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# **Building a local identity through sellout crowds: the impact of brand popularity, brand similarity, and brand diversity of music festivals**

## **ABSTRACT**

Festival organizations must often balance commercial and artistic priorities when providing a platform for creative expression and regional identity building. However, research on the complex relationship between festival brand metrics and visitor attendance is limited. This relationship is particularly relevant to local governments, tourism boards, and festival organizers because, without reach and visitors, regional branding and identity building are likely to fall on deaf ears. Using data collected from 136 Dutch music festivals, as well as hierarchical regression analysis, this study confirms that a balancing act is necessary with respect to brand popularity, brand similarity, and brand diversity and that being too unique as a festival brand can become a double-edged sword. This finding is particularly relevant because many festival organizers often highlight innovativeness and uniqueness in their requests for funding, regional marketing support, and community engagement. The implications for festival organizers, destination marketers, and local governments are discussed.

**Keywords:** music festivals; brand similarity; brand popularity; brand diversity

## **1. Introduction**

Music festivals have experienced significant growth and popularity in recent years, creating a competitive environment and challenging the viability of many festivals (Lashua, Spracklen, & Long, 2014; Thrane, 2002). Building a loyal customer base can be particularly difficult given the wide range of options from which consumers can choose. Fortunately, many local governments seem to have realized the benefits of music festivals because they can attract visitors from the region, country, and even around the globe.

The Dutch festival market, one of the leading markets in the world, shows clear signs of saturation, with several festivals going bankrupt every year (IQ, 2017; Leenders, Go, & Bhansing, 2015). To overcome the competitive pressures, festivals have engaged in three trends in the last years. First, they are increasingly turning to local governments for support, though with varying success. Second, some music festivals move to other places and even abroad (e.g. North Sea Jazz Festival, ID&T's Sensation). Third, festivals try to schedule top acts or broaden their scope to attract crowds, often putting even more financial pressures on themselves (e.g. North Sea Jazz added Snoop Dogg to its lineup).

Previous research has paid attention to the determinants of the visitor experience, satisfaction, and loyalty (Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Cole & Illum, 2006; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008), the impact of music festivals on local communities and economies (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Gursoy, Kim, & Uysal, 2004; Kim & Uysal, 2003; Mossberg & Getz, 2006), and the motivational factors for festival attendance (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Maeng, Jang, & Li, 2016). However, festivals have a broad range of performance metrics that are relevant, including the festival brand. City councils and local governments, for example, often prefer festivals that communicate the unique identity of their region or city; consequently, they fund or even own festivals as a tool for destination marketing and branding (Getz, 1989, 2008; Hall, 1989). Inspiring more people to visit the

festival and making the festival unique, however, may not always align. This dilemma is the focus of this study.

Although festivals operate in an environment in which competition and regulation are increasingly important, these factors are hardly controllable by festival organizations. Festival organizations have significant control over the festival identity and experience, and the choices they make directly affect visitor success and indirectly affect competition intensity. The focus of this research, which conceptualizes music festivals as brands, is on the music festival's programming and lineup and their impact on brand success. A key question that organizations face is whether to take program risks by organizing something innovative or to use proven artists and lineups. Much of the research so far has focused on simple relationships between festival characteristics and success. It is clear that festival organizations balance complex relationships and the need to identify optimal levels of certain festival features, rather than taking 'the more, the better' approach. In particular, this article is one of the first to shed light on the quadratic effect of brand similarity and brand scope on festival performance.

The structure of the article is as follows: we review extant literature on the topic, after which we delineate the research hypotheses. Then, we present the methodology used to test the research hypotheses and discuss the results. In the last section, we present the theoretical and managerial implications and discuss the limitations and possible avenues for further research.

## **2. Theoretical background and research hypotheses**

### ***2.1. Festivals as brands***

Conceptualization of festivals as brands is widely accepted in the tourism literature (e.g. d'Astous, Colbert, & D'Astous, 2006; Leenders, 2010; Morrison, 1989; Mossberg & Getz, 2006). Morrison (1989) applies the term 'brand positioning' to festivals and puts emphasis on

the importance of differentiation; Leenders (2010) examines the role of the brand of music festivals in their success by adopting a customer equity perspective; Mossberg and Getz (2006) propose that branding principles can be applied not only to products or services but also to festivals; and d'Astous et al. (2006) acknowledge several distinctive characteristics that differentiate festival brands from other brands, including social consumption, limited period, and hedonism. Considering these studies and Keller's (1998, p. 5) definition of a branded product as a 'physical good, a service, a store, a person, place, organization or idea', we argue that a branded product can also be a music festival. Going beyond the traditional definition of brand proposed by the American Marketing Association (1960) and adopted, among others, by Aaker (1991) and Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, and Wong (1996) ('A name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'), we view music festival brands as an experience (Schmitt, 1999).

This study focuses on four brand features (ticket price, popularity, lineup similarity, and lineup scope) that determine the brand identity and have an impact on the brand success and brand image of music festivals. Unlike brand image, brand identity is usually conceptualized on the sender's side (Kapferer, 1997). Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) see identity as the essence of the brand. Likewise, Balmer and colleagues emphasize the distinctive values of a brand (Balmer & Gray, 2003) and describe brand identity as having unique characteristics (Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). Balmer and Greyser (2002) depict a model called the AC<sup>2</sup>ID Test consisting of five types of identity, the most relevant for this study being the actual identity as it refers to the current features of the brand.

## ***2.2. The monotonous relationship between ticket price and music festival success***

Previous studies on the impact of price on the success of performance show contradictory research findings. Reddy, Swaminathan, and Motley (1998) conclude that ticket price does

not have an impact on success, while Leenders, Van Telgen, Gemser, and Van der Wurff (2005) find that ticket price has a significant, negative influence on loyalty. Applying cognitive psychology to our study, we suggest that during the decision-making process, consumers may use mental shortcuts, or heuristic cues, to simplify the process and assess quality (Olson, 1973). Cues traditionally fall into intrinsic cues (i.e. physical attributes of the products) or extrinsic cues (i.e. attributes not directly associated with the physical product, such as price, brand name, and country of origin) (Olsen, 1973, Rao & Monroe, 1988; Teas & Agarwal, 2000). According to signaling theory, consumers frequently use price as an extrinsic cue that indicates brand quality (Dawar & Parker, 1994; Monroe & Chapman, 1987; Rao & Monroe, 1989; Stokes, 1985). Thus, visitors use the ticket price as a signal of the quality of the festival; the higher the price, the higher is the quality of the music festival, and thus the larger is the attendance. Therefore, we propose the following:

H1: There is a positive relationship between ticket price and music festivals' success.

### ***2.3. The monotonous relationship between brand popularity (featuring national stars) and music festival success***

Research has conceptualized brand popularity as an intangible asset that affects performance. Kim (1995) and then Kim and Chung (1997) view popularity as a consequence of market acceptance and brand goodwill over time that has a positive impact on brand image, brand loyalty, and, thus, brand equity and also on market sales, market share, and, thus, brand performance. The results of their empirical studies prove the significant effect of popularity on market sales. Likewise, Raj (1985) reveals the relationship between brand popularity and brand loyalty.

Consumers use popularity as a signal of brand quality (Dean, 1999). Thus, it can influence the evaluation of alternatives by reducing consumers' risk and uncertainty, thereby facilitating their information processing and increasing value to the brand (Kim & Chung,

1997). Considering these arguments and our conceptualization of brand popularity as the extent to which a music festival features national stars, we hypothesize the following:

H2: There is a positive relationship between brand popularity (featuring popular national stars) and music festivals' success.

#### ***2.4. The nonlinear relationship between brand diversity (lineup scope) and festival success***

Past and recent changes in the music festival industry have brought additional pressure to festival organizers to attract as many visitors as possible to survive financially. An element that organizers can control and easily change is the music festival's lineup and program.

Leenders (2010) incorporates an aggregated measure for this in his customer equity model as a component of value equity that affects loyalty, and Lee et al. (2008) find that a festival's program has a significant and positive impact on visitors' satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, research has used loyalty as a measure of success in the music festival industry (Drengner, Jahn, & Gaus, 2010; Lee et al., 2008; Lee, Lee, & Yoon, 2009; Leenders, 2010; Leenders et al., 2005). In the same line, Cole and Chancellor (2009) conclude that entertainment (and, thus, the lineup) is the key festival attribute that directly influences festival visitors' satisfaction and revisit intentions and, consequently, the success and survival of a music festival.

Leenders et al. (2005) argue that music festival organizers have at least two options to be successful in terms of the number of visitors: (1) they can specialize in one specific genre, strive to become the best in that specific area of niche festivals (narrow scope), and work to attract as many particular types of consumers to the event as possible, or (2) they can set out the event in a broad way to appeal to as many visitors as possible. The latter option is known as a non-mainstream, niche music festival and the former as a mainstream music festival.

Consequently, both low levels of diversity (narrow lineup scope) and high levels of diversity (broad lineup scope) can have a positive impact on the success of music festivals,

while moderate levels of diversity may not translate into a positive outcome. This results in a curvilinear (U-shaped) relationship between lineup scope and success. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H3: The relationship between brand diversity (scope of the music festival) and the success of music festivals is U-shaped.

### ***2.5. The nonlinear relationship between brand similarity (lineup similarity) and music festival success***

Cognitive psychology, specifically categorization theory, proposes that individuals organize information into categories that help them process the information and understand their environment (Rosch & Mervis, 1975). People recognize a category member by assessing its similarity to the category prototype (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Rosch, 1978; Rosch & Mervis, 1975). Rosch and Mervis (1975) show that the degree of prototypicality of a category member is larger when the number of attributes it has in common with other members of the category increases and the number of attributes it has in common with other non-members decreases. Thus, if a new member is perceived as matching the category, the associations with that category are transferred to the new instance (Bhat & Reddy, 2001; Cohen, 1982; Fiske, 1982), and consumers use category information to make judgments about the new instance (Loken, 2006). If we apply this idea to our study, the greater the perceived fit between a new music festival and an existing category of music festivals, the easier it is for visitors to classify the new member, to make category inferences, and to accept the new members.

Several theoretical approaches in cognitive psychology recognize the importance of similarity (or fit) in making inferences, in addition to categorization, including schema congruity theory (Fiske, 1982), cognitive consistency (Festinger, 1957), and stimulus generalization (McSweeney & Bierley, 1984). The greater the perceived fit between two



items, the greater is the potential transfer of information from one to the other. Bruggeman, Grunow, Leenders, Vermeulen, and Kuilman (2012) apply categorization theory to their study on music festivals and conclude that overlaps facilitate categorization and, thus, spillover effects. Furthermore, as Loken (2006) acknowledges, similarity can serve as a heuristic in the decision-making process to simplify the process (e.g. when deciding whether to buy tickets to attend a new music festival). That is, heuristics are mental shortcuts that simplify consumers' choices (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2016).

Articles on music festivals (e.g. Finkel, 2009; Wang, 2016) have shown a trend over the last few years: sameness, artist overlaps, homogenization, and non-unique lineups to sell as many tickets as possible. For example, Wang (2016) analyzed the lineups for 11 main festivals in the United States in the summer of 2016 and found a significant amount of music artist overlap and, thus, sameness. Likewise, Finkel's (2009) empirical data show no significant differences in program content across festivals in the United Kingdom. Such trends are also salient in other countries/regions such as Benelux and the Netherlands. Thus, positive effects of similarity may occur in the music festival sector.

Conversely, several studies put emphasis on the importance of lineup uniqueness (and, thus, low level of similarity), innovation, and differentiation from competitors to remain attractive to visitors and, thus, successful, especially in saturated markets (e.g. Getz, 1989, 1991; Lee et al., 2004; Leenders, 2010; Orosa Paleo & Wijnberg, 2006). Leenders (2010) acknowledges that festival organizers need to find new and innovative ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors and be successful. An effective strategy that focuses on diversification and innovation is important to achieve success (Leenders et al., 2005). Likewise, Pegg and Patterson (2010) argue that a music festival's organization needs to differentiate itself to remain, or become, distinctive, and Larson (2009) and Pine and Gilmore

(1998) add that festivals that do not renew or innovate have more difficulty in attracting repeat visitors.

Brand differentiation, distinction, and uniqueness are widely recognized as important brand elements to build brand equity; if the brand is unique, it has a competitive advantage that can persuade consumers to buy it (Keller, 1998). Kotler (2003, p. 315) defines differentiation as ‘the process of adding a set of meaningful and valued differences to distinguish the company’s offering from competitors’ offerings’.

Considering these arguments, similarity can have both a positive and a negative effect on music festivals’ success, suggesting a curvilinear relationship between the level of similarity of music festivals and their level of success. Thus, increases in similarity can lead to increases in success until an optimal point, after which higher levels of similarity can lead to negative results, thus suggesting an inverted U-shaped relationship between lineup similarity and music festival success. Consequently, we hypothesize the following:

H4: The relationship between brand similarity (lineup similarity) and the success of music festivals has an inverted U shape.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### ***3.1. Data collection and sample***

We assembled a broad sample of 136 Dutch music festivals in the Netherlands from national and regional newspapers, news databases, and trade journals, covering different types of music festivals, genres, and sizes. We employed desk research to collect the information on the music festivals regarding their ticket price, popularity, lineup scope, lineup similarity, and success. Each music festivals was scored on a range of metrics by three independent raters. Each rater was selected because of his or her knowledge of festivals and music. Disagreements among raters were resolved through extensive discussion.

### **3.2. Measures**

#### *3.2.1. Ticket price*

We gathered the prices of regular entrance tickets of the festivals from the festivals' websites and festival announcements. If there were different regular ticket prices, we used the average price per festival in the analysis. If the festival lasted multiple days and offered arrangements, we used only single-day tickets to measure the price.

#### *3.2.2. Brand popularity*

To measure the number of national (Dutch) stars featured in a music festival's lineup, we counted the number of nationally known artists featured per festival who had a top 20 hit in the last two years.

#### *3.2.3. Brand diversity (lineup scope)*

Brand diversity refers to the broadness of a music festival's lineup in terms of the number of musical genres present. The larger the number of genres, the broader and more diverse is the brand. We used eight broad and widely known genre categories to classify the artists who played at a given music festival: pop, rock, jazz, dance, hip-hop, classical, Dutch, and world music.

#### *3.2.4. Brand similarity (lineup similarity)*

Brand similarity refers to the extent to which a music festival program is similar to other programs of the entire festival season. A music festival's lineup is considered highly unique if the artists who compose the lineup are not featured at any other festival in the Netherlands during the same year; a music festival's lineup is more similar when the artists are featured at many other festivals that year. We calculate the similarity score for a music festival ( $j$ ),  $S(j)$  as follows:

1. We calculated the total number of performances (x) during the festival season by each artist (i) who performed at one of the music festivals of the sample. We refer to this score as  $x(i)$ .
2. For each music festival (j), we summed the scores  $x(i)$  of all performing artists at that specific festival:  $X(j) = \sum_{i=1}^n x(i)$ .
3. For each music festival, we calculated the similarity score  $S(j)$  by dividing  $X(j)$  by the number of artists at the festival.

#### *3.2.5. Festival success*

We used a dichotomous variable for festival success (1 = festival sold out; 0 = festival not sold out). We collected this information through Internet search engines, festival websites, news websites, and e-mail messages exchanged with festival organizations. We collected data on ticket sales mainly through online sources by comparing location capacity with the number of estimated (or actual) festival visitors. We then averaged the festival success measure over three years, as brand metrics tend to have long-term effects (Leenders, 2010).

#### *3.2.6. Number of stages*

We measured the number of stages using the site plan and counted the number of stages on which artists can perform in front of a crowd. Stages have unique names to help visitors find the exact location where a band is playing at the site.

#### *3.2.7. Times held*

Festivals are often organized annually, and the times held variable measures the number of previous editions of the festival.

### *3.2.8. Location*

We used a dichotomous variable to measure location (1 = the festival is in a major city location; 0 = the festival is not in a major city location).

## **4. Data analysis and results**

### *4.1. Network analysis*

Before testing the hypotheses, we conducted network analysis to visualize the data and describe the relationships among the music festivals organized. Network analysis can, for example, show whether there is a tendency for similarity or diversity in the festival landscape. The underlying premise of this article is that there may be a great deal of diversity, which may reduce crowds and, thus, attractiveness of festivals as identity-building mechanisms.

We employed UCINET (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002) and NetDraw (Borgatti, 2002) for network analysis and visualization purposes, respectively. A relationship between two music festivals exists if at least one artist performed at both festivals. We use descriptive statistics to summarize the characteristics of the nodes and the whole network. Node-level analysis includes degree centrality (number of nodes that are adjacent to a given node), while network-level analysis includes measures of group cohesion: average degree (average number of links per music festival), average geodesic distance (average minimum distance between nodes), density (proportion of all possible ties in a network), diameter (distance between the farthest two nodes), components (the total number of isolates, i.e. nodes that are not connected to any other nodes, and sub-groups of nodes that are linked within but disconnected between sub-groups), component ratio (number of components to number of nodes), cliques (the number of sub-sets of a network; sub-sets refer to two or more nodes

connected), and fragmentation (proportion of pairs of nodes that cannot reach each other) (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005; Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The node-level analysis shows that node degree ranges from 0 (e.g. Amsterdam Dance, Solar, November, Ajoc, Dunya) to 7 (e.g. Super natural, Alempop, Defqon, Koetstock); the latter music festivals are more connected with other nodes. Table 1 shows measures of group cohesion that describe the entire network. There are 47 components in the core network (21 isolates and 26 sub-groups of music festivals connected within, thus 26 cliques). On average, each surviving music festival is connected with 3.2 other music festivals. The measures of fragmentation (i.e. component ratio and fragmentation) show that there is a large percentage of music festival pairs that are unreachable from each other. Furthermore, there is a relatively low density (3.2%). As Figure 1 shows, within the 26 groups of music festivals, there are some similarities in the artists who performed in each music festival; however, the low density and the fragmentation indicate the level of uniqueness and, thus, the lack of similarity across the groups.

Table 1 and Figure 1 go about here

In summary, the exploratory analysis shows that the Dutch music festival landscape is quite diverse. If brand diversity is indeed associated with reduced returns in terms of visitors, there is upside for many festival organizations to increase impact and attendance by gaining more similarity in the lineup, all else being equal. Because similarity can be achieved through all kinds of acts (not only famous and genre-specific acts), this strategy can then increase the festivals' value as a branding platform that attracts sufficient crowds to warrant support, public services, and community engagement.

#### ***4.2. Hierarchical regression with quadratic terms***

We used hierarchical ordinary least squares regression to test the hypotheses. Two models were run. Model 1 examines the linear effects on music festival success, while Model 2

includes the quadratic terms, to analyze the curvilinear effects of lineup similarity and lineup scope on music festival success. To calculate the quadratic terms, we mean-centered the relevant variables (lineup similarity and scope) and then squared them to reduce multicollinearity. All variance inflation factors are acceptable given that the inter-variable correlations are modest (see Appendix 1).

As Table 2 shows, the  $F$ -statistics are significant for the two models, thus confirming the overall robustness of the models. In Model 1, ticket price and popularity have a positive linear relationship to music festival success ( $\beta = 0.003, p < 0.01$ ;  $\beta = 0.135, p < 0.05$ , respectively). Thus, H1 and H2 are supported. In Model 2, brand similarity has an inverted U-shaped relationship to success, as the coefficient of similarity squared is negative and significant ( $\beta = -0.028, p < 0.05$ ). Brand diversity (lineup scope) has a U-shaped relationship to success ( $\beta = 0.027, p < 0.10$ ). These results provide support for H3 and H4.

We computed the derivate of music festival success with respect to brand similarity and brand diversity, respectively. The optimal point of brand similarity is 3.9. Thus, an increase of similarity has a positive effect on success when the level of similarity is lower than the optimal level. Beyond the optimal level, an increase of similarity reduces success. The optimal point of brand diversity is 2.56. Therefore, beyond that point, an increase of diversity has a positive impact on the success of music festivals.

Table 2 goes about here

#### ***4.3. Two-stage generalized least squares model***

The previous analysis shows that there is a benefit to similarity and that this is associated with selling out over a longer period (three years). As an additional check of the validity of these findings, we ran a two-stage generalized least squares (GLS) model. Two-stage GLS models are used in similar success studies, such as motion picture research. It can be argued that being popular (i.e. having Dutch stars in the lineup) and being successful (i.e. selling out)

are related and thus cause endogeneity issues resulting from the dependent variable's error terms being correlated with the independent variables. To check for this possible bias, we first ran a one-stage model to come up with a model that predicts brand popularity (Dutch stars) separately using genre and ticket price, rather than observing brand popularity from the actual data. Table 3 reports the results of the first-stage model.

Table 3 goes about here

We then used the model to arrive at expected brand popularity scores ( $E(DS_j)$ ) for each festival  $j$ , which we fed into the model while leaving out the old brand popularity (Dutch star) variable and ticket price. The results show that the resulting brand popularity variable becomes inherently exogenous (see Table 4).

Table 4 goes about here

Table 4 confirms that brand similarity has an inverted U-shaped relationship to success ( $\beta = -0.028, p < 0.05$ ) and brand diversity has a U-shaped relationship to success ( $\beta = 0.043, p < 0.01$ ). Thus, while one variable is based on the exact lineup overlap and the other variable measures genre breath, the coefficients indicate that there are diminishing benefits from being diverse and that some level of overlap in the lineup helps sell out the festival. Having more genres seems to be beneficial to sell out, as the festival may appeal to a broader range of music lovers. These findings again support H3 and H4.

## **5. Discussion and conclusions**

The festival landscape in Europe and around the world is crowded, and competition for audiences is fierce. While consumers benefit in terms of choices, festivals need to understand their impact better and prove to local and regional governments that their events are a platform for regional identity building and community engagement and entertainment. Attracting a crowd seems to be a key component for any successful festival brand.



This study extends existing research by analyzing the impact of multiple factors that are under the control of the festival organization and can affect the success of the music festival in terms of attendance. In particular, this study more closely assesses lineup similarity and genre scope or diversity.

First, we address a gap in the literature by examining similarity and diversity in events. In addition, we include not only linear relationships but also the quadratic relationships that can indicate increasing or diminishing effects. The results show that the relationship between lineup similarity and success has an inverted U shape, as predicted in H1, and that the relationship between lineup scope and success is U-shaped, as predicted in H2. Previous studies have put emphasis on the importance of differentiation, innovation, and uniqueness to be successful (e.g. Lee et al., 2004; Leenders, 2010; Orosa Paleo & Wijnberg, 2006); however, a trend over the last years is the similarity in program content across festivals (Finkel, 2009; Wang, 2016). Thus, there seems to be a mismatch between theoretical studies and practice. This study closes that gap by empirically proving that similarity has positive attendance outcomes and that festivals may sell out more consistently if they are somewhat similar in terms of their programming. Furthermore, two trends have been identified in music festivals to increase sales: narrow scope and broad scope (Leenders et al., 2005). This study shows that a very narrow or a very broad approach has a positive impact on sales; however, moderate levels can have a negative impact on success.

Second, unlike most prior research, we conceptualize music festivals as brands and focus on several brand features. We also extend previous research by examining brand popularity in the context of music festivals and showing that it has a positive impact on sales.

Finally, we contribute to the literature by analyzing relationships in the context of Dutch music festivals, a market that is challenging because of its high saturation and

dependence on government funding. However, the government has reduced support over the years.

### ***5.1. Theoretical implications***

Programming of a festival is often influenced by aesthetic and artistic considerations of the festival organizers. Criteria such as innovativeness, uniqueness, and expert acclaim are taken into account in conjunction with the need to appeal to the broader public and tourists.

Surprisingly, the practice of programming is one that—like music festivals—has been neglected for study until very recently. Beyond the specifics of the act of programming, this study is concerned with the festival as a brand in a crowded market. On a broader scale, the analysis of programming gives insights into (economic) exploitation strategies and affects success in terms of attracting audiences.

Tourism research has applied brand personality constructs to destination branding and image (e.g. Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007). Nevertheless, in general, brand relationship theory remains unused in relation to differentiated, or undifferentiated, festival brands. The program is likely to play a major role in what the brand is and how it is perceived in relation to other festivals during the intensively competitive summer period. The question we addressed is, do organizers, and stakeholders, really want to be different with their program from the festival that was recently organized a few kilometers away?

The first contribution of this study is the use of brand theory to underpin the relationship between festival programming and visitor behavior. Programming is a key brand feature that affects brand popularity, uniqueness, and diversity. All these brand features are measured and related to brand adoption by visitors.

The second contribution is the inclusion of more complex relationships between brand features and visitor behaviors. While most studies investigate whether more is better with

respect to festival features, this study allows for more complex and non-linear relationships between brand features and success.

### ***5.2. Managerial implications***

Regarding practice, the results of this study are important for local governments, tourism boards, festival organizers, and other organizations involved in destination branding efforts. Every year, councils around the world receive a substantial number of requests for funding music festivals. As such, knowing which factors have a positive impact on the success of the festivals is critical, as councils can use those determinants as assessment criteria against which to evaluate funding applications and allocate funding accordingly. Thus, applications submitted by organizers of music festivals that have either a very narrow or a very broad scope, are similar to other festivals to some extent, and feature national stars should be more likely to receive funding from the government.

### ***5.3. Limitations and further research***

This study has certain limitations. Data came only from the Netherlands and one industry (music festivals), and thus the generalizability of the findings may be limited. Replicating this study in other countries and with other industries would increase the validity of the results. The analysis is based on information collected from secondary data sources. Further research could collect data from consumers and thus include variables that require consumers' responses. Finally, an alternative measure of success, such as the brand image or brand reputation of music festivals, could be included in the model in addition to or as an alternative to sales.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for model constructs.

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Festival success	.486	.302	-							
2. Mean-centered brand diversity	-.002	1.413	.050	-						
3. Mean-centered brand similarity	.000	1.270	.074	.378***	-					
4. Number of stages	4.08	3.579	.101	-.114	-.002	-				
5. Times held	12.30	7.860	-.085	.233**	.128	.038	-			
6. Location	.40	.493	.033	.168*	.162*	-.084	.191*	-		
7. Ticket price	19.93	24.826	.280***	-.139	-.065	.116	.066	.194*	-	
8. Brand popularity	.67	.441	.238**	.004	.324***	.071	.038	-.214**	.213**	-

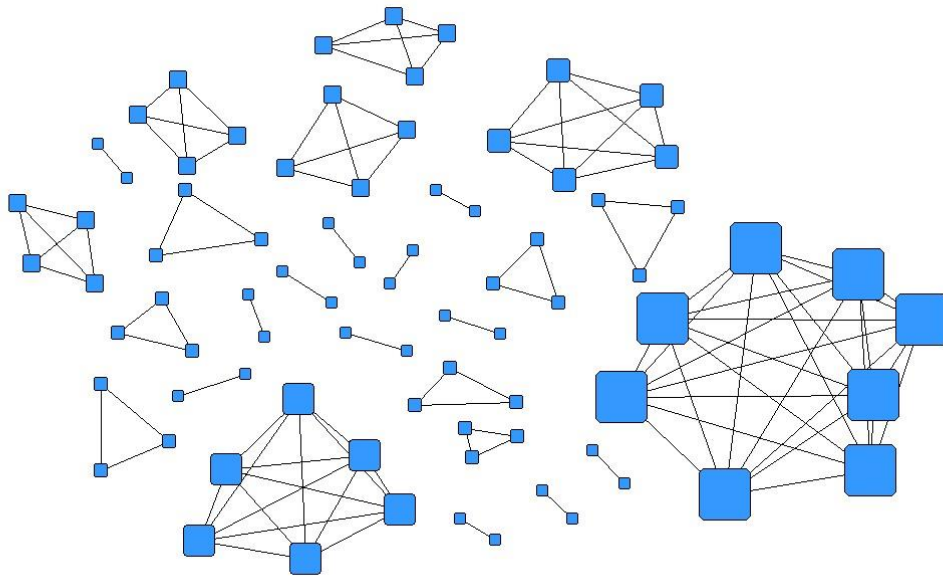
\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

## TABLES AND FIGURES

**Table 1.** Network-level analysis.

Average degree	3.178
Average geodesic distance	1
Density	0.032
Diameter	1
Components	47
Component ratio	0.46
Cliques	26
Fragmentation	0.978

**Figure 1.** Associative network for music festivals.



Notes: Nodes are sized by number of bands playing at the festival.

**Table 2.** Hierarchical regression results.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Brand similarity	-0.002 (-0.082)	0.061* (1.947)
Brand diversity	0.026 (1.326)	-0.018 (-0.689)
Ticket price	0.003*** (2.741)	0.003** (2.407)
Brand popularity	0.135** (2.048)	0.092 (1.377)
Number of stages	0.007 (0.978)	0.004 (0.615)
Times held	-0.006* (-1.724)	-0.005 (-1.516)
Location	0.026 (0.463)	0.007 (0.122)
(Brand similarity) <sup>2</sup>		-0.028** (-2.442)
(Brand diversity) <sup>2</sup>		0.027* (1.759)
$R^2$	0.143	0.200
Adjusted $R^2$	0.097	0.142
$\Delta R^2$		0.057
<i>F</i> -statistic	3.064***	3.493***

Notes: Dependent variable: music festival success. The entries are unstandardized  $\beta$  values, with  $t$ -values in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.10$  (two-tailed); \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 3.** First-stage GLS model results.

Variables	B
Genre: Pop	-0.074 (-0.547)
Genre: Rock	-0.239* (-1.824)
Genre: Jazz	0.055 (0.617)
Genre: Dance	0.042 (0.535)
Genre: Hip-hop	0.295** (3.454)
Genre: Classical	0.069 (0.545)
Genre: Dutch	0.409** (3.525)
Genre: World	-0.277** (-2.387)
Ticket price	0.003* (1.915)

Notes: Dependent variable: brand popularity. The entries are unstandardized  $\beta$  values, with  $t$ -values in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.10$  (two-tailed); \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4.** Second-stage GLS model for festival success with the independently estimated brand popularity measure as the independent variable.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Brand similarity	0.009 (0.389)	0.074** (2.458)
Brand diversity	-0.003 (-0.136)	-0.055** (-2.135)
E(brand popularity)	0.247* (1.788)	0.173 (1.287)
Number of stages	0.009 (1.222)	0.006 (0.824)
Times held	-0.004 (-1.281)	-0.004 (-1.260)
Location	0.023 (0.428)	0.016 (0.303)
(Brand similarity) <sup>2</sup>		-0.028** (-2.337)
(Brand diversity) <sup>2</sup>		0.043*** (2.938)
$R^2$	0.054	0.148
Adjusted $R^2$	0.010	0.094
$\Delta R^2$		0.094
$F$ -statistic	1.233	2.760***

Notes: Dependent variable: music festival success. The entries are unstandardized  $\beta$  values, with  $t$ -values in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.10$  (two-tailed); \*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .