# Exploring **emotional states** and **surprising consumption** as drivers of engagement at **music festivals**

Explorando estados emocionais e consumo surpresa como fatores de envolvimento em festivais de música

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**Abstract** | The aim of the current study is to explore the relationship between visitors' emotional states and surprise consumption with visitors' engagement at festivals in Portugal. A sample of usable questionnaires allowed us to understand that surprising consumption and arousal are very important drivers to engage visitors to music festivals. The article also provides managerial implications, limitations and further research.

Keywords | Customer engagement, surprising consumptions, emotional states, music festivals

**Resumo** | O objetivo do presente estudo é explorar a relação entre os estados emocionais dos visitantes e o consumo surpresa com o envolvimento dos visitantes em festivais em Portugal. Uma amostra de questionários utilizáveis permitiu-nos entender que o consumo surpresa e a excitação são fatores muito importantes para envolver os visitantes de festivais de música. O artigo também fornece implicações para a gestão, limitações e pesquisas adicionais.

Palavras-chave | Envolvimento do cliente, consumos surpresa, estados emocionais, festivais de música

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### 1. Introduction

Music festivals are a big phenomenon all over the world and its industry is evolving very quickly (BBC News, 2018). People attend music festivals because it is the perfect opportunity to share live music with their peers and even with strangers that they can easily know for being all in the same context. In fact, music festivals provide plenty chances for socializing, listening to music, and to participate in social activities (Packer & Ballantyne, 2011). On the artists' side, music festivals are also important, and many bands struggle to make their music known at festivals (Wakefield, 2016).

Despite this, the literature about festivals and events tourism is still open for further research, since the interest around these themes only appeared somewhere between the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s (Laing, 2018). In addition, very few studies have been carried out with the aim to find what makes a festival outshine in the visitors' minds, as well as to look for their benefits (Ballantyne, Ballantyne, & Packer, 2014).

The case of Portugal is pertinent for this study, since its visibility has increased tremendously, receiving every year about 21 million visitors (visit Portugal, 2017). Portugal's tourism boom resulted in having been recognized in the previous year of 2018 as the best tourist destination in the world for the second consecutive year by the World Travel Awards (World Travel Awards, 2018). Indeed, Portugal provides some of the best circumstances for the organization of music festivals, starting with the climate, which is characterized by being mainly warmer, and also with the diversity of landscapes.

To sum up, this research will be conducted with the purpose of verifying how the emotional states and surprising consumption influence engagement of the visitors. Thus, the research question is: how emotional states and surprise consumption act as drivers of consumer engagement at music festivals? In the current paper, we explore the relationship between visitors' emotional states and surprise consumption with visitors' engagement at festivals in Portugal.

# 2. Theoretical framework

# 2.1. Consumer Engagement

The vast literature up to now on consumer engagement has emerged from the Service-Dominance (S-D) logic (Hollebeek, 2014). The Vargo and Lusch's (2004) study makes an original contribution, considering the shift in marketing over the last decades, where they stress out the importance of evolving from goods to services and experiences. In addition, the service-dominance view seeks to establish focus on relationships and on the value of co-creative experiences (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Several authors have argued that customer engagement can be defined as the result of the interaction between a customer and a firm (Kumar et al. 2010; Brodie et al. 2011). A research undertaken by Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014, p. 154), acknowledged a definition for consumer-brand engagement as the "consumer's positively valanced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions". Pansari and Kumar (2017, p. 295) draw our attention for the customers' activities which give rise to CE and define it "as the mechanics of a customer's value addition to the firm, either through direct or/and indirect contribution". Music festivals have also organizations and firms behind to organize and support the event, what makes the Kumar and colleagues approach relevant in this context.

Kumar et al. (2010) reveal that exist diverse forms for a consumer affect a firm performance, which consequently generates customer engagement. The authors suggest four indicators that can contribute to level of customer engagement between customers and brands/companies, such as customer purchases, customer referrals, customer influence and customer knowledge. Direct contributions encompass the customer purchases, so when customers buy to a company any good or service, they are generating profit (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). The indirect contributions are constituted by customer referrals, customer influence and customer knowledge (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Customer referrals occurs when a customer is able to attract others that would not be through the direct channels of marketing. Customer influence is achieved through the social media channels that allow people to exchange information about the brand or products in a real-time way. Finally, customer knowledge is linked to the creation of value which can be generated when a customer gives feedback about a product or service to a company/brand.

According to Pansari and Kumar (2017), the process of engagement has to be created on the basis of satisfaction and emotion, which they claim to be the antecedents. In addition, these authors claim that satisfaction is usually linked to the direct contributions whereas emotions is linked to the indirect contributions (Bhuiyan & Darda, 2021).

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) also highlight the link between customer experience and customer engagement, being this last variable seen as a component of the first one. They enlighten that nowadays customer engagement can be more witnessed particularly because the current touch points of the customer's journey experience are very interactive. which allow to obtain customer's social and emotional reactions (Sarmento & Loureiro, 2014).

As for Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2014), the customer's impact on a firm's performance, which is a consequence of consumer engagement, cannot be considered as always positive. It is proposed by the authors that a positive impact derives when the customer's objectives are aligned with those

from firms. On the contrary, the negative impact results of misaligning of the objectives. The understanding of customer engagement and its appraisal should be carried out by managers in order to go further the intention of simply having satisfied customers, so they can create instead more emotional bonds with them (Bowden, 2009).

Much of the current literature have argued that there is less clarity about what are the roles of the seller and user, particularly because nowadays users are able to provide feedback about products development, as well as to contribute to content creation (e.g., Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft, & Singh, 2010; Loureiro et al., 2019). These consumer behaviors are forms of engagement that contribute to the process of co-creation (Almeida & Campos, 2021). Yet, much of the research up to now it is not satisfactorily extensive for the understanding of the effects of CE on co-creation (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013).

Packer and Ballantyne (2011) claim that engagement in music festivals context can provide union between the festival attendees because they are in the same space and for a similar purpose, which results in a bigger sense of community. As noted by Snell (2005), music festivals are normally held for successive days which offers to the participants a great opportunity for them to feel completely absorbed by the experience. For instance, music festivals that have camping access will naturally concede even higher chances to occur engagement between visitors, as it is formed a sense of community. The consumer engagement can occur in two ways -physically and digitally- (Laurell & Björner, 2018), and the manifestation of digital festival engagement has happened mainly in social media. Kumar and Pansari (2017) have argued that the customer influence, one form of indirect contribution for engagement, is normally linked with the informative content posted in the social media platforms. In their study, Laurell and Björner (2018) have suggest that ultimately visitors have become more and more through the digital way. In sum, emotional states related to the festival may influence the way customers are engaged with the festival.

### 2.2. Consumers' emotional state

Emotions can be defined as a "complex phenomena characterized by a combination of cognitive and experiential factors, psychological states, and behavioural expressions." (Rodríguez-campo et al., 2019, p.2). Due to its complexity, emotions can be considered either an antecedent or an outcome of the customer experience (Palmer, 2012, Veríssimo & Loureiro, 2014, Sarmento, Loureiro & Martins, 2017). As noted by Brakus et al. (2009), emotions can be seen as a consequence that occur in the inner self after consumption experiences induced by stimuli, while constitutes a relevant determining factor of consumers' satisfaction, and customers' purchase decisions (Brunner-Sperdin, Peters, & Strobl, 2012; Barsky & Nash, 2002; Knobloch et al., 2017; Rodríguez-campo et al., 2019).

Rodríguez-campo et al. (2019) suggest that emotions perform three functions, the adaptive, the motivational and the social function. The first presented is related with the human's capacity in adapting to the required circumstances of the environment. In similar way, Lee, Lee, Lee, and Babin (2008) posit that emotions can be treated as outcomes of environmental perceptions. The second one concerns the motivational behavior of the individuals when generated through emotions. Lastly, the social function is performed when facilitates the adaptability of the individual to the social environment.

Other researchers have been raised interest in emotional states, particularly on consumer delight (Finn, 2005; Loureiro, Miranda, & Breazeale, 2014; Loureiro & Sarmento, 2017). In order to measure delight, some researchers have used the same scales that are used to measure emotions

(Loureiro et al., 2014; MiRan, Vogt, & Knutson, 2015). The majority of these studies state that arousal and positive affect are antecedents of customer delight. In his study, Finn (2005) presented a 13 emotions measures which were based on the original measurement developed by Oliver (1997). The emotions' measures are split between four factors such as delight, arousal, positive affect and surprising consumption.

The surprising consumption is generally viewed as an emotion which represents the result of the difference between the actual performance and expectations (Oliver, 1997; Finn, 2005). Both arousal and positive affect are the fundamental antecedents of customer delight (Oliver, 1997). Arousal refers to the extent to which people feel excited and active (Loureiro et al., 2014). Positive affect is conceptualized as the set of feeling of pleasure and happiness (Finn, 2005). Lastly, consumer delight can be viewed as an emotional response that englobes surprise, arousal, and positive affect (Finn, 2005; Loureiro et al., 2014; Oliver, 1997). As a matter of fact, the concepts of satisfaction and delight are quite similar, but they are discussed as different constructs (Finn, 2005). Taken all together, surprise consumption and emotional states may be associated to the customer engagement towards a music festival:

H1: Arousal positively influences customer engagement to music festival

H2: Delight positively influences customer engagement to music festival

H3: Positive Affect positively influences customer engagement to music festival

H4: Surprising Consumption positively influences customer engagement to music festival

### 3. Methods

The online questionnaire was spread through online communities of people who regularly visit music festivals. The questionnaire was open for two months, it was launched on 27th of December and closed on 11th of February.

The questionnaire was formed based on the literature review and all measurement items were adapted from existing instruments. Thus, all items were measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale. Emotions and surprise consumption were measured based on Finn (2005) and customers engagement adapted from Kumar and Pansari (2016). The structure took several aspects into consideration in order to avoid common method bias, that is, the items and questions were prepared to avoid ambiguity and the physical distance between measures of the same construct namely keeping them simple and concise.

A total of 363 fully completed and usable questionnaires (after excluding those with missing values, inconsistent responses or extreme multivariate outliers) were collected from the 394 distributed. Of the participants, 53% were female and 47% and 53% were male. Most of the sample belongs to the 18-24 age range (59%), followed by the 25-34 age range (21%).

# 4. Results

For this study, the multiple linear regression was used to analyze the relationships between the constructs presented in the conceptual model. Multiple linear regression is a very useful statistical technique that allows to explore all sorts of dependence relationships, although one of its limitations is the fact of only admitting the study of relationships one at a time (Hair et al., 2014,

p.541). The ANOVA test table underlines that the model is valid, as well as significant (sig<0.05) to predict the dependent variable Engagement. As shown in the table 1, the F(sig) column indicates a Sig value lower than 0.05, so it means that the analysis of the model is viable.

Closer examination of the R<sup>2</sup> value indicates that 12.3% of the dependent variable, i.e. Engagement, is significantly explained by, at least, some of the explanatory variables. From the observation of the sig values included in the coefficients table, we can verify that, in this case, the only dimension capable of explaining the Engagement variable is the Surprising Consumption, as its sig < 0.05. The remaining variables such as Arousal, Delight and Positive Affect, are not significant to explain the Dependent variable, once their sig values are >0.05. However, when applying an alpha level of 0.1%, it is then possible to consider the Arousal dimension as an explanatory variable, with a Sig. value of 0.075. Hence, hypotheses H2 and H3 are not supported. Only H1 (at p<0.10) and H4 (at p < 0.05) are supported.

The multiple regression model obtained is as follows:

Engagement = 24.235 + 0.715 \* Arousal+ (-0.278) \* Delight + 0.707 \* Positive Affect + 1.516\* Surprising Consumption + Ei

As it can be seen in the Residual statistics table 1, the mean value of the residual term is zero, which confirms the first assumption. Secondly, not only the Tolerance values are all above 0.1 but also the VIF values are lower than 10. Thirdly, the Durbin- Watson is close to 2. Under those circumstances these assumptions also hold the model. Moreover, studying the Histogram and Normal P-Plot, it can be verified the normality of the residuals. Lastly, the Scatterplot displays that the variance of the random term appears to be constant.

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t(sig.)	R²	F(sig.)	Durbin- Watson	Collinearity statistics	
	В	Std.Error						Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	24.235	5.130		4.724 (0.000)					
Arousal	0.715	0.400	0.122	1.787 (0.075)	0.123	12.586 (0.000)	1.998	0.528	1.895
Delight	-0.278	0.421	-0.051	-0.659 (0.511)				0.414	2.416
Positive Affect	0.707	0.496	0.114	1.425 (0.155)				0.386	2.593
Surprising Consumption	1.516	0.421	0.223	3.602 (0.000)	-			0.638	1.568

Figure 1 | Coefficients Table: Impact of Consumers' Emotions on their Engagement

Source: authors'elaboration

### 5. Conclusion

From the results there is evidence that surprising consumption proved to be the most important to the explanation of the dependent variable Engagement –at p<0.05- and Arousal, at p<0.10. However, if we look at the standardized coefficients beta in table 1, we can verify that the Delight dimension has a negative impact on Engagement since its  $\beta$  value is equal to -0.051. Some researchers (e.g., Shane & Patterson, 2010; Packer & Ballantyne, 2011; Packer & Ballantyne, 2014) have recognized the importance of exploring the drivers of consumers' engagement in the context of music festivals, but up until now there is still a gap in the literature. This result indicates that visitors' engagement is more influenced through the correspondence of visitor's expectations, i.e., with the ability of festival managers create a positive surprise, than with their induced feelings during the service consumption.

This research has contributed for the field of tourism and event management by giving new insight for the gap that was found in the literature. This research has provided knowledge for the different constructs that have influence on visitors' engagement in the context of music festivals. In

addition, there are several relevant areas where this study makes an original contribution, for instance, by adding visitors' engagement in a conceptual model in the context of music festivals. This study is a pioneer in the perspective of music festivals for having introduced the engagement variable and emotional states and surprising consumption as drivers.

Regarding managerial implication. Firstly, this study has revealed that festival organizers should invest a lot in ways to provide a good atmosphere, an attractive program and enough facilities to the festival attendees, since the aesthetic experience appears to be extremely important for them. Secondly, in this study we found that music festivals that induce visitors' feelings of surprise leads to better chances of engagement. This can be explained by the fact that music festivals offer an experience different from the usual consumption experiences by its experiential nature. Consequently, festival managers should concentrate on how to surprise their visitors, for instance, by offering a festival program with the best bands and by offering a unique atmosphere.

All studies face limitations, and this is not an exception, but as it matters to understand how the restraints were managed during this study, and because it is important to realize how they should be interpreted, they are revealed as it follows. Firstly, one of the limitations of this study is due to the fact of the sample not being notably balanced, either within the age groups, as the representation of the sample is mostly characterized for younger people. Therefore, the researchers should bear in mind that the study can hardly be extrapolated and generalized to other international backgrounds.

Secondly, as the research method was quantitative there might be some disadvantages, such as the usage of closed questions and the high probability of participants' misapprehension relatively to the items included in the measurement scales, which can lead to more untrue responses. When conducting interviews instead of surveys, it is possible to clarify the participants about what they did not comprehend. Moreover, through questionnaires is difficult to obtain in-depth information and consider the different perspectives the participants may have regarding the topic which are not included in the scale items.

Thirdly, the measurement scales used to this study may not have been the most suitable, particularly in the case of the variable emotions. Lee and Kyle (2013) have questioned the reliability of the current emotions' measurement scales, as they support what was previously suggested by Richins (1997), indicating that emotions must be adequate to the context. However, there is still inconclusive discussion about the theme (Lee & Kyle, 2013).

Future research is needed to explore the role of visitors' engagement in the context of music festivals, since there are not enough studies that provide a satisfactory comprehension of how it could be enhanced through the experience provided by festival organizers. Moreover, in future investigations may also be interesting to add to this study the examination of the inverse relationship between visitors' emotions and satisfaction on visitors' engagement, i.e., if the visitors' engagement can also have positive impacts on their emotions and satisfaction. In addition, recent research has suggested that the visitors' engagement with music festivals is becoming more and more virtual and less physical. Therefore, further studies should investigate visitors' engagement in a separate way.

Lastly, the inclusion of the loyalty variable in this model could be an important issue for further research. As it mentioned before, there is a clear link between engagement and loyalty, which makes it appealing to add the loyalty variable to the conceptual model developed in this study.

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