



The impact on festival's loyalty from co-creating festival's sustainability

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Abstract

Title: *The impact on festival's loyalty from co-creating festival's sustainability*

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Nowadays sustainability plays an important role in consumers' decision making and this has extended to the events sector. Festivals, face increasing numbers of participants that choose events according to the green commitments. However, greenwashing practices lead to attendees' scepticism toward the green practices and claims, which then decreases participants' loyalty. This thesis aims to understand whether co-creation is a successful tool to overcome participants' green scepticism and therefore increase participants' loyalty toward the festival.

In an experimental study design, 196 participants reported loyalty levels for a green festival. The study analysed different scenarios regarding the development of practices in a festival: green against non green. Further, we analysed if loyalty toward the event differed according to whether the practice was co-created or not. The new feature was presented either as co-created with the festival's attendees or exclusively by the festival's organization.

Our findings show that the relationship between the event's sustainability and the participants' loyalty is mediated both by their trust in the green practices and by their identification with the festival's organization and festivalgoers' community. Additionally, we found that co-creation does not moderate the relationship analysed, and therefore our results do not lend support that co-creation represents an efficient way to increase attendees' trust and identification and consequently their loyalty.

These findings contribute to the literature on co-creation in the context of festivals' sustainability. Ultimately, it draws managerial implications for events' organizations and how they can drive attendees' loyalty through eco-friendly commitment and its communication.

Keywords: festivals, sustainability, green trust, organization identification, community identification, loyalty, co-creation

Sumário

Título: O impacto da co-criação da sustentabilidade do festival na fidelidade do festival

A sustentabilidade desempenha um papel importante nas decisões dos consumidores no sector dos eventos. Cada vez mais consumidores escolhem os eventos de acordo com os compromissos ecológicos. No entanto, devido às práticas de "greenwashing" os participantes estão a desenvolver um cepticismo em relação às práticas ecológicas, o que diminui a sua lealdade. Esta tese pretende compreender se a co-criação é uma ferramenta de sucesso para superar o cepticismo ecológico dos participantes e, assim, aumentar a sua lealdade.

Num estudo experimental, 196 participantes reportaram a sua lealdade para um festival com práticas ecológicas. O estudo analisou dois cenários diferentes: um festival com práticas ecológicas e outro sem práticas ecológicas.

Analisámos também se a lealdade para com o evento era diferente consoante a prática fosse co-criada com os participantes do festival ou exclusivamente pela organização do mesmo.

Os resultados mostram que a relação entre a sustentabilidade do evento e a lealdade dos participantes é mediada tanto pela sua confiança nas práticas ecológicas como pela sua identificação com a organização e comunidade do festival. Constatamos que a co-criação não modera a relação analisada, pelo que os nossos resultados não apoiam que a co-criação represente uma forma eficiente de aumentar a confiança e identificação dos participantes e a sua lealdade.

Estes resultados contribuem para a literatura sobre co-criação no contexto da sustentabilidade dos festivais. Em última análise, pode ter implicações na criar gestão de eventos e para a forma como as organizações podem criar lealdade através de um compromisso sustentável e da sua comunicação.

Palavras-chave: festivais, sustentabilidade, confiança verde, identificação de marcas, identificação de comunidades, lealdade, co-criação

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1. Introduction

Events are one of the fastest improving and most important forms of tourism, cultural and leisure businesses (Getz, 2009). The market for festivals reached, in the US about one-fifth of its population: 32 million people attended music festivals and between 10 to 20 million attended films or food events. In Europe, the market is estimated to be worth 3.8 billion euros. In 2018, music festivals attracted almost 8 million people in the UK. These figures show the importance of events' industry for the global and national economies (Fest Forums, 2017; Johnson, 2019; Johnson, 2020).

There is also a darker side to growth. Coachella, an American music and arts festival, attracts about 250 thousand participants over two weekends, producing a daily average of 106 tons of waste. In 2011, Glastonbury welcomed over 135 thousand attendees producing waste (gas emissions and litter) equivalent to the 32nd largest city in the UK. Estimates for the UK are that the festivals' industry generates almost 20.000 tons of CO₂ (carbon-dioxin) and uses 5 million litres of fuel each year (Baker, 2019; Marchini, 2013; Powerful Thinking, 2016; Richter, 2019).

The current rate of growth of festivals represents a threat to the environment. The negative impact of these events affects the local environment as well as the socio-cultural aspects of the surrounding communities (Mair & Laing, 2012). The events often leave behind a trail of waste in terms of energy and water consumption: waste produced left in green fields, carbon-emission and pollution.

With several millions of people participating in festivals around the world each year, the global implications are noteworthy (Getz, 2009; Mair & Laing, 2012). Sustainability and sustainable development are recognised globally as a fundamental matter related to the wellbeing and survival of human society. Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the negative consequences that events have on a local and broader level across environmental, social and economic aspects (Holmes, Huges, Mair, & Carlsen, 2015). This awareness drives a change in the consumers' behaviours which led them to prefer sustainable products and services (Nath, Kumar, Agrawal, Gautam, & Sharma, 2013; Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2014). Therefore, festivals' participants avoid events with a harmful attitude and are willing to spend a premium price to adopt greener solutions (Gibson & Wong, 2011; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Kaufmann, Panni, & Orphanidou, 2012; Laing & Frost, 2010; Lin & Huang, 2012).

The increased consumers' awareness regarding the sustainable concerns has led companies and

specifically the events' sector to use practices aim to address the harmful environmental externalities produced (Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017).

Pressured by the need to pursue sustainability, several companies started to do greenwashing. Greenwashing is the practice used by companies to advertise their activities as greener than they are. Through this green advertisement, organizations expect to attract more consumers (Chen & Chang, 2013).

The danger when using greenwashing is the jeopardy on companies' credibility (Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017). Noteworthy is that consumers have become increasingly sceptical toward the organizations' environmental claims (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014). The consumers, confronted with continuous greenwashing activities, react with scepticism and disorientation toward environmental information, which consequently drives to lower confidence toward sustainable practices and green claims (Chen & Chang, 2013; Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017).

To increase trust in companies' environmental practices, the festivals' management and organizers started to include the participants in the development of a greener event. This logic follows from the essential role attendees take to achieve sustainability thresholds. The willingness of all the festivals' participants to respect the environment and to participate in green co-created practices becomes an essential factor for the reduction of the environmental harm and the promotion of a green attitude within the event (Koehler & Schneider, 2014; Lusch, Vargo, & Tanniru, 2010). Thus, the events' management should focus on the collaboration of all the stakeholders for the development of a sustainable event. Co-creation can be the most efficient way to achieve such outcomes (Cavagnaro, Postma, & De Brito, 2017; Luoma, 2018).

In the case of co-creating sustainable features for a festival, a dual effect is expected: motivation to accept a feature developed by similar festival goers (community identity) and identification with the feature (sustainable identity). Community identification can be explained by the values and beliefs held by members in a community that are linked to peoples' attitudes and identities (Derrett, 2003), in particular in the festivals' circumstances in which individuals express a high identification with their values and experiences. Being involved in the co-creation community, the participants collaborate to create sustainability, identifying with the festivals' values and co-creating experiences. Through this social interaction, individuals enhance the identification to

similar others and with the co-creation community's beliefs and values (Katsanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Kennedy & Guzmán, 2016).

Sustainability identification can be explained with the self congruency theory. Accordingly, self-identification is an important predictor of consumer behaviour, driving the preferences for identity-relevant products and services. Consumers are willing to develop attitudes and show intentions to adopt brands congruent with their self-image (Xu (Rinka) & Pratt, 2018). Thus, consumers favour brands or services that match their self-concept, creating, maintaining and improving their self-identity through consumption (Johe & Bhullar, 2016). For examples, consumers with an organic self-identification will prefer sustainable festivals because of their identification with environmentally friendly values.

These two identities, easily found in participants' involvement in the eco-friendly practices, will likely reinforce the sense of membership to the event's community, improving the identification with the specific social group (Derret, 2003). The development of group identification is based on two aspects: on the one hand, festivals draw considerably on the sense of belongingness (Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013). On the other hand, co-creation, a process described as fostering community empowerment and ownership (Fuchs & Schreier, 2010), strengthen the sense of community because it takes place in the context of customer communities, where a collaborative approach is characterise by common values, identities, and experiences are developed (Rowley, Kupiec-Teahan, & Leeming, 2007).

Event's management has to facilitate the interrelation with the participants and should involve them in the organization and planning process (Koehler & Schneider, 2014; Lusch, Vargo, & Tanniru, 2010).

This study aims to examine if co-creating a sustainable festival is an effective way of achieving success through sustainability and therefore, whether consumers are more likely to attend an event that addresses sustainable issues with a co-creation format.

1.1 Research aim

This research has the main objective of studying the effect that co-created sustainability can have on the festivals' loyalty.

Firstly, the thesis investigates whether the participants' identification with the festival's community and its organization, and their trust in the proposed green activities mediate the relation between the sustainability and the final participants' loyalty.

In particular, the paper analyses if co-creation impact these bonds and therefore if festivals' organization can communicate co-creation as a tool to increase participants' identification and overcome the lack of trust they have regarding sustainable practice.

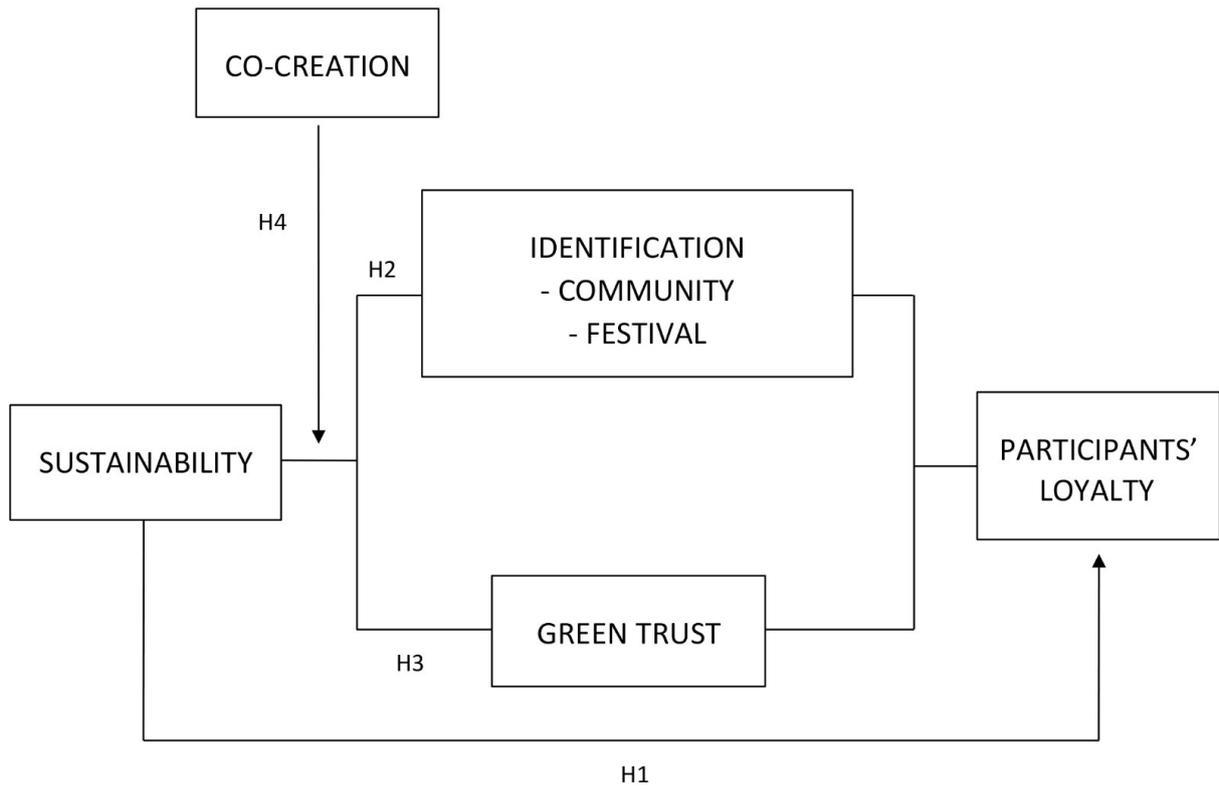
It is expected that co-creation will be positively related with customers' identification and trust which will, consequently, lead to a positive effect on the sustainability claim of the event studied and on its participants' loyalty.

Therefore, the main research question of this thesis is the following:

Is the co-creation of green practices in festivals an effective way of achieving participants' loyalty?

Moreover, the research aim will be supported with answers to the following questions:

- Does the presence of sustainability increase festival loyalty for consumers?
- What are the effects that identification and trust have on the participants' loyalty of a sustainable festival?
- Does the fact that sustainability is co-created with participants affect the perception of identification and trust and therefore moderate the relationship between sustainability and loyalty?



2. Literature review

2.1 Festivals

Festivals can be described as public celebrations with a central theme, which include several social and cultural dimensions of ritual and symbolism. These events celebrate community beliefs, identity, values and ideologies (Getz, 2005; Getz, 2010).

The diffusion of festivals started in the second half of the 20th century pushed by increases in leisure time and wages. Consequently, at the beginning of the 21st century, there has been an unprecedented interest and participation in events (Gration, Arcodia, Raciti, & Stokes, 2011). In 2019, 767.4 million people attended a festival, following a positive trend which is forecasted to continue in the successive years (Statista, 2020). In 2020 the festivals' tickets sold have totalled 56.586 million euro worldwide. These revenues are expected to rise in the next period to about 8% reaching around 78.000 million in 2024. The events' sector counted in 2019 767.4 million participants globally, following a positive trend which is forecasted to continue in the successive years. The industry largest segment is Music Festivals with a market volume of almost 22.000 million euros (Statista, 2020). These insights show the impact of events' industry on the global and national economies, clarifying why they have been defined as a giant in the tourism sector (Mair & Laing, 2012).

The crowds involved in festivals demonstrated their capacity to have an impact at a cultural, urban, artistic and educational level. Thus, the festivals started to play an essential role as a tourism attraction (Getz, 2005; Dickson & Arcodia, 2010). Consequently, festivals also contributed to the economic and social well-being of regions hosting the event, growing the importance of the festivals' industry at a global level (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011; Mair & Whitford, 2013).

2.2 Sustainability

The concept of sustainability can be described as the behaviour that allows satisfying the present needs without jeopardizing the possibility for the future generations to meet their needs, through actions that guarantee and enhance the responsibility toward humanity and nature (Zifkos, 2014; World Commission on Environment and Development, 2012).

The idea of sustainability is rooted in the conservation of the natural environment and the development of a healthy relationship between nature and humans. Sustainability takes into consideration the factors that contribute to the present quality of life, ensuring the same welfare in the future. According to sustainability, the opportunities that the present generation has must also be delivered to future generations (Zifkos, 2014).

The increased awareness about sustainability and its importance affected all sectors of society, encouraging the companies to face the challenge to behave responsibly toward the environment in which they operate and the damaging consequences their business may have (Zifkos, 2014). Organizations are eager to satisfy the increasing demand for sustainable products and services while being honest about their operations (Laing & Frost, 2010; Mair & Laing, 2012). Growing numbers of businesses started to give importance to the sustainability topic, which currently represents one of the main core for companies' policies (Dahlsrud, 2006) known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

In this context, it is largely believed and recognised by researches that sustainability represents also a tool to profitability as it can be a way of achieving a competitive advantage (Aggarwal, 2013; Cavagnaro, Postma, & De Brito, 2017; Luoma, 2018).

2.2.1 Sustainability in festivals and its current footprint

The relevance that sustainability reached within corporates became fundamental also in the events' management (Mair & Laing, 2012). Given the size of the events' sector and the popularity that festivals reached around the world, a deeper comprehension of sustainability within festivals industry becomes a relevant topic of research (Mair & Laing, 2012). Especially considering the significant impact that festivals have on the eco-system, leaving negative consequences at a local and global scale (Collins & Cooper, 2017).

Environmental degradation is the result of the numbers of participants that festivals attract which directly impact on the ecosystem without any action for restoration (Gibson & Wong, 2011). For example, the prolonged use of lights and the noise produced during the events, generate negative pollution which impacts the environment. Fireworks and bonfires, common in festivals, just increase the already high ecological footprint from transportation involved,

release contaminants in the air such as dioxins and heavy metals (Gibson & Wong, 2011).

Consumers have increasingly developed interest and awareness toward these environmental concerns, building a positive attitude toward green services, specifically regarding sustainable events.

Indeed, consumers increasingly recognize the importance of environmental problems, being aware of the seriousness of the negative environmental impact festivals have (Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2014). The result of the UK festival award census survey shows that 72% of festivalgoers care about the environmental impact of festivals (CGA, 2019). According to a study conducted by the Buckinghamshire New University, about 50% of the festivals' audience is willing to pay an increased ticket price to reduce the event's environmental footprint, and approximately the 43% is changing their behaviour relating to the festivals' green initiatives and practices (Buckinghamshire New University & A Greener Festival, 2012).

Consumers aware of sustainability issues look for opportunities to behave in an eco-friendly way engaging in green activities. These green seekers want to attend sustainable events because of the perceived environmental benefits they could get from them (Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2014).

Considering the global trend of the events' sustainability previously described, and analysing the participants' preference for green consumption, it is clear how environmental concerns have become an important matter for festivalgoers.

Werner, Griese and Faatz (2019) argue that participants' demand for greening and desire to act in an eco-friendly way affect their decision-making process and intentions' formation. The concerns about environmental issues drive consumers' intentions to adopt green actions in the decision of products or services (Han, Lee, Trang, & Kim, 2018).

In the festivals' context, all the environmental elements that compose the festival atmosphere have an impact on the attendees' perception of the event and their loyalty toward it (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008). The quality of the environment perceived in an event has an impact on the attendees' loyalty and word of mouth (Lee, Liu, Chung, & Ho, 2015; Lee, 2016).

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that attendees will be more loyal to green festivals rather than events not presenting sustainable practices and activities.

H1: The festival's sustainable practices will have a positive effect on participants' loyalty

2.3 Identification through sustainable values: sense of community among festivals' attendees

Self-congruity is a psychological process and outcome in which consumers compare their perception of a brand image (more specifically, brand personality or brand-user image) with their self-concept (e.g. actual self, ideal self, social self). Self-congruity is thus the extent to which consumers identify with the brand or more specifically the users of the brand (Kazàr, 2019).

The identification with the brand has positive behavioural outcomes, such as brand loyalty (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2010). Consumers identify with the brand and relate themselves to it, perceiving an extension of the self. The identification with the brand and its organization has relevant importance because they connect the dynamic of the self, the meaning of products and services and the role brands have on the individuals (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2010). The identification with the organizations develops as a cognitive state of self-categorization getting consumers and the brand closer. Identification develop as a comparison between the organization's values and the participants' own one, which in turn evolve the consumers' preferences generating loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Martínez & del Bosque, 2013)

In this context, sustainability plays a role in the decisions to which organizations and brand to strengthen relationship with (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Martínez & del Bosque, 2013).

This explains why the festival's environment paves the way to social networking practices which form, intensify and sustain ties among the attendees. These practices point out the homogeneity between the members of the event's brand community and emphasize the similarities across community participants, and behavioural expectation about themselves and others (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013; Karlsen, 2007).

The community belonging is characterised by common needs and beliefs which leads the people that identify with these characteristics to adopt the community's behaviours and collective actions. This, develop a significant social cohesion, which is enhanced by factors such as physical proximity, or shared lifestyle (Uzzell, Pol, & Badenas, 2002), common in the festivals' context, which are forums that facilitate the common purposes to be manifest. The values of events' members characterise the sense of community and its attitudes, having an impact on the

environment in which individuals and the group define their beliefs (Derret, 2003). In the festivals environment, the community bring together people with similar interests and identities expressing a common consciousness and shared values, rituals and traditions (Cummings, 2007).

As Derret (2003) argues the main reasons for the popularity of festivals is social identity development. Festivals create a sense of community, where attendees live the experience close to one another and in most cases for several days. Such intensity allows these relationships to expand and to reinforce moral bonds with the community. Therefore, festivals represent the value system in which the attendees identify themselves, explaining the meaning of the sense of community through the relationships, the sense of belonging and the shared identities.

Community cohesion improves green values and pro-environmental behaviours (Guàrdia & Pol, 2002; Pol, 2002). Indeed, identification drives people to identity-consistent attitude, which brings the consumers to adopt behaviours related to categories in which they identify, especially for consumers' environmental attitudes. (Reed, Forehand, Puntoni, & Warlop, 2012). Consumers' identification with others can have a relevant effect also in situations where the membership is not formal (Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

The identification with the members of a group affects the engagement in eco-friendly behaviours if the reference group adopts green behaviours (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008; White, Habib, & Hardi, 2019). Hence, personal identification with a green community has a positive effect on the context of sustainability. Therefore, the connection with the individuals conscious of sustainability will predict a similar pro-environmental attitude (Van der Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2013; White, Habib, & Hardi, 2019).

The role of attendees' identification with the event's community and its values is analysed as a predictor of the willingness to return to a festival. As several studies demonstrate, the extent to which consumers identify with a social group, such as the festival community, impact their behaviours (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

Thus, the connection between attendees and the other festivalgoers lead to re-patronizing behaviour (Grappi & Montanari, 2011). Therefore, identifying with the community and sharing the same values will lead to be more likely to attend the festival again in the future.

Thus, we predict that the identification with the festival and its community might have a mediating role in the relationship between sustainability and the festival loyalty:

H2a: Participants' identification with the festival's community mediates the impact of the event's sustainability on participants' loyalty

H2b: Participants' identification with the festival mediate the impact of the event's sustainability on participants' loyalty

2.3.1 Festival's greenwashing

The growing demand for green products and services, and the raised attention that consumers are paying to it, has become an opportunity to gain competitiveness in the market (Cavagnaro, Postma, & De Brito, 2017). Several service providers and events' organizations significantly commit to the promotion of festivals as green, recognizing the awareness that consumers have developed toward environmental problems, showing that they can meet the social responsibility consumers required (Mair & Laing, 2012). To embrace eco-friendly strategies, indeed, become crucial to obtain success in the festivals' business and have a fundamental role in gaining a competitive margin in the bidding process, in particular for the organization mega-events (Laing & Frost, 2010).

Pressured by the need to pursue sustainable practices, companies at times fall into greenwashing. Greenwashing is defined as the intentional practice to mislead or deceive consumers, claiming false environmental impact and activities of the firm (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014).

Through greenwashing, organizations show their activities or claim their product or services as more environmentally friendly than they actually are (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011).

Since sustainable commitments are difficult to verify, less responsible businesses take advantage of greenwashing intentionally giving ambiguous or false information to satisfy the consumers' green expectations (Chen & Chang, 2013).

As such companies expect to attract consumers as they are perceived as more eco friendly (Chen & Chang, 2013).

Greenwashing is nowadays a very popular practice, used by companies to take competitive advantage on the competitors (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011). Because of the increasing request for green products and services, the companies keep adopt this practice, despite people started to be attentive to it.

Greenwashing started to be used also in the events and festivals industry (Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017; Zifkos, 2014). Greenwashing in the events sector is mainly based on the enhancing of an eco-friendly image aim to obtain greater acceptance among stakeholders; by misleading communication, which mainly present non-concrete and vague statement and a lack of evidence, and the disclosure of limited information and difficulty in assessing the public information. Moreover, often in the festivals business the natural resources involved are minimised and the events' organization tend to present the handling of environmental resources used as better than is (Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017). A final feature of festivals' greenwashing is the focus on areas that dominate the public discussion, for instance, the minimization of CO2 emissions or the waste reduction, used consequently to show the green image of the company (Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017).

2.4 Consumers' scepticism about festivals' sustainability

The consumers' are increasingly aware of green concerns, and particularly the festivals' participants are giving attention to the environmental outcomes that events have (Holmes, Huges, Mair, & Carlsen, 2015). At the same time, consumers are increasingly conscious of the misleading practices organizations take to cope with these sustainability claims (Chen & Chang, 2013).

Consequently, consumers are becoming sceptical toward businesses with opportunistic strategies related to green trends, which results in confusion and uncertainty about the adoption of the specific product or service. This scepticism can change their purchase behaviour, making them unwilling to re-purchase the green item or adopt the sustainable service again (Pomeroy & Johnson, 2009). Many consumers, indeed, recognise the marketing strategies in the promotion of the firms' green attitude, with the exaggeration or making up of the green performance. This undermines their trust and changes consumers' attitude toward the brand (Chen & Chang, 2013).

Without trust in what the companies and service providers claim, consumers lose confidence in

the green claim, considered as the intention to believe in a product or service based on the values or expectations related to its credibility, benevolence and ability toward the environmental performance (Chen & Chang, 2013). Thus, the lack of green trust is negatively related to customers' satisfaction and loyalty. The lack of trust in product's green feature can make consumers infer negatively about the company's other products or services impacting the entire organization and related brands (De Jong, Huluba, & Beldad, 2020).

As a result, greenwashing jeopardizes the whole market creating a barrier for consumers to go green.

Indeed, if consumers or stakeholders only have incomplete information about firms' environmental engagements and they do not trust these organizations marketing communications, perceiving greenwash, consumers' attitude towards the companies can be damaged. As a result, greenwash may destroy the related market making the consumers suspicious of green products and services (Chen & Chang, 2013).

Festivals are receiving criticism due to their negative consequences on nature, and experience a penalization from festivalgoers who evaluate the consequences related to their purchase (Oliver, Naar, & Harris, 2015). To prevent their contribution to environmental damage, and to avoid unclear environmental practices, attendees change their preferences, avoiding events with a harmful and not transparent attitude (Gibson & Wong, 2011; Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Kaufmann, Panni, & Orphanidou, 2012; Laing & Frost, 2010; Lin & Huang, 2012).

Considering the impact that the festival's sustainable practices have on the green trust, and considering how it affects the behavioural intention, we can state that:

H3: Participants' trust in the festival's sustainable practices mediate the relation between the event's sustainability and the participants' loyalty

2.5 Co-creation

Innovation scholars have studied the relationship between innovation models and identification-based trust. To this end, co-creation has been receiving special attention as a mechanism to bring consumers and firm closer either directly or through an indirect effect achieved through identification with firms that foster co-creation (Dahl, Fuchs, & Schreier,

2015; Fuchs & Schreier, 2011; Schreier, Fuchs, & Dahl, D. W., 2012).

Co-creation is an interactive process between the firm and the consumers through which value arise (Chen & Watanabe, 2007). Indeed, the firm-centric view has recently developed in the direction of the active community of consumers which are increasingly informed, connected and conscious about the company's offer. Consumers are no longer passive receivers of the value given by companies but, with this process, they started to be co-creators of the value, product and service innovators and collaborators to the competitive strategy (Luo, Zhang, & Liu, 2015; Payne, Storbacka, & Frow, 2008).

Through co-creation, value is re-invented by the networks where organizations and firms interact and dialogue. With practices of cooperation and reciprocal giving with consumers, the service orientation is evolving to a process of collective value generation (Luo, Zhang, & Liu, 2015; Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011).

Co-creation can be a powerful tool able to reduce the scepticism that consumers developed toward the sustainability of companies and organizations because of greenwashing practices (Forbes, 2012). The co-creating process develops the identification between consumers and like-minded people involved in the process, increasing the inclination to trust the more transparent dialogue that firms have with and consumers (Black & Veloutsou, 2017). Co-creation let the consumers perceive more proximity to the companies and make the products as more desirable (Fuchs & Schreier, 2011). Consumers are aware of their needs and preferences and this allows the improvement of product or service benefits when customers are involved in the development process increasing the preference for the specific product or service (Alam & Perry, 2002).

2.5.1 Co-creation and festivals' sustainability

Co-creation is becoming a common practice in the festivals' context. Festivalgoers interacting with the organization bring their operant resources such as cultural skills, knowledge and competencies, which influence the others' experience and the entire co-creation process. Thus, the active involvement of attendees in the co-creation process allows them to interact sharing values and meanings, which will result in a co-creation of value (Werner, Griese, & Faatz, 2019).

Co-creation is used particularly as a process to develop sustainability in festivals and to manage the events' environmental impact. Several initiatives have been taken by the festivals' organization to involve the attendees and the stakeholders in the development of environmental practices (Koehler & Schneider, 2014).

The "We love green" festival in Paris, is a significant example of a green festival in which sustainability is co-created through the participants' involvement. The attendees can submit and implement eco-designed ideas that are applied in the next edition and to actively take part in the sustainable practices aimed at an ecological development (Considine, 2019).

The entire festival's organization planned to be environmental-oriented, with its program and activities attracts a remarkable number of attendees and guests, demonstrating how the inclusion of co-created sustainability can be a successful factor in festivals. The 2017 edition brought around 60 thousand participants and well-known speakers. The increasing trend of the event reached a 30% growth in 2018, welcoming 74 thousand festivalgoers including around 15 thousand young people. In its last edition, The We Love Green has been capable of engaging in its environmental commitment more than 80000 people, with 60 performers and almost 50 start-ups and NGOs with sustainable aims, with which the attendees could cooperate (Fondation Engie, 2019; We Love Green, 2019).

Managing the value through a co-creating process can enhance the perceived sustainable value of the firm or the organization (Werner, Griese, & Faatz, 2019).

In the events field, the inclusion of attendees in the co-creation value process can enhance general sustainable behaviour increasing the transparency and the reliability of the pro-environmental processes. The continuity of the co-creation process between attendees and also among participants and organizers can develop increasing sustainability of the event with time (Werner, Griese, & Faatz, 2019).

2.5.2 Co-creation: developing a sense of community and trust

Co-creation is a collaborative process between the firms and the users' community. The co-creation of value is built with direct cooperation between the firms and their communities (Skålén, Pace, & Cova, 2015). From a sociological perspective, communities preannounce forms of collectives which shape around common values and are naturally adopt to develop value through the interaction of members in the cooperating activities (Skålén, Pace, & Cova,

2015).

By fostering of consumers cooperation, the creation process evolves the relationship between customers. Co-creating practices deepen the knowledge of each other and build a sense of connection and interaction, which results in the development of trust, commitment and confidence (Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Indeed, co-creation can be considered an effective way to develop valuable relationships, based on transparent and trustful interactions with existing and potential consumers, and especially to foster loyalty (Gebauer, Füller, & Pezzeri, 2013).

The members of these communities benefit from the engagement with similar others and through collaborative activities further develop social identity. Through social identity, the members evolve a sense of belonging to the participants' community (Gebauer, Füller, & Pezzeri, 2013). Thus, co-creating communities develop an identity to which like-minded others can identify and then trust. Together with a thorough comprehension of the brand, these practices pave the way to the development of trustworthy interactions between the consumers co-participating, organization and consumers in the market (Luo, Zhang, & Liu, 2015; Skålén, Pace, & Cova, 2015).

With this development of the sense of community, the consumers meet and engage around the brand, empowering consumers and brand followers, who might believe that they own the brand rather than the companies (Cova & White, 2010).

In the festivals' sector this cooperation evolves between the organization and the attendees participating in the co-creating process, aimed at the co-realization of the experience.

2.5.3 Identification and trust effect on participants' loyalty

The involvement of consumers in value co-creation process has a positive impact on the general satisfaction with the service. Being the consumers protagonists of the value creation, the service offer will be more accurately adapted to the consumers' needs (Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011).

Consumers, in general, will identify more with the outcome from a co-created process, as such

outcome is likely to better meet their needs due to a perceived psychological connection with those co-creating (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Lee, 2011). Indeed, when the customers are involved in the co-creation process, other consumers', those that attend the festival but did not take part in the co-creation activities, identification with the co-creation community increases (Schreier, Fuchs, & Dahl, D. W., 2012). Extant research has shown that when identification with those co-creating with the firm is high, consumers that buy products but do not take part in co-creation, develop a preference for co-created products (Dah et al., 2015; Thompson & Malavyia, 2013). Thus, customers' identification with the co-creating actors leads consumers to engage with the business-related community, consequently increasing consumers' satisfaction and loyalty (Prentice, Han, Hua, & Hu, 2019). Therefore we state that:

H4a: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' festival identification on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

H4b: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' identification with the festival's community, on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

In the case of festivals, the consumers' identification with the event's community through co-creation, develops trust. Trust emerges when there is a high sense of identification. Identification-based trust occurs when two parties share common values, preferences and needs, they develop a collective identity over time.

The development of trust based on identification is grounded on the structure of collective identity, shared activities and objects. In a context with unconditional trust, people are more willing to disclose information, and will trust that the information shared is reliable (da Costa Hernandez & Cincotto dos Santos, 2010).

Since co-creation requires transparency about the firm's practices, collaborating consumers will certify that the firm adheres to values of transparency and integrity. Indeed, through the process of co-creation, the dialogue between firm and consumers is developed. The cooperating members share information, making them circulate and therefore amplifying any transparency concerning the brand or the organization behind it (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). Thus, trust result improved through co-creation (Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011).

Therefore, co-creation can be an important tool to overcome the consumers' scepticism toward organizations' sustainability (Forbes, 2012). The introduction of the co-creation process can increment participants' identification with the like-minded people involved in the co-creation practice (Black & Veloutsou, 2017), in particular in the festivals' sector. This identification increases the willingness to trust more the dialogue that the organization develop with consumers.

Increasing the consumers' confidence toward the organization and its transparency through co-creation, it is highly probable that the final value of the event may better meet the participants' needs (Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011). This trust, in turn, leads to a consumers' positive attitude and therefore loyalty toward the event (Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Lee, 2011).

As such, co-creation effect (trust) is transferred to those that do not take part in co-creation but identify with the co-creating community. The festivalgoers' identification with a festival that co-creates is higher than with a traditional festival (Thompson & Malaviya, 2013) since festivals already departure from high social identification.

Furthermore, the impact of community belonging on sustainable attitudes is enhanced when the identification with the group is higher. When the bond with the community is stronger, the communication and acceptance of eco-friendly attitudes are better perceived, accepted and ultimately trusted, increasing the re-patronizing behaviour (Bartels & Onwezen, 2013; White, Habib, & Hardi, 2019).

Thus, according to the literature, we propose that co-creation may have a positive moderating effect on the identification and trust variable of the model, increasing the final consumers' loyalty:

H4c: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' trust, on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

3. Methodology and Research Framework

3.1 Data collection

This study analyses the effect of co-creating sustainability on the loyalty of festivals' attendees, through the impact on participants' identification and trust. These relationships can be

adequately tested through an experimental design, which tests causation. Experimental research is an efficient method used in social sciences to test cause-and-effect relationships in individuals. The study aimed to analyse the influence of one factor (design-mode) on another (loyalty), controlling the other variables that can impact the same effect.

Web surveys have several advantages such as the costs minimization and the possibility to reach a vast sample of respondents globally, eliminating geographical boundaries and the possible lack of country representativeness. Moreover, online surveys are a time-efficient method of analysis, allowing a quick collection of information and direct access to the results obtained (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Besides, the flexibility is a significant advantage considering that the questionnaire can be conducted and distributed in different formats such as e-mail, anonymous link or social media. Ultimately, the online surveys are adaptable in terms of language, type of questions and order of answers (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

An online survey also has some disadvantages. This quantitative research procedure presents a lower response rate than other methods - the conversion rate between the total of the received questionnaire and the completed ones, lower than other methods (Manfreda, Berzelak, Vehovar, Bosnjak, & Haas, 2008). Additionally, online surveys instructions can be misunderstood, respondents may lack familiarity with internet protocols, and there can be privacy issues regarding the level of confidentiality perceived by the respondent (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

After analysing the advantages and disadvantages, an online survey has been chosen as the method to analyse the hypothesis of this work and therefore has been developed in Qualtrics.

The survey has been distributed among the researcher's personal network and through Mturk (Amazon Mechanical Turk).

Mturk was used due to time limitations and because of its reliability. The Amazon platform that quickly distributes questionnaires among a wide and global sample is considered a reliable method at the same level of other traditional methods. Researches have demonstrated that Mturk respondents are usually more attentive than people who answer in a traditional method. However, the platform is eventually connected to a lack of effort by respondents while answering (Follmer, Sperling, & Suen, 2017).

3.2 Pilot study

A pilot study assisted the decision of the type of festival to introduce in the main study, and which practices to use as scenarios. The short survey was created in Qualtrics and shared through M-Turk. The field test was completed by 31 respondents, 61% male and 39% female, with a mean age (58%) between 25 and 34 years old.

A list of pro-environmental practices was presented to the respondents, asking to choose which were perceived as more sustainability-related in a festival. The green practices considered have been taken from common measures adopted in some of the world biggest festivals to improve sustainability, presented by Laing and Frost (2010) and reported in festivals-related blogs for instance by Patel (2018). Considering the similar values, the three most voted responses have been analysed to understand which could better fit both a sustainable and non- sustainable scenario. The practice chosen to be part of the main study was "the presence of local and organic food" because of the possibility to introduce it both with a sustainable purpose or just as a general improvement.

| Practice | Responses | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Ban of single-use plastics and use of biodegradable items | 18 | 23.4% |
| Waste management and recycling | 15 | 19.5% |
| Presence of local and organic food | 13 | 16.9% |

Table 1- Pilot Study results- sustainable practices

The pilot survey, in addition, comprehends a question regarding the features most considered when evaluating a festival. The results suggested insights for the main study. Indeed, "the variety of food and beverage choices" has been considered among the most valued features, confirming that the introduction of different food options can represent a valid scenario for the main test.

The second most selected option described the possibility to actively participate in activities such as workshops. This practice is introduced in the main questionnaire as a valuable method

to present the design mode representing a common context for the proposal and implementation of new ideas and can be attributed both to festival organizers or to the attendees.

| Feature | Responses | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| The possibility to actively participate in activities (such as workshops, interactions with the performers, volunteering programs,..) | 13 | 24.5% |
| Variety of food and beverage choices | 11 | 20.8% |

Table 2- Pilot Study results- general features

Ultimately, the participants were asked to choose which type of event they attend the most. The music festivals prevailed among the type of festivals presented and therefore has been considered the type of event object of analysis in the main study.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Main study

In order to analyse the impact that both sustainable practices and their design-mode have on festivals, an online survey has been developed in Qualtrics. The questionnaire has been clustered in four different scenarios distributed among participant randomly, using the randomization option present in the program, which allowed to collect an equivalent number of answers for each scenario. Thus, it results in a 2 (sustainability condition: yes, no) x 2 (design mode: co-creation, professionals) between-subject design, casually introduced to the respondents as follows:

| | | Sustainability | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Design-Mode | Co-Created with attendees | Scenario 1 | Scenario 2 |

| Developed by professionals | Scenario 3 | Scenario 4 |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|

Table 3- Research conditions

The survey recreated the consumers' journey in the decision process for the next festival to attend.

Participants were first introduced to the festival through an introductory text which placed them in the assessment process for the next festival to attend. The favourite music festival was presented as the result of their decision. To ensure that the respondents imagine this one as their best option when deciding the event, the text added a short description explaining that the decision was taken being confident that the people, music and activities present in the event would have met the personal preferences.

Then, the introduction of new features aimed at the enhancement of the festival's experience was presented to respondents as current year edition innovation. Specifically, the improvement of the food offer was described either in a sustainable or in a non-sustainable way. Thus, the participants were randomly assigned to one of the two scenarios.

The description of the previously mentioned new practices, either eco-friendly or not, was followed by the first manipulation check: a question regarding the perceived level of sustainability of the presented edition.

The table below (table 4) illustrates the sustainable and non-sustainable scenarios presented.

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sustainable scenario | <p>“In this year edition new features have been introduced to enhance your experience. In particular, the food offer has been improved. The goal is to offer better quality in a sustainable way. So all food in this edition will be locally sourced and organically produced.”</p> |
| Non-sustainable scenario | <p>“In this year edition new features have been introduced to enhance your experience. In particular, the food offer has been improved. The goal is to offer better quality. So all food in this edition will be sourced from the highest quality retailers.”</p> |

Table 4- Sustainable and non-sustainable scenarios

Next, participants were informed about the development process of the new practice.

Respondents were randomly allocated to the new practice as co-created with festivals' attendees or created solely by festivals' organizers.

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Co-created scenario | <p>“The new feature (food) is the result of a workshop held at the end of the festival to generate new ideas for future editions.</p> <p>Last year workshop meets with all festival's organizers and is now being implemented to provide you with a better experience.”</p> |
| Internally developed scenario | <p>“The new feature (food) is the result of a workshop held at the end of the festival to generate new ideas for future editions.</p> <p>Last year workshop meet with only festival's attendees and is now being implemented to provide you with a better experience.”</p> |

Table 5- Co-created and non co-created scenarios

After the presentation of the method used to implement the new feature, the second manipulation check was asked, who participants considered responsible for the development of the new food offer. The two descriptions of the innovation's method are shown in table 5.

Ultimately, participants answered about their demographics, such as age, education, gender and income.

3.3.2 Respondents’ profile

The sample consisted of 263 participants. After the data check, 47 responses were deleted from the sample due to missing values. In order to increase the quality of the data, 20 answers were eliminated since missing the attention check presented in the survey. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 196 valid respondents.

The sample consisted of 40.8% female respondents and 59.2% male. The 64.5% of the participants were aged between 18 and 35 years old, mainly from the United States (39.8%), India (18.9%) and Brazil (13.3%). Most respondents were employed (67.9%) and students (14.8%). Regarding the yearly income, 24.5% of the sample responded that is less than €10,000 and 28.4% that is between €10,000 and €29,999. The demographic sample is shown in Appendix 1 in Table 13.

3.3.3 Measures

Firstly, the two manipulation checks were asked following a personal construct. The two questions measured the eco-friendly perception of the scenario in a 5 point Likert scale from 1 (unsustainable at all) to 5 (very sustainable), and the perception of the design-mode asking the participants who they think was responsible for the development of the new feature between the festival's organization, the festival's attendees or both of them together. After the manipulation checks, green trust was measured adapting the scale used in Chen's (2010) paper with a 5 items scale. Community identification followed measuring 5 different statements taken from (Grappi & Montanari, 2011). Moreover, the identification with the festival has been measured adapting the scale used in Escalas and Bettman research (2005) to examine the identification with the brand. Festival loyalty scale comprehends 3 different statements analysed in (Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010).

All the responses, except the two manipulation checks, have been measured with 7 points Likert scale because of its simplicity and versatility.

The constructs used in the development of the main study with the relative sources are listed in appendix 1 table 14.

4. Analysis and results

4.1 Manipulation check

The two manipulation checks were included in the main survey to confirm that respondents correctly perceived the intended differences in scenarios regarding the sustainability of the new practices and the design-mode of its development.

After exposure to the sustainability condition, participants reported on how sustainable they perceived the new practice in a 5 point Likert scale (with [1] meaning very sustainable and [5] unsustainable at all). The second manipulation check was included asking respondents whom they perceive as responsible for the new practice development, choosing by three options ([1] the festival's organization, [2] the organization and attendees together, [3] the festival's attendees)

In order to test the sustainability manipulation, the Independent T-test was run on the

“sustainability perception” as test variable and the dummy variable “sustainability of the scenario” (1=sustainable scenario; 0= Non-sustainable scenario) as the factor. We found a statistical significance between the means of the two condition ($t(194)= 5.234$; $p=.003$). Participants perceived the differences between the sustainable scenario which has a lower mean ($M_{\text{Sustainable scenario}}= 4.30$; $SD= 0.835$) than the scenario in which the practice is presented as non-sustainable ($M_{\text{Non-sustainable scenario}}= 3.56$; $SD= 1.122$).

Taking into account the fact that the sustainable perception is measured in a 1 to 5 scale, it is possible to conclude that participants consider the introduction of the sustainable practice as greener scenario compared to the scenario in which the new feature is presented as non eco-friendly.

For the question regarding the design-mode manipulation check, the Independent T-Test was run as well with the question “who is responsible for the new feature” as test variable and the dummy variable of the co-creation scenario as factors (1= scenario co-created by attendees; 0= scenario developed by organizers).

After running the test it was possible to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference ($t(194)= 7.566$, $p= .004$) between the scenario developed by attendees ($M_{\text{Co-created scenario}} = 2.13$, $SD= 0.797$) and the one developed by attendees ($M_{\text{Non co-created}} = 1.36$ $SD= 0.624$). These results suggest that the respondents had a different perception about who develop the new festival's feature.

The Independent T-Test illustrated that respondents identified the different scenarios correctly and therefore the overall experimental manipulation was successful.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Being the Likert scales questions used in the survey, it is necessary to test their reliability. Cronbach's Alpha is used as a method to define if the questions consistently reflect the construct that is measuring (Field, 2005).

The reliability analysis shows the Cronbach's Alpha of the constructs is above 0.8, which explain that the survey produces reliable scales. Moreover, the reliability analysis presents all the constructs' corrected item-total correlation close to 0.7 which indicate the appropriate internal reliability of the scales used.

Specifically, green trust presents a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.9 showing an excellent consistency of its items. The single factors have all the values of the Total Correlation higher than 0.7, describing a good correlation with the overall questionnaire score.

In the analysis of community identification's reliability, one of the four items has been removed considering the low value of the factor correlation. After deleting the item, the construct showed an alpha value of 0.884 and the Corrected Item- Total Correlation has values higher than 0.7, showing internal consistency.

The next two variables- identification with the festival and festival loyalty- show close relation of the items included in the construct. Cronbach's alpha value are respectively 0.896 and 0.888. Additionally, the Corrected Item- Total Correlation present all values above 0.7, demonstrating good reliability of the scales.

| <i>Reliability analysis</i> | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Construct | Item | Factor | α |
| Green trust | Meet expectations | 0.748 | 0.908 |
| | Reliability | 0.790 | |
| | Dependability | 0.715 | |
| | Commitment to environmental protection | 0.809 | |
| | Trustworthiness | 0.783 | |
| Community identification | Community closeness | 0.775 | 0.884 |
| | Identity similarity | 0.745 | |
| | Community attachment | 0.753 | |
| Identification with the festival | Festival reflection of oneself | 0.769 | 0.896 |
| | Identification with festival's values | 0.757 | |
| | Personal connection with the festival | 0.815 | |
| | Festival suits me | 0.746 | |
| Festival loyalty | Willingness to positive WOM | 0.752 | 0.888 |
| | Willingness to recommend | 0.829 | |
| | Willingness to keep attending the festival | 0.767 | |

Table 6- Main study's reliability scale

After the reliability analysis, four new variables haven created with the means of the items of each question: green trust, community identification, identification with the festival, and

festival loyalty.

4.3 Hypothesis 1

Our first hypothesis states that: *“The festival’s sustainable practices will have a positive effect on participants’ loyalty”*.

In order to understand if the presence of sustainability in the festival analysed has a positive effect on the consumers' loyalty, we run an analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS. Festival loyalty was used as dependent variable and the sustainability of the scenario as factor.

The results of the Welch ANOVA - Robust Tests of Equality are statistically significant ($p=.001$), so it is possible to reject the null hypothesis of similarity of means and to conclude that there is a significant effect of sustainability on participants loyalty at the $p< .05$ level for the two conditions $F(1,194)= 11.545$ $p=.001$. Analysing the difference between the means it can be understood that, when sustainability is introduced in the festival, the loyalty is higher ($M_{\text{Sustainable Scenario}}= 5.78$; $SD=0.9919$) than in the festival where the sustainable practices are not introduced ($M_{\text{Non-Sustainable Scenario}}= 5.27$; $SD=1.1318$).

Thus, H1 is **supported**: the presence of sustainable practices and activities have a positive effect on consumers' loyalty for festivals.

| Welch | Statistic | P-Value |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| | 11.483 | .001 |
| Scenario Sustainability | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| Sustainable | 5.7833 | 0.9919 |
| Non Sustainable | 5.2674 | 1.1318 |

Table 7- Welch ANOVA’s results for Festival loyalty on Scenario Sustainability

4.4 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis aims to understand if identification has a mediation effect of the event's sustainability on participants' loyalty.

Since the variable identification has been considered as identification with the community, and with the festival's brand, H2 has led to two hypotheses:

H2a: Participants' identification with the festival's community mediates the impact of the event's sustainability on participants' loyalty

H2b: Participants' identification with the festival mediate the impact of the event's sustainability on participants' loyalty

First of all, a discriminant analysis has been conducted to demonstrate that the two variables can be regarded as separate measures. The Test of Equality of The Group Means shows significant Wilks' Lambda both for identification with the festival, equal to .958 $F(1,194)=8.492$ $p=.004$ and for community identification, with a value of .977 $F(1,194)=4.612$ $p=.033$. therefore, there is a significant difference between the identification with the festival and community identification.

Despite the correlation between the two variables is quite high (.746), the logarithms of determinants of the Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices are fairly similar (.019; -.508; -.232). Moreover, we can fail to reject the test of the null hypothesis of equal population covariance matrices being the P value= .340. Thus, the two variables have no direct relationship. The summary of Canonical Discriminant Functions shows that the linear combination that can produce group separation with respect to the predictor variables has a low percentage of variance (Eigenvalue=.044). The Canonical Correlation index is low as well (.205) so there is less discrimination between groups with respect to our discriminant function.

Lastly, with a Wilks Lambda= .958 and a p value= .016 we can conclude there is a statistically significant relationship between our discriminant function and our grouping variable.

Overall, we can state that the two variables measuring identification (toward the festival and toward the community) can be considered as separate measures.

The tables with the results of the discriminant analysis are shown in appendix 1 (table 15, 16, 17, 18).

To understand the impact that identification has on the participants' loyalty, a bootstrap analysis has been run through the Process procedure for SPSS by Hayes. The dependent variable considered was the participants' loyalty while the independent variable was the scenario sustainability. In the model, the community identification and the identification with the festival have been introduced as mediators.

As reported in the table below, all the variables (scenario sustainability, identification with the festival and community identification) have a significant effect on participants' loyalty. Accordingly to the total effect model, the effect of the scenario sustainability significantly predicts the dependent variable participants' loyalty ($t(1,194)=3.397$; $\beta_{\text{Scenario sustainability}}=0.5610$ $p < .05$).

When the two identification variables are introduced in the model, the coefficient of the independent variable on the dependent one is lower but not statistically significant ($t(2,192)=1.8476$; $\beta_{\text{Scenario sustainability}}=0.1839$; $p > .05$), while the identification with the festival ($t(2,192)=8.2565$; $\beta_{\text{Identification with festival}}=0.5335$; $p < .05$) and the community identification ($t(2,192)=3.5171$; $\beta_{\text{community identification}}=0.2200$; $p < .05$) result significant from the performed test.

The bootstrap analysis at a confidence level of 95% demonstrates a significant indirect effect both of the attendees' identification with festival [0.0776; 0.4506] and the identification with the community [0.0074; 0.1774] since the intervals do not include the value zero. Considering the coefficient of the direct effect, the values are non-significant confirming that, sustainability does not have effect on participants' loyalty while the indirect effect of identification with the festival and with its community are significant. This demonstrates that the effect of sustainability on the dependent variable is fully mediated by the two identification variables. These findings confirm the literature review, showing that the mediation of the identification variables explains the relationship between sustainability practices and the consumers' loyalty. Therefore, we can **accept** both H2a and H2b.

Bootstrap analysis Process model 4 by Hayes

Dependent variable (Y): Festival loyalty
 Independent variable (X): Scenario sustainability
 Mediator 1 (M1): Identification with the festival
 Mediator 2 (M2): Community identification
 Total effect model: $F(1,194)=11.5454$ $p=.0008$

Dependent Variable

Independent variable

Identification with the festival

| <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Scenario sustainability | 0.4736 | 2.9142 | 0.0040 | Significant |
| Community identification | | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Scenario sustainability | 0.3606 | 2.2147 | 0.0330 | Significant |
| Participants' loyalty | | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Scenario sustainability | 0.1839 | 1.8476 | 0.0662 | Not significant |
| Identification with the festival | 0.5335 | 3.5171 | 0.0000 | Significant |
| Community identification | 0.2200 | 8.2565 | 0.0005 | Significant |
| | | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Direct effect | | -0.0124 | 0.3803 | Not Significant |
| | | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | <i>Mediation</i> |
| Indirect effect of X on Y | Identification with the festival | 0.0776 | 0.4506 | Mediation |
| | Community identification | 0.0074 | 0.1774 | Mediation |

Table 8- Bootstrap Analysis, studying the mediating effects of identification in the scenario sustainability and participants' loyalty

4.5 Hypothesis 3

With the third hypothesis, we want to analyse if "*Participants' trust in the festival's sustainable practices mediate the relation between the event's sustainability and the participants' loyalty*".

To further develop the analysis, the same procedure of H2 has been followed.

As shown in the table, both the variables (scenario sustainability and green trust) have a significant effect on participants' loyalty. The total effect model illustrates that the presence of sustainability increases consumers' loyalty, as demonstrated by the positive and statistically significant coefficient ($t(1,194)= 3.3978$; $\beta_{\text{Scenario sustainability}}=0.5610$ $p< .05$). The presence of the variable "green trust" in the model demonstrates that the relationship is positively mediate ($t(2,193)= 11.4700$; $\beta_{\text{Green trust}}=0.6429$; $p< .05$), and the relation between independent and

dependent variable present a non-significant coefficient ($t(2,193)=1.2320$; $\beta_{\text{Scenario sustainability}}=0.1499$; $p>.05$).

The results of the bootstrap analysis at a confidence level of 95% shows a significant indirect effect of green trust since the interval C.I. [0.1162; 0.5868] do not include the zero. Analysing the coefficient of the direct effect, the results seem to be non-significant meaning that, sustainability does not have effect on participants loyalty when the indirect effect of green trust is significant. We can conclude that the whole effect is explained by green trust. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that there is a full mediation effect, confirming what analysed in the literature review, showing that the sustainability practices can increase the consumers' loyalty when more trust is perceived.

Thus, H3 is **accepted**.

| <i>Bootstrap analysis Process model 4 by Hayes</i> | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Dependent variable (Y): Festival loyalty | | | | | |
| Independent variable (X): Scenario sustainability | | | | | |
| Mediator (M): Green trust | | | | | |
| Total effect model: $F(1,194)= 11.5454$ $p=.0008$ | | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | | | | | |
| Independent variable | | | | | |
| | Green trust | | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> | |
| Scenario sustainability | 0.5694 | 3.7866 | 0.0002 | Significant | |
| | Participants' loyalty | | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> | |
| Scenario sustainability | 0.1499 | 1.2320 | 0.2195 | Not Significant | |
| Green trust | 0.6429 | 11.4700 | 0.0000 | Significant | |
| | | | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Direct effect | | | -0.0901 | 0.3898 | Not Significant |
| | | | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | <i>Mediation</i> |
| Indirect effect of X on Y | Green trust | 0.1743 | 0.5854 | Mediation | |

Table 9- Bootstrap Analysis, studying the mediating effects of green trust in scenario sustainability and participants' loyalty

4.6 Hypothesis 4

H4 stated that co-creation would increase the levels of identification and green trust derived from a sustainable initiative. We want to understand if the mediation effects between the scenario sustainability and the participants' loyalty, differ according to the method in which the sustainability is developed, either co-created (developed by festival's attendees) or developed by festival's organization. Specifically, we want to study if:

H4a: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' festival identification on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

H4b: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' identification with the festival's community, on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

H4c: Co-creation positively moderate the mediation effect of participants' trust, on the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

To study these hypotheses a bootstrap analysis has been run through the model 7 in the Process procedure for SPSS by Hayes. In the test, participants' loyalty has been used as dependent variable, the scenario sustainability as independent variable and the scenario co-creation as moderator.

In H4a was studied the moderating effect of co-creation on the mediating effect of identification in the relationship between the festival sustainability and participants' loyalty.

Firstly, the model's outcome shows that the independent variable (sustainability) does not predict the mediator (identification with the festival) for $t(192) = 1.7872$ $p > .05$. The relationship between the moderator (co-creation) and the mediator (identification with the festival) is also not significant meaning that there is not predicting effect $t(192) = 0.4257$ $p > .05$. The interaction between the independent variable and the moderator (sustainability*co-creation) does not predict the mediation effect of identification being $t(192) = 0.5218$ $p > .05$.

Being this three effect non significant the indirect effects of the independent variable on the dependent one through the effect of mediation cannot be studied.

Ultimately, the index of moderated mediation range between $[-0.3562; 0.5589]$, including the value zero in the interval. This means that it cannot be assumed that the effects of different level

of moderation are different from each other and from the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent one.

We can conclude that there is no moderated mediation and therefore co-creation does not play a role in the relationship between sustainability and loyalty through identification with the festival.

Therefore, we **reject** H4a.

| <i>Bootstrap analysis Process model 4 by Hayes</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Dependent variable (Y): Festival loyalty | | | | |
| Independent variable (X): Scenario sustainability | | | | |
| Mediator (M): Identification with the festival | | | | |
| Moderator (W): Scenario Co-creation | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | | | | |
| Independent variable | Identification with the festival | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Sustainability | 0.4020 | 1.7872 | 0.0755 | Non-significant |
| Co-creation | 0.0990 | 0.4257 | 0.6708 | Non-significant |
| Sustainability*Co-creation | 0.1702 | 0.5218 | 0.6024 | Non-significant |
| Index of moderated mediation | <i>Index:</i> | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | No Moderated mediation |
| | 0.1197 | -0.3562 | 0.5589 | |

Table 10- Bootstrap Analysis, studying the moderated mediation of Co-creation on Festival identification

H4b studied the moderation effect of co-creation on the moderating effect of identification with the community in the relationship between sustainability and loyalty.

The results show that neither the independent variable sustainability ($t(192)= 1.8390, p > .05$) nor the moderator co-creation ($t(192)= 1.1576, p > .05$) predict the mediation effect of community identification. The two variable together (sustainability*co-creation) have no significant effect on the dependent variable. Therefore, is not relevant to study the indirect effect of sustainability on loyalty through the mediation of community identification.

The non-significance of co-creation as moderator for community identification is confirmed by the bootstrap analysis at a 95% confidence level and by the index of moderated mediation which

ranging between [-0.4741; 0.3295] comprehend zero. Therefore, the moderation of co-creation on the mediating effect of community identification is not significant.

Thus, H4b is rejected.

| <i>Bootstrap analysis Process model 4 by Hayes</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Dependent variable (Y): Festival loyalty | | | | |
| Independent variable (X): Scenario sustainability | | | | |
| Mediator (M): Community identification | | | | |
| Moderator (W): Scenario Co-creation | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | | | | |
| Independent variable | Community identification | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Sustainability | 0.4270 | 1.8390 | 0.0675 | Non-significant |
| Co-creation | 0.2778 | 1.1576 | 0.2485 | Non-significant |
| Sustainability*Co-creation | -0.1168 | -0.3469 | 0.7290 | Non-significant |
| Index of moderated mediation | <i>Index:</i> | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | No Moderated mediation |
| | -0.0707 | -0.4877 | 0.3198 | |

Table 11- Bootstrap Analysis, studying the moderated mediation of Co-creation on Community identification

H4c analyses the moderation effect of co-creation on the mediation effect of green trust. The performed model 7 of Process procedure reveals that the independent variable sustainability predicts the mediator green trust ($t(192)= 3.3337, p < .05$). However, when analysing the prediction of the moderator co-creation on the mediator green trust, the values are not significant ($t(192)= 1.4556, p > .05$). The interaction between sustainability and co-creation, as well, does not predict the mediator green trust being the p value higher than 0.5 ($t(192)= -0.7931, p > .05$). The analysis of the indirect effect of sustainability on loyalty cannot be concluded being the values non-significant.

The index of moderated mediation presents an interval which includes zero [-0.5371, 0.2262], meaning that the model shows no moderated mediation effect. Therefore it can be concluded that co-creation does not moderate the mediation effect of green trust.

Hence, H4c is **rejected**.

| <i>Bootstrap analysis Process model 4 by Hayes</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Dependent variable (Y): Festival loyalty | | | | |
| Independent variable (X): Scenario sustainability | | | | |
| Mediator (M): Green trust | | | | |
| Moderator (W): Scenario Co-creation | | | | |
| Dependent Variable | | | | |
| Independent variable | | | | |
| | Green trust | | | |
| | <i>Coeff</i> | <i>T value</i> | <i>P-value</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Sustainability | 0.6926 | 3.3337 | 0.0010 | Significant |
| Co-creation | 0.3125 | 1.4556 | 0.1417 | Non-significant |
| Sustainability*Co-creation | -0.2390 | -0.7931 | 0.4287 | Non-significant |
| Index of moderated mediation | <i>Index:</i> | <i>BootLLCI</i> | <i>BootULCI</i> | No Moderated mediation |
| | -0.1536 | -0.5371 | 0.2262 | |

Table 12- Bootstrap Analysis, studying the moderated mediation of Co-creation on Green trust

5. Conclusion and implication

Given the importance consumers give to sustainability and the danger festivals pose to the environment, this work studied the impact of co-created sustainability on the loyalty of festivals, perceived by the eyes of the broader market. Particularly, communicating that sustainability features were introduced as the result of a co-creation process was analysed as a possible successful method to overcome the consumers' scepticism toward sustainable practices and claims caused by greenwashing (Forbes, 2012).

Communicating the involvement of the festival's participants in the development of sustainable practices has been presented as an efficient tool to positively generate favourable behavioural attitudes from the broader market (Scheier et al., 2012). Our study particularly investigates the role of attendees' perceived identification with the festival, its community and participants' green trust as the main drivers of the relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty.

Firstly, the results confirmed that sustainability is an important factor in consumers' preferences, influencing consumers to be more likely to develop loyalty toward the festival if sustainable practices have been implemented. Therefore, sustainable practices in festivals influence festivals' loyalty, as previously studied in the literature regarding the positive relationship between sustainability and festival loyalty (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008; Lee, Liu, Chung, & Ho, 2015).

Our findings show that this preference is explained by consumers' identification and trust. When the green practices are introduced in the event, we unveiled two distinct types of identification: at an organization level (identification with the festival) and with the community taking part in the festival.

Analyzing the psychological process unveiled in self-congruity theory, consumers relate their self-concept with their perception of the brand and its users (Kazàr, 2019). Our observations show that this self-identification highlights the homogeneity with the organization's community, characterized by common needs and beliefs between the individual and the firm (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013; Karlsen, 2007). In particular, our analysis shows that in the festivals' context the self-identification is reflected both in relation with the festival's organization and with the festivalgoers' community, especially when green values and eco-friendly behaviour are present. This dual aspect of identification explains the positive impact that sustainable practices have on participants' loyalty. Accordingly to our work's data, both the variable significantly increases this relationship between sustainability and loyalty. However, the effect of the identification toward the festival is stronger than the one toward its community.

Secondly, such an increase in participants loyalty derives from trusting that the sustainable feature being introduced. The findings of our analysis demonstrate that the introduction of practices with a sustainable aim in festival positively increase the participants level of trust toward sustainability. This higher confidence in the eco-friendly commitment has a positive mediating effect on their loyalty toward the festival. As such, trust that the green feature will achieve the supposed environmental benefits is determinant for loyal participants.

Surprisingly, and against our theorizing, our findings did not show any effect of co-creation on identification nor green trust. Accordingly to the findings, the main takeaway of this work is that the communication of co-creation does not have the expected moderating role on the

identification and trust of consumers and consequently on their loyalty. Against what was previously studied in the literature (Dahl, Fuchs, & Schreier, 2015; Schreier, Fuchs, & Dahl, D. W., 2012; Thompson & Malaviya, 2013), the involvement of attendees on the development of festival's sustainable practices seems not to impact the other consumers' perception of closeness to the festival brand and community. To advertise the event's co-creation neither increase the level of confidence toward sustainability, as analysed in this paper, as related to the perceived closeness of consumers with the attendees participating in the co-creation of sustainability (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Randall, Gravier, & Prybutok, 2011).

Considering the non-significant relationship, it is concluded that, in the festival sector, the sharing of information regarding the application of co-creation process does not increase the participants' connection with the festival's organization and its community and their trust toward the sustainable practices. As a consequence, communicating to the broader market that sustainability was co-created is not suggested as a relevant factor to increase participants' loyalty.

This paper provided evidence about the sense of community that characterize festivals (Derrett, 2003). The participants' identification with the event's community is the basis for the emergence of a brand community and therefore representative of the festival's value and its organization (Holmes, Huges, Mair, & Carlsen, 2015). The findings showed this strong closeness that participants perceive when a sustainability practice is introduced both toward the festival organization and the community characterizing the event, which resulted in our analysis in a positive mediation effect in the relationship between sustainability and the loyalty toward the event. The sense of community and identification make participants feel closer to the event's organization through the practices it develops, namely those green. Being identification and trust relevant factors, as demonstrated by the positive coefficients in the analysis conducted, their effect might prevail on the fact that the practices are co-created. Consequently, consumers might not perceive more identification when other attendees are involved in the process since they already feel an attachment to the community and the festival.

In this context, consumers can perceive the total inclusion with the festival's activities and practices. Since they live them personally, they might trust them more. As a consequence, co-creation might not be relevant for participants, since they already perceive confidence toward the event's sustainability living it firsthand.

Considering that, in our findings, trust also resulted in a positive mediation effect, it can be understood that the effect of communicating co-creation might not have worked because participants perceived an already high level of reliability toward the green practices developed without the application of co-creating process.

5.1 Alternative Explanations

The result of the analysis is not consistent with the hypothesis developed in the literature review.

This might also be linked to the fact that this study has been conducted during the epidemic of COVID-19. The Covid-19 pandemic is a public health emergency of international concern (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). Several studies demonstrated that, as other relevant epidemics in history, such as the SARS in 2003, COVID-19 has significant effects on the global economies (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). The macroeconomics effect of this global pandemic changed the consumption of good and service. Panic among consumers and firms have altered usual consumption habits creating market anomalies. This distortion is demonstrated by the change in the global financial markets and in the responses of the global stock indices (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020).

An unprecedented crisis such as COVID-19 might have changed the perception of the respondents, distorting the results expected.

Particularly considering that the events and tourism sector has been one of the most affected in the global economy (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020).

5.2 Academic Implications

In the festivals and events field, sustainability has become a main area of interest. Considering the fundamental role the green commitments are having in this business, extant researches are focusing on the topic (Laing & Frost, 2010; Luoma, 2018; Mair & Laing, 2012; Zifkos, 2014). This research extends the literature regarding festivals' sustainability studying how greenwashing affects the events field (Chen & Chang, 2013; Griese, Werner, & Hogg, 2017; Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011), resulting as one of the main causes for participants' scepticism toward this environmental commitment, able to change consumers' loyalty.

The paper develops the topic of sustainability and its effect on participants' loyalty which

represents in the academic researches one of the key assets when analyzing the festivals' businesses and their success (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Hume, 2008; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008). This work finds that the presence of sustainability is a main driver for the participants' loyalty development, and add that identification and green trust have a mediating role on it.

Specifically, it is found that sustainability is related to participants' identification with the festival's organization and community which positively influence the eco-friendly attitude and behaviour of attendees.

Moreover, the topic of festivals' sustainability is deepened studying the effect that green practices have on participants' trust. The findings explain that the introduction of environmental-friendly commitment from the festival's organization is a relevant factor for consumers, and is able to increase green trust leading to a higher loyalty.

In this field, of the theme of co-creation started to be relevant and therefore extensively studied, (Koehler & Schneider, 2014; Laing & Frost, 2010; Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2014; Xiaoyue Zhang, Hoc NangFong, & Li, 2019). This research brings the topics of co-creation and sustainability together understanding that the application of the co-creation process in the development of eco-friendly practices does not improve participants' loyalty. The findings show that there is no moderating effect of co-creation on identification and trust and therefore cannot be considered a driver for the attendees' loyalty and a tool to successfully.

5.3 Managerial Implications

Our findings suggest implications regarding the communication of the sustainability and co-creating practices adopted by the events' organization.

The increasing importance consumers give to sustainable concerns (Wong, Wan, & Qi, 2014), the communication and implementation of sustainable practices become fundamental for the success of festivals. As demonstrated by the results, the implementation of sustainable activities and practices has an important positive effect on the festivalgoers' loyalty. To communicate the attention paid to green matters will, therefore, be a success factor for the festival brand and especially for its advertisement.

The "We love green" festival (analysed in chapter 2.5.1 of this paper), was able to develop its main image of a green event, attentive to environmental concerns in all its activities, through

the communication of the sustainable practices and commitment it consistently pursues. The presentation of the festival as strictly related to sustainability in all its communication and advertisement, especially through the social media marketing, developed this festival brand as green, making it a success driver (Fondation Engie, 2019; WeLoveGreen, 2019).

Being the green practices trusted by the festival's attendees, as showed in the statistical results, it is fundamental for the festivals' organizations to continue to share their sustainable commitment in a reliable and trustfully way. The transparency and integrity of festivals' green activities will confirm the level of trust and identification participants perceive toward the event.

Festivals' management might increase trust in the eco-feature through collaborations with NGO, aimed at the development of sustainability for festival and events, such as "A Greener Festival" or "The Sustainable Event Alliance", or cooperating with the consumers considering they are one of the major cause of the environmental footprint. Moreover, the events' organization could benefit from the development of an educative message to its participant, for examples through workshops or a communication strategy aimed at sharing the impact the specific event is producing and how to react.

To enhance the consumers' perception of the green impact the product or service has, organizations need to send continuous signals (Atkinson & Rosentha, 2014). Therefore, festivals' manager could focus on an efficient marketing strategy to communicate the festival's sustainability through a continuous and honest sharing of the commitment the organization is undertaking.

To better develop this communication a social media strategy can be used. Social networks allow organizations to advertise their brand sharing their commitment to a wide audience (Treem & Leonardi, 2012). At the same time, through social networks, the users can reach information about the organization quickly and obtain opinions about the brand. The consumers perceive closeness to the brand and see the contents as reliable (Ceyhan, 2019). A social media strategy could represent an efficient way to send constant signals of the environmental commitment to consumers which will perceive them as reliable being straightforward information to which they can interact.

With regards to co-creation, sharing with participants that other the participants were included in the development of green practices is not a relevant factor for consumers' loyalty. According

to the findings of this paper, communicating co-creation is not be a relevant marketing strategy. This does not imply that co-creation should not be used as a successful strategy to enhance sustainability increasing loyalty. The strong identification with the festival organization and its community and the trust in the eco-friendly commitments might derive also from the attendees' inclusion in the co-creation of practices. The present study would benefit from further research on this effect that the attendees' inclusion in the co-creation of practices might have on identification and trust.

6. Limitations and Future research

This dissertation was able to expand the literature regarding co-creation and sustainability and to produce some interesting findings. However, certain limitations affected the work.

First of all, the surveys' literature demonstrates that the respondents might be sensitive to the precise order, format and the wording in which questions and scenarios are presented (Kalton & Schuman, 1982). Moreover, the multiple scenarios and the numerous questions can have affected the consumers' responses. The choice overload is considered as the process in which the people perceived choices as more difficult when they can decide between several options (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000).

The sample size was another limitation of this work. The total amount of answers was 263, however, only 196 were considered valid. Considering that the main test included four different scenarios, the number of responses for each was limited to less than 50.

Moreover, the survey was distributed through M-Turk. The platform often presents downsides in the quality of responses provided. This is because the respondents do not pay particular effort in completing the questionnaire (Follmer, Sperling, & Suen, 2017). This was confirmed by the participants that did not respond properly to the attention check during the survey.

The work faced time and budget restriction. The fact that the experiment consisted of an online survey did not allow the researcher to control the stimuli and the contexts to which the participants were subjected. This might have led to misunderstandings regarding the scenarios. This is demonstrated by the wrong answers in the manipulation checks. Despite the overall results are statistically significant and the two scenarios were distinguished by participants, some of them did not clearly perceive the difference.

The work has been restricted by the occurring of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, this global crisis is a major threat to the society and particularly for the tourism and leisure fields (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020), context analysed by this paper. All the form of events in which numerous group of people meet is restricted globally because of the epidemic diffusion. Specifically, events as concerts, festivals, meetings or sports are blocked (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). In this situation, developing the experiment precisely in this field represents a limitation since consumers are responding to a type of service extremely limited by the global crisis.

Another important limitation regarded the fact that the practical analysis has been conducted only in one type of festival. Therefore, the findings might be limited to the music festival context and not entirely apply to all the different festival types and settings.

This study would benefit from further research. In particular, the study could include different types of festivals to expand the findings to a broader sample. It would allow comparing the model and variables considered in different festival settings.

From a practical perspective, the research would be improved studying a real scenario, analysing the effect of co-created sustainable practices in an existing festival. This would allow obtaining results in a more concrete context to which refer, studying practical implication on a specific festival brand.

Other research methods could improve the research, especially conducting the survey in person, or interviews and focus groups during the festival's edition.

Considering that the co-creation did not result statistically significant in this paper, future researches should be conducted on the effect co-creation has on the festivalgoers' loyalty, to deepen this relationship understanding which variables might impact it.

Finally, since this work considered the impact of the communication of the attendees' participation in the co-creation process on other consumers, the topic could be examined, in the perspective of the attendees' willingness to take part in the co-creation process firsthand, analysing how it would affect festival loyalty.

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Appendix

Appendix 1- Survey results

Table 13- Demographics of the main study

| Demographics | | Frequencies | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Gender | Male | 80 | 59.2% |
| | Female | 116 | 40.8% |
| Age | 18-24 | 45 | 23% |
| | 25-34 | 81 | 41.3% |
| | 35-44 | 50 | 25.5% |
| | 45-54 | 14 | 7.1% |
| | 55-64 | 6 | 3.1% |
| Nationality | US | 78 | 39.8% |
| | India | 37 | 18.9% |
| | Brazil | 26 | 13.3% |
| | Italy | 17 | 8.7% |
| | Others | 38 | 19.3% |
| Occupation | Student | 29 | 14.8% |
| | Employed | 133 | 67.9% |
| | Unemployed | 23 | 11.7% |
| | Ritired | 2 | 1% |
| | Other (home maker) | 9 | 4.6% |
| Income | Less than €10,000 | 55 | 28.1% |
| | €10,000 - €19,999 | 25 | 12.8% |
| | €20,000 - €29,999 | 23 | 11.7% |
| | €30,000 - €39,999 | 26 | 13.3% |
| | €40,000 - €49,999 | 22 | 11.2% |
| | €50,000 - €59,999 | 17 | 8.7% |
| | More than €60,000 | 28 | 14.3% |
| | Total | 196 | 100% |

Main study demographics

Table 14- Main Study's Measures and respective scales

| Construct | Item | Source |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Manipulation Check: Eco-friendly perception | How sustainable do you think this year's edition of the festival is? [1] Unsustainable at all ...[5] Very Sustainable | Own construct |
| Manipulation Check: Design-mode | Who is responsible for the festival's new feature (food)? [1] The festival's organization [2] The festival attendees & organizers together [3] The festival's attendees | Own construct |
| Green trust | 1. I feel that this festival's environmental functions are generally reliable 2. I feel that this festival's environmental performance is generally dependable 3. This festival's environmental concern meets my expectations 4. This festival keeps promises and commitments for environmental protection 5. Overall, I believe that this festival's environmental claims are trustworthy Scale: [1] Strongly Disagree; [7] Strongly agree | Adapted from (Chen Y.-S., 2010) |
| Community identification | 1. I feel close to the usual festival attendee 2. My identity is similar to that of the usual festival attendee 3. I am attached to the community of other attendees of the festival 4. My feeling of belonging to the group of other festival attendees is strong Scale: [1] Strongly Disagree; [7] Strongly agree | (Grappi & Montanari, 2011) |
| Festival identification | This festival reflects who I am I can identify with this festival's values I feel a personal connection to this festival This festival suits me well Scale: [1] Strongly Disagree; [7] Strongly agree | Adapted from (Escalas & Bettman, 2005) |
| Festival loyalty | 7. I would spread positive word-of-mouth about the festival 8. I would recommend the festival to my friends 9. I will keep attending the festival | (Yoon, Lee, & Lee, 2010) |

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| | Scale: [1] Strongly Disagree; [7] Strongly agree | |
| Demographics | Gender, Age, Nationality, Profession, Income | Own construct |

Main Study's Measures and respective scales

Table 15- Discriminant analysis result- Test of Equality of Group Means

| <i>Tests of Equality of Group Means</i> | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| | Wilks' Lambda | Sig. |
| Community identification | .977 | .033 |
| Identification with festival | .958 | .004 |

Discriminant analysis- Test of Equality of Group Means

Table 16- Discriminant analysis result- Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

| <i>Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices- Log determinants</i> | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Scenario | Log Determinant |
| Sustainable | .019 |
| Non sustainable | -.508 |
| Pooled within-groups | -.232 |

Discriminant analysis- Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices- Log determinants

Table 17- Discriminant analysis result- Eigenvalues

| <i>Eigenvalues</i> | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Function | Eigenvalue | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Canonical Correlation |
| 1 | .044 | 100.0 | 100.0 | .205 |

Discriminant analysis- Summary of Canonical Discriminant Functions- Eigenvalues

Table 18- Discriminant analysis result- Wilks' Lambda

| <i>Wilks' Lambda</i> | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|------------|----|------|
| Test of Function | Wilks' Lambda | Chi-square | df | Sig. |
| 1 | .958 | 8.270 | 2 | .016 |

Discriminant analysis- Summary of Canonical Discriminant Functions- Wilks' Lambda