

# Re-examining the Roles of Experience Quality at Festivals: A Comparative Analysis using SEM and FSQCA

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of the study is to re-examine the dimensionality and role of experience quality (EQ) to explain other related factors, namely, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Using dual methodological approaches of fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) and structural equations modeling (SEM), it seeks to establish the EQ's construct and predictive validity.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Grounded in cross-sectional and online research design, the present study surveyed 881 attendees of an annual music festival (Malakoff) held in Norway and subjected the quantitative data to SEM and fsQCA.

**Findings** – Both SEM and fsQCA confirmed the socializing and enjoyment dimensions of EQ, with good validity and reliability, as well as the functional and emotional value dimensions explaining visitors' perceived value of attending a festival. Both statistical analyses also showed that perceived value derived satisfaction leads to behavioral intention regarding festival visits.

**Practical implications** – This study provides numerous valuable consequences for festival organizers, or marketers that can aid in developing effective strategies to measure visitors' perceived quality of experience and numerous practical implications for festival organizers or marketers can help in developing effective strategies to measure visitors' perceived quality of experience and then increase value perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions toward attending festivals.

**Originality/value** – This study is among the first to adopt a dual-dimensional framework to measure EQ in festivals and establish its utility with two statistical approaches (SEM and fsQCA). It also shows the utility of perceived value, initially developed for adventure tourists, to study visitors' experience with festivals.

**Keywords** *Experience quality, perceived value, behavioral intentions, fsQCA, experiential marketing*

**Paper type** Research paper

# Re-examining the Roles of Experience Quality at Festivals: A Comparative Analysis using SEM and FSQCA

## 1. Introduction

Experience quality (EQ) has been widely conceptualized as a complex, subjective, and personal evaluation of overall experiences (Chen & Chen, 2010; Harrington et al., 2021; Kuppelwieser, 2021). Despite its popularity in the hospitality management literature, some questions that can advance our understanding of EQ still need to be answered, including i) what is the ideal number of dimensions meaningful to measure EQ? ii) what is the ideal set of outcomes to be considered for EQ? iii) does structural equation modeling remain an ideal approach to analyze the validity of EQ? Some studies (Cole & Illum, 2006; Otto & Ritchie, 1996) have opted for three or more dimensions, but a handful of studies (Domínguez-Quintero et al., 2020; Haji et al., 2021) have favored a single dimension for the EQ measurement. Accordingly, the number of dimensions ideal for measuring EQ remains a moot point among hospitality scholars. Perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intention are frequently considered alongside EQ as its outcomes (Kang et al., 2022). The direct and indirect relationships of EQ with those outcomes remain ambiguous, where some scholars (Chen & Chen, 2010; Cole & Scott, 2004; Jin et al., 2015) support a direct effect and others (Song et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2010) favor an indirect effect of EQ via perceived value. Scholars like Brown and colleagues (2022; 2019) stress the necessary consideration of perceived value to better understand the explanatory role of EQ with other outcomes. They describe EQ and perceived value as pre- and post-consumption evaluations that complement each other. The present study concurs with Brown and colleagues (2022; 2019) and seeks to verify their notion about the EQ/perceived value relationship, and with other outcomes, in an economically and socially significant hospitality sector. That is, festival events (Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Cole & Illum, 2006).

The contributions of the present study are twofold. Theoretically, the present study adopts a critical and multi-stage approach to examine the construct and predictive validity of the EQ concept. This issue requires further attention because of the inconsistent measurement and findings reported by previous studies. Methodologically, the present research performs both structural equations modeling (SEM) and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to establish the construct and predictive validity of the EQ concept. Previous studies of festivals have favored SEM for its statistical advantages, i.e., the examination of latent variables and their relationships (Yoon et al., 2010). Our work, however, demonstrates that coupling SEM with fsQCA can offer richer insights on, at least, two grounds. First, fsQCA complements the explanatory power of SEM for a proposed model. Second, it provides a more parsimonious solution by identifying the configurations of constructs that fulfill the conditions of ‘necessity’ and ‘sufficiency’ (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). We believe there is value in such parsimony since it allows for factors to be addressed by firms or organizations in tiers of priority given festival organizers' resource constraints, mainly localized ones.

## 2. Theoretical background, hypotheses, and proposed research model

### 2.1 Conceptualization and measurement of EQ

EQ is a popular, yet controversial, concept studied in hospitality and tourism literature (Chen & Chen, 2010; Cole & Scott, 2004; Guan et al., 2021; Moon & Han, 2019; Suhartanto et al., 2020). Its popularity can be attributed to the continued focus on experiential marketing and its effect on visitors' subsequent behavior (Hwang & Seo, 2016; Williams, 2006). The conceptualization of EQ has been broad. Some scholars have provided a rather elaborate definition by stating EQ as:

- "Subjective evaluation of tourism experience, that is holistic/gestalt rather than attributes-based, and the focus is on self (internal) rather than on service environment (external), the scope of experience is more general than specific, the psychological representation is affective instead of cognitive/attitudinal" (Chen & Chen, 2010, p.20).
- "Tourist's affective response to the desired socio-psychological benefits of visiting experiences. EQ is also referred to as an evaluation of the overall experience at a destination over a certain period of time" (Haji et al., 2021, p.1024).

Other scholars have been more parsimonious, defining EQ as:

- "Benefits or outcomes that people experience as a result of a trip or visit to a tourist attraction" (Cole & Scott, 2004, p.81).
- "Tourist (summative) evaluation of the overall experience with a destination" (Moon & Han, 2019, p.45).
- "Tourists' psychological and social reaction towards the performance of a tourist attraction" (Suhartanto et al., 2020, p.869).

Several themes can be discerned from this range of EQ definitions. The first theme signifies EQ as a *subjective summative evaluation*. The second theme highlights that the evaluation is linked to a *collection of attributes or benefits*. The next theme indicates that the nature of attributes or benefits can be grouped as *psychological, affective and/or social in nature* (Chen & Chen, 2010; Otto & Ritchie, 1996). These themes may explain why the EQ measurement has also been diverse and less congruous, ranging from three (Cole & Scott, 2004), four (Moon & Han, 2019), five (Suhartanto et al., 2020) and six dimensions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Previous studies tended to favor the 'more is better' ( $\geq 3$ ) principle for the number of dimensions measuring EQ. Yet, they cannot agree on, nor do they provide clear guidelines on how to decide the optimal number of EQ dimensions. Hence, the 'more is better' principle warrants demystifying and has served as an inspiration for the present study's focus.

Taking the first step to address the mentioned gaps, the present study proposes a two-dimensional EQ measurement that is both theoretically and practically meaningful. Parsimony is another unique strength of the measurement (Preacher, 2006). It focuses on attendees' social benefits and related enjoyment from attending a festival (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). We are particularly interested in attendees spending quality time and (re)connecting with family and/or friends and interacting with like-minded people (Perron-Brault et al., 2020). As society becomes more digitalized, it is not uncommon for people to forego interacting with each other in favor of 'playing' with their digital devices (see McCormack & Ogilvie, 2020). Some mindful consumers, however, seek to revert this anti-social trend by pursuing collective experiences, like festivals, that are conducive to 'linking value' (Cova, 1997) and using the experiences as a conduit to (re)connect with other people and (re)establish their social networks in the physical world (Harrington et al., 2021; Perron-Brault et al., 2020).

Table I summarizes the conceptualizations and the explanatory role of EQ considered by previous studies and their limitations. In terms of meaningful outcomes of EQ, predictive validity refers to the extent to which EQ predicts (or influences) other theoretical factors. Our critical analysis reveals three theoretical factors that earlier research has considered meaningful outcomes of EQ. They are perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral action (intention).

INSERT TABLE I HERE

## 2.2 *Synthesizing the effects of EQ, perceived value, and satisfaction on behavioral intentions*

### 2.2.1 Perceived value (PV)

Broadly, PV refers to consumers' perceived utility of what is received and what is given (Williams & Soutar, 2009). In festival contexts, PV has been widely measured as a *unidimensional* concept (As,an et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2015) and been treated as a summative gain/loss evaluation, a functional and utilitarian perspective, that consumers undertake concerning the monetary value delivered by a product. However, since tourism consumptions are primarily experiential, solely considering the functional perspective may be ineffective in diagnosing other outcomes, such as affective and social value, that visitors also desire (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Williams and Soutar (2009) propose a multidimensional approach to measure perceived value for tourism contexts, and their proposition is equally applicable to festival contexts. They argue that consumers do not just evaluate a product based on expected functional performance, value for money, and flexibility. Instead, they also consider the aspects of pleasure and enjoyment (emotional value) and social interaction (social value) that the product delivers. These are PV dimensions that festivalgoers desire or appreciate considering the collective hedonic nature of a festival (Ng et al., 2007).

Like EQ, the number of multiple dimensions meaningful to operationalizing PV has been idiosyncratic in non-festival contexts. For example, Sánchez et al.(2006) supported a three-dimensional definition, focusing on emotional, social, and economic/functional dimensions. Cronin et al. (2000) favored a five-dimensional underpinned by price, time, effort, and risk and convenience dimensions. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) measured perceived value with four dimensions: emotional value, social value, and two functional values. Given that visitors' PV is complex because of the thinking, feeling, and companionship aspects involved, we advocate a three-dimensional measurement (functional, emotional, and social value) in line with Williams and Soutar (2009). The measurement has shown strong validity in other contexts like ecotourism (Teng et al., 2018) and consumer-brand relationship (Papista et al., 2018), but its validity for studying festival experience remains unclear.

Besides its measurement, another challenge that warrants consideration is the occasional indiscriminate treatment of PV with EQ. Possible reasons include the broad focus on cognitive summative evaluation (Otto & Ritchie, 1996) and the similar labels used for the defining dimensions (e.g., socialization versus social value) by both factors (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). The experience marketing theory (Hwang & Seo, 2016) asserts that the indiscriminate treatment of PV with EQ is a limitation and will lose the nuanced meanings of *what experience* triggers—prompt visitors to participate in a festival and *how much*—non-monetarily—they deem their participation is worthwhile. Building on this notion, the distinction between EQ and PV is

apparent. That is, EQ feeds into PV. When visitors express a positive perceived EQ of a festival event, they are likely to express greater perceived value with the event, such as enjoyment and pleasure (Yoon et al., 2010). That is, it allows visitors to judge (or justify) the extent to which their time and efforts were well spent attending a festival event. This leads us to our first hypothesis:

*H1: A positive perception of EQ leads to a higher PV of a festival.*

### 2.2.2 Satisfaction (SAT)

Satisfaction refers to consumers' post-consumption judgment of whether goods and services meet or exceed expectations (Oliver, 1980, 1999). In hospitality literature, satisfaction has been measured as an overall emotional judgment derived from people's pre-consumption expectations and post-consumption experiences (Wu & Ai, 2016). Emotional judgment can exist in the form of pleasure (performance meeting expectation) or displeasure (performance falling below expectation) (Reisinger & Turner, 2012). We favor the summative emotional measurement of visitors' satisfaction because it provides visitors with an effortless yet meaningful route to share personal favorable/unfavorable assessments of an experience (Wu & Ai, 2016). We hypothesize that visitors' perceived value of a festival would directly influence their subsequent (emotional) satisfaction. That is, when visitors perceive a festival to have quality features and performance (functional value), offer a pleasurable day out (emotional value), and enable them to be seen by others (social value), they are very likely to experience satisfaction with their attendance. This hypothesis aligns with the notion of previous festival and tourism studies (Jin et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2011).

*H2: A positive PV leads to a higher level of visitors' satisfaction (SAT) towards attending a festival.*

### 2.2.3 Behavioral intention (BI).

BI indicates the desirable behaviors individuals are likely to perform in the future. In tourism and hospitality literature, BI has been used as a reliable surrogate measure of loyalty (Moore et al., 2015; Zeithaml et al., 1996). When consumers are satisfied with the post-consumption experience, they are inclined to show favorable BI, such as talking positively about the consumed product to others or repurchasing the product (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Conversely, when the post-consumption experience fails to meet their expectations, dissatisfaction arises, and in turn, consumers are likely to exhibit unfavorable BI.

In a festival context, a popular measurement of BI is the revisit intention (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Its popularity can be partly explained by the measurement's simplicity and practicality (Jin et al., 2015). Researchers and practitioners are keen to establish whether satisfied visitors are prone to return to a festival, indicating visitors' patronage (Rivera et al., 2022; Žabkar et al., 2010). This leads us to our third and final hypothesis:

*H3: Higher levels of satisfaction (SAT) lead to a positive behavioral intention (BI) of revisiting a festival.*

### *2.3 Proposed Research Model*

A good many of the festival marketing literature has focused on understanding the factors influencing visitors' attendance at festivals (Culha, 2020; Lee, 2019; Monterrubio, 2019). Within this area, there has been an over-emphasis on (de)motivational factors linked to visitors' attendance (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Cole & Chancellor, 2009; Lee, 2019; Monterrubio, 2019; Rivera et al., 2022; Song et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2010); but, minimal emphasis on visitors' experience and subsequent behavior. This is surprising given that a festival's practical design and delivery requires the consideration of experiential marketing principles (Williams, 2006). Amongst the (de)motivational factors that previous studies have examined, festival quality represents a popular choice. However, the measurement of the quality dimensions has been less experience- but more function- or utility-focused (Wu & Ai, 2016; Yoon et al., 2010). Wu and Ai (2016) measured festival quality with primarily functional or tangible dimensions, notably physical environment, access and program qualities.

Drawing on the discussion earlier, an experience-focused measurement of festival quality and its effect on other (de)motivational factors, such as visitors' perceived quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention, represents a gap within the festival marketing literature that awaits further exploration (Kuppelwieser, 2021). Addressing this gap can give researchers and practitioners unique insights into the experience-focused dimensions of festival quality and their motivating effects on visitors' attendance. Accordingly, we have proposed a research model along with relevant hypotheses as the first step to closing the gap. Grounded in the experiential marketing theory (Hwang & Seo, 2016; Williams, 2006), the proposed model examines the relationship of EQ with perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. The theory advocates the utility of the socialization and enjoyment dimensions to measure EQ. It also supports the direct impact of EQ on perceived value, which consists of three interrelated dimensions. They are functional value, emotional value, and social value. The theory further supports the direct impact of perceived value on visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention.

## **3. Methodology**

### *3.1 Construct measurement*

EQ was measured with two dimensions, socialization (3 items) and enjoyment (6 items), sourced from the works of Cole and Illum (2006) and Otto and Ritchie (1996). Perceived value was measured along three dimensions, functional (4 items), emotional (3 items), and social value (4 items). Measurement items were sourced from Williams and Soutar (2009). The measurements of satisfaction (5 items) and behavioral intention (5 items) were derived from Oliver (1999) and Zeithaml et al. (1996) respectively. Please visit Table II for details of the measurement scale used.

### *3.2 Data collection*

A self-completed online questionnaire was administered to the attendees at the Malakoff festival, an annual rock-focused music event that has been taking place at Nordfjordeid (Norway) since 2003 (*History Malakoff*, n.d.). It draws an estimated 30,000 visitors annually. It is also family-friendly (open to all ages), eco-friendly, and primarily run by local volunteers. Its administrator posted an invitation page and a participation link on the festival's official Facebook page. Those who had visited the festival were invited to complete the questionnaire on a self-selection basis. 971 visitors completed the survey, but 90 were found incomplete, with more than 10% missing data and excluded from data analysis. This results in a total of 881 usable questionnaires and a response rate of 3.3%. The seemingly low rate is due to taking the high number of attendees as the basis. The questionnaire consisted of two major parts; one was collecting demographic data such as gender, nationality, residence, whether a first-time visitor and whether with family or friends, age, accommodation choice, employment status, and education level. The second part consisted of the items measuring the studied constructs on a seven-point Likert scale, from (1) being 'strongly disagree' to (7) being 'strongly agree.'

#### **4. Analyses and results**

Most of the respondents surveyed in this study were females (62%), with Norwegian nationality (98%), aged between 18 and 25 years (63%), and self-reported repeat visitors (75%). They were representative of the varied key visitor segments targeted by the music festival in question (see *Gallery Malakoff*, n.d.).

##### *4.1 SEM analysis*

###### **4.1.1 Explanatory modeling with CFA and Structural Equations**

The reliability and validity of the measurement scales were evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), respectively. Cronbach's alpha calculated the internal consistency (reliability) of constructs, and it satisfied the recommended level of 0.70 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), and reliability varied from .794 (behavioral intention) to .936 (satisfaction).

Table II shows the standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted, and composite (construct) reliabilities. Construct validity is principally assessed through convergent and discriminant validities, which tell us whether measures of constructs that should be related are indeed so (convergent validity) and whether measures of constructs that should not be linked are observed so (discriminant validity). A correlations matrix of measurement items shows all within-factors item correlations to be significantly higher than zero and higher than items used to measure other constructs, confirming convergent validity. We followed average variance extraction analysis for testing discriminant validity. The latent construct AVEs for all, except for social value, were higher than all inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity.

INSERT TABLE II HERE

First-order CFAs were conducted for each construct to confirm the construct validities further and check whether any omissions were needed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For EQ,

the socialization dimension achieved a good fit without any modification. All three items attained factor loadings over 0.5 and a critical ratio of more than 1.96. We excluded two items from the enjoyment dimension as CFA indicated poor loadings. The final measurement of the enjoyment dimension comprised four items and exhibited satisfactory fit, with factor loadings over 0.5 and a critical ratio over 1.96. We removed one item from the functional value dimension for perceived value due to poor loading. The final measurement of the value dimension retained three items. All three items measuring the emotional value dimension showed a good fit and thus retained for further analysis. Contrary to previous empirical findings (e.g., Harrington et al., 2021) Social value did not show a satisfactory fit and was omitted from the final measurement model. All five items of satisfaction scored high loadings and fit and were retained. We excluded two items from BI due to poor reliability (Cronbach alpha below 0.7) and poor loading, with the final measurement comprising three items. The second round of CFA indicated that both EQ and perceived value were distinct constructs with sound standardized factor loadings, exceeding the recommended level of 0.5, with AVE higher than the threshold of 0.5, and composite reliabilities ranging from 0,879 to 0.913. In all, 25 items were retained for the measurement model (see Table II).

#### 4.1.2 Measurement and Structural Modelling, and Hypothesis testing

A measurement model was run correlating the four constructs under study, analyzing the summated mean scores of EQ and perceived value, along with satisfaction and behavioral intention. The measurement model satisfied all the recommended fit indices. In particular, the goodness of fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) at 0.936 and 0.896 fulfilled the recommended benchmark of 0.9 and 0.8, respectively (Hair et al., 2014, p. 201). Two other suggested indicators, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Comparative fit index (CFI), were more significant than .90 as preferred. The measurement model TLI and CFI were .964 and .974. The RMSEA value was .08, within the recommended threshold, and served as another indicator of good fit.

We tested the structural model using the input of the maximum likelihood estimation method and correlation matrix. In line with the measurement model, the structural model (Figure I: supplementary) displayed a good fit where all of its fit indices satisfied the recommended thresholds (RMSEA = .09, CFI = .965, GFI = .916, TLI .957, CFI = .965, AGFI = .878), showing the data collected fit the proposed model well (Hair et al., 2014). The structural model estimates provided the coefficients required for testing the proposed hypotheses. The results revealed that EQ, perceived value, and satisfaction explained 56% of the variance of behavioral intention (Figure I: supplementary). Highly significant positive effects were found between EQ on perceived value (H1) at ( $\gamma_1=.94$ ) with a CR of 50.175 and a significance level of  $p<0.001$ . This result aligns with previous empirical studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Jin et al., 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2020). The second hypothesis (H2) was also strongly supported, with the significant positive effect of perceived value found on satisfaction at ( $\gamma_2=.95$ ), at a critical ratio of 42,775 at a significance level of  $p<0.001$ . This result is consistent with earlier studies on the festival context (As,an et al., 2020; Kang et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2015). Support for the third hypothesis was confirmed where satisfaction had a significant positive effect on behavioral intention ( $\gamma_3=.75$ ), with a critical ratio of 25,754 and a significance level at  $p<0.01$ , which confirms previous studies (Cole & Illum, 2006; Kim et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2019).

#### 4.2 Analysis applying fuzzy set (fsQCA):



#### 4.2.1 Rationale:

The use of the multiple configurations approach using QCA in consumer research has been increasing in recent years, both as a standalone approach and in conjunction with SEM as a means of gaining deeper insights (Bawack et al., 2021; Tho & Trang, 2015). Pappas and Woodside (2021) identify that quantitative analysis traditionally relied on variance and null hypothesis testing. In contrast, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) treats variables as ‘conditions’ and arrives at combinations of conditions (or configurations) that can lead to desired outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). In support of the value of using QCA in its variations (crisp set, multi-variate, and fuzzy-set) as a methodological tool, Pappas and Woodside (2021) stress that the configurational approach helps attain a more holistic view through its consideration of “sufficient and necessary conditionalities.”

While robust, a means-centered symmetric approach to model estimation such as SEM provides an incomplete picture of the effects (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Woodside, 2013). In contrast, an asymmetric approach such as configuration analysis analyzes each response ‘case’ instead of reaching for the mean values led constructs, exploring combinations of independent variables that generate specific levels of outcomes for different groups of cases (Pappas & Woodside, 2021). The number and ratio of cases identify combinations of sufficient and necessary predictors, allowing for a more parsimonious solution and more nuanced insights. The desirability of a specific configuration from amongst those that emerged is indicated by its associated consistency (how reliably a combination results in the outcome, comparable to the significance level), indicating the sufficiency of the given configuration or solution (Pappas & Woodside, 2021), and coverage (how much of the outcome is covered or explained by a solution, comparable to the coefficient of determination or  $R^2$ ) (Ragin, 2017; Urueña & Hidalgo, 2016).

#### 4.2.2 fsQCA calibration and configurations analysis

To proceed with fsQCA, the original variables (conditions) are dichotomized using relevant thresholds, allowing for calibrating the variables to emerge with fuzzy sets where the values range from 0 to 1 (Pappas & Woodside, 2021). Since we use summated averages for the constructs and all items were measured with a 7-point Likert scale and were previously checked for reliability and validity, we employ direct calibration without rescaling, and the thresholds were set at the norms of the scale points of 6,4, and 2 for full-set membership, intermediate (or cross-over), and full-set non-membership respectively (Pappas & Woodside, 2021). The consistency threshold for solution configurations was set at 0.75 (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). The dichotomization leads to a truth table of Boolean configurations corresponding to the observed conditions (Ragin, 2017). The analysis was run with two applications, QCA add-in for calibration, truth table and configurations analysis, and TOSMANA for generating the Venn diagram (Figure II: supplementary) visualizing the truth table.

#### 4.2.3 Results of fsQCA:

Table III (supplementary) illustrates the multiple sufficient configurations with consistencies over 0.75 that explain ‘Behavioral Intentions’ after minimization, with their respective consistency and coverage obtained after running fsQCA. The configuration of the presence (in uppercase) and products (intersections) of enjoyment, socialization, functional value, and emotional value (ENJOYMENT\* SOCIALIZATION\* FUNCTIONAL\_VALUE\* EMOTIONAL\_VALUE) provides the most coverage (0.67) along with the highest consistency

of 0.977. The second-best configuration is characterized by the presence of enjoyment, functional and emotional values, and the absence of social value (ENJOYMENT \*FUNCTIONAL\_VALUE\* EMOTIONAL\_VALUE\* social\_value) with a consistency of 0.96 and coverage of 0.59. Note that the configurations indicated here are Boolean multiplications, not arithmetic ones. In other words, the most coverage of the outcome variable, and thus the preferred solution, is obtained necessarily and sufficiently by the four conditions being present, enjoyment, socialization, functional, and emotional values. The second-best solution is where there is the presence of enjoyment, functional, and emotional values and the absence of social value.

Figure II (supplementary) shows the relative positioning of the dichotomized conditions, representing the truth table obtained from the fuzzy set analysis. It divides the space into 'special areas' representing the presence or absence of single conditions, while intersections between two or more particular areas indicate combinations of two or more conditions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Socialization creates two principal spaces/areas (horizontal) and Enjoyment (vertical), within which functional and emotional value create two more subspaces. Satisfaction comes as a minor subspace intersecting with functional value. Most cases belong to the intersections of enjoyment, socialization, emotional and functional value.

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

### 5.1 Conclusions

Our work reveals the complex measurement and role of EQ in influencing other related concepts, a notion that has been discussed by other scholars (e.g., Guan et al., 2021). First, while we support EQ as a positive antecedent to perceived value, aligning with the findings of previous studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Jin et al., 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2020), our work is unique in the sense that it establishes the utility of a dual-dimensional EQ (i.e., socializing and enjoyment) to diagnose visitor behavior at a festival. Previous studies (e.g., Moon & Han, 2019; Otto & Ritchie, 1996) have favored a greater number ( $\geq 3$ ) of dimensions. The dual-dimensional approach succinctly captures visitors' desire to interact and spend time with in-group members. They refer to individuals that visitors can socially identify with via either their inner social circles (e.g., family and friends) or acquaintances with similar interests (e.g., other visitors at a music festival). In-group socializing has been characterized as a behavior pursuing collective identities (i.e., collective belonging to a social group), and festivals, where a mass of like-minded people congregate, serve as an ideal conduit for accomplishing this behavior (see Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013). Besides socialization, visitors also derive EQ from enjoying music and having fun in a friendly atmosphere, reaffirming the work of other scholars (e.g., Neuhofer et al., 2020).

In support of the claim, our work offers preliminary but empirical support for the utility of a dual-dimensional approach to measure EQ and its relationship with perceived value. We thus question whether a more significant number of dimensions is necessary for EQ measurement, a notion that previous studies have consistently advocated (e.g., Moon & Han, 2019; Otto & Ritchie, 1996). The question of '*measuring EQ more with fewer dimensions*' can serve as a fruitful research direction for festival researchers and practitioners. Second, we confirm that both functional and emotional value are necessary to operationalize the visitors' perceived value of a festival (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Functional value alone is ample to drive consumers' subsequent behavior (Pauluzzo & Mason, 2022). Both

functional and emotional dimensions are necessary to diagnose visitors' perceived value of a festival because of its collective experiential nature (see Ng et al., 2007). The two modeling approaches supported the co-utility of the two perceived value dimensions to explain visitors' behaviors, by indicating that the functional value captures the quality consistency and execution at event facilities and arrangement of a festival, whereas the emotional value taps into visitors' feeling of well-being, elation, and excitement (Baker & Crompton, 2000). This result echoes the ongoing call from experience-marketing scholars (e.g., Hwang & Seo, 2016) to avoid profiling festival goers as mainly rational consumers with sole emphasis on thinking but as *experience seekers* with both thinking and feeling capabilities.

Third, the more significant weightings of the enjoyment dimension on EQ and the emotional dimension on perceived value serve as another unique result. It reinforces the hedonic nature of a collective experience like a festival and that festivalgoers—experience seekers—apply feeling more than thinking in their summative judgment (Williams, 2006). This also suggests that visitors may seek emotive rather than functional outcomes as the higher goal when considering a music festival via the lens of collective experience (Ng et al., 2007). Fifth, we initially measured a social dimension in perceived value, but it emerged as non-significant. A posthoc examination of the measurement attributes, adapted from Williams and Soutar (2009), reveals that they are more about seeking social approval or validation than socializing or networking with others. “The attributes include “*gives me social approval from others,*” “*makes me feel acceptable to others,*” “*helps me to gain popularity among family and friends,*” and “*helps me to be recognized by others by attending the festival.*”

There are two tenable explanations for our work's non-utility of social value. One is that visitors do not seek social recognition or approval from others in a festival, at least for the rock music festival (Malakoff) we have examined here. The socialization dimension of EQ suggests that visitors prefer to spend time with in-group members like family and friends and/or other visitors that share their interests (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013), known as ‘connectedness’ in different collective experiences (Harrington et al., 2021). Another being social value serves as a ‘base factor,’ akin to the hygiene factor discussed in Herzberg's motivation theory (see Crompton, 2003). The presence of social value (i.e., social approval) in a music festival—a collective experience—is requisite but does not guarantee visitors' satisfaction. However, a lack of social value can result in visitors' dissatisfaction because it violates their basic expectations of the festival (Chiang et al., 2017). The focal festival, i.e., the Malakoff festival, is attended annually by tens of thousands, held in a Norwegian/Scandinavian location, and enjoys a supra-national repute (*History Malakoff*, n.d.). The lack of social (approval) value in such a context suggests the need to consider other theoretical lenses, such as *social identity theory* (Chiang et al., 2017), to discern better the in- and out-group socializing that visitors pursue and, in turn, the varied forms of social approval they seek at a festival. The finding also suggests that a festival's location and cultural backdrops can determine whether visitors perceive social value as significant or insignificant.

### 5.2 Theoretical implications:

The present study offers several theoretical contributions to the festival marketing literature. First, it establishes the validity of a dual-dimensional approach to diagnosing a festival's EQ. Despite its parsimonious nature, the dual-dimensional approach can predict visitors' perceived value, satisfaction, and behavior equally robust. This finding epitomizes the utility of the ‘*less is more*’ principle in presenting information to consumers and/or designing a consumer-oriented research framework to ease their cognitive burden (see Peters et al., 2007). Scholars like

Neuhof et al. (2020) have called for more significant consideration of social and emotional benefits and services when studying people's experiences with music festivals. Our work has responded to this call by measuring the socialization and enjoyment dimensions of EQ and operationalizing services via functional value.

Second, it clarifies the comparative effects of EQ and perceived value on visitors' satisfaction and behavioral intention in festivals. This research area has received renewed interest due to the growing appreciation of the experience marketing principles to design and deliver festivals (Hwang & Seo, 2016). Third, the present study provides partial evidence of the external validity of Williams and Soutar's (2009) measurement for perceived value. It was developed to measure perceived value in adventure tourism; our work illustrates that it can be adapted to measure visitors' experience with festivals but to a more limited extent. Surprisingly, social value in the form of social approval has no significant role, suggesting the diagnosis of varied conditions of socialization existent at festivals. For example, in- versus out-group socialization (Chiang et al., 2017). We surmise that social value may be more notable in out-group socialization when visitors seek to impress and gain acceptance from people outside their social networks.

Methodologically, the present study is unique from other studies focusing on EQ. It applies a fuzzy set configuration analysis tool (fsQCA) in addition to SEM. This second analysis shows that the combined presence of enjoyment, socialization, functional value, and emotional value emerge as a solution that provides the most amount of coverage (comparable to the coefficient of determination or R<sup>2</sup>) and consistency (reliability with which the factors and their combination that leads to the outcome) towards behavioral intention. The next best solution was a configuration where the conditions of enjoyment, socialization, and satisfaction were met. In short, the fuzzy set analysis tells us the EQ measured by the dimensions of enjoyment and socialization and perceived value by the dimensions of functional and emotional value are 1) not only sufficient for explaining behavioral intention but instead provide the most explanation for it too, and 2) that we do not necessarily need to include satisfaction in the equation. Satisfaction has long been a customary predictor of behavioral intention (Žabkar et al., 2010), but our study—informed by fsQCA—suggests a new departure point for festival researchers.

### *5.3 Managerial implications:*

Festival organizers or marketers may find our work insightful in several ways. First, our work offers a simple yet meaningful framework to measure EQ and perceived value. It is succinct and easy for visitors to digest and respond to the measurement attributes, reducing their cognitive burden and increasing their response rate. The framework is also scalable, where festival organizers or marketers can expand the list of attributes measuring EQ and perceived value and/or replace the Likert-type scale with another, like a dichotomous scale, for ease of interpretation. The framework can also be applied to measure the value co-creation process in festival settings, either between the organizer and the attendees or between the attendees themselves (see Van Winkle & Bueddefeld, 2016).

Second, our finding on EQ—around the dimensions of socialization and enjoyment—provides an easy-to-understand benchmark that festival organizers can apply to drive visitors' perceived value and, in turn, satisfaction. The two EQ dimensions can be delivered by, for example, designating zones for different music genres, with each zone offering features encouraging mingling with others (e.g., pop-up pods). Festival organizers can deliver perceived

functional value by having friendly and well-trained personnel and perceived emotional value by encouraging visitors to share their feelings via Instagram booths (Sotiriadis, 2017).

We provide festival organizers with parsimonious yet actionable insights on encouraging visitors' repeat behaviors. That is, to deliver the enjoyment and socialization dimensions of EQ and the functional and emotional dimensions of perceived value. Focusing on just one concept will render a partial understanding of how visitors formulate their cognitive and behavioral responses to a festival event. Measuring EQ and perceived value together reveals the varied and interconnected attributes that visitors emphasize in the experiential consumption of a festival event, echoing the principles of experience marketing (Hwang & Seo, 2016). Satisfaction is expected but may not necessarily drive repeat visits.

#### *5.4 Limitations and future research*

While our work is insightful, it is not without limitations, and the findings should be interpreted with some caution. First, our work has targeted only one music festival located in one Scandinavian country. We thus suggest more quantitative studies to test the proposed research model and underlying factors with visitor samples from other music festivals situated in other European Union (EU) countries. This research direction will establish the generalizability of the dimensionality and role of EQ in explaining festival visitors' behaviors. Alongside this, future work should retest the validity of social value at other festivals and other countries. Second, we have mainly considered the explanatory role of EQ in festivals via the lens of collective hedonic experience (Ng et al., 2007). Another theoretical lens, such as *transformative experience* (Neuhof et al., 2020) and *co-creation experience* (Zhang et al., 2019), exist and may yield different results on EQ. Comparing the varied theoretical lens for measuring EQ can enrich the extant literature and thus serve as a fruitful research direction. Third, our work is mainly quantitative and has enabled us to illustrate the lone and combined utility of SEM and fsQCA to test the measurement of EQ and perceived value and their resultant effects on visitors' satisfaction and behavior. Future research can consider alternative research designs, like qualitative in-depth interviews or focus groups, to explore visitors' tacit interpretation of EQ. Future research can also consider a netnographic method to collate and analyze visitors' organic comments on social media about the EQ of a festival (Whalen, 2018).

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**Table 1.**  
EQ conceptualizations,  
explanatory roles and  
perceived limitations

Author/s and year	EQ conceptualization	No. EQ dimensions	Data collection and analysis	Explanatory role of EQ	Limitations
Chen and Chen (2010)	Subjective evaluation of tourism experience, that is holistic/gestalt rather than attributes-based, and the focus is on self (internal) rather than on service environment (external), the scope of experience is more general than specific, the psychological representation is affective instead of cognitive/attitudinal	3, involvement of mind and educational experience	Survey with 447 tourists to four major heritage sites in Taiwan. Structural equation modeling (SEM)	EQ as a direct positive antecedent of perceived value and satisfaction	EQ measurement appears to be adapted from Otto and Ritchie's (2000) work, which consist of four dimensions: hedonics; peace of mind; involvement; and recognition. No explanation on why the original scale did not fully apply to the context under study and how educational experience has emerged
Cole and Illium (2006)	EQ as a sub-dimension of service quality, in addition to performance quality (PQ). EQ is also coined as transaction-level satisfaction	4, history appreciation, socialization, enjoyment	Survey with 413 festival attendees, SEM	EQ as a full mediator of PQ with overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions; EQ as an independent factor of overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions	EQ dimensions were not grounded in any existing theory, but developed from a focus group. EQ was a dependent factor of PQ

(continued)

Table 1.

Author/s and year	EQ conceptualization	No. EQ dimensions	Data collection and analysis	Explanatory role of EQ	Limitations
Culha (2020)	Pine and Gilmore's (1998) experience realms	4, education, entertainment, escapism and aesthetics	Survey with 186 attendees to an olive festival, SEM	Labelled EQ as festival experience (FE) that served as a full mediator of festival quality with festival satisfaction, place attachment and destination recommendation. FE has a direct effect on destination recommendation	A uniqueness rather than a limitation, where the author differentiates Quality and Experience as two related but distinct concepts. Labeled them as Festival Quality and Festival Experience, where the former focuses mostly on functional and tangible attributes, i.e. information services, program content, staff and facilities. Doesn't consider festival (perceived) value
Jim <i>et al.</i> (2015)	A psychological outcome accorded to customers who participated in tourism activities. It arises tourists' inclination to evaluate the quality their experiences according to emotional responses rather than functional or utilitarian standards	4, immersion, surprise, participation and fun	Mall intercept survey with 376 visitors to a theme park. SEM	EQ as a direct positive antecedent of perceived value, satisfaction and water park image, and as an indirect antecedent of behavioral intention	Hypothesized and established EQ as a positive antecedent of perceived value, but provided very little rationale on why they should be treated as related but distinct concepts. Other studies have treated EQ and perceived value as the identical concepts

(continued)

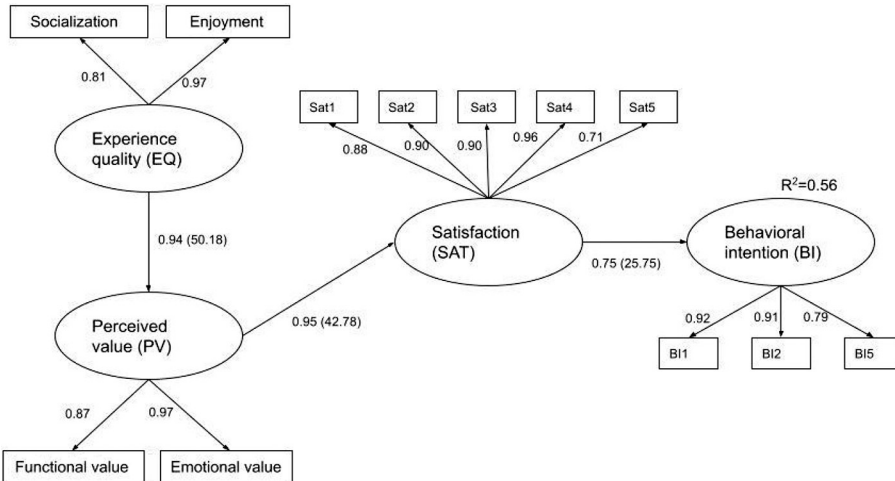
**Table 1.**

Author/s and year	EQ conceptualization	No. EQ dimensions	Data collection and analysis	Explanatory role of EQ	Limitations
<a href="#">Moon and Han (2019)</a>	Tourist (summative) evaluation of the overall experience with a destination, seems to base on <a href="#">Otto and Ritchie (1996)</a> work	4, escapism, relaxation, enjoyment and involvement	Survey with 465 island visitors, SEM	EQ serves as a direct determinant but not all EQ dimensions have a direct effect on subsequent outcomes, where only escapism and involvement on perceived value and only involvement on perceived price reasonableness	Not all EQ dimensions have a direct effect on the outcome factors
<a href="#">Otto and Ritchie (1996)</a>	Subjective, holistic/gestalt, self/internal focused, broad scope, emphasizing hedonic and symbolic benefits and affective representation	6, hedonic, interactive, novelty, comfort, safety and stimulation	Survey with 339 consumers of three related tourism sectors: tours and attractions; hotels and airlines. Exploratory factor analysis	4 instead of 6 dimensions of EQ were confirmed. They were hedonics, peace of mind, involvement and recognition	Predictive validity of EQ is not tested where behavioral factors are not studied
<a href="#">Subartanto et al. (2020)</a>	Tourists' psychological and social reaction toward the performance of a tourist attraction, blending the work of <a href="#">Otto and Ritchie (1996)</a> and <a href="#">Pine and Gilmore (1998)</a>	5, involvement, peace of mind, recognition, escape and learning	Survey with 369 visitors to four creative tourism attractions. SEM (PLS)	EQ serves as a direct determinant of perceived value and tourist motivation and an indirect determinant of tourist loyalty via tourist motivation	Whilst multiple dimensions of EQ are considered, their individual effects are not tested. Unidimensional treatment of perceived value

**Table 2.**  
Items, scale reliabilities, AVE and composite construct reliabilities

Constructs and measurement items	Reliability estimates (alpha)	Standardized factor loadings	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability
<i>Experience quality</i>			0.787	0.879
Dimension 1: Socialization (3 items) Meet new people, be with people who share similar interests and values. Get together with friends	0.829	0.81		
Dimension 2: Enjoyment (6 items) Indulging interest in music, having fun, enjoying a friendly atmosphere, as families having fun together, enjoying the music and dancing, having a good time	0.889	0.97		
<i>Perceived value</i>			0.840	0.913
Functional value (4 items) Consistent quality, everything was done well during festival, acceptable standard of quality, well organized	0.924	0.87		
Emotional value (3 items) Gave me feelings of well-being, was exciting, made me elated	0.930	0.97		
Social value (4 items) Gives social approval from others, makes me feel acceptable to others, helps me to gain popularity among my friends and family, helps me to be recognized by other people	0.930	0.31		
<i>Satisfaction (5 items)</i> Satisfaction with decision, wise choice, good experience, pleased at decision to attend, participation exceeded the expectations	0.936		0.768	0.943
<i>Behavioral intention (5 items)</i> Will say positive things, visit again in next year, will try to come back every year, willingness to pay more, shall encourage friends and relatives	0.794		0.773	0.910

## Appendix



**Notes:** Paths are significant at  $p < 0.001$ ,  $t$  values (C.R.s) are given in parentheses

**Figure A1.**  
Structural model



**Figure A2.**  
Venn diagram with five conditions

**Table A1.** fsQCA configurations and consistencies

Configurations	Consistency	Coverage
ENJOYMENT*SOCIALIZATION*functional_value*emotional_value*SOCIAL_VALUE*satisfaction	1	0.001289
socialization*FUNCTIONAL_VALUE*emotional_value*social_value*SATISFACTION	1	0.006443
socialization*FUNCTIONAL_VALUE*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*social_value*satisfaction	0.894737	0.021907
SOCIALIZATION*FUNCTIONAL_VALUE*emotional_value*social_value*satisfaction	0.875	0.009021
enjoyment*functional_value*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*SATISFACTION	0.909091	0.012887
SOCIALIZATION*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*social_value*SATISFACTION	0.976378	0.479381
SOCIALIZATION*functional_value*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*SATISFACTION	0.979167	0.060567
ENJOYMENT*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*social_value*satisfaction	0.90566	0.061856
ENJOYMENT*FUNCTIONAL_VALUE*EMOTIONAL_VALUE*social_value	0.962105	0.588918
ENJOYMENT*SOCIALIZATION*social_value*SATISFACTION	0.97644	0.48067
ENJOYMENT*SOCIALIZATION*FUNCTIONAL_VALUE*EMOTIONAL_VALUE	0.977401	0.668814

**Note:** \*Combination of conditions