CONCEPTUALIZING THE IMPACT OF FESTIVAL AND EVENT ATTENDANCE UPON FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL)

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Quality of life (QOL) research has been well explored in medicine, psychology, and the social sciences, although it has received very little attention within festival and event studies. This proposition article is both conceptual and exploratory and will seek to establish the foundations of a framework to investigate the impact(s) festivals and events may have upon individual and family QOL and to set an agenda for research into QOL in the field of festival and event studies. The article begins with a review of literature, which sets the conceptual nature of the article in the area of festival studies and in doing so investigates interconnected themes such as: political, social, cultural, and personal impact discourses. Following this our article provides a review of literature introducing key QOL theories, concepts, and research undertaken in previous studies. The article then progresses naturally into a discussion of the key differences and relationships between individual and family QOL, and provides an overview of previous research in festivals and events to allow the study to develop research questions in order to situate this article and our future research agenda. Following the literature review we present a discussion of key methodological considerations in order to determine the most appropriate and practical framework for collecting and analyzing primary data to better understand the potential impacts of festivals and events on families' QOL. The final section of the article concludes and reflects upon our review of literature and research questions, which we hope will set an agenda for future research in this area and on the development of a framework to test QOL within events.

Key words: Community festivals/events; Individual & family quality of life (QOL); Qualitative inquiry approach; Festival & event studies

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Introduction

This article takes forward a definition by Jepson and Clarke (2013) who see community festivals and events as a:

> Themed and inclusive community event or series of events which have been created as the result of an inclusive community planning process to celebrate the particular way of life of people and groups in the local community with emphasis on particular space and time. (p. 7)

This definition is one that promotes all stakeholder equality through the planning process and also helps to bring attention to preserving sensitive natural, cultural, or social environments, and in particular community values. The literature surrounding community festivals suggests largely positive opportunities for community cultural development (Getz, 1997), or that festivals can also be used as building blocks for communities and promote ethnic understanding within society (Dunstan, 1994; Frisby & Getz, 1989; Getz, 1991, 1997), and in doing so preserve and celebrate local traditions, history, and culture, or be used as a strategy to extend a destination's lifecycle (Chacko & Schaffer, 1993). Dugas and Schweitzer (1997) maintain that to develop a sense of community is hard work, long term, especially to build levels of connectedness, belonging, and support. Previous studies have explored communities and engagement (Clarke & Jepson, 2011; Jepson & Clarke, 2005, 2009, 2013; Jepson, Clarke, & Ragsdell, 2013, 2014; Jepson, Wiltshire, & Clarke, 2008; Ragsdell & Jepson, 2014; Stadler, 2013), but none have examined the relationship, impacts, or engagement festivals and events have on an individual or on a family's QOL. Festivals can be understood as prime manifestations of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Festivals hold a unique ability to entertain, educate, hold aesthetic value, and provide a platform for escapism through the creation of an often unique event experience that could be beneficial to families' QOL.

Festival Studies

According to Getz (2010), festival studies can be divided into three discourses: (1) festival tourism, (2) festival management, and (3) those discourses that investigate the meanings and impacts of festivals in society and culture. The latter discourse will provide context for our research into how festivals and events impact upon a family's QOL. Getz's (2010) article is particularly important to this proposition article on QOL as it enables contextualization among Event and Festival Studies and helps to locate it within existing literature. Our article is situated within the most established area of research within festival studies; the one concerned with the meanings and impacts of festivals in society. Getz (2010) identified 19 areas of research within this discourse, where our article mainly falls into the following categories: Community, cultural, place identity, and attachment; communitas, social cohesion, sociability; personal impacts (psychic benefits, health and well-being, educational, attitude change, consumer surplus); social and cultural impacts; and antecedents (motivations & constraints to festival attendance).

As a field of academic inquiry festival studies are deeply rooted and established within cultural anthropology and sociological fields of study, connected by the seminal works by: Van Gennep (1909), who discovered that the nature of ritual ceremonies accompanying the landmarks of human life was universal apart from the detail which varied from one culture to another; Turner (1969, 1974, 1982), who documented the ritualistic liminal psychology associated with cultural festivals, events, and rites of passage; Geertz (1973), who theorized the rituals role in social change and made us aware of the potential for conflicting views in society to be played out in the dramas created for ritualistic events and festivals. Abrahams (1982, 1987), in his research, discusses the symbolic meaning and importance of events and their multifaceted components in a consumer driven society. Falassi's (1987) book *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival* is thought to be the most cited literature in festival studies either to set context and define, or to seek to understand a festival's unique phases, patterns of behavior, morphology, or its rites of valorization, rites of conspicuous display, rites of exchange, rites of consumption, and rites of competition. Manning's (1983) research was the first to explore the construction of festivals and the

connections between festival development and its authenticity or perceived authenticity. The following discussions are used to contextualize individual and family QOL in the already existent festival studies literature. In particular, we center our discussions on social and cultural impact, and personal impact. This article recognizes the importance of and potential impacts of festivals within local communities, moreover it recognizes that events cannot easily be analyzed without performing an analysis of society itself. It aspires to add to the growing movement of Critical Event Studies (CES) research as it seeks to understand events from a sociological and psychological underpinning to ascertain how events impact upon individuals and families QOL.

Social and Cultural Impact Discourse

Getz (2010) summarized recent social cultural research on festivals and identified sub themes such as: social impact assessment (Delamere, 2001; Delamere, Wankel, & Hintch, 2001; L. Fredline, Jago, & Deery, 2003; Small, 2007); resident perceptions and attitudes towards festivals/events (E. Fredline & Faulkner, 1998, 2002a, 2002b; Xiao & Smith, 2004); influences on leisure; community identity and cohesion (Van Winkel & Woosnam, 2014); disruption and loss of privacy; crime and accidents; social and cultural capital (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Wilks, 2011); enhancing community capacity; and social demonstration effect. Getz's (2010) review of the literature highlighted that social and cultural impact research is the second largest area of research in festival studies. Most studies rather than seek to define have looked to measure social impacts through scales or resident perceptions of events (Delamere, 2001; Delamere et al., 2001; E. Fredline & Faulkner, 1998, 2002a 2002b; L. Fredline et al., 2003; Small, 2007; Small, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2005; Wood & Thomas, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2004) or examine the potential to create social capital through events (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). Our article seeks to determine and understand the relationships between event attendance and QOL and provides a research agenda for exploring, testing, and analyzing the impact of festival and event attendance upon families QOL.

Personal Impact Discourse

According to Getz (2010), personal impacts include the following domains: psychic benefits; health and well-being; educational; attitude change; and consumer surplus. The impact of festivals and events on an individual is underresearched and limited in scope and as such remains a low-profile area of investigation, although this is beginning to change. As a new area of research, Getz (2010) is right to call for a truly interdisciplinary approach to research. Festivals are widespread and being adapted as vehicles for social marketing and social cultural exchange, which further justifies the importance of this proposition article. Researchers have so far investigated personal educational benefits (Gitelson, Kerstetter, & Kiernan, 1995). Following this, Gursoy, Spangenberg, and Rutherford (2006) analyzed attendees' attitudes to festivals in light of the experience they were hoping to receive. In order to contribute to the social and cultural impact discourse, this article aims to set a research agenda in relation to the key differences between individual and family QOL and which aspects of individual QOL are particularly important in balancing family QOL.

Defining the "Family" and Potential Benefits Derived from Leisure and Event Experiences

Poston et al. (2003), in their qualitative enquiry approach to investigating QOL in families with and without disabilities, defined the family as follows: "A family includes the people who think of themselves as part of the family, whether related by blood or marriage or not, and who support and care for each other on a regular basis" (p. 319). For the purposes of this article, Poston et al.'s (2003) definition of a family will be used with recognition of the importance of extended family. In Poston et al.'s (2003) study respondents were very idealistic when they spoke of the family and described it as a place of love, acceptance, harmony, and nurturance. The respondents in the study also described conditions that lead to a harmonious family life such as spending time together, clarifying roles for the adults, respecting each other's individuality, offering unconditional love and support, and having open and honest communication.

Leisure research on (family) recreation has further identified how leisure contributes to well-being and QOL, but it has been argued that this interrelationship is a complex one (Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, & Šverko, 2011; Lloyd & Auld, 2002). With regards to family QOL in particular, Cummins (1996) highlighted that life satisfaction is closely related to leisure satisfaction, particularly when participating in leisure activities with other people with who one has more intimate relationships, such as families or close friends. Brajša-Žganec et al. (2011) came to a similar conclusion with regards to intimate family leisure activities and how they contribute to QOL. For families in particular, engaging in leisure activities can enhance and improve family relationships and a healthy family life (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009)—important elements of family QOL. Hutchinson (2004) further maintained that, "leisure can be generative of a range of personal, familial, social, and cultural meanings," and therefore enhance people's QOL by supporting "a sense of connection, accomplishment, self/relationship/cultural affirmation, hope, control, etc." (p. 31). In relation to family QOL, Agate et al. (2009) specifically found that it is not necessarily the amount of time that families spend together engaging in leisure activities, but how meaningful they are to individual family members and the family as a whole. According to the authors, special events, for example, can provide such out of the ordinary experiences that bring the family together in different and new ways.

Defining QOL: For Individuals, Families, and Events

The search for QOL has gained momentum and become a growing concern for individuals, families, communities, and governments as a result of a rapidly changing world and a desire to find and sustain satisfaction, happiness, and belief in the future (Eckersley, 1999; Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Mercer, 1994). Defining QOL is a hugely complicated task as it relates directly to a personal state of mind and all those factors that shape individual and group well-being (Rapley, 2003). The term well-being or *bien-être* of French origins can be traced back to the 16th century from Pasquier's 1555 work *Le Monophile*: "agréable procurée par

la satisfaction des besoins du corps et ceux de l'esprit." Rapley (2003) summarizes how the term QOL has been used in the literature in many different ways: Happiness; life-satisfaction; well-being; self-actualization; freedom from want; objective functioning; "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease" [World Health Organization (WHO), 1997, p. 1]; balance, equilibrium or "true bliss" (Kant, 1978, p. 185); prosperity; fulfilment; low unemployment; psychological well-being; high GDP; the good life; enjoyment; democratic liberalism; the examined life (pace Socrates); a full and meaningful existence (cf Sheldon, 2000).

A QOL theory was first developed by Sirgy (1986) from Abraham Maslow's (1954) human developmental perspective model. Sirgy (1986) recognized that QOL could also be defined in terms of the hierarchical need satisfaction level of most of the members within a society. Sirgy concluded that the higher the needs satisfaction of the majority in a given society the greater the QOL of that society. From a festival studies perspective, this is an important relationship as QOL goals could be defined as "the satisfaction of human and developmental needs in a community or society" (Sirgy, 1986, p. 331).

More recent studies in QOL (D. J. Lee, Sirgy, Larsen, & Wright, 2002) have relied on the development of satisfaction hierarchy models to explain the relationship between consumer well-being and life satisfaction. Even though this article is concerned with QOL, there could be positive synergy in researchers adapting and testing this type of model within festival and event studies as it could help to analyze the interconnected cultural relationships between communities, events, and QOL (Fig. 1).

One of the first studies on QOL was published by Kuyken (1995) on behalf of The World Health Organization. The project set out to develop an international QOL assessment and in doing so produced multidimensional profiles of families across six main and 24 subdomains of QOL. Kuyken (1995) defined QOL as an "individual's perception of their position in life in the context of culture and value systems in which they life and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (p. 1405). The identified six domains of QOL include: physical domain, psychological domain,
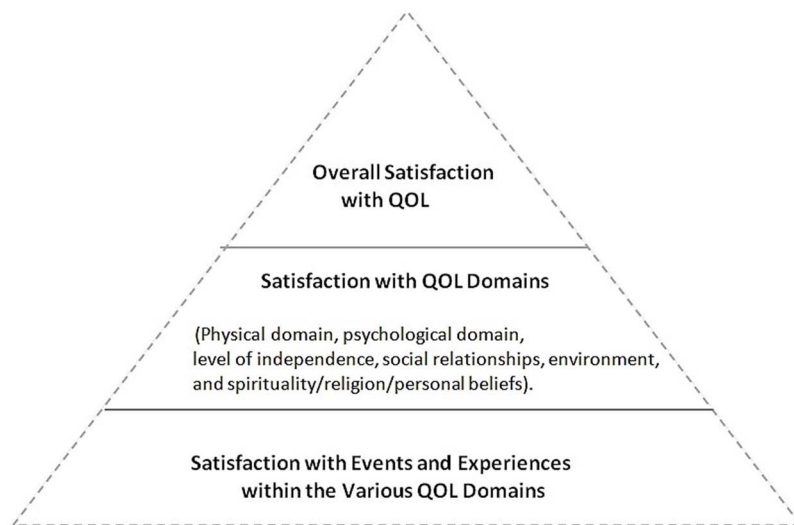
Figure 1. QOL satisfaction hierarchy (adapted from Kuyken, 1995; Lee et al., 2002).

level of independence, social relationships, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs. Kuyken's (1995) QOL domains can be seen within Figure 1, which illustrates an adapted life satisfaction model (Lee et al., 2002). Rapley (2003) highlights that the WHO QOL definition "benefits from comprehensiveness and efforts to relate the idea to cultural, social and environmental contexts and to local value systems" (p. 50). Although these QOL domains and the original definition are still used, a variety of theoretical and conceptual approaches have since been applied to the concept of QOL. Most of them emphasize the importance of social relationships (and personal relationships in particular) as well as opportunities to participate in recreation/leisure in one way or another (Rapley, 2003). In relation to festival and event studies in particular, researchers have thus far mainly focused on the individual's experience of QOL (see e.g., Liburd & Hergesell, 2008; O'Shea & Leime, 2012; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010; Small et al., 2005).

Family QOL, in contrast to individual QOL, considers all family members in terms of what it takes for them to have a good life and their "aggregated" perspective (Poston et al., 2003, p. 139). Foster and Robinson (2010) identified that children are crucial in the event decision-making process of families and parents are willing to compromise if the event is satisfying for the child(ren). "Family togetherness"

was thereby found to be the most important motivational factor as well as having an impact on family QOL. However, the study is limited to motivational factors for attending events as a family and does not apply the broader concept of family QOL. Currently there is a lack of understanding on the impacts festivals can have on family QOL. We aim to further investigate and analyze the impact of festival and event attendance upon family QOL.

More recent studies in this area are better placed to contextualize our research into investigating the impact of festivals and events on a family's QOL. Tayler, McArdle, Richer, Brennan, and Weier (2006) looked at how a festival could help build relationships between parents and children to enrich a child's creativity. Pearce's (2009) research within tourism studies reviewed the basic concerns in positive psychology and highlighted two areas of study relating to the behavior of tourists; namely the study of optimism and the assessment of positive emotions of visitors during their experience, which clearly can be frame for analysis in festival and event studies. Furthermore, Pearce (2009) highlights the opportunity to gain a richer and holistically critical view of the dimensions that create visitor experience and satisfaction.

More recently Packer and Ballantyne's (2010) research employed positive psychology theories to explore the impact of music festival attendance

on young people's psychological and social well-being. Positive psychology, according to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), seeks to understand and build upon those factors that can improve the QOL and enable individuals, communities, and societies to thrive rather than just survive. Packer and Ballantyne's (2010) study offers a good insight into building theoretical frameworks to understand how festivals can impact on an individual's well-being. Their adapted framework utilized Laiho's (2004) psychological functions of music in adolescence: interpersonal relationships, identity, agency, and emotional field. Packer and Ballantyne's (2010) framework also included psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), subjective well-being (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002), and social well-being (Keyes, 1998). They found that the festival experience began months before people attended, and that the experience of attendance enabled a transitory state of subjective well-being that became a part of and strengthened a person's identity through strong emotional connections with music, people, and place. Packer and Ballantyne's (2010) study found that feeling part of festival performances was essential as this created a sense of belonging and enabled social integration during and beyond the event. Another interesting aspect of their research was the discovery that those who attended a festival every couple of years (rather than annually) reported a greater level of well-being outcomes than those who attended less or more frequently.

Liburd and Hergesell (2008) conducted a study on the Wadden Sea Festival in Denmark to try to ascertain how a cultural event might influence individual participants' QOL. This study gave preliminary findings in regards to economic growth and tourism, and went on to suggest that differentiation needs to take place between subjective definitions of QOL, defined by Andereck, Valentine, Vogt, and Knopf (2007) as "one's satisfaction with life, and feelings of contentment or fulfilment with one's experiences in the world" (p. 484). This should be taken forward in future studies, as well as psychological definitions that refer to the actualization of one's self potential (Liburd & Hergesell, 2008).

Foster and Robinson's (2010) article was the first to explore families in the context of events; they did so by providing analysis of motivational factors that influence attendance. Foster and Robinson's study provides useful context to this research as it explored the role and importance of children as a key determinant in decision making regarding the type of events that were attended. The study also identifies the key motivations for festival and event attendance as socialization and family togetherness, which were previously identified in numerous other studies (Backman, Backman, Uysal, & Sunshine, 1995; Bowen & Daniels, 2005; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Faulkner, Fredline, Larson, & Tomljenovic, 1999; Formica & Uysal, 1996, 1998; C. K. Lee, 2000; C. K. Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Mohr, Backman, Gahan, & Backman, 1993; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Scott, 1996; Schneider & Backman, 1996; Tomljenovic, Larson, & Faulkner, 2001; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993). Foster and Robinson (2010) identified children as the prime factors in deciding which type of festivals and events to visit and that their satisfaction comes ahead of that of parent's, guardian's, or caregiver's. An interesting aspect for this article to take into consideration is Robinson's (2008) finding, which notes that the overall happiness of the family unit is almost solely dependent on the happiness of the children.

The above discussed studies by Crompton and McKay (1997), Foster and Robinson (2010), Packer and Ballantyne (2010), Tayler et al. (2006), and Usyal et al. (1993) give the closest connection to our research on the impacts of festival and event attendance upon individual and family QOL. However, no research within event or festival studies has investigated how family togetherness, socialization, and bonding could impact upon an individual's and the family's QOL. As a result, it could be argued here that another research domain is emerging on "family impact discourse," to which this article hopes to set precedent.

From the review of existing literature in the areas of community festival and event studies, the role of children and families, and QOL (individual and family), the following research questions are carried forward to frame our proposed methodology, data collection, and analysis: (1) What is the meaning of community event and festival attendance from a family perspective? (2) What elements of QOL do families associate with attending community events? (3) How can attendance at community events and festivals enhance family QOL? (4) What are the key differences between individual and family

QOL and which aspects of individual QOL are important in balancing family QOL? (5) How has family QOL changed as a result of attending festivals and events?

Methods

As a result of very limited research in relation to analyzing the impact of festival and event attendance upon family QOL, this article proposes an exploratory mixed-methods design incorporating three key phases of data collection as seen in Figure 2. Discussion in this section of the article will center on the creation of a flexible methodology that can be practically applied to gather primary data on QOL at community festivals within towns in the UK.

The review of existing literature revealed significant gaps and a lack of understanding in regards the impact of festivals and events on QOL, and as a result of this we propose that three existing theoretical perspectives [Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Poston et al., 2003; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010; Ragheb & Tate,

1993 (focus groups); semi-structured interviews] be adapted and tested within the methodology to inform data collection and analysis. We arrive at this conclusion through a realization that, due to the complexities and diversities of local communities, a singular research methodology would not fully explain or provide accurate conclusions on how community festivals and events impact upon an individual's or family's QOL. Therefore, we suggest that a mixed-methodological approach is employed incorporating the critical realism paradigm through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. It could be argued that critical realism (Collier, 1994) is the most appropriate research philosophy as it will test theories of QOL but assumes that relationships are present between variables and facts.

Fairclough (2003) gives further justification for this approach when he concludes that social events contain social practices that exist within social structures, which are all part of reality. Brewer (2010) defines critical realism as providing real structures that provide a framework for people's
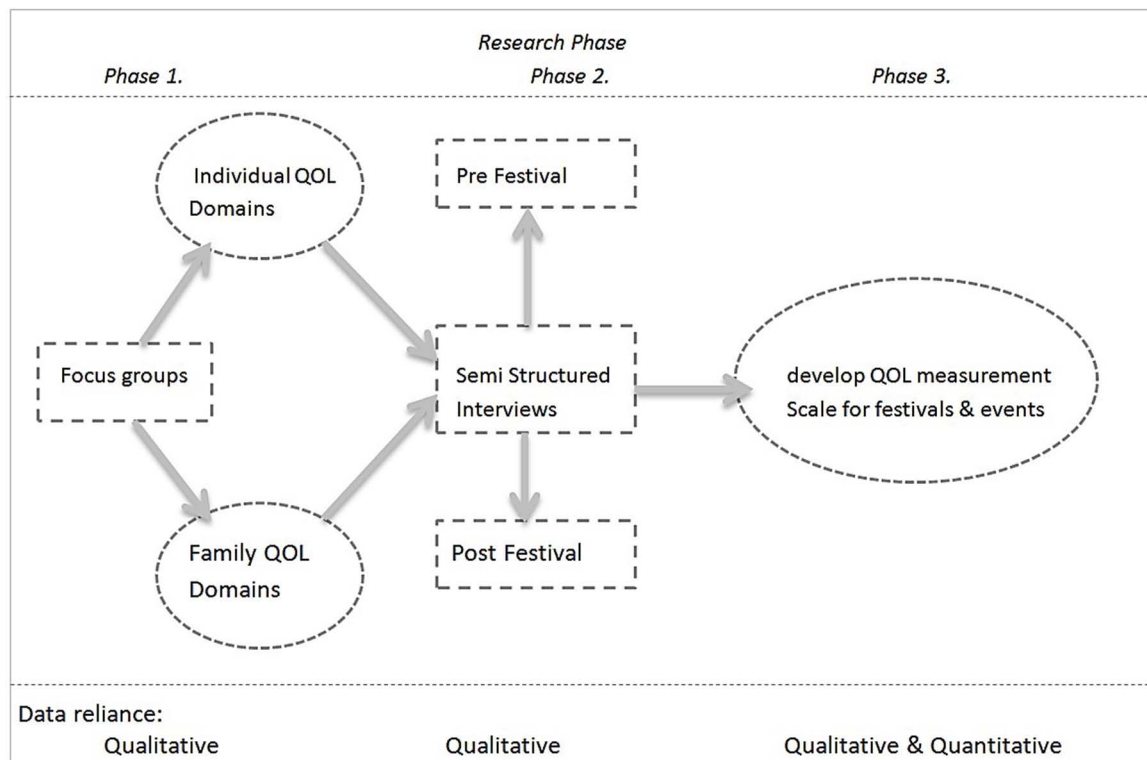

Figure 2. QOL Research methods diagram.

actions. It could be further argued that the methodological approach put forward in this article is a reaction to the limited amount of development in festival and event studies with regard to qualitative methodologies and philosophical underpinning (Decrop, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Our article advocates a combination of two stages of data collection: focus groups and semistructured interviews, with a view that following qualitative analysis a QOL measurement scale can later be developed for festivals and events (stage 3).

Focus Groups

Focus groups can provide a responsive context for people who have not traditionally been encouraged to voice their perspectives on sensitive topics (Krueger, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). We propose to gather subjective accounts of personal QOL around the three variables of life satisfaction, happiness, and morale as identified by Lloyd and Auld (2002) through a minimum of six focus groups. In addition to this focus groups allow for documenting subjective accounts of place-centered conditions, which it is hoped will allow further understanding

as to how person- and place-centered conditions create positive or negative QOL for individuals and families. The focus groups may also act as a pilot study to test Ragheb and Tate's (1993) theory of frequency of engagement against levels of satisfaction in festivals and events. We advocate that focus groups should contain at least four family units [taking forward Poston et al.'s (2003) definition, p. 7] and that at least one of these family units is not regularly attending festivals and events. It is suggested that one outcome of the focus groups will be the emergence of major QOL themes and subthemes that can then be integrated into the semistructured interviews for further testing.

It is suggested by previous research (Packer & Ballatyne, 2010; Poston et al., 2003) that semistructured questions could help to guide the focus group discussion areas. Although this is certainly true, one should exercise caution in sticking too rigorously to a set agenda to ensure that subthemes in the discussion have a good chance of emerging. Table 1 provides a nonexhaustive list of possible questions that could be used to stimulate and guide focus group discussions around the role of festivals and events to individual and family QOL.

Table 1
Example Questions to Stimulate Focus Group Discussions and Test Theory to Better Understand the Relationship Between Festivals/Events and QOL

Focus Group Question/Discussion Statement	Researcher Focus
When you hear the words family QOL, what first comes to your mind? Tell us about times when things have gone really well in your family. What helps things go well? Tell us about times that have been especially tough in your family. What are the things that usually create tough times?	Poston et al. (2003)
What do you value most about visiting festivals? Why is this important to you? Why do you usually go to festivals? Do you feel more connected with your local community when you attend events? What do you enjoy the most about attending festivals/events? What do you feel you have gained from attending festivals/events? Has it changed the way you feel or think about yourself or about the world?	Packer and Ballatyne (2011)
Has it changed the way you feel or think about your family? Do you feel more connected to your family when you attend events? Do you feel a stronger connection with your local community after attending festivals and events? Do you feel proud of where you live after attending festivals/events? Do you feel proud of your family after attending festivals/events?	Jepson and Stadler (2015)
How often do you and your family attend festivals/events? How do you feel when you attend festivals/events? Were you and your family satisfied with the overall festival/event experience?	Ragheb and Tate (1993)

Source: Authors.

Our current research in the area of QOL from festival and event attendance is concentrating on family groups to form the main primary data sample but there would also be an opportunity in future research to use focus groups to engage with festival and event producers as well as other major stakeholders.

Semistructured Interviews

We advocate the use of simple semistructured interviews as they can be employed to ascertain the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of participants (Holloway, 2008). Semistructured interviews will also be an advantage where English is not the participant's first language or if they have limited English language skills. Semistructured interviews should be a natural progression from focus group discussions whose outcome should dispute or reinforce theory and identify major and minor themes emanating from qualitative discourse. The major and minor themes and theory with proven correlation analyzed within the focus groups will then be applied to the already outlined theories for testing (Lloyd & Auld, 2002; Packer & Ballantyne, 2010) and form the semistructured interview questions.

We advocate that interviews take place with one family unit, and that between 15 to 20 semistructured interviews take place preevent and postevent attendance in order to track changes in perception over time. We recommend that the participants within the semistructured interviews should not be the same as those taking part in the focus group, thus avoiding any potential bias or repetitive dialogue. We suggest the use of a two-stage interview method, which will interview participants a month prefestival/event visitation, and then a month postfestival/event visitation, as seen in Figure 2.

Table 2 gives an indication of the types of questions one could potentially use within the semistructured interviews and aims to test individual and family QOL theory in order to understand their relationship to festivals and events attendance. It is important to bear in mind though that these are example questions only and could change or be added to once the focus group analysis has taken place.

Data Analysis

Once transcribed, focus group and interview data could be analyzed by either NVivo or Ethnograph. We suggest firstly employing discourse analysis through Nvivo or Ethnograph to develop thematic mapping analysis, which maps key theories and respondents' recognition or confirmation of said

Table 2

Example Questions to Conduct Semistructured Interviews to Better Understand the Relationship Between Festivals/Events and QOL

QOL Focus	Interview Questions
Family	What do you as a family value about attending events/festivals?
	How do you decide which events to attend as a family?
	Do you feel there are enough opportunities for you as a family to attend events/festivals in the local area?
	Why is event attendance important for your family?
	What do members of your family enjoy the most? What does the family as a whole enjoy the most?
	What do members of your family gain from attending an event/festival? What does the family as a whole gain?
	Has festival attendance changed the way you think about your family? In relation to other families?
Individual	What do you as a person value about attending events/festivals?
	Why is this important to you?
	Why do you go to festivals and events?
	Does going to the festival/event have a positive effect on your relationships with your family?
	Describe the emotions you felt when attending the festival/event
Place	Does attending festivals and events give you a sense of place?
	Or attachment to the place where you live?
	When you attend events do you feel proud of where you live?
	When you attend events do you feel proud of your local community?

Source: Authors.

theories through the first stages of data collection (such as focus groups). A result of this technique being that key themes emerge to build and frame the analysis for succeeding data collection methods and finally triangulation between all data sets to validate findings. Families should be the central units of analysis for both the focus group and in-depth interview data, as family QOL highlights all family members' *aggregated* perspective. However, in order to answer research question 4 (What are the key differences between individual and family QOL & which aspects of individual QOL are important in balancing family QOL?), individual perspectives should also be considered and analyzed separately, later correlated with family unit data and findings. Members of the research team should also read all the focus group and interview transcripts for accuracy and following all data analysis should agree upon a credible and inclusive taxonomy representing a synthesis of the ideas of all members of the research team (Lincoln, 1995). Structured and detailed triangulation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and data analysis should reveal concise themes and domains upon which a measurement scale to test QOL quantitatively and qualitatively could be produced to further quantify the importance of the relationship between festivals/events, individuals, and families (stage 3 of the research).

Ensuring Rigor and Transparency

The iterative analysis and triangulation of multiple sources should demonstrate the validity of the research processes undertaken and of the account to be constructed after data collection and analysis takes place. To achieve this, we suggest that as research is limited in the area of QOL and community festivals and events that the constant comparative method of analyzing focus group and interview data is used as this aims to generate categories, subcategories, and codes, interpret patterns and themes, and ensure rigor (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We suggest that rigor and transparency can be achieved within qualitative QOL research through the incorporation of procedures to address credibility, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rapley, 2003).

We recommend that researchers in this area adopt the following measures for addressing the accuracy of information (credibility): the synthesis of multiple sources with the same information (triangulation), and research member and research peer checking of data analysis. Transferability is not necessarily seen as a critical issue within qualitative studies (Maxwell, 1996), although researchers should be aware of the benefits of using multiple data collection locations and participants from a wide range of social backgrounds in order to build diversity and ensure an accurate and holistic breakdown of the research phenomena. We suggest that feedback is sought from researchers not directly involved in the project to gain valuable feedback on the research processes used and the credibility of the research. There is also a case to be made for collecting the views of the participants involved in the research to gain information to improve the focus groups or semistructured interviews, especially between the preevent and postevent interviews, as this can ensure the participant's experience is improved for the second interview. And finally, to ensure dependability we maintain that a recognized process of analysis be agreed upon by all researchers working within the study. For example: be in constant discussions to reach agreement on what the main themes are from the focus groups that require additional testing through interview; agree to the coding for major and minor themes deriving from analysis; ensure all raw and analyzed data is secure; and version control is maintained throughout the study.

Limitations and Future Research

Our identified research questions are the result of a comprehensive review of literature within the area of QOL: (1) What is the meaning of community event and festival attendance from a family perspective? (2) What elements of QOL do families associate with attending community events? (3) How can attendance at community events and festivals enhance family QOL? (4) What are the key differences between individual and family QOL and which aspects of individual QOL are important in balancing family QOL? (4) How has family QOL changed as a result of attending festivals and

events? We believe that these questions are appropriate given the exploratory and conceptual nature of the article and that they should help to focus the research agenda for exploring the festival/event attendance upon families QOL.

We believe we have set a thoughtful and practical future research agenda into QOL and festivals/events throughout this article, which should help us to understand the complexities of relationships within families and how they may perceive their overall QOL. In the next stages of our research we will seek to carry out all three phases of our research methodology and systematically test and measure the sociological contribution of festivals/events to individual and family QOL.

Future areas of research further include, but are not limited to, the impact of festival and event attendance upon family QOL specifically distinguishing between different age groups of children and young adults, single parents, extended families, or other types of families. There is also potential to investigate the topic upon other groups in society, such as the elderly or disabled. During stage 3 (quantitative study) of the proposed research, topics and themes could be explored within a wider geographic region, both nationally as well as internationally. Lastly, the perspective of other stakeholders, such as event organizers, local councils, sponsors, and other partners, or similar, should also be taken into account and could be explored further both qualitatively and quantitatively with regards to the question of how event attendance may impact upon family QOL. Event organizers and other stakeholder can in turn benefit from a better understanding of what matters to families, why they attend events, and how to maximize the impact event attendance has on their QOL. Event programs can be tailored to specific needs and expectations, which will ensure families attend events on a regular basis, and hence feel a stronger sense of belonging to their local community.

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