



Research paper

Social music festival brandscapes: A lexical analysis of music festival social conversations

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ABSTRACT

Social media usage relative to music festivals has given rise to the Social Music Festival Brandscape (SMFB)—an ecosystem of festival experiences and social conversations where music festival brand value is co-created through discussions of festival experiences and attendances, artist performance celebrations, and evaluation of festival purchase exchanges. The present study applied machine learning-based lexical analysis to the ten largest U.S.-based music festivals and their communities across Instagram and Twitter and revealed post theme types of Time, Artists, Media, Location, Purchase Exchanges, Gratitude, Priming, Social Media Inducements, and Genre References to round out value co-creation activity within the Dialogue Zone of the SMFB model. Of particular note is that while these content themes emerged holistically in the SMFB dialogue, content theme misalignment occurred between festivals and communities where Media, Gratitude, and Priming content theme posts lacked the same frequency across community posts. Understanding the content of these dialogues within SMFBs is important for music festivals moving forward as they seek to build, re-establish, or re-trench music communities in the festival experience, and to determine if post theme misalignment is necessary for longer term, successful SMFB dialogue.

1. Introduction

The downturn in destination-based music events due to the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 notwithstanding (Doing, 2020; Harris, 2020; Statista, 2020a), music festivals have risen in popularity around the world with attendees of all ages sharing music-based cultural experiences (Nunes, 2019). Prior to 2020 there were more than 800 music festivals in 57 different countries (e.g. Gajanan, 2019; Hudson et al., 2015), and approximately a fifth of the U.S. population attended live music events annually (The Nielsen Company, 2018). Additionally, music festival-goers turned to social media to share personal experiences and connect with festival communities virtually and in-person—56% of general attendees engaged on social media during live music shows to share photos and post videos (Rys, 2018). Social media platforms continue to offer festival-goers opportunities for real-time connection both offline and online (Danielsen & Kjus, 2017) allowing consumers access to social media's core principles of usage: presence, relationships, reputation, identity, groups, sharing and conversations (Kietzmann et al., 2012). However, few researchers have investigated how music festival organizations communicate with attendee communities by way

of social media messaging. The present study, then, seeks to understand how social media communication influences festival branding by examining which messages surface through social media festival posts compared with messages shared by festival-goers. The implications of this study, as well, may inform music festivals looking forward to launching, re-building their communities, or seeking growth in attendance or marketshare.

Music festivals bolstered the larger music industry as these events, in the years leading up to 2020, were the fastest growing sector within the live music industry attracting larger audiences at lower costs than standalone concerts (Danielsen & Kjus, 2017). Some researchers argue that music festivals can be a highly volatile industry because of the rising costs of commodities like transportation, artist fees, logistical expenses, as well as macroeconomic variables and festival competition (Kerr & May 2011). Recently, the pandemic has demonstrated these vulnerabilities with festival growth slowing due to Covid-19 pandemic. Yet still, the launch of new festivals, the expansion of festival owners such as Live Nation, and attendance all increased prior to the pandemic (e.g. Statista, 2020b; The Nielsen Company, 2018). This growth in festivals changed the way music fans experience music and the way artists release music

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(Knopper, 2014), and analysts believe that the festival phenomenon will continue to grow following the pandemic (Statista, 2020a). Ben Dickey, manager of the band Spoon, whose 2014 album launched at festivals like Governors Ball, explains it simply: A music festival is “a pretty huge promotional platform for new songs” (Knopper, 2014, para. 4). Music festivals impact the way artists gain popularity and generate revenue. According to artist Dylan Baldi of the band Cloud Nothings, artists are able to generate “three and a half or four times more” revenue by playing the music festival circuit and increasing their exposure during a normal year (Knopper, 2014, para. 11). Music festivals are also vital to larger culture, locally and globally. Prior to 2020, festivals were one of the fastest growing types of tourism attractions (Leenders, 2010). In the U.K. the music industry brought in approximately \$7 billion in spending and provided close to 200,000 full time jobs—a large portion of this from festival tourism—(UK Music, 2019) while in the United States music-based tourism constituted approximately 17 percent of the entire tourism industry (Hudson et al., 2015). Festivals generally, and music festivals particularly, have become recognized for enhancing their region’s image and appeal, improving recreational opportunities, contributing to local and regional economies, and enhancing local pride and culture (Leenders, 2010). For instance, U.S.-based festivals Coachella SXSW, Bonnaroo, and Stagecoach annually bring in millions of dollars to their local economies (e.g. Bosse, 2015; Gajanan, 2019).

Music festivals also strengthen a destination’s image by shifting the perceptions people may have of the location and those who live in the region (Hudson et al., 2015). Music festivals impact local cultures and economies both by offering unique consumer experiences as well as offering the location a distinct personality. Attendees in search of unique life experiences can select location and festival, and if the experience is fitting festival-goers can reinvent themselves through attendance and experiences (Skandalis et al., 2019). Music festivals create specific times and places for celebration at the interstices of festival goers’ routine experiences (Danielsen & Kjus, 2017). Music festivals also provide a sense of community where attendees are bound together through shared experiences across a larger collective outside of their routine, while also allowing attendees to reflect on their individual identities and to reinvent themselves in new and expressive ways (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011).

Further, social media platforms change the way consumers experience music festivals in-person and impact how consumers share and connect with adjacent and networked community members. Social platforms provide opportunities for festival organizers to market and learn from their audiences, to build engaging and long-term relationships with festival-goers and fans, to glean robust consumer insights into how to foster brand loyalty across time (Hudson et al., 2015), and to offer instant feedback on what festival-goers prefer (Eventbrite, 2016; Kerr & May 2011). Finally, recent rise in music festival popularity means that more brands are allocating advertising resources to connect with consumers at festivals—and social media platforms are central to this effort. Up from \$1.3 billion in 2013, brands spent approximately \$1.6 billion to sponsor music festivals, tours and venues in 2018, with festivals accounting for the largest portion of that spending (IEG, 2020). Karly Tuckness, festival organizer at Austin City Limits and Lollapalooza, explained the importance of brands sponsoring festivals and inserting themselves into festival experiences by providing shareable, engaging moments designed for social media platforms (Wohl, 2019). For brands to create successful consumption experiences—specifically for music festivals to afford attendees these opportunities—such experiences need to be intense, unique, memorable and transformative (e.g. Arnould et al., 1993; Husemann et al., 2016; Schau et al., 2009; Skandalis et al., 2019). To determine if music festivals as brands are able to accomplish these strategic needs, the present study examines both festival and festival community messages in dialogue across social media platforms in the most recent active years.

2. Literature review

2.1. From experience to value co-creation

Research into brand experience is a fairly recent phenomenon—born of the marketing discipline in the 1990s—that assumes an organization’s highest-value economic offerings are consumer experiences relative to the organization’s branded products or services (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). The creation and management of a strong brand depends upon the ability to win and sustain consumers from both cognitive and emotional standpoints (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). The idea of creating emotional connection through brand experiences is a key strategy within contemporary marketing practices where experiences are designed to be memorable, educational, and entertaining. This stands in contrast to older forms of marketing reliant upon functionality and utility to convey messaging. Experiential marketing differs from involvement in that the prior creates brand attachment through customer delight, a phenomenon both motivational and affective by nature, and the culmination of a consumer’s perceptions, feelings, direct observations, knowledge and experiences over time (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). However, today’s consumer environment is more saturated than ever by competing experiences vying for the attention of target audiences. The contemporary experiential brand attachment process is animated and contested by different views of brand value held by marketers and consumer communities while conditioned by product and brand preferences (Shao et al., 2015). Marketers must be able to provide appealing experiences relative to expectations and preferences (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013), and to help consumers value some products and services over others or select some brands over others (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). Experiential marketing research also raises questions about the concept “value” itself, and who or what is responsible for value creation. Value lies in the hedonic and experiential elements surrounding a product and service, the experience of product or brand consumption, and the value realized in objects of purchase (products and services) and their utilitarian or functional benefits (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). For consumers, such value may take on many forms including absorption, personal control, joy, and spontaneity, and may be found in the newness of perception of unique consumption experience (Arnould et al., 2016). Experiential value may be difficult to describe yet recalled easily for years due to considerable emotional content. Some consumers report that such value leaves them changed forever, in a “magical” way; hence, many consumers strive continually to find, create, and re-create experiences that liberate them from the routine (Arnould et al., 2016). It is in this era of searching for experience that the concept of value co-creation has become integral to strategic branding (e.g. Carlsson et al., 2019; Saarijärvi, 2012).

As a construct, value co-creation is defined as the collaborative creation of value by firms and customers enabling the latter to co-construct service experiences to meet consumer needs and expectations. The concept may be further refined: direct interactions through joint activities that contribute to product or brand value for one or many parties (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Value co-creation is the product of a specific consumer psychological state manifested by interactive experiences with a focal object to enhance connection with and thereby to increase perceived value of the object (Sorensen et al., 2017a; Sorensen et al., 2017b). The establishment of this psychological state among consumers is not as simple as having them walk into an experiential marketing situation, however. Strategists intending to use this construct must first understand how consumers attain this psychological state to grasp the effectiveness of value co-creation as a marketing tool. Additionally, it is important to note that consumers and consumer communities may choose to participate in value co-creation through a wide array of activities including message production and modification, message and product distribution, and consumer service activities (Saarijärvi, 2012). Consumers and their communities

co-consume, co-conceive, and co-maintain product value through conversational dialogue with brands and brand communities (Sheth & Uslay, 2007; Zhang & Chen, 2008).

It is through multiple interactions across channels such as social media platforms that organizations co-create the aforementioned symbiotic psychological state with consumers and gain their feedback, trust, and loyalty. Organizations, then, must be nimble with their reactions and work to sustain dialogue with consumers while reaching a common understanding of advertised objects' values resulting in the co-creation of those objects' symbolic or financial weight (Abeza et al., 2018). Value is a product's or a brand's worth created at the intersection of the offeror (the organization), the customer, and additional value creation stakeholders (Zadeh et al., 2019a; Zadeh et al., 2019b). And while scholars consider organizations to be the primary integrators and transformers of products or brands designed for consumers, it is consumers who are the co-creators of product or brand value in social platform-based community networks via interactivity (Zadeh et al., 2019a; Zadeh et al., 2019b) including post platform, tone, language, and various behaviors (e.g. click, comment) (Sorensen et al., 2017). The levels of community (based on relationship, network and size) extant within a value co-creating social media community include known customer dialogues, social exchanges across groups, temporary relationships between customers, and tribal connections binding consumer communities together (Zadeh et al., 2019a; Zadeh et al., 2019b). These levels are worth noting as the latter two descriptions are especially relevant to the present examination of value co-creation communities and music festivals.

Organizational brand value occurs through co-creation activities through partnerships and collaboration. Specifically, organizations work jointly with users and stakeholder groups so that consumers become brand agents assigning meanings, experiences, and contexts in a personal manner while critically sharing that information with other consumers (Kim & Choi, 2019). Assignment and sharing creates value for all actors involved, including additional network stakeholders and creator organizations (Brodie et al., 2013). Kim and Choi placed a high level of importance on this value suggesting that all organizations should make it their mission to serve stakeholders rather than produce simple product outputs given that innovation hinges upon the changing nature of value and value creation (2019). Despite this call, there is limited understanding of how consumers perceive the benefits of enhancing and maintaining relationships with different organizations, especially in the context of social media experiences (Abeza et al., 2018). Organizations have attempted to address this dilemma through the creation of the "brandscape" concept, detailed in the next section.

Little is known about the influence of social media on emotions and attachments to brands, and this holds true for whether or not social media-based relationships lead to desired outcomes such as positive word of mouth (Hudson et al., 2015). The paucity of this research is troubling in the context of branding, which originated as a means for firms to differentiate their goods or services from those of competitors. Organizations often devote a significant budget to social media marketing, though word of mouth evangelism for products and services may be difficult to tie back to specific social campaigns (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). This conundrum is at least partially the impetus for the creation of the "brandscape" concept. Brandscapes are defined as places that converge and assimilate all elements of a brand into a coherent entity, as well as a place where value can be co-created by both the host and consumer as a result of place-based experiences (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006; Sherry, 1998). Brandscapes may consist of physical elements, digital elements or a hybrid of the two where experiences and brands come together. Regardless of form and structure, the key to a brandscape's coherent entity are the creation of experiential narratives. These narratives, if successful, should generate temporary yet profound and intimate bonds of connection between participants that transcend the commercial nature of the experience (Arnould et al., 2016).

Brand communities form around experiential narratives where members share common interests and affinity. These communities, in

turn, generate consumer feelings of empowerment and make their brand community agentive, interactive platforms for consumer-to-consumer recommendations. Brand communities, as components of brandscapes, are also epicenters for individual and collaborative efforts to create and co-create value for individuals, additional stakeholders, and organizations (Brodie et al., 2013). Organizations may stimulate value co-creation within these communities by providing resources to engage and interact with community members. In a social media context, these resources arrive as organization-generated content posts, which may promote the creation of companion user-generated content posts. Stakeholders interacting with posts creates value both in-use and in-context for the larger community, and this activity leads to additional value co-creation opportunities for brands and their stakeholders (Sorensen et al., 2017a; Sorensen et al., 2017b).

Social media-based brand communities are different from other communities in terms of social context, structure, scale, symbolic content, and storytelling; as well, these communities do not have consistent aliases and they do not resemble the flat structures observed in traditionally threaded discussion forum communities. Social media brand communities sustain heterogeneous populations, large scale communication activities, myriad platform usage, and a variety of affiliated brand communities (i.e. sub-brand communities) (Sorensen et al., 2017a; Sorensen et al., 2017b). These conditions hold true for brand communities identified within the confines of music festival brandscapes. The next section expands upon the idea that music festivals themselves are brandscapes with social media a primary driving component for the formation of brand communities and value co-creation between attendees and festivals.

2.2. Music festivals as brandscapes

Contemporary music festivals may be traced back to the 1950s. Widely considered the inception of U.S. festival culture, The Newport Jazz Festival, founded in 1952 in Rhode Island (USA), featured academic panels during the day, with jazz, blues and gospel performances at night by well-known artists such as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie (Chamberlain, 2017). In 1969, the historically famous rock event Woodstock (New York, USA) marketed as "three days of peace and music" solidified rock music festivals' place in contemporary popular culture when radio advertising and word of mouth yielded almost 500,000 in attendance when 20,000 were expected (Lawson, 2009). Compare that to contemporary music festival marketing which has evolved from word of mouth to "engagement marketing," or two-way relationship interactions between consumer communities, festival brands, and products (Jacobs, 2017). The 2017 Governors Ball Music Festival in New York City, for instance, witnessed music and product brands ubiquitously marketing to festival-goers with high-tech experiences or activations. For example, Coca-Cola used its "Share an Ice Cold Coke" activation, which handed out free cans of different Coca-Cola products and featured a specialized vending machine where festival-goers typed in a friend's name to receive two Coke cans with their names on it (Jacobs, 2017). The Founders Entertainment team, the festival promotion company behind Governors Ball, used this kind of experiential marketing and found it successful, especially among millennial attendees. According to Alex Joffe, the director of brand and media partnerships for the Founders Entertainment team, traditional marketing interactions have given way to more progressive, experience-based approaches to interacting with festival attendees (Jacobs, 2017).

Increased popularity of music festivals has coincided with the rise of social media intersecting in a time of historical significance. While Covid-19 has been a financial hardship of late, music festivals are one of the industries that performed well during and following the economic recession of the previous decade due to leveraging cost-effective social media for experiential ends (Hudson et al., 2015; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011). Currently, marketers use sophisticated tactics to present

individual brands across these types of experiences. Likewise, the rise of mobile device usage has been a driving force behind social media platforms' role in sharing music festival brand experiences. Where the "extended festival experience" has become a large part of building music festival brands, active festival-goers are incorporated in brand activities as festivals integrate various social media platforms into marketing streams (Danielsen & Kjus, 2017, p. 8). For instance Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival, a popular music event held annually in Tennessee (USA) shares experiences on its website by asking its visitors "How Will You Experience Bonnaroo?", and perennially features a YouTube video of festival highlights and responses. The event's videos show attendees taking selfies and using mobile devices to share personal and group experiences throughout the festival. Bonnaroo attendees, likewise, reciprocate and extend these experiences as they share videos, pictures, and textual support across social posts.

Another music festival branding practice rooted in the previously mentioned aspirational travel marketing accrues when music festivals promote the concept of music tourism and destination is ultimately integrated into brand narratives. Individuals see themselves as music tourists when they travel to new places, listen to music, and experience performances (Hudson et al., 2015). Coachella, held annually in California (USA), is one of the most popular destination festivals; other festivals like Bonnaroo and Lollapalooza (Illinois, USA) are part of dozens of trending festivals around the country attracting cross-generational, cross-demographic ticket-buyers (Deutsch, 2015). For music communities planning to attend a festival, making travel arrangements is often an early step in the process, and festivals such as Bonnaroo and Coachella incorporate travel into consumer engagement on their webpages and shared across social platforms. Promoting the travel and tourism aspects of these festivals creates opportunities for more stories to be told about the music concert experiences festival-goers enjoy sharing. Ticket buyers, then, participate in the experiential messages on social media and those narratives are used to entice more people to attend. Often, narrative experiences are promulgated after the music event ends as festival-goers' stories continue their lifespan through post-festival engagement, which in turn continues actively to promote and develop festival branding (Hudson & Hudson, 2013).

In order to attract and retain fans, music festival brandscapes need to create a distinct connection between humans and music in the context of human development, religion, politics, and sporting events, as well as

the sense of place created by festival locales (Hudson et al., 2015). Hence, music festivals tend to participate in the narratives social media communities share online where the aesthetics of consumption become part of the music event's increased value. In the mind of social media users, the emotional payoff of aesthetics is based on the appreciation of beauty similar to an elevated art exhibition or performance (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). Festival brands use these aesthetic and cultural events to harness the participatory labor of attendees by creating opportunities to incorporate and further distribute festival images across social media (Carah & Angus, 2018). This co-creation and sharing of messages also contributes to the creation of social media identity considered a function of using social platforms to recognize consumers' relationship to a product or brand, as well a function of consumers incorporating that value into self or community conceptualization (Kietzmann et al., 2012).

Based upon the aforementioned understanding of contemporary event attendance and social platform marketing schemes, the Social Music Festival Brandscape (Fig. 1, SMFB) may be visualized as an interconnection of space and place anchored in location-based musical experiences where artists and festival-goers as well as the festivals themselves interact during performances, where interactions are expanded through festival communities talking/posting/sharing before, during, and after festival performances across preferred social media platforms, and where interactions allow communities to engage in purchase exchanges around tickets, airfare, and festival merchandise. Often, the elements of the SMFB function to aggregate the music festival brand by affording post-attendance discussion and celebration of physical performance activities, offering network resonance where festival communities share brand-specific experiences within and across their in-network connections, and facilitating user-generated content videos and images that induce future-attendance or catalyze in-group feelings within festival-goer communities. In terms of the portion of the SMFB where value is clearly co-created by social media communities, the dialogue zone includes the experiential places and social platform spaces where festival-goers interact with artists, festival community members, and the festival brand.

Although robust attendances and market growth are hallmarks of contemporary music festivals, these event phenomena have not been examined relative to their SMFB dialogues. Specifically, the impactful engines behind these brandscapes include the value co-creation generated by festival-goer social communities induced and enhanced by the

Social Music Festival Brandscape

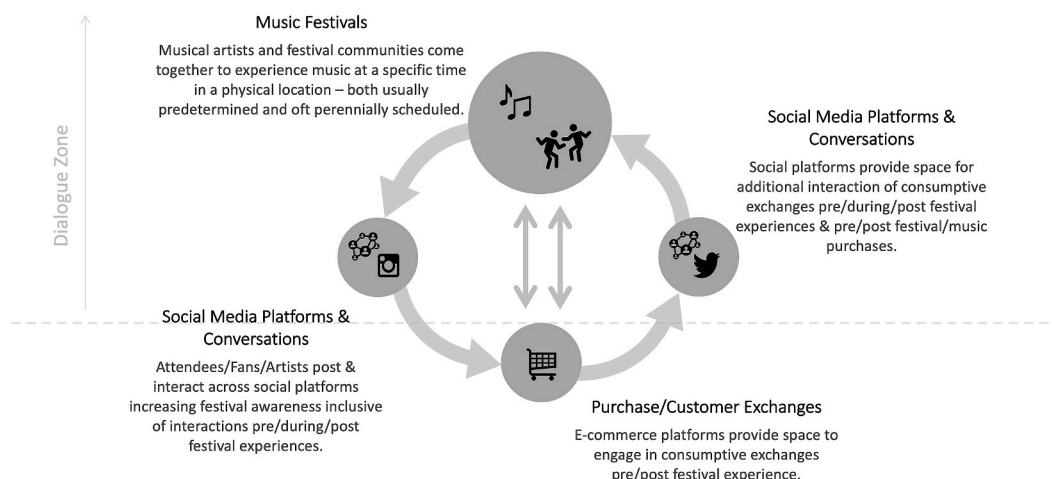


Fig. 1. Social music festival brandscape model.

experiential opportunities afforded through location-based attendance. Given that music festival communities impact both local communities and the greater music industry with their attendance trends and social media posts born out of these brandscape experiences, the present study evaluated the 10 largest U.S.-based Music Festivals and their communities by asking this question:

RQ: How do music festivals and their communities co-create value within the Social Music Festival Brandscape?

3. Methods

The present study followed recent trends in data mining public-facing social platforms to account for strategic brand and marketing activities (Saxena et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2019; Taecharunroj, 2019)—text mining shared narratives specifically (Nishanth et al., 2012)—by crawling, capturing and archiving data that answer strategic questions, cleaning the data of information not pertinent to research questions, accounting for redundancies, and conducting filtering analysis to observe themes. To begin, a Python-based tool was deployed to capture textual data across Twitter and Instagram social platforms of U.S.-based

Table 1
Social music festivals - account, impact, population, history & dataset counts.

Festival	Social & Web Media	Economic Impact	Attendees	Location	Launched	Tweet Dataset	Instagram Dataset
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage	https://www.facebook.com/JazzFest https://twitter.com/jazzfest https://www.youtube.com/user/jazzfest https://www.instagram.com/jazzfest/	\$300 million (2018)	450,000 (2018)	New Orleans, LA	1970	797	667
Austin City Limits	https://www.facebook.com/aclfestival https://twitter.com/aclfestival https://www.instagram.com/aclfestival/ https://www.youtube.com/user/aclfestival	\$264.6 million (2018)	450,000 (2018)	Zilker Park, TX	2002	850	839
Lollapalooza	https://www.facebook.com/lollapalooza https://www.instagram.com/lollapalooza/ https://www.youtube.com/user/lollapalooza https://twitter.com/lollapalooza	\$245 million (2018)	431,000 (2018)	Grant Park, Chicago, IL	1991–1997, 2003, 2005	837	455
Coachella	https://www.facebook.com/coachella/ https://twitter.com/coachella https://www.instagram.com/coachella/ https://www.youtube.com/user/coachella https://www.snapchat.com/add/coachella	\$700 million Coachella region (2017)	594,000 (2018)	Coachella Valley, CA	1999	849	837
Electric Daisy Carnival	https://www.facebook.com/electricdaisycarnival https://twitter.com/EDC_LasVegas https://www.instagram.com/edc_lasvegas/	\$1.3 billion (2011–2015)	411,400 (2018)	Las Vegas, NV	1991–1993, 1997	816	842
Ultra Music Festival	https://www.facebook.com/Ultra/ https://twitter.com/ultra https://www.instagram.com/ultra/ https://www.youtube.com/umftv https://www.mixcloud.com/umfradio/	\$168 million (2018)	170,000 (2019)	Miami, FL	1999	898	547
South by Southwest/SXSW	https://www.facebook.com/SXSWFestival https://twitter.com/sxsw https://www.instagram.com/sxsw/ https://www.linkedin.com/company/sxsw/ https://soundcloud.com/officialsxsw https://www.mixcloud.com/sxswfm/ https://www.youtube.com/user/sxsw https://open.spotify.com/user/1270297457	\$325 million (2016)	159,258 (2019)	Austin, TX	1987	735	1311
The Governor's Ball	https://www.facebook.com/govballnyc https://twitter.com/govballnyc https://www.instagram.com/govballnyc/	\$62.4 million (2017)	150,000 (2017)	Randall's Island Park, NYC	2011	820	502
Movement Electronic	https://www.facebook.com/movementdetroit https://twitter.com/movementdetroit https://www.instagram.com/movementdetroit https://www.youtube.com/movementdetroit	N/A	75,000 or 25,000 each day (2018)	Detroit, MI	2000	797	500
Electric Zoo	https://www.facebook.com/ElectricZoo https://twitter.com/ElectricZooNY https://www.instagram.com/electriczoony/ https://www.youtube.com/user/ElectricZooNY https://soundcloud.com/electriczoofestival	N/A	100,000 (2018)	Randall's Island Park, NYC		821	689

music festivals and their festival communities given the relative size of U.S. music festivals (Knopper, 2014), access researchers have to social API data in the U.S., and the activity of these music festival communities. Table 1 indicates the number of music festival brand and community data collected across these social platforms relative to accounts and/hashtags, pre-Covid-19, as they relate to the music festival research question. Next, music festival brand and community accounts within these social platforms were targeted due to the focus of the research question (see Shen et al., 2019). Hashtag searches were also conducted and results were captured to focus the data on music festival-specific conversations (Table 2).

3.1. Data cleaning & parsing

After capturing data from music festival accounts and music festival community hashtag searches, data were cleaned of non-words and non-letters to improve the quality of post-capture analysis. Following previous social media mining approaches, the data sets preparation also included removing incomplete lines of textual data, deleting or repairing corrupted data, adjusting for missing fields, spell checking, and removing numerical information (Shen et al., 2019). Unstructured data was then analyzed using Leximancer software, a data-processing tool prevalent across numerous research disciplines (Islam et al., 2018; Lai & To, 2015; Liu & Xu, 2018; Nishanth et al., 2012; Saxena et al., 2018; Singleton et al., 2018), to examine the social media textual data sets and generate a textual content analysis (Biroscak et al., 2017). First, Leximancer cleaned the data sets further to exclude remaining non-words and word replications (Shen et al., 2019). Slang terms, phrases, and proper nouns were removed so that final textual output would be relevant and thematic analysis would not queue around “@” comments, retweeted or reshared materials. Additional parsing included identifying spaces between words and phrases to delimit the inclusion of nonsensical textual data or replications. Compressed words and misspellings were also extracted from the data sets (Leximancer Pty Ltd., 2018).

3.2. Data analyses

Utilizing a machine learning-based latent semantic approach to thematic discovery and classification across large qualitative data sets (Deerwester et al., 1990; Hartmann et al., 2019), Leximancer followed textual parsing with a calculation of word frequencies using the sliding n-gram window process (Struhl, 2015). Words were counted within sentence-level units at the rate of once per sentence and then all words were tallied and weighted in value. Leximancer then accounted for all forms of each word using stemming (word variations treated as the same concept) (Smith & Humphreys, 2006), created indices of unique terms

Table 2
Music Festival Community Hashtag Data sets.

Hashtag	Tweet Count	Instagram Post Count
#nolajazzfest	94	1708
#aclfest	1992	478
#austincitylimitmusicfestival	98	1591
#lollapalooza	6450	1720
#coachella	6320	1061
#electricdaisy	192	1830
#electricdaisycarnival	375	1213
#edcllasvegas	652	1190
#electronicdaisycarnivallasvegas	53	251
#ultramusicfestival	1391	0
#ultramiami	529	0
#sxswmusic	315	1416
#govballnyc	133	1378
#movementdetroit	398	1376
#detroittechno	456	1173
#electriczoo	672	1649
TOTAL:	20,120	18,034

with machine learning-based n-gram sampling (Deerwester et al., 1990), and generated a lexicon of these terms (Struhl, 2015). Co-occurrence analysis then yielded themes based upon traditional data-mining calculation techniques whereby emergent themes were assessed via communalities and their relationship to additional clustered terms within other themes were also calculated (Larose & Larose, 2015). Finally, emergent content themes were visualized to demonstrate concept themes as clustered spheres connected by lines to associated terms (Leximancer Pty Ltd., 2018; see Fig. 2). Exemplars were selected to illustrate thematic results.

4. Results/findings

Lexical analysis findings demonstrate value co-creation between festival accounts and community hashtag conversations across social platforms. Specifically, festival and community posts aligned in content typological ways. First, festival account content themes included the concepts day, pic, music, stage, tickets, check, looking, thank, ready, YouTube, track, playlist, sold, and premier, as well as more miscellaneous data (Fig. 3, Table 3). A specific filter for festival accounts parsed direct festival references from this data set given the level of festival-self-referencing that occurred over 15,400 tweets and Instagram posts. That said, these textual content themes emerged as the top 15 themes across the ten festival accounts' posts. Second, festival community post data included festival references, pic, genre references, time, location, tickets, forward, bio, someone, artist and location mixtures, tag, and aftershows, as well as additional miscellaneous data (Fig. 4, Table 3). Direct connections between content themes emerging across festival account and festival community data include the latter strongly utilizing festival references first and foremost, with pic and tickets emerging across both data sets. An initial review reveals a weak connection between the exact language usage of festival accounts and festival communities beyond the hashtags and festival referencing. That is, a lack of connection seems to appear when examining the exact terms used most frequently and with cooccurrence weighting within festival account and festival community data sets. However, a deeper review of the main content themes reveals a number of strong typological connections due to the ways festival accounts and festival community content themes relate to one another.

A typology of content themes emerged when reviewing the visualizations of both data sets, as well as the general posts made by both festivals and festival communities (see Figs. 3, 4 and 5a & 7c). These theme types included Time, Artists, Media, Location, Purchase Exchanges, Gratitude, Priming, Social Media Inducements, Miscellaneous, and Genre, and Table 4 shows where theme types emerged across both festival and festival community content themes. Time type posts (see Figs. 6a & 8a) emerged across a robust number of festival and festival community Instagram and Twitter posts emerging in day, stage, check and aftershows posts, as well as posts utilizing the word “time.” Artist type posts (see Fig. 5a, b, 6a, 6b, & 7a) were observed as direct posts about performers, images or videos of artists before, during, or after shows, and indicated as to where artists were located. Media type posts (see Fig. 6b) were illuminated as ways festival community members could access or share artists' works on social platforms inclusive of tracks, playlists or video platforms where sanctioned and unsanctioned music was shared. Location type posts (see Fig. 6a, b, & 7a) were manifested to locate festivals, to identify when specific performance acts were occurring or were planned during festivals, when festivals or artists would be occurring or performing in the future, or where post-festival activities would be held. Purchase exchange type posts (see Figs. 5b & 8b) were those that indicated how to purchase tickets, when discounts emerged, or what price points existed for attendees to purchase access to shows or festival merchandise. Gratitude type posts (see Fig. 5c) figured most prominently within the festival account data set and appeared to be posts conveying thanks to attendees and artists. Priming type posts (see Fig. 5b) such as “premier” and “ready” were utilized primarily by

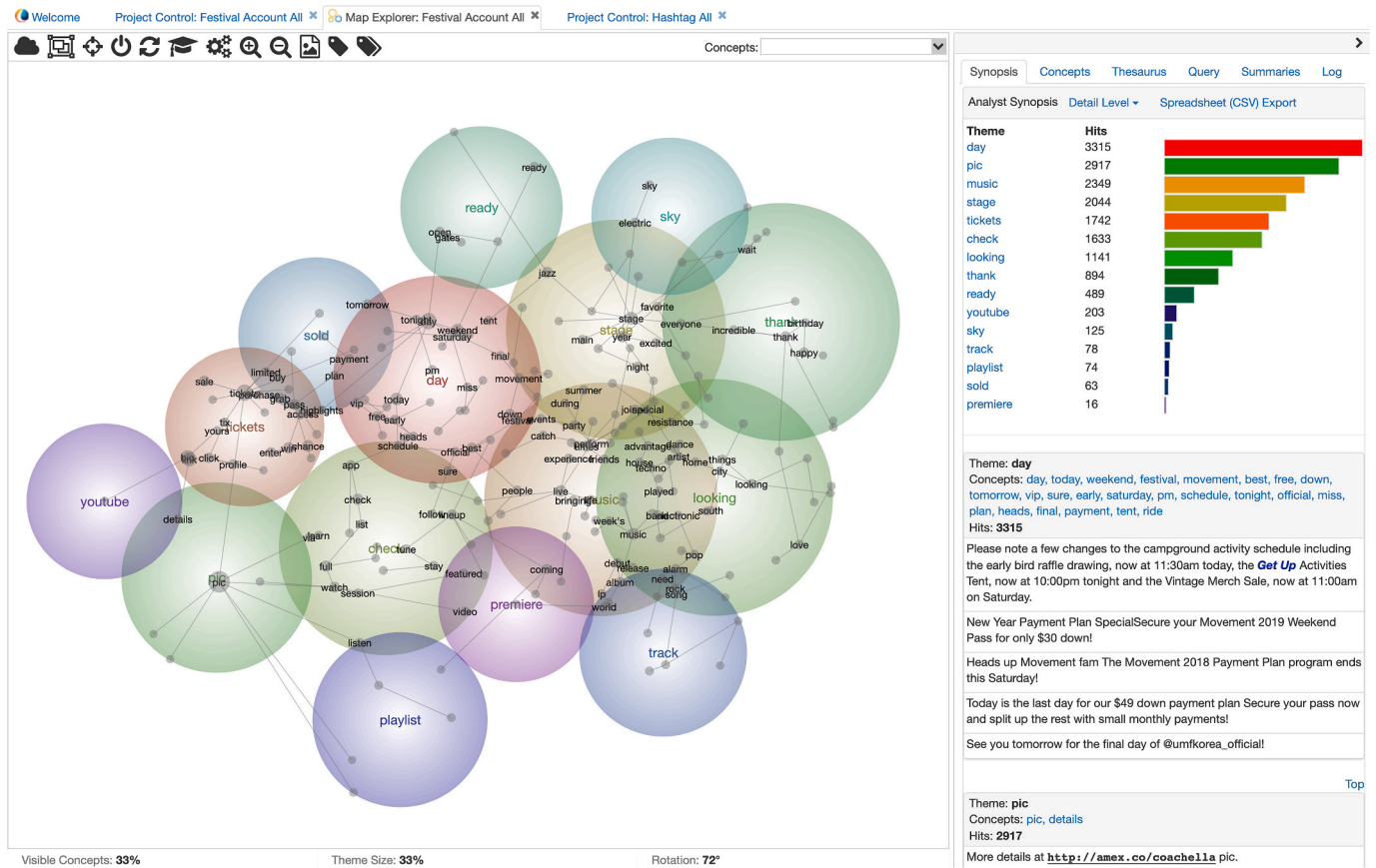


Fig. 2. Sample output with visualizations.

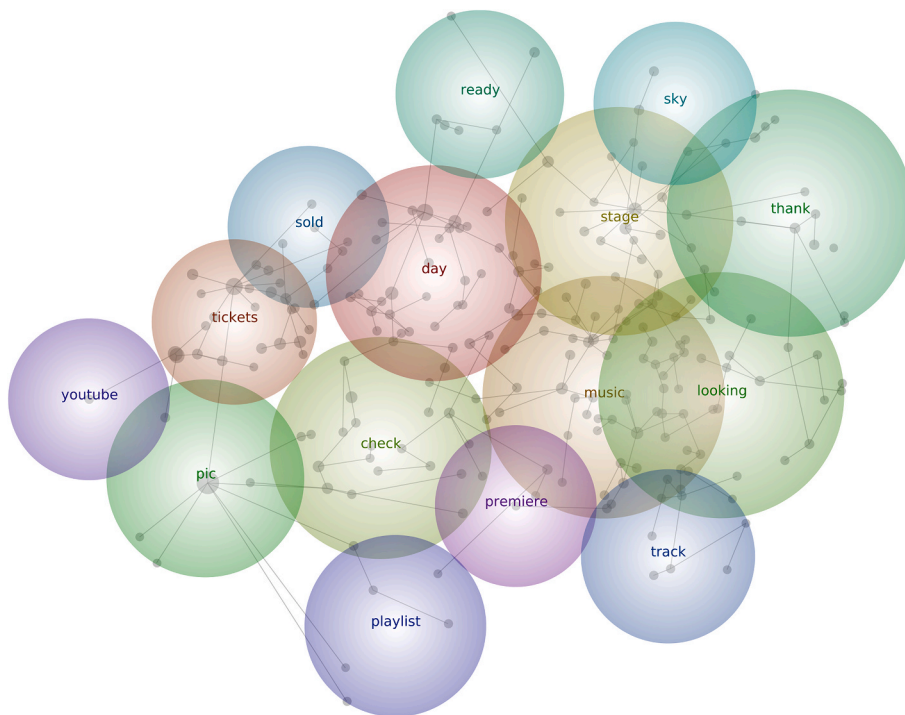


Fig. 3. Music festival account content themes.

Table 3
Content themes comparison.

Rank	Festival Account Themes	Data Count	Community Hashtag Themes	Data Count
1	Day	3315	Festival References	28,863
2	Pic	2917	Pic	8086
3	Music	2349	Genre References	6228
4	Stage	2044	Time	5667
5	Tickets	1742	Location References	5290
6	Check	1633	Tickets	2304
7	Looking	1141	Forward	1804
8	Thank	894	Bio	1694
9	Ready	489	Someone	765
10	YouTube	203	Artist & Location Promotional Mix	504
11	Sky	125	Tag	196
12	Track	78	Aftershow	40
13	Playlist	74	Artists	5
14	Sold	63	Namaste	2
15	Premier	16	Random	1

festival accounts as ways to call attention to the uniqueness of events or as ways to set the stage for time sensitive performances, or as ways to encourage attendee preparedness. Social media inducement type posts included references to sharing YouTube, Soundcloud, or Bandcamp tracks, emphasizing pictures (pics), noting artists and attendee bios, and promoting viral behavior such as “tag”ing and “forward”ing content. Genre type posts (see Fig. 7a) occurred primarily in festival community posts and included reference to the kinds of music played primarily by festival goers and festival artists. Like direct references to the music festival, these genre references emerged both in myriad hashtags as well as in conversations about community with regard to expectations and artist alignment with music festival attendees and history. Finally, there were clearly misalignments between festival themes and community themes within these SMFB dialogues. Of note, references to Media,

Gratitude, and Priming were not nearly as frequent within the community data set, hence they did not register as substantial theme types for the community analysis.

5. Conclusions & discussion

It has become increasingly clear that social media post content is the animus of consumer engagement within brand communities (Brodie et al., 2013), and that brand community members are in dialogue with brands and other community members (Abeza et al., 2018; Saarijärvi, 2012) to sustain and grow those brands (Sorensen et al., 2017a; Sorensen et al., 2017b). Further, brandscapes (Rahman et al., 2010) are place-space ecosystems wherein brand dialogues emerge between brands and brand communities to co-create those brands’ values where physical experiences lead to dialogic exchanges, and where dialogic exchanges lead to more physical experiences (Sherry, 1998; Stevens et al., 2019). The present study examined the relational portion of SMFBs relative to the social media dialogue accruing between festival accounts and festival communities. While the physical locations of music festival attendance is understood as vital to the festival brandscape, it is the contention of this study that the larger brandscape of music festivals includes both the physical and the digital spaces where conversations between festival and festival communities co-create festival brands in, around, before, during, and after festivals occur. Though music festivals’ dialogic exchanges include myriad media shares, e-commerce, and physical attendances, the focus of this study was to examine the unstructured, textual data of the SMFB to better grasp the language-based value co-created by brand stakeholders experiencing and dialoguing about the music festivals they attend (see “Dialogue Zone,” Fig. 1).

The results of machine learning-based lexical analysis of the top ten largest U.S.-based Social Music Festivals and their festival communities indicated content connection between festivals and their communities

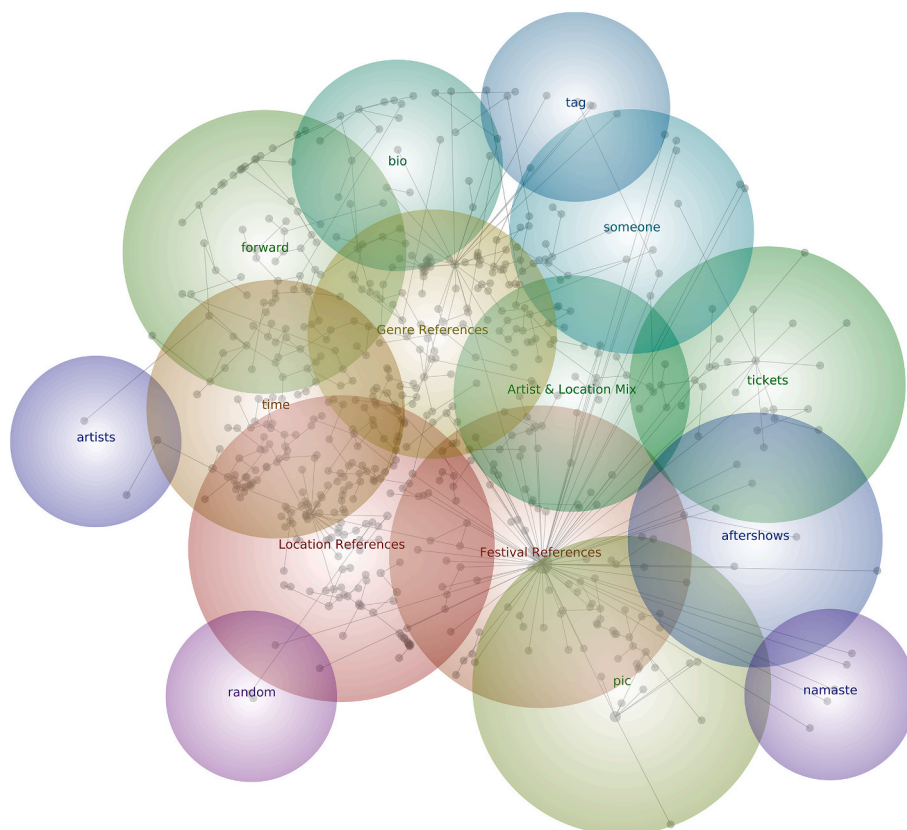


Figure 4. Music festival community hashtag content themes.

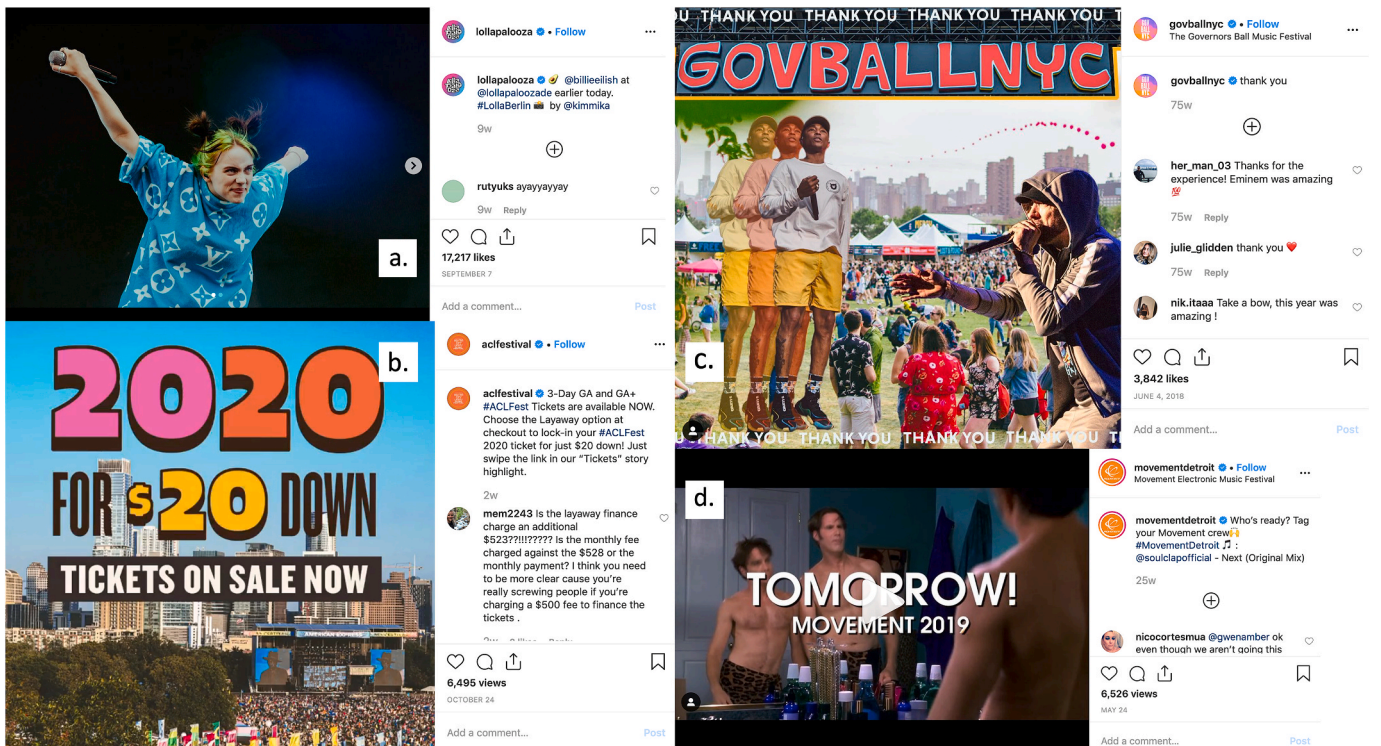


Fig. 5. Instagram festival posts.

Table 4
Themes with associated theme types.

Theme Types	Festival Themes	Corresponding Types	Community Themes	Corresponding Types
Time - 1	Day	1	Festival References	
Artists - 2	Pic	8	Pic	8
Media - 3	Music	2, 3	Genre References	10
Location - 4	Stage	1, 2, 4	Time	1
Purchase Exchanges - 5	Tickets	2, 5	Location References	4
Gratitude - 6	Check	1, 4	Tickets	5
Priming - 7	Looking	7, 8	Forward	8
SM Inducements - 8	Thank	6	Bio	8
Miscellaneous - 9	Ready	7	Someone	9
Genre - 10	YouTube	8	Artist & Location Mix	2, 4
	Sky	9	Tag	8
	Track	2, 3	Aftershows	1, 2, 4
	Playlist	2, 3	Artists	2
	Sold	2, 5	Namaste	9
	Premier	7	Random	9

relative to festival brand conversations. In both data sets, festival names emerged often as was expected. Beyond comparison of content themes however, a theme typology showed additional connections between festival and community social posts where time, artists, location, purchase exchanges, and social media inducements emerged frequently and co-occurred across both festival account and festival community posts. Additionally, media and gratitude theme types occurred in festival posts but not in community posts, while genre type posts frequently co-occurred in community posts but not in festival posts. This is not to say that instances of each type of content theme could not be found in

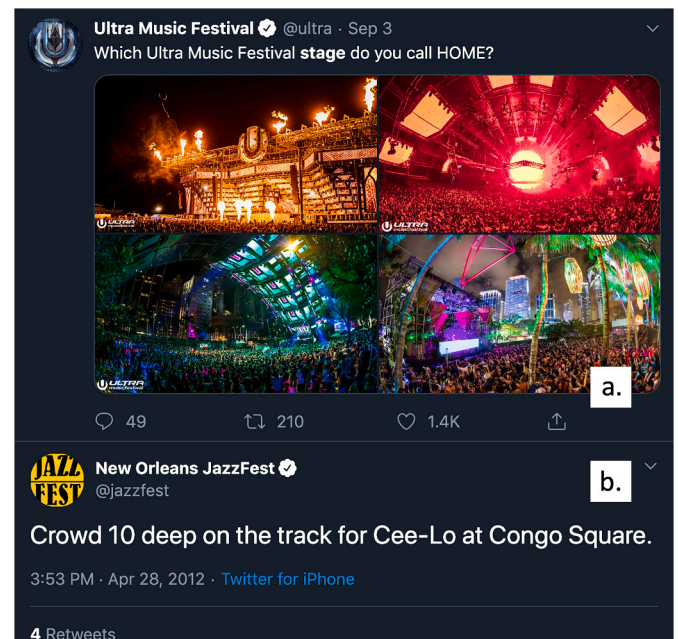


Fig. 6. Twitter festival posts.

both data sets, but rather that frequency and co-occurrence demonstrates these theme posts types are unique in scale and relationality relative to one or the other side of the SMFB dialogue. Festival accounts more often shared gratitude for artists and attendees or posted explanations for where attendees could find media related to artists participating in festivals. Community accounts posted and continued to converse about the music genres found at festivals, and sustained those conversations for value co-creation by emphasizing the importance of genres to the community as well as the importance of supporting genres

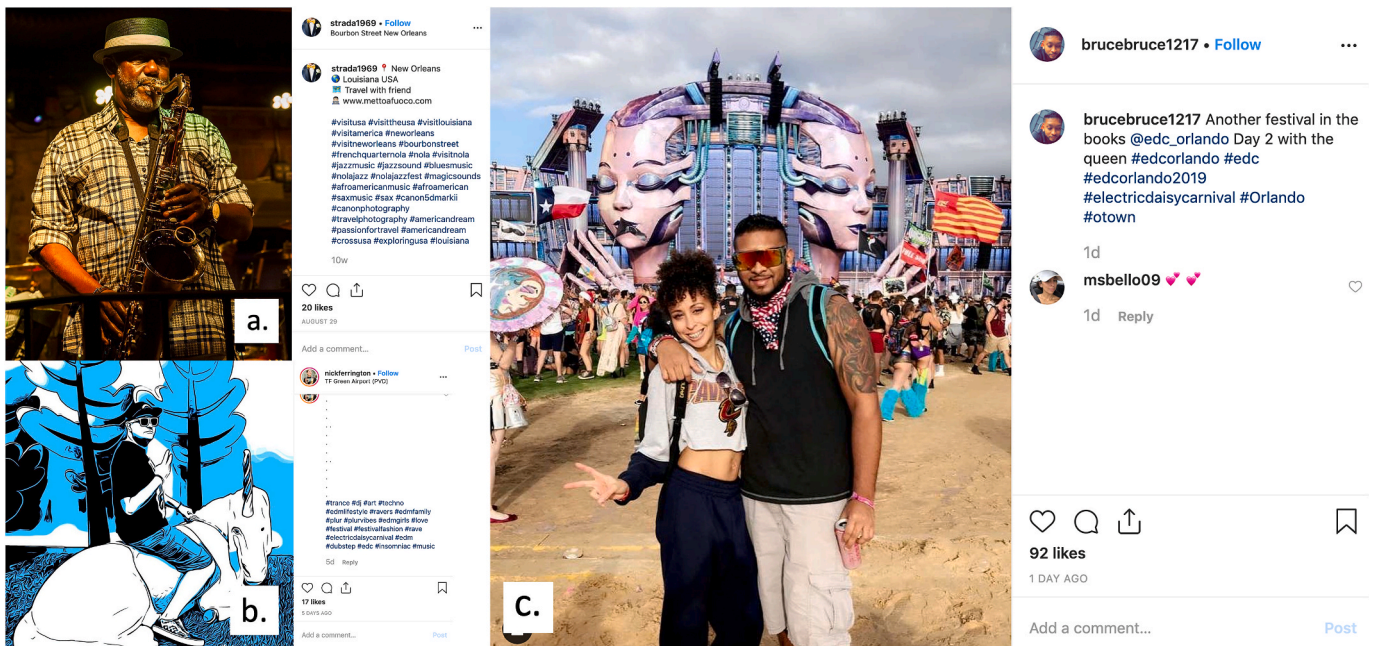


Fig. 7. Instagram hashtag posts.

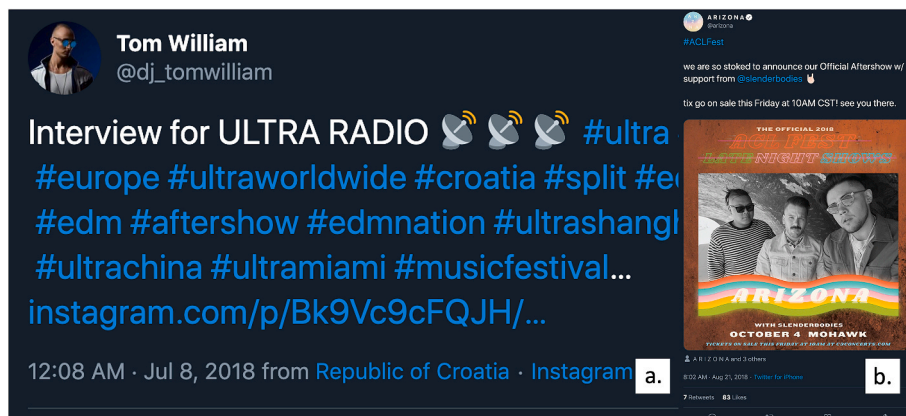


Fig. 8. Twitter hashtag posts.

through attendance and celebrating artists contributing to community-valued genres. Additional idioms of the SMFB value dialogue included more references and shares of artists within festival account data, and slightly more location references in community themes. Relative to the uniqueness of these festival brandscapes, the value co-created by these conversations (Saarijärvi, 2012) demonstrates that the experiences accrued by festival communities has helped to build festival brands beyond a mere exchange of money for music and, instead, into experiences and digital conversations celebrating and showing gratitude to artists and attendees, and facilitating spaces where festival communities can perennially experience and mutually share interest in musical genres about which they care.

Two additional typological outcomes point up the need for additional research. First, priming behavior was observed in festival themes but it was not a significant theme within the community data set. Priming is a phenomenon within social media conversations whereby participants are provided a message that positively, negatively, or emotionally prepares them to receive the rest of the message, or a future message (Luoma-aho et al., 2019). While this study did not assess the emotional valence of the textual content utilized within SMFB dialogic communication, it did determine that priming content themes were

prevalent and found primarily across the festival account dataset. This discovery indicates that festival accounts are already practicing priming, while festival community accounts are not priming at the same level. Future research should investigate with more detail the depth and granularity of priming language within SMFB festival accounts, if priming language is useful within the SMFB ecosystem to sustain or grow a festival's brand—especially in the dialogue zone—and what priming content types are the most successful to accomplish festival brand goals. Second, social media inducements occurred only slightly more often in community posts than in festival posts. However, the types of inducements appeared slightly more directive in the community data set where community members asked their networks directly to share, forward, or tag posts using the available tools built into social platforms. This further explains the value co-creation of SMFB brand dialogues in that community accounts appear to do the most direct work to expand festival brands by asking community members and their networks to resonate and extend festival brand messages via images, videos, and text. Future research should determine the strength of this language usage relative to successful sharing, forwarding, and tagging outcomes, should locate this content usage within the broader framework of language with platform and tool alignment such as social buttons in the

'like economy' (Gerlitz & Helmond, 2013), and should explore the emotional intensity of inducement themes and language relative to SMFB brand outcomes (Choi & Toma, 2014).

Additionally, future research should delve further into how brand communities co-create value in dialogue with brands based upon experiences and services shared and elaborated upon across social platforms in ways that strengthen ties both within communities and between communities and brands (Hollebeek et al., 2017; Zadeh et al., 2019). The outcome of such research could yield further insights into content types involved in strengthening ties in SMFBs by way of value co-creation (e.g. Schau et al., 2009; Triantafyllidou & Siomkos, 2014), and suggest ways that both communities and brands direct conversations to enhance brand value overall. Previous research has considered how brand collectives elicit relational ties relative to brand products and services, as well as consumer-to-consumer interactions (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Alvarez & Fournier, 2016; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012) while enhancing values, engaging in shared rituals, and building brand community traditions (Muniz et al., 2001; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Further content research might also explore the ways the social media brand communities literature (Goh et al., 2013; Habibi et al., 2014a; 2014b; Laroche et al., 2012; Rialti et al., 2018; Rossolatos, 2019; Sorensen & Drennan, 2017; Zaglia, 2013) understands the messaging side of communicative activity as it relates to community members posting text and rich media, commenting, critiquing, sharing, elaborating and replying, among other symbolic behaviors (e.g. Dessart, 2017; Dessart et al., 2015; Gao & Feng, 2016). Given that social media-based brand communities make "sense of new phenomena" related to brands of interest (Högberg & Olsson, 2019, p. 214), share brand information and insights with additional brand community members, and elicit responses from community members and additional brand stakeholders (Ku et al., 2018; Wagner et al., 2017), this research would provide further insights into the symbolic modalities extant in social media-based communities relative to brand value co-creation processes.

Future research should also examine the ways artists and festival communities talk about performances, individual and group expression, festival community participation, as well as greater music-based networks and the impacts to e-commerce. Specifically, how do SMFB communities talk in ways that converge interests, relationships, fantasy and transactions to enhance festival brands by resonating and growing festival communities (Salo et al., 2013), or creating unique, intense, memorable or transformative experiences (Skandalis et al., 2019)? While our data suggest myriad conversations are created and shared by festival communities regarding specific artists relative to their festival performances or musical releases, the ways these consumptive experiences are explained and celebrated is certainly worth further investigation. Additionally, how festival communities talk about festival experiences relative to purchase exchanges will become more instrumental to the music industry as traditional "consumer journey" narratives to instigate product purchases (e.g. downloads) and artist engagement within festival experiences (e.g. VIP passes) evolve beyond traditional advocacy and evaluation (Hudson & Hudson, 2013). Investigating these experiences will require detailed exploration of festival data sets that reveal SMFB brand communications outside of the dialogue zone, but with clear implications for the greater SMFB ecosystem. After all, without attendance there are no festivals and without festivals there are no festival communities. This final suggestion likewise yields new questions about the market-building and marketing processes utilized by brands planning to interact within SMFBs and across community networks as e-commerce continues to evolve (Bourreau et al., 2017) and the discourses utilized to trigger e-commerce exchanges continue to evolve alongside a plurality of visceral social media (Xu & Sundar, 2014).

Finally, music festival response to the constraints of the Covid-19 Pandemic will be of paramount importance to the festival industry. Specifically, Statista (2020a) projects that the pandemic is in large part

to blame on industry revenues being a mere 40% year over year what they were prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. Music festivals, then, will want to rebuild the SMFB brand communities that attended previously and grow new brand-supporting populations relative to online and attendance-based conversations regarding artists and experiences within the festivals. To do this, creating the experiences once again prompted by conversations across SMFBs and enhanced through online community shares during and after the festivals will be key (e.g. Carah & Angus, 2018; Sorensen et al., 2017). Specifically, monitoring the tone and content of these conversations while working toward expanded dialogue between festivals and communities will be essential. Future research will want to compare the current tranche of pre-Covid-19 data with the conversational tone and content of conversations that happened within SMFBs between these communities and the festivals during the pandemic to generate a contrasting image of SMFB-Festival dialogue atrophy versus healthy festival conversations. More, these conversations and social posting data should be compared to earlier years when SMFBs were in their infancy and dialogues were birthed, nurtured, and expanded as festival communities flourished facilitated in large part by social media posting.

Declaration of competing interest

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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