies, factors were pulled from both Perkins and Crompton & McKay (1997) to connect directly to music festivals, rather than cultural festivals or concerts. These five include novelty, socialization, rest and relaxation, prestige/status, and aesthetics (Crompton & McKay, 1997, Perkins, 2013).

Novelty is defined as "a desire to seek out new and different experiences through pleasure travel as motivated by a need to experience thrill, adventure and surprise, and alleviate boredom" (Crompton & McKay, 1997, p.430). Novelty can be displayed through pleasure and wanting to attend because of the yearning for new experiences. Though novelty came from Crompton & McKay (1997), Perkins (2013) had similar ideas referencing uninhibited behavior. She defines uninhibited behavior as "social behavior that may be unaccepted in a normal setting such as drinking, moshing, dancing, and going crazy" (Perkins, 2013, p.5). Uninhibited behavior refers to actions that are typically found within the setting of a music festival and seen as a normativity within those walls, but not typically in everyday life. Some examples include jumping up and down with the music, crowd surfing, moshing, and even wearing clothing in a way that is more comfortable in the heat. Uninhibited behavior is often connected to socialization as it is a way for attendees to bond and connect with others in the crowd. Socialization is defined as "a desire to interact with a group and its members", which means, the motivation to go with friends or make friends (Crompton & McKay, 1997, p.430). Rest and relaxation is how it sounds. It is the motivation to use the festival as a getaway from normal everyday life. Perkins had similar ideas, calling it "social interaction" instead, but the concept is

the same (Perkins, 2013, p.5). While most forms of social interaction describe your relationship with others directly, there is a form of social interaction involving how you look to other people.

Prestige or status is the motivation to look good in the eyes of others whether it's looking like a loyal fan of an artist or just looking like you have the money to attend a music festival. Both Perkins (2013) and Crompton & McKay (1997) had variables regarding prestige and status, Perkins's being "status enhancement" and Crompton & McKay's being "prestige/status", but both are contextually similar, therefore both may be used and will be referred to as status enhancement. Status enhancement is becoming more and more important in the era of social media and, when considering the target audience, can be effective in motivating attendance. These motivational categories are interconnected and can reinforce one another, but in order to properly study them, they must be separated. By understanding these motivations and connecting them to Uses and Gratifications Theory, event organizers and marketers can design festivals that meet the needs of attendees and create a more fulfilling and engaging experience.

### **Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)**

The Uses and Gratifications Theory in mass media studies is defined as "people use media to gratify specific wants and needs" (Vinney, 2019, p.1). What are people looking to satisfy when they indulge in social media sites and how can music festivals benefit from this information and use it to their advantage? Instead of thinking of media regarding social media, we should instead shift the focus and think about the broad spectrum of media that can be overlooked in this age of technology. Media is defined as a means of communication, like radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely. Music festival advertising would fall under the umbrella of media, therefore uses and gratifications theory should be effective in playing a role in motivation to visit music festivals.

There are truths associated with the uses and gratifications theory as defined by Alan Rubin. First is that communication behavior, “including media selection and use, is goal-directed, purposive, and motivated” (Haridakis & Whitmore, 2006, p.1). This explains that we assume those who use media are doing it for a reason. This is essential for the music festival industry to utilize because of the sheer profit the music festival industry brings in annually (Gajanan, 2019). The next truth shows that “people take the initiative in selecting and using communication vehicles to satisfy felt needs or desires” (Haridakis & Whitmore, 2006, p.1). The person indulging in media uses the specific channel that they feel will most satisfy their needs and they select that medium on purpose. The third is that “a host of social and logical factors mediate people’s communication behavior” (Haridakis & Whitmore, 2006, p.1). This brings in the motivational factor aspect of music festival research because those could determine someone’s intention to attend. Fourth, “media competes with other forms of communication (i.e., functional alternatives) for selection, attention, and use to gratify our needs or wants” (Haridakis & Whitmore, 2006, p.1). This shows why using the medium that is found to be most successful for the target audience is essential. Using word of mouth for this type of event is inefficient because it is these events are worldwide events and the target audience would not match the medium. The final truth is that “people are typically more influential than the media in the relationship, but not always” (Haridakis & Whitmore, 2006, p.1). Meaning celebrity endorsements and influencers could prove to be helpful when it comes to advertising events such as this. When companies attempt to advertise on social media, they may not have a strong following, but as soon as the audience sees someone who is influential going to the event, that is going to motivate them to attend due to reputation and this want to be like that influencer. This could strengthen the status enhancement subcategory relating to motivation that Crompton and McKay (1997) and Perkins (2013) used to study a cultural festival. Uses and gratifications theory

is an audience-centered approach to mass communication, so you need to use someone who appeals to the audience to effectively get through to the audience. Uses and gratifications theory can be used to determine intent for social media use, which in turn can be used for event organizers to manipulate the media they are using to persuade them into attending the festival.

## **Conclusion**

Through the research of other scholars, the need for research on music festival motivation has become apparent. Where some research studies focus on music festival attendees and only those that have attended a music festival, a broader audience will be utilized because influence is important and many people who go to concerts are college-aged, so the likelihood of the results of this study being beneficial to event organizers everywhere is very high (Borges, Cunha, & Lopes', 2021, Crompton & McKay, 1997). Uncovering motivations in a broad study of college students will be used followed by a more specific presentation of promotional materials that apply uses and gratifications theory along with their motivations. Using the uses and gratifications theory to find out why the audience is using media and then matching their wants and needs to the message will be used to help to create a successful advertisement.

Research Question 1: Are promotional materials considered more persuasive when they match the audience's stated motivations for attending music festivals?

Hypothesis- If uses and gratifications theory plays a role in motivation to attend events, specifically music festivals, then participants will choose which event to attend based on their specific wants and needs.

## **Methods**

### **Section One**

The study was divided into two sections and conducted using a cross-sectional field survey. This survey was anonymous and there were 58 respondents. Section one studied

motivations to attend music festivals and collected quantitative data to measure which motivations were more prominent in each individual respondent. This section consisted of eighteen questions in total, with three questions for each of the six motivation subcategories. Participants were asked to rank each question on a Likert scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most important reason to attend a music festival and 1 being the least important reason to attend. This is similar to Crompton & McKay's (1997) methods, using a Likert scale to rank motivations. Immediately following section one, section two began within the same survey.

## **Section Two**

Section two consisted of six peer-reviewed hypothetical music festival posters. This study had two objectives. First, to establish participants' motivation to attend music festivals, which showed what they value and want to see in order to attend. Second, to test those motives and see if they would attend a festival that displays those motives. If those motives are consistent with section one and section two of the survey, then the research question will prove to be accurate within the study. To test section two of the study, participants were asked to rank them in order of the festival they are most likely to attend, to the festival they are least likely to attend. These posters are designed to show a specific motivation that was tested in section one using discursive and non-discursive elements. An initial set of 5 motivations were then given to a group of peers after being given the definitions of each motive. To ensure these posters displayed the motivations accurately, they were taken through a peer review process where an audience looked at each poster individually and then chose which motivation they believed was displayed. I then asked open-ended questions at the end of the survey to get their thoughts about what did not work as well as suggestions to make the posters display those motivations more accurately, which I used to improve the posters. Following the peer review process, the number of motivations being tested increased to 6 and the names and definitions of a few have changed to

represent the motivation more accurately. Some motivations were too closely related, such as aesthetics and prestige/status, so the motivations have been reviewed and renamed to represent the motivation more clearly, such the motivation previously known as prestige/status being changed to status enhancement and aesthetics being eliminated from the study entirely.

### **Recruitment and Sampling**

The number of respondents for this survey was 58. To reach this amount of participation, flyers were created with a QR code and put up around the entirety of the Hanover College campus. Flyers were also posted to my personal Twitter account, which increased the diversity and lowered the risk of regional bias prevailing throughout the survey answers. Convenience sampling was used with the Hanover College community, but snowball sampling was present when my Twitter followers retweeted my flyer after they had taken my survey to get the word out. Flyers were also posted to my Instagram, which has a less diverse audience. To participate in this study, participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 24. Participants could have had no prior experience in music festivals or live music as this variable was not tested. Participants were informed that this study would remain anonymous as the identity of the participants is not beneficial to the study. There were no incentives to complete this study, though the study was advertised as taking less than ten minutes to complete.

### **Results**

Respondents were presented with a total of 15 Likert scale questions, 3 per motivation and 5 rank order questions. Two variables were tested, audience motivation and audience tendencies to adhere to advertising material that displays those top stated motivations. To properly analyze and reveal the respondent's top motivation, I combined scores displayed

through a series of three questions per motivation. These were presented on a scale from one to ten, so the lowest possible score would be three and the highest possible score would be thirty. The lowest score possible, a 3, was received by uninhibited behavior a total of 6 times and received by status enhancement a total of 10 times, but received by novelty, rest and relaxation, and socialization 0 times. The highest score possible, a 30, was received by rest and relaxation a total of 6 times and received by novelty a total of 9 times. Socialization followed with 4 perfect 30 scores, while status enhancement had 1. Whichever motivation had the highest total score, was deemed that participant's top motivation. This was used to, in turn, analyze how or if they would be drawn to that motivation within advertising material. Novelty was chosen as the overall most motivational factor for respondents, making up 25.87% of the total responses, with socialization being second at 24.68%. Rest and relaxation fell in the middle at 24.03% and uninhibited behavior and status enhancement landed in fourth and fifth at 14.18% and 11.24% respectively.

Focusing on the research question; are promotional materials considered more persuasive when they match the audience's stated motivations for attending music festivals, we must analyze and determine the effectiveness of the second half of the survey. Within the second half of the survey, respondents were asked to rank a series of hypothetical music festival posters in a rank order system with 1 being most likely to attend and 5 being least likely to attend. These rankings were added up by category and divided by the number of respondents to calculate the average score the motivations received. From this data, it was found that the novelty and socialization flyers were equally persuasive as they tied for the top motivations in terms of flyer strength with an average ranking of 2.4, the lower the score, the more persuasive the festival flyer. Following them was the rest and relaxation flyer with a 2.44 and the uninhibited behavior



flyer with a 2.53. Rounding out the festival flyers was the one displaying status enhancement with a 2.93 average ranking, making it the least persuasive festival poster.

In terms of connecting individual's highest scoring motivations to their application and choosing their top motivation as their top flyer, the motivation of novelty prevailed. A total of 8 respondents had their top motivation from section one match the flyer they chose as most likely to attend in section two. This means that 13.79% of respondents had motivations matching the flyer they chose. Of the 8 total matches, 6 of them hailed from the novelty motivation, making it 75% of the total matches. Following novelty was both rest and relaxation and uninhibited behavior with one match each. There were also 9 inconclusive results due to participants ranking the flyers in a way that was not intended. Therefore, these results were extradited from the study and not analyzed. See figure 5 for the visual results of each individual respondent's matches between section one and section two of the survey.

### **Discussion**

The outcomes of this research within the motivation to visit music festivals and the connection to promotional material have provided insight to the marketing field. The goal of this study was to determine whether promotional material is considered more persuasive when they match the audience's stated motivations for attending a music festival. This research has shown that promotional and advertising material is considered more effective when applying motivations 13.79% of the time. While this narrow view of the study shows slight results to suggest motivations matter in advertising material, when looking at this study on a broader scale throughout the entire participant pool, the results suggest otherwise. Novelty or the desire to seek out new experiences, whether through travel or environments, prevailed as the top motivation for 28 of the 58 participants, which accounts for ties for other top motivations as well. Novelty also prevailed as the most persuasive ranked flyer along with socialization. This dominant nature of

the novelty motivation makes sense when you consider a study that tested the need for novelty, proving that novelty satisfaction is positively associated with vitality, life satisfaction and the presence of meaning in life (Gonzalez-Cutre, Romero-Elias, Jimenez-Loaisa, Beltran-Carrillo, Hagger, 2019). This shows that novelty is an impactful motivation in everyone's lives, so regardless of whether it is a respondent's top motivation, it still likely played a role in their final decision to attend an event. The recognition of multiple motivations and their combination in swaying festivalgoers' decisions, as discussed by Crompton (1979), strengthens the potential application of the Uses and Gratifications Theory to music festival motivation (Crompton & McKay, 1997), given the theory's focus on satisfying individual needs and wants. The survey supported this idea as novelty, the desire for new experiences, prevailed as the top motivation followed closely behind by socialization. As discussed by Crompton, socialization can impact event motivation in numerous ways, and it satisfies human nature's need for interaction and connection (Hoiland, 2022). Therefore, the strength of both socialization and novelty reinforces the idea that participants will likely have multiple strong motivational preferences.

As recognized by Crompton (1979), there is a flaw in assuming that only one leading motivation exists instead of recognizing that a multitude of motivations can combine to sway festival attendee's decisions. This contributes to Iso-Ahola's (1980) findings that the same needs can be satisfied by different types of events, showing that uses and gratifications theory could play a role in music festival motivations (Crompton & McKay, 1997). This strengthens the idea that people attend events to satisfy needs and wants, as shown through their top motivations compared to their choice of flyer. Since, novelty was shown as the dominant motivation for the sample, novelty was displayed as their want or motivation for attending. This translated to section two of the survey where novelty again prevailed as the top flyer choice showing that the respondents may have chosen the hypothetical festival flyers to adhere to their wants and needs,

as uses and gratifications theory supports. Since uses and gratifications theory was shown to support the idea that those who are interested in attending music festivals will choose which one to attend based on their personal needs and wants, this theory could also be used and tested for a variety of different events and implemented within the marketing discipline.

While socialization did not overcome novelty as the top motivation for the sample, it was closely behind it, making up 24.68% of total responses to novelty's 25.87%. As Crompton suggested, socialization was merged, in terms of this study, with known-group socialization, external socialization and gregariousness, which may have contributed to its impact on audience motivations (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Socialization's strength is the versatility in which it impacts event motivations. While novelty can exist within the confines of new experiences, what happens when a tradition loses its novelty? Socialization is a guaranteed new interaction with people from all walks of life every time. It also "provides us the means by which we gradually become able to see ourselves through the eyes of others, and how we learn who we are and how we fit into the larger world", satisfying human nature (Hoiland, 2022, p.7). Therefore, it's not a surprise it placed closely behind novelty and in any given sample size, these motivations could overcome the other.

Research on the top motivations is very telling and contribute the dominant factors to the field, but the least motivational, subordinate categories are also very telling and informative. In this study, the motivations of status enhancement and uninhibited behavior fell to the bottom as they were proven to be the least motivational in section one and had the two least persuasive hypothetical festival flyers. Starting with status enhancement, as it placed last in section one with 11.24% of the motivation score. Of course, this motivation could have been limited by the wrong questions being asked. There are multiple ways to go about analyzing this motivation, so the

wrong prompts or questions could have contributed to this low score. For example, asking respondents if they are motivated to attend concerts because they enjoy moshing or crowd surfing could have lowered the score of uninhibited behavior because some don't enjoy those. Instead, I could have asked "I attend/would attend a music festival to sing loudly to the music", as that is also a way to express uninhibited behavior. Understanding and stating this limitation of this study is crucial to those attempting to replicate the study for research outside the music festival realm, as the variation in questions asked can affect the results of this study.

Understanding motivations and core reasons behind certain decisions will contribute to the field of persuasive communication as well as the business field in sales and advertising. Motivation testing can also contribute on a smaller scale in terms of interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication, so those interested can better understand themselves and events they might be interested in attending. This research could be used by event planners, marketing agencies, the sales industry and any type of career that integrates persuasive communication. As music festivals are newer events and becoming more popular as the years go on, research on them is limited, so making that leap to study them directly will open the door to other opportunities within the industry and more chances for research. More research could result in bigger turnout for these events and therefore is contributing to both the communication discipline and the entertainment industry.

Strengths of this research included the diverse participant pool and the ability to reproduce this study in different environments. Though the study was limited to those between the ages of 18 and 24, it is predicted that the respondents came from diverse backgrounds. While advertised mainly at a small liberal arts college, the study was also advertised on Twitter, which has a variety of different races, ethnicities, religions, and genders. This study can be redesigned

through different hypothetical flyers and used to unveil different motivations as included. The study is not limited to the five motivations of novelty, socialization, rest and relaxation, status enhancement, and uninhibited behavior, which makes it versatile. The hypothetical flyers are flexible as well and can be used to display real music festival posters before they are unveiled to the public.

Some limitations of this study include unclear or difficult to understand directions in regard to section two of the survey, ineffective hypothetical flyers, and lack of previous studies within the field. Section two of the study stated that “if money/location was not an issue, choose which music festival you are most likely to attend based on the flyers provided. Rank these in order from the one you are most likely to attend (1) to the one you are least likely to attend (5). Only use each number one time”, though this was misinterpreted by 9 out of 58 respondents. Therefore, the results could have differed through those participant’s answers, but instead were not included in the results of the study. Secondly, the hypothetical flyers meant to show motivations could not have come off that way to the audience. While a pretest was utilized in an attempt to subdue this limitation, the way that participants interpret things cannot be modified, therefore, they could have seen each poster in a different light, potentially changing their results. Finally, there is a lack of previous studies on motivation to attend specifically music festivals. Since they are newer events, there should be an influx of studies on them in the future, but currently, most studies cover a broader spectrum of all festivals and events rather than modern day music festivals. Which could have different motivations entirely.

Finally, using the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to frame music festival motivation research can be helpful as attendees have their own unique motivations for attending these events. However, there are some differences between UGT and music festival motivations. While UGT focuses on the individual’s personal needs and goals, music festival motivations

often involve social and communal aspects, such as the desire to connect with others or be part of a larger community. Additionally, UGT suggests that individuals choose specific media to fulfill their needs, while music festival attendees may attend festivals for a variety of reasons, including the desire to experience different types of music, to have fun, or to escape from their daily routine. Therefore, while UGT provides a useful framework for understanding motivations for music festival attendance, it is important to recognize that music festivals have their own unique characteristics that may not always align with UGT principles.

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## Appendix A

## **Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

### Uses and Gratifications Theory Applied to Motivations to Attend Music Festival

Jessica Beckman, Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Hanover College

December 3rd, 2022

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a study of the uses and gratifications theory applied to music festival motivations. We hope to learn more about your motivations to attend events and how that applies to the advertising material provided to you. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a person between the ages of 18 and 24. If you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed survey. Your return of this survey constitutes implied consent. The survey is designed to gather information about how motivations affect the choices we make when it comes to the marketing of music festivals. It will take you about 10 – 15 minutes to complete. No compensation will be provided to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to the benefit of motivation theory. Any discomfort or inconvenience to you will not exceed the time taken to complete the survey. Information that is obtained via this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed. This information will not be distributed and will be deleted in January of 2023 following the completion of this thesis. Your decision to participate (or not) will not prejudice any future relationships with Hanover College. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. You will be made aware of any information that varies from what has been provided to you and/or might affect your willingness to continue to participate in the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a human subject please contact the IRB chair, at [irb@Hanover.edu](mailto:irb@Hanover.edu). We may submit the results of this study for publication. Participant data will be destroyed 3 years after publication. If you are interested in the study results, please email the primary investigator (PI) to request this information. Please keep a copy of this email for your records. If you have any questions regarding this study feel free to contact Jessica Beckman at [beckmanj23@hanover.edu](mailto:beckmanj23@hanover.edu).

Thank you for your time.

Jessica Beckman

**Figure 1:**

<b>MOTIVATION SUBCATEGORIES</b>		
<b>MOTIVES</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example of Likert Scale Statements Displaying Motivation</b>
<b>Novelty</b>	A desire to seek out different or new experiences through pleasure motivated by a need to experience adventure, thrill, surprise, and alleviating boredom (Crompton & McKay 1997).	I go to/would attend a music festival to experience something new.
<b>Socialization</b>	A desire to interact with a group and its members, specifically friends or those attending the music festival (Crompton & McKay 1997).	I go to/would attend music festivals to meet new people.
<b>Status Enhancement</b>	A desire to look of a higher standing around others or to a social media following, displaying a 'bigger fan' status (Perkins 2013).	I go to/would attend music festivals to have interesting things to post to Instagram.
<b>Rest &amp; Relaxation</b>	A desire to escape normal, everyday life and refresh oneself mentally (Crompton & McKay 1997, Perkins 2013)	I go to/would attend music festivals to get away from normal/everyday life.
<b>Uninhibited Behavior</b>	A desire to participate in “social behavior that may be unaccepted in a normal setting such as drinking, moshing, dancing and going crazy” (Perkins 2013).	I go to/would attend music festivals to dance/mosh.

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**Figure 2:**

HYPOTHETICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL FLYERS	
Novelty	Socialization
 <p><b>MUSIC FEST</b>  <b>KENDRICK LAMAR ODESZA PARAMORE</b>            ZEDS DEAD GRIZ PORTUGAL THE MAN            THREE 6 MAFIA LIL NAS X PARAMORE            TYLER CHILDERS MY MORNING JACKET            LOUIS THE CHILD KORN            RAINBOW KITTEN SURPRISE SHERYL CROW            MARCUS MUMFORD THE REVIVALISTS            HIPPO CAMPUS PIXIES STS9 BIG WILD            JULY 21.22.23. 2023</p>	 <p><b>MUSIC FEST</b>  <b>KENDRICK LAMAR ODESZA PARAMORE</b>            ZEDS DEAD GRIZ PORTUGAL THE MAN            THREE 6 MAFIA LIL NAS X PARAMORE            TYLER CHILDERS MY MORNING JACKET            LOUIS THE CHILD KORN            RAINBOW KITTEN SURPRISE SHERYL CROW            MARCUS MUMFORD THE REVIVALISTS            HIPPO CAMPUS PIXIES STS9 BIG WILD            JULY 21.22.23. 2023</p>



Figure 3:

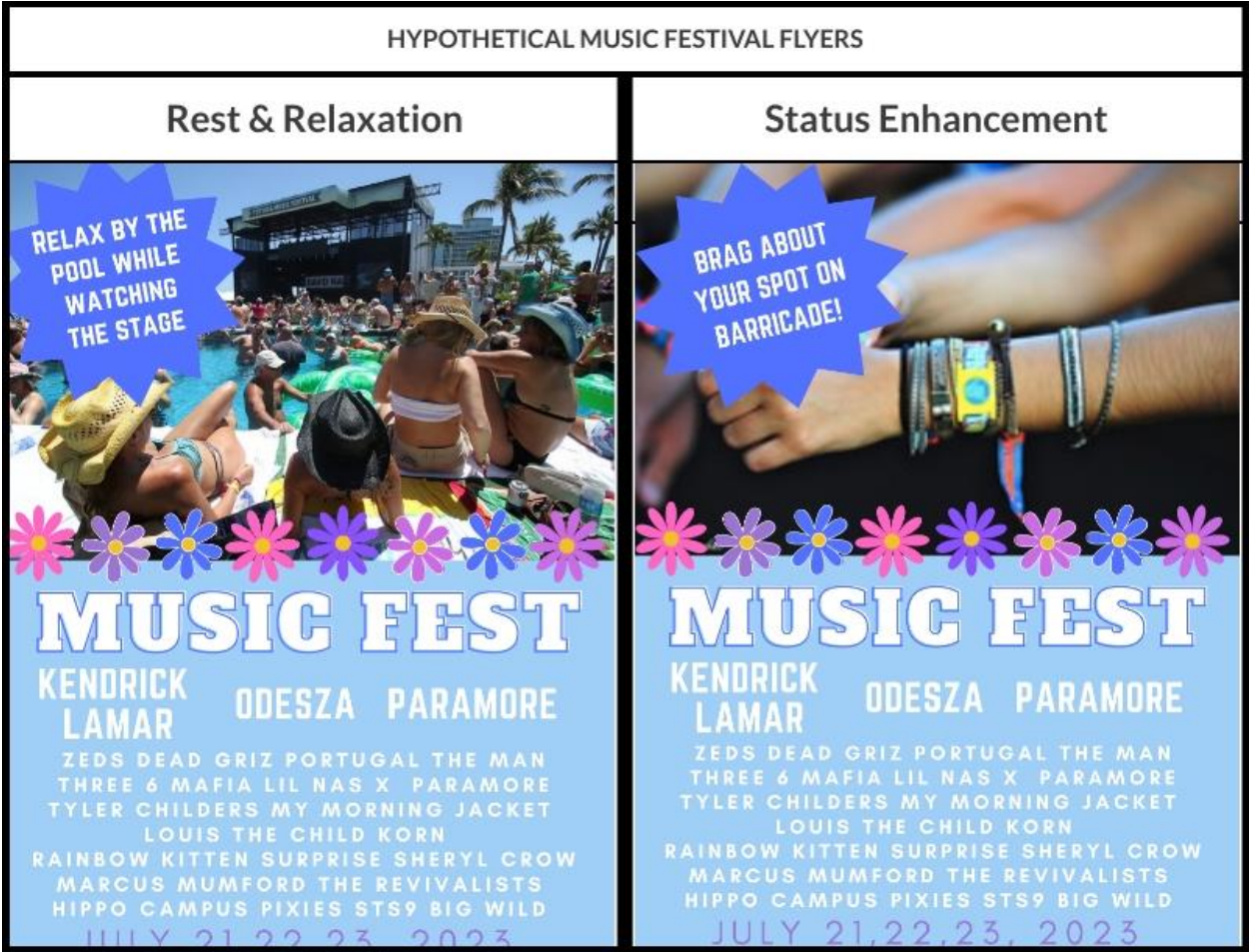


Figure 4:



**Figure 5:**

