

# The EDM Festival Sensation

## A Case Study in the Netherlands

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## Summary

Electronic dance music (EDM) is a popular genre of music that has garnered enormous global success over the past decade. Nowadays, EDM festivals are one of the most common types of music festivals in the growing festival industry, which is an important sector of the current world leisure and tourism industry. EDM is also a type of musical sub-culture that comes with a package of socially created meanings and associations. This study focused on the total EDM experience at music festivals and gathered important information about the significance and practices that are associated with the sub-culture phenomenon.

Two methods were used to complete this study, a questionnaire to frame the research and interviews to collect more in-depth data on the topic. The questionnaire sample found that the average age of an EDM festivalgoer in the Netherlands is 22.5 years old and that EDM festivals are enjoyed evenly between the sexes.



EDM festivals are not a one-time visit event but are seen as places to go more often than once. The top motivations for going to an EDM festival were to have fun with friends, musical line-up and the overall reputation of the festival. The main activities reported at EDM festivals from this sample were dancing, drinking alcohol, socializing and taking drugs and almost all EDM festivalgoers reported being satisfied after attending an event. These findings were used to frame the understudied research topic of EDM festivals and they provided a good reference to check and compare with the qualitative research data.

The interviews found that Dutch people in this sample are motivated to go to EDM festivals for both common motivations found in past festival motivation studies and for other unique motivations that present the EDM festival as a distinct festival experience. While past studies found that music festivals are more likely recreational offerings because of their seeking-focus, this study tends to disagree considering the escape-focused nature of EDM events. The most interesting findings of this study includes the understanding of the EDM festival atmosphere, the link between EDM and drug use and the notion of escape. Considering the results of this sample, it seems as if EDM festivals may be fundamentally different from other types of festivals because of their two very strong pull and escape factors: the alternative and liberating atmosphere and the possibility of intense drug-enhanced experiences. EDM festivals are famous for providing an alternate reality and sense of escape by way of their intricate designs, decorations and set up at the festivals. This helps to promote the free and liberating atmosphere of the events that are an important motivational factor for many people attending these festivals. It is at these festivals that many people feel free to let go and unwind from daily life.

Overall, the EDM experience is a greatly interesting leisure and tourism topic because of all its underlying features and unique qualities. The deeper understanding of EDM culture helps to explain current leisure and tourism trends and the cultural phenomenon of dance-focused culture. These findings tell us the Dutch youth are typically going to EDM festivals in search of a fun, friendly experience that takes them away from normal, everyday life and allows them to experience the open, liberating feeling of life without borders and rules.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Electronic Dance Music.....	2
Problem Statement and Relevance of Study .....	3
Research Objectives and Research Questions .....	4
<b>2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Connection Between Music and People .....	5
Review of Past Electronic Dance Music (EDM) Literature.....	5
Previous Festival Studies .....	8
<b>3. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 Personal Realm: .....	12
3.1.1 Motivations .....	12
3.1.2 Expectations .....	13
3.1.3 Satisfaction .....	13
3.1.4 Experience at Event.....	14
3.1.5 Activities at Event.....	15
3.2 Influential Realm .....	15
<b>4. Methodology.....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Epistemology of Research .....	17
4.2 Data Collection .....	18
4.3 Analysis .....	20
4.4 Credibility and Dependability .....	21
<b>5. Background Knowledge of EDM in the Netherlands .....</b>	<b>22</b>
5.1 Demographics .....	22
5.2 Motivations.....	22
5.3 Activities.....	24
5.4 Satisfaction .....	24
<b>6. Results and Analysis .....</b>	<b>25</b>
6.1 Demographics .....	25
6.2 Motivations.....	26
6.3 Expectations.....	34
6.4 Satisfaction .....	34
6.5 EDM Festival Activities .....	36
6.6 The Influential Realm .....	36
6.6.1 Physical.....	36
6.6.2 Social .....	37
6.6.3 Festival Product/Service.....	38
<b>7. Discussion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
7.1 Motivations.....	40
7.2 Drug use at EDM Events.....	44
7.3 Expectations and Satisfaction .....	45

7.3.1 Existential Authenticity.....	46
7.3.2 Cohen’s Modes of Tourist Experience in Relation to EDM Festivals.....	46
7.4 Influential Realm Implications for Organizers .....	47
7.5 Unique Findings .....	49
7.6 EDM Festival Experience: Recreational or Tourist Experience?.....	50
7.7 Broader Implications.....	50
7.8 Limitations of Study.....	51
7.9 Suggestions Future Research .....	52
8. Conclusions .....	53
9. References .....	56
Appendix 1 – SoGoSurvey Questions.....	58
Appendix 2 – Interview Guide .....	62
Appendix 3 – Code Tree and Network View .....	64

## TABLE OF CONTENTS – FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1 Tourist Experience Conceptual Model of Influences and Outcomes .....	10
Figure 2 Conceptual Framework Model .....	11
Figure 3 Screen Captures of Online Survey .....	18
Figure 4 Main Push and Pull Factors from Questionnaire.....	22
Figure 5 Main Motivations from Questionnaire .....	23
Figure 6 Conceptual Framework Model .....	25
Table 1 Demographics of Interview Respondents .....	26
Table 2 Main Push and Pull Factors from Interview Data.....	26
Table 3 Main Activities at EDM Festivals from Interview Data.....	36

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# THE EDM FESTIVAL SENSATION: A CASE STUDY IN THE NETHERLANDS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a rapid increase in popularity of electronic dance music (EDM) and dance festivals around the world in the past decade (EVAR, 2012). This study focuses on the prevalence of these festivals and aims to understand the reasons as to why they are such popular leisure and tourism activities throughout the world today. The festival experience in particular, is of interest in this study. Similar to the current dance music phenomenon, festival and event tourism has been one of the fastest growing sectors of the world leisure and tourism industry and corresponding academic society (Getz, 1991; Li & Petrick, 2006). The experience people look for in a festival reveal a lot about the individuals who attend the event and about the event's characteristics itself. The motivations of people going to these events and the experiences of people at these events, can help explain the overall experience of EDM festivals and assist in understanding the underlying factors that make them so popular today. Additionally, this study will add to the developing body of knowledge of festival and event research within the leisure and tourism field.

EDM is one of the leading music genres in the world today. EDM music is an electronic form of music that is played and mixed together by disk jockeys (DJs). It is extremely popular in nightclubs and festivals because it is well suited for dancing and creating a 'party-style' atmosphere for large crowds of people. Most of the EDM music fans are young, under the age of 35 (EVAR, 2012) and the music tends to be loud, energetic and deeply grounded upon heavy, bass beats. The Netherlands is home to a large number of popular EDM events that thousands of Dutch people attend annually, making it a popular and active leisure activity that Dutch people find extremely enjoyable (EVAR, 2012). In 2011, more than 1.5 million visitors participated in large-scale EDM festivals held in the Netherlands, and these numbers have been increasing annually ever since (EVAR, 2012).

Due to the illegal downloading of music that became rampant during the new millennium, it became practically impossible for DJs to generate earnings from record sales. As a result, most dance music DJs and producers began to earn their income from DJ gigs (EVAR, 2012). This led to the number of EDM events to experience explosive growth, most noticeably in outdoor dance festivals (EVAR, 2012). Ten years ago there were only three major festivals in the Netherlands (Mysteryland, Dance Valley and Extrema). Nowadays, there are dozens of new significant festivals including: Defqon, Awakenings, Free Your Mind, Rockit, Voltt, Welcome to the Future, Solar, Indian Summer, Open Air, A Day at the Park, Loveland, Soenda, etc (EVAR, 2012). The sheer amount of young consumers interested in attending this kind of music festival is fascinating and it promotes the need for further research in the field of leisure and tourism studies.

The focus of this research was to find out the main factors that make up the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands. This includes all of the main features of the tourist experience: motivation, expectation and satisfaction (Morgan, Lugosi, & Ritchie, 2010). Using these factors, the research aimed to better define the EDM experience and to explore the reasons as to why it

is so popular in Dutch youth culture today. Some research has already been done in the field of event motivation and experiences, but it was mostly based on cultural events and other kinds of music festivals (Rock, Pop, Classical, Jazz, mixed genres, etc.). Little research has been conducted on specific EDM festival experiences, therefore due to its existing global popularity, it is beneficial to discover more about this specific experience. The results will lead to a deeper understanding of the EDM experience and will help to explain the abundant number of people who frequent these festivals annually.

This report will begin with a short description of electronic dance music and its development overtime. This will be followed with the relevance of the study, the problem statement and the research objectives of the study. Then the literature available on the EDM music sub-culture will be reviewed to gain a better understanding of what is already known about the subject. Additionally, the literature from previous music festival studies will be reviewed. Following the literature review, the theoretical framework of this study will be laid out, which will include a conceptual model that guides the processes and concepts involved in this study. The remainder of this report will be made up of: Chapter 4 Methodology, Chapter 5 Background Knowledge of EDM in the Netherlands, Chapter 6 Results and Analysis, Chapter 7 Discussion and Chapter 8 Conclusions.

### **1.1 ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC**

Electronic Dance Music is music produced through equipment and played in a dance-based environment. The common denominator of dance music is primarily the turntables, in which the Disc Jockey (DJ) uses to combine tracks electronically into one smooth mix (Clair, 2013). EDM is said to have its roots in the 1960's where bands like the Beach Boys used the Theremin (electronic instrument) to create new sounds and producers used electronic manipulation to edit and smooth out certain technical problems bands would have (Clair, 2013). It wasn't until the 1970's when electronic music really became its own genre in Europe, called Eurodance, and Disco became a popular genre in the USA (Clair, 2013). Disco includes bass-heavy electronic music and the use of a synthesizer, which is a staple of the EDM music genre (Clair, 2013). During the 1990's, technology improved rapidly and the costs involved decreased significantly, so more people were able to mix their own music and develop their own sound. A techno craze developed in Western Europe and some large DJ names became very popular, such as Armin van Buuren from the Netherlands as well as some popular dance clubs and outdoor festivals (Clair, 2013). The 2000's were a decade of increased development and popularity for EDM music, however it still mostly remained in Western Europe. In the late 2000's EDM music spread to America and became more mainstream throughout most of the Western world.

Electronic Dance Music and EDM festivals have become immensely popular in the past five years. Its presence has increased on the top of music charts, music festival headliners and music download sites. EDM is a music genre that is gaining momentum all over the world. The largest market of EDM fans and consumers live in Western Europe, where EDM developed, and in the United States.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RELEVANCE OF STUDY**

Increased economic prosperity, a more leisure-oriented lifestyle and increased global connections have made festivals one of the most common leisure and tourism activities today (Getz, 1991). The theoretical relevance of this study is to gain a further understanding of festivals in general, while illuminating the different experiences and motivations that exist depending on the type of festival. The current consumption pattern of the leisure and tourism market is the Post-Fordism mode of production, which includes diversification, specialization and niche-markets. This means that the tourism market is expanding and diversifying quickly overtime, which makes it hard for researchers to keep up with the ever-changing demands and trends present in society. The festival area of research has been developing well except in the region of specific niche-market areas, such as the dance festival example. This study helps to fill this gap in an indisputably relevant and fast-growing market sector – EDM festivals.

In general, music-based events are an extremely popular form of entertainment but the research exploring these topics, such as the motivations of music festival visitors, is sparse (Oakes, 2003). As with the EDM sector, some researchers (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard, Richards and Riley) have studied EDM before but never with a motivational focus. Mainstream international dance events, such as Sensation (Netherlands), TomorrowLand (Belgium) and Sonar (Spain), have had enormous success over the past five years and this phenomenon deserves to be studied further in order to understand the underlying factors that drive people to attend these events.

The social relevance of this topic is to understand the current social structures and behaviours of people today who take part in this lifestyle. This study helps to understand the motivations and needs of those willing to take part in this kind of leisure and tourism experience. Through understanding the needs, expectations and motivations of EDM music festival consumers, a better understanding of peoples' social habits, interests and desires will emerge.

Furthermore, this research could be very useful for event organizers in the EDM music festival sector. It is extremely important for event organizers to understand the motivations of their potential clients, especially now when the market is saturated with thousands of events and festivals going on every weekend all over the world (G. Gelder & Robinson, 2013). By understanding the motivations, expectations and satisfaction criteria of the festivalgoers, they can design better products and services in return for a more successful event (G. Gelder & Robinson, 2013).



## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The overall purpose of this study is to broaden the festival event research field, by researching a current boom in EDM festival events. This will help develop the field of leisure and tourism, EDM culture research and overall event festival research. Understanding the EDM festival experience can help get a deeper understanding of current leisure and tourism trends in the Netherlands and can reveal what people find interesting and appealing about these festivals. In turn, this will tell us about peoples' interests and how their interests' have developed over time.

The main research objectives of this study are to find out the main motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels that lead people into attending EDM music festival events. Furthermore, the main objective is to find out more about the activities and influential factors of these events so the full experience can be better understood considering there is little previous knowledge of this topic already.

The central research question is as follows:

- What are the main experiential aspects of EDM festivals in the Netherlands?

The research sub-questions:

- What are the main motivations of people attending EDM festivals in the Netherlands?
- What are the common expectations, activities and satisfaction levels of EDM festival visitors in the Netherlands?
- What are the physical, social and product/service factors that influence an EDM experience in the Netherlands?
- Are there any unique qualities of the EDM festival experience compared to other music festival genres?

These questions are designed to illuminate the EDM experience and its implications on society. It is also possible and relevant to see if the EDM experience is significantly different or similar to other types of music festival experiences because this will give us a better overall understanding of the event.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The following section includes a background of music and tourism and a literature review of research in the electronic dance music field and of past music festival studies. The knowledge displayed in these past studies helped to build the framework of this current research study.

### **CONNECTION BETWEEN MUSIC AND PEOPLE**

The term 'music tourism' has been studied by researchers to explain the many connections that link music, people and travel. Music is known to mobilize and affect people more than other forms of art and on a larger scale (Saldanha, 2002). Music has a mysterious and powerful way of moving humans in both the physical and emotional sense of the word 'movement'. People travel for music and the music they like travels with them wherever they go. Music does not have a gender, nationality or colour of skin and it has the power to connect people and to move people in various ways (Saldanha, 2002).

Music on its own is meaningless (Saldanha, 2002). The sounds people hear are only meaningful because they are connected to other entities and conditions. There are various social rules and norms of a music sub-culture, depending on the music genre. Music's close connection with the human body is one of the most important ways that music becomes meaningful to people (Saldanha, 2002). People have to know how to connect to a certain type of music before they can do this. "It's not just what music does to your body, but how your body has learnt to let the music do this to itself (Frith, 1996)." Bodily sensations related to types of music, are rarely ever formed by way of one individual, but by groups of people, overtime. This does not mean that the experience of a certain type of music is embodied by every participant in the same way. People have different histories, backgrounds and values so the experience is varied and this creates space for micro-politics to form within the one musical experience (Saldanha, 2002). This of course leads to the dual sense of belonging and exclusion depending on the person. If music gives you a sense of belonging, it will give others a sense of non-belonging (Saldanha, 2002). Overall, music is an extremely powerful force on people and it has the ability to move people both physically and emotionally overtime. Furthermore, the importance of rules and norms within a sub-culture of music are very important and can shape the way that people experience a certain type of music.

### **REVIEW OF PAST ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC (EDM) LITERATURE**

Overall the literature on EDM is not very well developed. There are some isolated studies about different topics related to EDM but no studies have been done on the EDM festival experience. The main emphasis of past EDM research has been on studies about rave culture (including drug use), social journeys, rites of passage and tribalism/solidarity at club events (Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2010; Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008; Parker, Aldridge, & Measham, 1998; Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). There has not been an experience-based study on EDM festivals, relating the experience to leisure and tourism concepts and approaches that may help explain people's behaviour and interests in these kinds of events.

A study by Jaimangal-Jones, Pritchard and Morgan (2009) illuminates the various discourses at work concerning the experiences related to EDM events and it is one of the most relevant studies to this research project because of its exploration of dance culture experiences and the discourses involved. This study only focuses on certain aspects of the experience, such as the

journey to the event and the discourse of pilgrimage and rites of passage, but it provides a good base of concepts and ideas related to the EDM experience.

The study interviewed and observed participants of EDM experiences in the UK to find out more about motives of participants to travel long distances for events and the idea of pilgrimage and rites of passage that this mode of behaviour suggests. It also explored the idea of neo-tribalism at these events, which explains the notion of participants being accepted into the 'clubbing tribe' when they enter into the event (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). This tribal process can be described as, a niche culture phenomenon that has replaced the broken fragments of mass culture and individualism by grouping people into clusters of shared lifestyles and tastes (Hetherington, 1992; Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010; Maffesoli, 1996). The feeling of togetherness is an important reason for people to attend EDM events because they create a sense of belonging and everyone participating has something in common.



Image: Mysteryland Festival from <http://www.mysteryland.nl/en/>

Dance events are places that exist within, yet outside existing social structures, where alternative norms and values have influence and everyday identities become largely invisible in the eyes of others (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). People watching is an important behaviour at EDM events because EDM rave attendees seem to derive enjoyment from watching people who are just letting go of themselves and enjoying the music (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). This demonstrates the open and accepting, yet playfully critical, views people have at dance events and that people have within this niche subculture group (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010).

Another interesting idea that this article suggests, is the fact that some people travel long distances simply to experience more significant EDM events because the journey constitutes an experience in itself (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). The journey was found to symbolize the state of transitioning from one reality to the next and in this sense the journey could be considered a rite of passage into the liminal zone that is the dance event (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). The authors conclude that attending large dance events can be considered a rite of passage for many young people but this conclusion is not fully credible because not every participant at a dance music event falls into this category. This would suggest that all participants are alienated people looking for a new religious or spiritual centre and this is likely not the case.

The conclusion reached about the importance of the long-distance journey as part of the overall event experience, is very likely to be true because people can build up their excitement during the journey. People go to these kinds of events to experience something different from their normal, everyday life and by travelling further away from home so they can magnify their sense of escape and experience the event more profoundly (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). This element of escape along with the idea that EDM festival tourism may be a form of youth pilgrimage is very interesting in the field of leisure and tourism. Overall this article was greatly insightful into the EDM world and to some of the discourses attached to it. It lacked a clear section of

motivations and focused more on the discourses about rites of passage and neo-tribalism but it was still a good overview of current EDM experience research.

Kavanaugh and Anderson (2008) completed a study in Philadelphia to find out how drug use at rave scenes has become a part of solidarity overtime. A rave is a party with electronic dance music and bright, flashing lights to create a psychedelic atmosphere that lasts all night long (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008). The term solidarity refers to the feeling of unity that is shared by a group of people with similar interests. One of the key characteristics of rave culture has been the use of illicit drugs, such as LSD, ketamine, rohypnol, and ecstasy (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008). This study found that most young people attending the rave parties in Philadelphia were using drugs but that drug use itself was not a necessary component of the overall experience (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008). The overall reasons to use drugs at these raves were to enhance the overall experience, to develop a second identity that was different from their everyday self, to allow people to party longer and to have more fun (Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2008). This article proves that there is a strong relationship between drug use and EDM rave events.

Drug use has also been associated with 'rave' dance scenes around Europe, which has been vastly covered in the media associating the phenomena with deviant behaviour and a negative tone (Parker et al., 1998)." Interestingly enough, the dance scene phenomenon happens to be comprised of ordinary young people, representing all social classes, who do not fit the conventional idea of drug using 'junkies' who express this typical deviant behaviour (Parker et al., 1998). This phenomenon of recreational drug use by everyday people at dance music events is highly interesting for the field of leisure and tourism studies. What matters are the various implications and consequences this phenomenon has on the overall experience at events.

The broader context of this finding is that the leisure and tourism fields are still very much part of this outdated view that drug use is appalling, destructive and has only negatively effects on society. There should be more studies done to understand the extent of which drug use is both positive and negative towards the health and experiences of youth today. This study will check to see the prevalence and opinions of drug use at official EDM festivals in the Netherlands, to contribute to this existing body of knowledge regarding youth drug use at dance events.

The topic of drug use has been studied before in the tourism field. Risky tourist behaviour has been documented before in several areas of research, including backpacking, adventure tourism, sex tourism, gambling and sunshine holidays (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Uriely and Belhassen (2005) took a look at the perceived risks tourists have when taking drugs while away on vacations. They found that people are concerned with the legal, social and medical risks involved with drug use but less so than when they are at home, in the routine of everyday life. The 'license for thrill' is one way to describe this behaviour of risk taking tourists and their perceptions of vacations as places to feel less restrained and risky (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Specifically, these studies argue that tourism is perceived by people as a framework of time and space that provides them with the opportunity to feel less restrained and to undertake adventures out in their ordinary routines (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Risk relating to drug use has been studied on the broader tourism level but understanding the risk related at activities closer to home (during leisure or close-range tourist events such as EDM festivals) still requires development.

So far the literature on EDM culture is heavily related to drug use and its effects on the people involved at various EDM events. There appears to be a research gap in the study of larger EDM festival experiences and the underlying motivations of people who go to these kinds of events. The field of event research has done studies on this topic but they are restricted to cultural festivals or pop/rock music festivals around the world. The next section will look at a few of these past studies.

## **PREVIOUS FESTIVAL STUDIES**

Festival and event tourism has been one of the fastest growing sections of the world leisure industry and the leisure and tourism academic society (Getz, 1991; Li & Petrick, 2006). Some of the common areas of study include; economic impact, marketing strategies, festival management and more recently, motivations of attendees (Li & Petrick, 2006). Considering this is an anthropological, leisure and tourism focused study, the economic, marketing and management studies will not be under review. Therefore, festival motivation studies are the key sources of background information, theory and approaches for this study.

In 2006, Li and Petrick did a review of all the main motivational festival event literature studies. Their review found that there is a good research framework present in this discipline but it is lacking the emergence of a universal scale of motivations (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Other main conclusions were that most festival and event motivational studies have been conducted under the theoretical framework of travel motivation research which has been conceptually grounded on both the escape-seeking dichotomy and push-pull model (Li & Petrick, 2006).

Event-specific factors are important in attracting festival attendees and in understand festival motivations (Li & Petrick, 2006). So far there has not been a universal motivation scale created for events because each type of event invites people to come based on different motives. This created the exploration of generalizability in the discipline, which inquires about the idea that there are different motivations for different events (Li & Petrick, 2006). The type of festival event is very strongly related to the motivations people have for going to that event and it is the best predictor of people's motivations in the event research field (Scott, 1996).

Petrack and Li (2006) also concluded that existing festival and event motivation research has been heavily dominated by a naturalist approach using quantitative methods but that qualitative insights may offer greater insight into the motivations of people attending certain events (Li & Petrick, 2006). Past mixed-method studies proved that the qualitative technique offers a chance to receive more thorough details about motivations (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). This allows for more descriptive data to be collected so that more diverse motivation patterns can be reported. Furthermore, Petrick and Li found that a comparative approach to the study of motivations made it easier to isolate the main similarities and differences between the motivations of attendees for two different events (Gelder & Robinson, 2009).

Gelder and Robinson produced such a study concerning the motivations involved in attending two different UK music festivals: Glastonbury and V Festival. These two festivals are the largest in the UK and they host a variety of musical acts and genres. Their study aimed to compared the visitor motivations of the two different festivals to see if there are common motivators amongst all types of festivals or if differences exist between festivals.

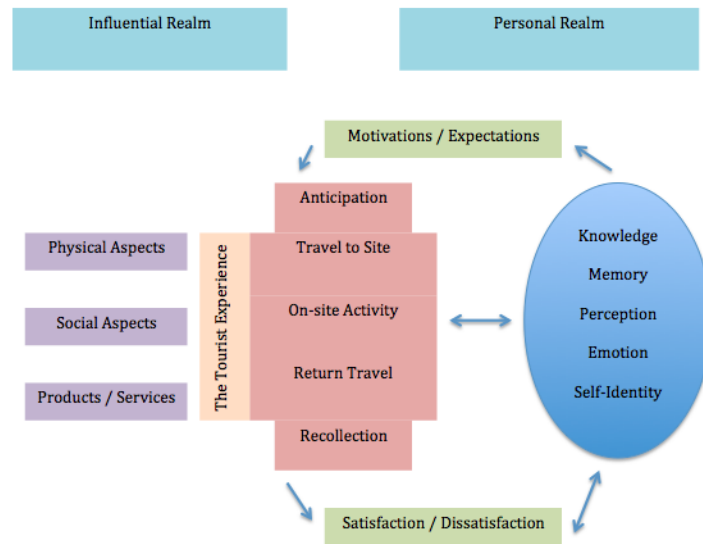
Using both a questionnaire and open ended questions, they found that the main motives for attending the Glastonbury festival were: atmosphere, socializing with friends/family, reputation/involvement and music/artists. And the main motives for attending the V Festival were: music/artists, local/close to home, free tickets and socializing with family/friends. Glastonbury was more well known for its overall atmosphere and reputation whereas V Festival was more recognized for its musical line-up and location. They also found that a younger audience was interested in the V Festival and an older audience for the Glastonbury festival. They stated that open questions were very useful in allowing people to come up with their own insights, which provided the opportunity to see if anything was overlooked. The fact that there are differences between the two festivals proved that each festival attracts its own kind of crowd for different reasons, some of which are intangible factors such as atmosphere or experience that cannot be planned by organizers (Gelder & Robinson, 2009).

This study is a good example of a festival motivation study in both the theory and methods that they used. They focus on the three major theories of motivation; Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy and the notion of the push/pull factors because not one single theory can describe the decision-making process of humans based on motivations. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is not entirely relevant to the study of festival motivations because it is not detailed enough to explain all of the complex reasons why people decide to do things within the higher level of needs. His theory simply describes the order of needs that people have and it does not help to explain the complex push and pull of people's desires and needs once they have reached self-actualization. Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy and the push and pull model are more useful for this study because they are more complex and can vary depending on the specific study.

An interesting query that emerged from these reviews, is the basic fundamental question as to whether music festivals are either tourism or leisure activities? Getz (1991) states that conventional wisdom has generally classified festivals as a subset of tourism. However, the finding in both Petrick and Li's (2006) review and Gelder and Robinson's study, is that festivals should be considered recreation as opposed to tourism offerings (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). These findings were found without considering the EDM festival, so it will be interesting to see through the results of this study as to whether EDM festivals are considered more leisure or tourism focused offerings.

### 3. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review in the previous chapter outlines the previous work completed within the EDM culture and festival event fields. This section will outline the main concepts and approaches that were used to complete this research study. The main objective of this study is to find out more about the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands. This will be done with the aid and guidance of the Tourist Experience Conceptual Model of Influences and Outcomes from the 2010 book, *“The Tourism and Leisure Experience,”* by Morgan, Lugosi and Ritchie, found in Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1 TOURIST EXPERIENCE CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INFLUENCES AND OUTCOMES**

This model demonstrates the multi-phased, multi-influential and multi-outcome nature of the tourist experience (Morgan et al., 2010). This model includes Clawson and Knetsch’s (1966) five-phase model describing the tourist experience in five stages: anticipation, travel to site, on-site activity, return travel and recollection. The influential realm includes three categories of influence which are outside of the individual during the experience: physical, social and products/services (Morgan et al., 2010). The personal realm includes topics that are often key findings in tourist experience literature, which involve elements within the individual such as knowledge, memory, perception, emotion and self-identity. These are all influential to the overall motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels of each individual person (Morgan et al., 2010). A further explanation as to how each of these factors played a role in this study, will be explained more clearly below.

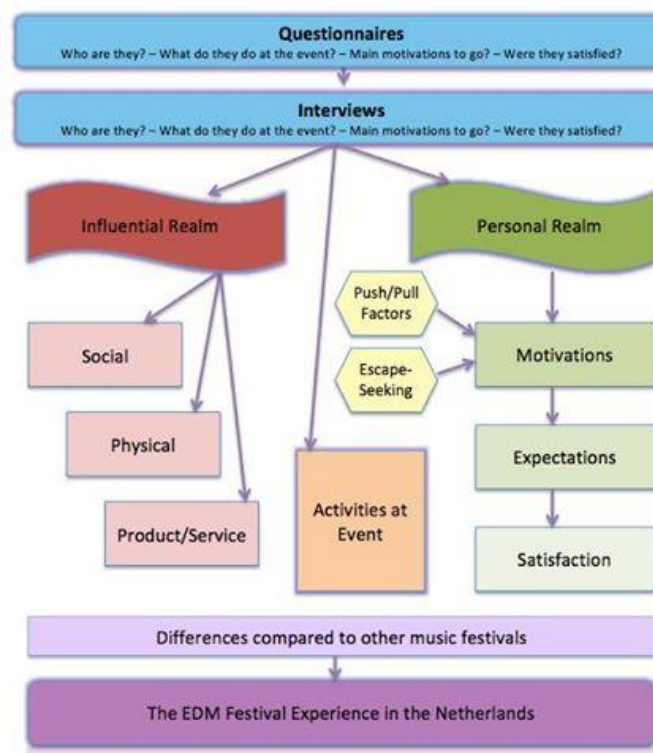
The main focus of this study is on the motivations and expectations of people under the personal realm, as well as the aspects of the festival that stimulate visitor satisfaction. The influential realm is also included in this study in order to understand the important physical, social and product/service aspects of EDM festivals. This will help understand the overall EDM experience and will provide useful advice for EDM event organizers. The actual “Tourist Experience,” from anticipation to recollection, is not included because this is not an on-site, real-time study at an EDM festival.

The conceptual framework model for this study, found in Figure 2, was built using the tourist experience model and Li and Petrick’s four main questions for researching motivations of which

were deemed fit to organize and structure this study by the researcher. In Li and Petrick's review of festival and event motivation studies article, they mentioned the four most straightforward questions to ask in a motivational study.

1. Who are they?
2. What activities do they participate in?
3. Why do they come?
4. Are they satisfied?

In this study all four of these questions were realised in both the questionnaire and the interviews but there was more emphasis on certain questions depending on the method. 'Who are they?' involves collecting demographic information such as gender and age. 'What activities do they participate in?' strives to explain the EDM experience further because there is a lack of EDM festival experience research. 'Why do they come?' is the main focus of this study and was included in both the questionnaire and the interviews. This included both the motivations and expectations to go to an event. The last question, 'Are they satisfied?' aimed to collect information about the final conclusions of the experience, which revolves back to analysing their original reasons to go there in the first place (motivations).



**FIGURE 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MODEL**



### **3.1 PERSONAL REALM:**

People's motivations, expectations and levels of satisfaction are all closely related during a leisure or tourism experience. Depending on people's motivations, they choose certain events that they go to with certain expectations and this eventually leads to either a satisfying experience or a non-satisfactory experience. In order to fully understand the EDM experience, it was important to study all three main areas of an individual's personal decisions and opinions on the matter.

#### **3.1.1 MOTIVATIONS**

Motivation has been referred to as psychological and biological needs and wants, including integral forces that arouse, direct, and integrate a person's behavior and activity (Iso-Ahola, 1980). A decision to visit a festival is a directed action which is triggered by a desire to meet a need (Crompton & McKay, 1997). There are three important reasons for researching the motives of festival visitors: the first is for the benefit of festival organizers in being able to design the best products and services for the festival consumers, the second is to ensure visitor satisfaction and the third is to identify and prioritize the main motivations of people for certain events in order to plan and promote as effectively as possible (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Most festivals draw from a relatively local area, so their continued viability is likely to be dependent on a high level of repeat visitation (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Most motivational studies in the leisure and tourism field use one of three main motivational theories to frame their research: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the push/pull model and the escape-seeking dichotomy.

##### *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

Getz (1991) was the first to link Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to tourist motivations (Li & Petrick, 2006). He believed that people's human needs could be met through motivations to attend events and festivals and by physically attending these kinds of events. Attending events and festivals is a useful way to satisfy one's social-psychological needs. This finding has provided the foundation for studies on festival and event motivation studies (Li & Petrick, 2006). For this study, this idea was taken into account as the main underlying theory involved with people searching to fulfil their needs, but the escape-seeking dichotomy and the push-pull model were chosen as the main theories to focus on in this study because they are more in-depth and detailed, which better suited the purposes of this study.

##### *The Push-Pull Model*

Push and pull motivations have been primarily utilized in studies of tourist behavior by many researchers in the past few decades (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The push-pull model was created in the tourism discipline to explain why people want to leave their home and why they choose a certain destination that suits their needs and 'pulls' them in. Push factors are factors that are intrinsic to the individual, intangible psychological thoughts, and they help influence their decision-making (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Pull factors are event-specific attributes that draw audiences to the event (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Yoon and Uysal (2005) state that push motivations are more related to internal or emotional aspects and can be seen as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, adventure, social interaction and excitement. While pull motives are connected to external, situational or cognitive aspects and are inspired by the

attractiveness, recreational facilities and cultural attractions of an event, entertainment and natural scenery (Gelder & Robinson, 2009).

### *The Escape-Seeking Dichotomy*

Iso-Ahola's escape seeking dichotomy and the concept of push and pull factors are closely related. The escape-seeking dichotomy consists of two motivational forces: escaping and seeking. Escaping is 'the desire to leave the everyday environment behind oneself' in search of change and novelty, and new experiences, while seeking is 'the desire to obtain psychological (intrinsic) rewards through travel in a contrasting (new or old) environment' (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1980).

#### **3.1.2 EXPECTATIONS**

Expectations are defined as anticipated traits, formed beliefs and predictions related to future events or states (Larsen, 2007). Tourists develop certain expectations about destinations and events through planning, word of mouth, media and general knowledge before departure. Expectations are also linked to the theoretical discussions concerning the tourist gaze (Urry, 2002). Urry uses the notion of the tourist gaze to conceptualize how a tourist – influenced by media, preconceived images and ideas, and past experiences – arrives at a destination with particular assumptions about what one will see and experience (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

Motivations and expectations are closely related to each other because people's motivations help form expectations for various events and destinations. For example, if someone's main motivation to go to TomorrowLand was to experience the hype and reputation of one of the biggest and most popular dance festivals in the world, their expectations would reflect this motivation and they would likely expect a spectacular and outstanding experience that overshadows all of their past experiences beforehand.

On the other hand, expectations are also very closely related to levels of satisfaction. The Expectation Confirmation Theory by Oliver (1980) is often used by researchers studying consumer satisfaction. This theory suggests that there are two processes involved with satisfaction; the forming of expectations and the confirmation or disconfirmation of those expectations which results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the product or experience (Oliver, 1980). In the case of attending festivals, an attendee's expectations are either confirmed when the experience matches their prior expectations (satisfied) or negatively confirmed when the experience fails to match expectations (dissatisfied)(Oliver, 1980). Another possible outcome includes being satisfied because the experience exceeds expectations (Oliver, 1980). This theory will be used to help understand people's expectations for EDM festivals which will in turn, help understand the most important motives people have when going to such an event.

#### **3.1.3 SATISFACTION**

Satisfaction with travel experiences, contributes to people wanting to revisit an enjoyable, past experience again, otherwise known as destination loyalty in the leisure and tourism field. A study by Yoon & Uysal (2005) researched the importance of these connections and found that tourists' positive experiences of service, products, and other resources provided by tourism and leisure destinations could produce repeat visits as well as positive word-of-mouth effects to potential tourists such as friends and/or relatives (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination. Recommendations to other people (word-of-mouth) are one of the most often sought types of

information for people interested in traveling and can be taken as the most reliable information source for potential tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Tourists do not travel to achieve satisfaction; it is simply an attitude one has after an experience. If expectations of experiences are met or exceeded, then satisfaction will occur (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be related to the idea of authenticity, which is an important concept within the academic leisure and tourism field (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Some authors suggest that authenticity can only be involved if the individual planned to search for authentic experiences prior to their departure and some believe that an authentic experience can be an overall feeling that people are looking for in their experience (Wang, 1999). Existential authenticity involves all elements of a person's experience, even at the emotional and cognitive level, because authenticity is related to the achievement of finding an authentic self or state of being (Wang, 1999). This kind of authenticity is nostalgic because it idealizes the ideal way people are supposed to live; freer, more innocent, more spontaneous, truer to themselves and this kind of authenticity is romantic because of the opportunity people get to feel and express themselves and because of its naturalness (Wang, 1999). Objective authenticity involves experiencing actual objects that are authentic and constructive authenticity involves symbolic authenticity, where people perceive and interpret tourist objects as either authentic or not (Wang, 1999). Existential authenticity will be emphasized in this study because music festivals involve more than just objects, they are all about the atmosphere and emotions that become present in people when they experience a festival. If the authentic experience an attendee is looking for at a festival is met, then satisfaction will likely occur and vice versa.

In his work, Cohen mentions that commoditization can destroy the authenticity of a product (Cohen, 1988). "Commoditization" is a process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade, thereby becoming goods (Cohen, 1988)". EDM festivals are highly commoditized because they are some of the most important and influential sectors of the tourism industry which involves a lot of competition between companies. This race for recognition and success between companies can lead to over commoditization, which can become a problem for tourists who are searching for an authentic experience. Furthermore, MacCannell's idea of staged authenticity comes into play here. This is the idea that some tourist places or events can be staged specifically for tourists, which differs from the true authentic experience (Cohen, 1988). If a festival is not organized or presented correctly, then it can risk being labelled as a false imitation of the true experience. All of this depends on the level of authenticity EDM festivalgoers expect. Depending on the level of authenticity people expect, satisfaction based on authenticity will be affected. If a festival does not meet the authentic standards of a potential visitor or if it seems dishonest, then dissatisfaction can occur.

#### **3.1.4 EXPERIENCE AT EVENT**

Different people search for different experiences at events depending on their personal characteristics, motivations and expectations. Cohen's phenomenology of tourist experiences can be useful for this study, to help describe the kinds of experiences EDM festival visitors are looking to experience. This phenomenology consists of five different modes of tourist experience: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental and existential.

The recreational mode includes people who are simply searching for fun, rest and relaxation away from their life-centre, which in turn refreshes their mind, body and soul so that the experience is meaningful to them in some superficial way (Cohen, 1979). They pay little mind towards authenticity but just want to enjoy time away from home (Cohen, 1979). The diversionary mode includes people who want to leave their centre to escape boredom or the ordinary, but they do not want to recreate their centres or search for meaning (Cohen, 1979). EDM festivals are then sought out as a meaningless source of relaxation and pleasure for these kinds of people.

The experiential mode is for people who are unable to lead an authentic and fulfilling life at home and who search for meaning through travel and experiences to try and capture some sense of meaning (Cohen, 1979). This type matches MacCannell's tourist in search of an authentic experience away from his alienated centre. The experimental mode describes people who do not adhere anymore to the centre of their society so they experiment with other cultures experiences and realities in search of a new, authentic centre (Cohen, 1979). These kinds of people are usually in search of themselves and not necessarily a new centre. And the existential mode describes people who are searching for a new elective centre for their life because they feel completely alienated from their current life centre.

### **3.1.5 ACTIVITIES AT EVENT**

Activities at music festivals, other than listening to the music, are known in the literature to be very important in order to broaden the appeal of the event to attendees who are not just there for the music (Bowen & Daniels, 2005). It will be interesting to see what kinds of activities are present at an EDM festival that help make up the overall experience.

Considering the well-known fact that EDM culture is closely linked with drug use, it will be interesting to see just how prevalent drug use is at Dutch dance festivals. Studies show that ecstasy remains strongly associated with rave culture (EDM music parties) and it will remain in association for a while to come (Kelly et al., 2013). This study will aim to see if drugs are as prevalent at large scale EDM festivals, as they are at rave-style events.

## **3.2 INFLUENTIAL REALM**

The influential realm involves elements outside of an individual, such as physical and social aspects and the products and services available at a destination. The physical aspects of a destination can be related to the physical setting (natural and human made), the spatial characteristics and/or the geographical features of the location (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). These physical attributes are often seen as an essential influential element in understanding tourist experiences and can lead to more positive evaluations of experiences by the tourist (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Some previous studies mentioned proximity as a common motivator in past festival studies (Li & Petrick, 2006). This is likely an important finding in this current study as well because proximity will always be an important influential factor, no matter what kind of musical event it is.

The social aspects refer to the various social influences, which can be present during a tourist experience including social settings, personal relationships, interactions with personnel, interactions with other tourists and host/guest relationships (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Festival atmospheres are known to produce a very positive social atmosphere that is important to the overall satisfaction and motivations of festival guests (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li &

Petrack, 2006). Furthermore, the EDM culture relies heavily on the concept of solidarity so it will be interesting to see if this concept rises from the data (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010).

The festival product and services can also bring an interesting understanding to the overall experience of EDM festival visitors because this will demonstrate the specific boundaries in which people are willing to pay and attend various festivals and as to which factors are the most important when creating an EDM event. Previously, music festival researchers found that people who adore the particular genre of music are more likely to spend more than people who enjoy it less. This specific concept has been studied by Christer Thrane (2002) in relation to Jazz festivals. He found that visitors that reported to rate musical interest as very important, spent more than those who reported musical interest as less important (Thrane, 2002). This factor along with length of stay, income and being from out of town (a tourist), are all positively linked with higher spending at music festivals (Thrane, 2002). It will be interesting to see if this holds true for EDM festivals as well.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides an overview of the methods chosen to complete this study and the analysis process. In order to answer the research questions, a mixed method approach was used. A questionnaire was administered online to identify the main motivations and experiences people had while attending EDM festivals in the past. The questionnaires main purpose was to frame the research study in order to gather background information on the topic of EDM festivals from a larger sample. In addition to the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were completed to support the findings of the survey and to take a deeper look into the motivations and experiences of people at this kind of event.

### **4.1 EPISTEMOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

Interpretivism is the underlying research approach for this study. This approach uses information given by real people to help form and explain real life phenomenon (Gorton, 2015). The ontology of the interpretivism approach assumes that reality is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially by people (D. Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). According to interpretivists, the key aim of social inquiry should be to enhance our understanding of the social world's meanings, which involves uncovering the intentions and beliefs that inform human action, which in turn requires making sense of the broader social context in which those beliefs, intentions, and actions reside (Gorton, 2015). This study focuses on understanding the EDM experience in the Netherlands by collecting qualitative information on specific topics related to the EDM festival experience. This study investigates why people in the Netherlands go to EDM festivals and what this social phenomenon can tell us about the EDM festival experience and the youth culture in the Netherlands.

During the analysis and discussion phase, the hermeneutic approach was used. This theory suggests that the social world consists of actions, beliefs, values, practices and other elements in need of interpretation (Gorton, 2015). In order to understand these elements, a researcher must interpret the explanations, comments, expressions and use of language that people use during interviews. Interpreting them requires unpacking the larger web of meanings in which they are embedded and no interpretation of such data can be considered final and uncontestable (Gorton, 2015). The hermeneutic approach states is that there will always be incongruences between people and what they claim to be true, "Incongruences between values, purposes, desires and beliefs may also occur at a society-wide level, and good interpretive inquiry will bring these inconsistencies to light (Gorton, 2015)." The central task of an interpretive, hermeneutic study is to uncover the processes that underlie the motivations and actions of people in society. This study used a hermeneutic approach to analyze the interview data and to come to various conclusions in the discussion, while keeping in mind that the viewpoints of those interviewed do not explain the whole picture but offer a look into the EDM society in the Netherlands.

The approach to studying this topic was based on feasibility and the greatest amount of effectiveness to fully understand this topic. Within the leisure and tourism sector, there are three dominant approaches for examining tourist experiences, according to Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987). This study uses the post-hoc satisfaction approach because it is popular in the tourist experience research and it focuses on psychological outcomes by examining motivations and the assessment of experiences (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). This approach asks people about their experience after it has happened and focuses on their satisfaction levels and

experiences at the event. This approach suited the study best because the other two approaches were not feasible considering time and financial restraints. The definitional approach was not appropriate for this study because it focuses on identifying the elements and dimensions of the tourist experience and this study focuses on the leisure experience of people at dance festivals (Li & Petrick, 2006). The immediate approach was also not possible for this study because I do not have permission to complete on-site research and almost all EDM festivals take place during the summer months and this thesis takes place between September and March.

## 4.2 DATA COLLECTION

### Online Questionnaire

The questionnaire's main focus was to map trends and to provide a background chapter of EDM in the Netherlands. In total, 80 questionnaires were collected via the SoGoSurvey website. Screen captures of this online survey website can be found in figure 3 below. The link to the online questionnaire was distributed by posting it on the researcher's personal Facebook page, by friends sharing the link onto their own Facebook pages and by posting the link on various Wageningen University Facebook pages (Student Plaza, Environmental Sciences Group, Aquifer Swim Team, Beringhem Residence). This way there was immediate access to the target group of this study; people between the ages of 17 and 30, who have been to an EDM festival in the Netherlands.

FIGURE 3 SCREEN CAPTURES OF ONLINE SURVEY

Eight respondents in the survey were not Dutch and had never been to an EDM festival in the Netherlands, so their data was excluded from the analysis. This left 72 respondents who had been to an EDM festival before in the Netherlands. Facebook's network, which has access to thousands of people who fit the EDM festival demographic, was a good means to reach the research population for this study. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to provide background information on the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands and about who visits these festivals. By distributing it via Facebook, it was guaranteed that there would be enough people who fit this category and who would be interested in filling out a short 5 minute survey about their past experiences. A flaw of using this method was that it was not able to reach those not on the Facebook networking site. This does contribute to the under-representativeness of the sample, but is a minor problem because the sample is still well represented by a random selection of people who accessed the survey during the survey period between December 2014 and January 2015.

The questionnaire collected information on past experiences at EDM festivals such as how they heard about the event, what activities were present at the event, satisfaction levels and demographics. A copy of the questions included in the online questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. Motivation was an important section of this questionnaire and included two parts. The first was a push and pull section where respondents had to choose the push and pull factors that suited them most. The second was a rating question based off the same methods from Gelder and Robinson's study from 2009 which included 5 predetermined motives that were ranked on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 5 very important to 1 very unimportant). The questionnaire also collected information on the demographics of the participants.

### **Interviews**

Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were chosen as an appropriate method for this study because past research shows that qualitative techniques are beneficial for this kind of research. Past mixed-method studies, such as Nicholson and Pearce (2001) and Gelder and Robinson (2006), proved that the qualitative technique offer a chance to receive more thorough details to be collected about motivations (Gelder & Robinson, 2009).

In total, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted. 9 interviewees were female and 6 were male. All respondents had Dutch nationality and were between the ages of 21 and 27. The length of the interviews lasted between 20 and 50 minutes, with the average interview length of 30 minutes. The interviewees were found using the snowball sampling technique by asking the previous interviewee for suggestions on other people to interview. The interviews were continued until saturation was reached on the main topics under study.

The interview guide included questions about festival experience, motivations, expectations and satisfaction and can be found in Appendix 2. The interviews were recorded using a MacBook computer or an iPod Touch and were transcribed by hand into the program Word. Each transcript was then entered into the qualitative data analysis program Atlas.ti for coding and analysis of data.



## **4.3 ANALYSIS**

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire data was analysed using Excel. Graphs were made for all questions for better interpretation of the results. The questionnaire's main purpose was to frame the topic for a clearer understanding of EDM festival demographics, experiences and motivations.

### **Interviews**

The interview process was done using a hermeneutical approach. During the data collection process, a few interviews were conducted and coded and then more interviews were done to gather new data. During each coding and processing analysis, the researcher's own views and opinions were used to help code and analyse the data. These thoughts and processes helped shape the final outcomes of the coding process.

This study used the conceptual aspect of thematic analysis to shape the research analysis of the interview data. Thematic analysis is a generic approach to data analysis that enables data sources to be analysed in terms of the principal concepts or themes (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). These themes are developed by the analyst to enable the data to be reduced to key ideas. Thematic analysis helps researchers discover patterns and themes while coding and reading through the data to create a deeper connection with the content (Daly et al., 1997).

The interviews were analysed using the program Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti is a program suited to help organize and facilitate qualitative data analysis. Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software is now widely applied in the qualitative research community (Richards & Richards, 1994). Computer programs, such as Atlas.ti, contribute most to ordering, structuring, retrieving and visualising important tasks while neatly organizing all of the data collected (Smit, 2002). It is important to keep in mind that computer-aided text analysis is only meant to aid analysis, it cannot do the analysis for a researcher.

The coding process involved three distinct steps. The first was open coding. This method was used to code all of the transcripts during the initial read-overs of the transcripts. Both inductive and deductive coding occurred. The deductive codes came from the literature review and theoretical framework of this study, such as push/pull codes, escape/seeking codes, etc. Inductive open coding was used when a particularly interesting piece of data emerged from the transcript. Once the data in each transcript from the first round of interviews (#1-7) was complete, axial coding commenced. This type of coding involved creating categories from the list of codes made during open coding. The primary purpose of axial coding is to determine which elements in the research are the dominant ones and which are the less important ones (Boeije, 2010). These categories were useful in the coding process of the second round of interviews (#8-15) because then the certain categories that were found during axial coding, could be coded more easily. Eventually code trees were created and the final coding method, selective coding, was used to complete the analysis phase and to help write the results section. Finally, the network view in Atlas.ti was helpful in visualizing the connections between codes and families for further analysis. Both the code tree and network views from Atlas.ti can be view in Appendix 3.

## **4.4 CREDIBILITY AND DEPENDABILITY**

### **Credibility**

This research project was carried out with credibility in mind. Credibility refers to consistency of the data and whether it can be considered credible according to the research design (Morrow, 2005). Credibility can be achieved by collecting sufficient and appropriate data for the study and thorough data analysis (Morrow, 2005). This is closely related to the choice of methods used to complete the study. Interviews and questionnaires were carefully chosen to collect relevant data on this topic. Past studies in motivational research have suggested that qualitative techniques are beneficial in this discipline because it allows for further insight into the subject of the study. Well thought-out open questions were used to ensure the study would produce valid and useful results to answer the main research questions.

Questionnaires were also a part of this study because they allow for demographical information to be collected easily from a greater amount of people and this is good because the EDM festival subject does not come from a well-studied or documented background in the leisure and tourism sector. Questionnaires are also important for this study because they triangulate the results. Concurrent triangulation is useful to generalize findings from the quantitative research to the entire population by means of a larger sample and to understand the mechanisms that underlie the outcomes at the local or micro-interactional level by means of the qualitative research (Boeijs, 2010). Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on EDM experiences and motivations allow for the results to be compared together to check for congruency. Finally, questionnaires were important for this study because they made it easier to compare the main conclusions of past studies on event motivations, fulfilling one of the research sub-questions. By comparing the results from this study to those of other event studies we can find out more about the EDM experience and its unique qualities.

### **Dependability**

Dependability concerns the consistency of the study overtime (Morrow, 2005). This study can be considered dependable. Throughout the process of this research study, the same approach and theories were used upon the same general topic of EDM festival cultures and experiences. The interview guide remained the same throughout the process as well as the questionnaire questions. The same demeanour and enthusiasm was shown to each interview respondent to ensure a similar atmosphere for each participant. If another researcher were to use the same survey and interview questions than the ones in this study, the results would be similar. Even if the researcher decided to re-word or change a few of the questions the results would likely be similar because the interviews are mainly open questions that allow for people to describe their thoughts on EDM festivals and their motivations to attend. It would be very interesting to repeat this study in different parts of the world to see if the EDM music festival scene has any differences depending on the location.

## 5. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE OF EDM IN THE NETHERLANDS

### 5.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

A questionnaire was administered to receive background knowledge about EDM fan demographics, motivations and experiences at EDM festivals and to frame the in-depth, qualitative research study. This study found that the average age of an EDM fan from this sample in the Netherlands is 22.5 years old. 92% of the respondents were between the ages of 19-26. The only other age group represented was the older, 27-30 years old age group, with 8% of the total respondents population fitting into this category. There were no responses in the 18 and under category, nor in the 30 and over category.

The questionnaire was completed by 37 females (51%) and 35 males (49%), this shows that EDM festivals are enjoyed virtually evenly between the sexes. The main nationality represented in the questionnaire results was Dutch (87.5%), with a few responses from Canadian, German, Spanish, Greek and Indian nationalities. This means that according to this study, most people attending EDM festivals in the Netherlands are Dutch but other nationalities do attend EDM festivals as well.

51% of respondents have been to more than five EDM festivals. This was the largest response category of this sample, which may mean that EDM festivals are not a one-time visit event but are seen as places to go more often than once. 32% of respondents have been to 2-4 festivals and 17% of respondents have only been to one festival.

### 5.2 MOTIVATIONS

There were three main motivation questions in the questionnaire. One to isolate the main push factors people have for attending EDM events, one to isolate the main pull factors and one larger question to see which, out of all those options, was the main motive to go to an EDM festival.

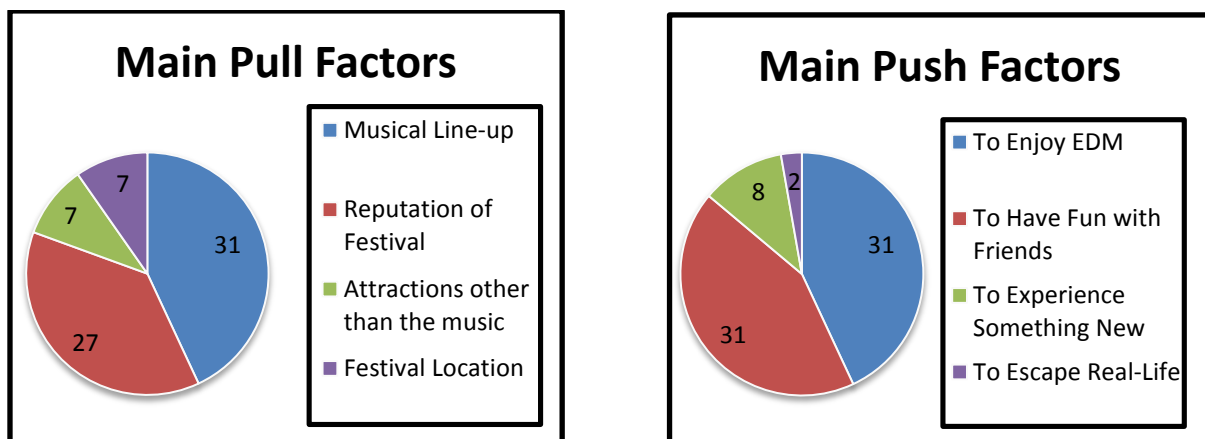
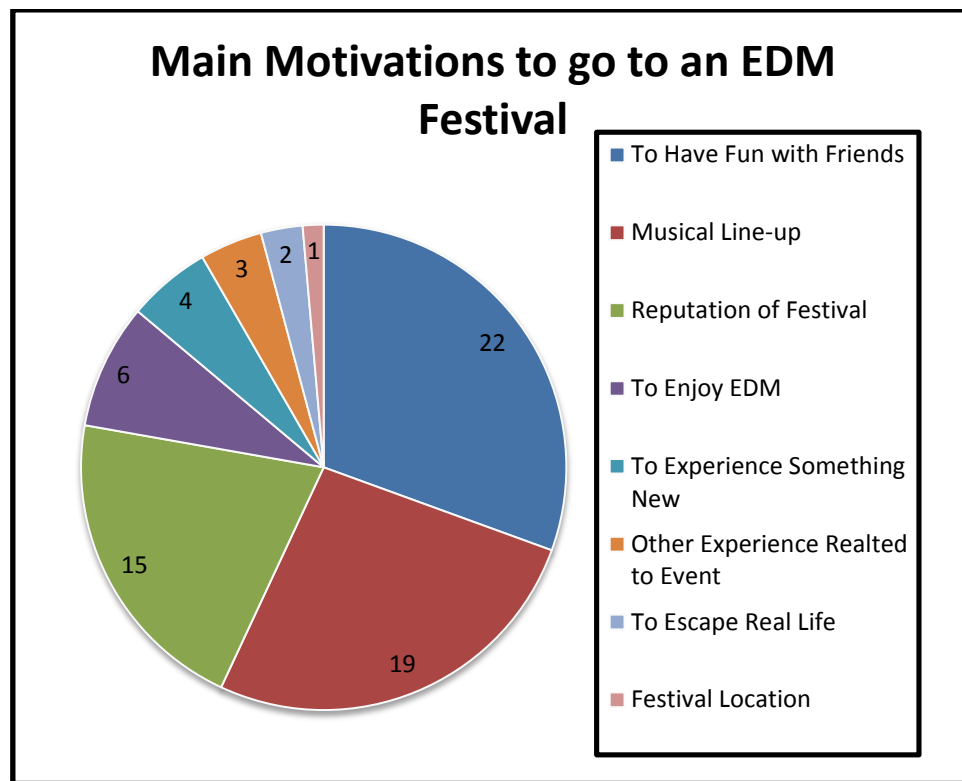


FIGURE 4 MAIN PUSH AND PULL FACTORS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

The main pull and push factors can be found in Figure 4. 'Musical line-up' (43%) was the most important pull factor for attending an EDM festival, followed by the 'Reputation of the festival' (37%), and the other two factors were tied: 'Attractions other than the music' (10%) and 'Festival location' (10%). 'To enjoy EDM' and 'To have fun with friends' were the most

important push factors for attending EDM festivals (43% each). Then 'To experience something new' (11%) and 'To escape real life' (3%).

In order to find out the main overall factor to attend EDM festivals, one overall motivation question was posed and the results can be seen in Figure 5. The top 3 overall motives for attending an EDM festival were: 'To have fun with friends' (30%), 'Musical line-up' (26%) and 'Reputation of festival' (21%). All other responses were chosen less than 10% of the time: 'To enjoy live EDM' (8%), 'To experience something new' (6%), 'Other experience related to event' (4%), 'To escape real-life' (3%) and 'Location of event' (2%).



**FIGURE 5 MAIN MOTIVATIONS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE**

The top responses from the main motivations to go to EDM festivals matched up with the top two responses from the two previous questions concerning the main push and pull factors. The top pull factor to go to an EDM festival, was the 'Musical line up' and the second highest response was the 'Reputation of the festival'. The top push factor was 'To enjoy EDM' music and the second highest response was 'To have fun with friends'.

The top responses for overall motivation to go were:

1. To have fun with friends (#2 push factor)
2. Musical line-up (#1 pull factor)
3. Reputation of festival (#2 pull factor)
4. To enjoy EDM (#1 push factor)

These findings tell us that both push and pull factors are important to people when deciding to go to EDM festivals.

### 5.3 ACTIVITIES

The main activities at EDM festivals are dancing (100%), drinking alcohol (94%), socializing (86%) and taking drugs (78%). Respondents were asked to choose which activities (in a list) were present at their past festival experiences. Dancing is the number one activity at dance events, which makes sense because that is the general point of 'dance' festivals. Drinking alcohol, socializing and taking drugs all seem to be main activities present at EDM events. Other activities that are sometimes present at EDM festivals are camping (30%) and festival games (32%). The 'other' category included responses such as: eating, shopping, sex, admiring art, attending lectures and workshops, hula hooping and swimming.

### 5.4 SATISFACTION

Overall, EDM festival visitors are satisfied with their past EDM experiences. The majority of the respondents chose either 'High'(42%) or 'Very High'(50%) satisfaction levels.



Image: MysteryLand Festival from <http://www.festicket.com/festival/mysteryland/>

## 6. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section describes the results of this study from the interview data. The central research question, “*What are the main experiential aspects of EDM festival events in the Netherlands?*” will be uncovered through the analysis of the interview data. All sub-questions will be realised and will be discussed further in Chapter 7, the discussion. This results section will present its results using the Conceptual Framework Model as an outline. Seen below in Figure 6 for convenience.

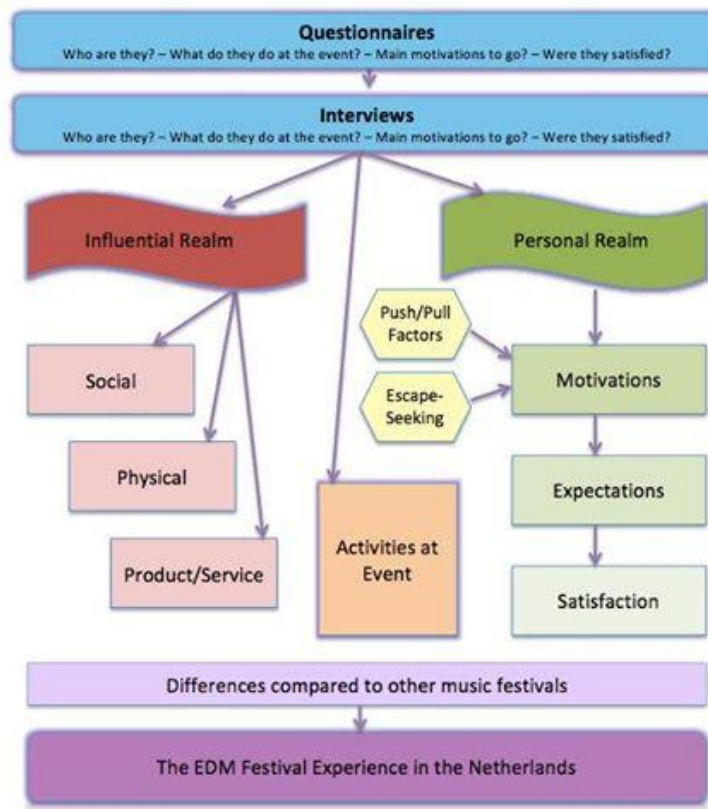


FIGURE 6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MODEL

### 6.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of the interview respondents can be viewed below in Table 1. In total, 15 interviews were conducted; 9 interviewees were female and 6 were male. All respondents had Dutch nationality and were between the ages of 21 and 27. The average age of the respondents' was 23.67. Every respondent was a student at the University level except for one, who was a primary school teacher.

**TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHICS OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS**

Interviewee #	Age	Gender	Nationality	# of EDM Festivals	Occupation
1	25	F	Dutch	10	Student
2	24	F	Dutch	7-8	Student
3	23	F	Dutch	12	Student
4	21	M	Dutch	5	Student
5	21	M	Dutch	2	Student
6	24	M	Dutch	50	Student
7	23	M	Dutch	10	Student
8	25	M	Dutch	10-15	Student
9	27	M	Dutch	20	Student
10	24	F	Dutch	50	Student
11	26	F	Dutch	15-20	Teacher
12	23	F	Dutch	1	Student
13	22	F	Dutch	7-8	Student
14	25	F	Dutch	10-15	Student
15	22	F	Dutch	20-30	Student

These demographics match the findings from the questionnaire data; EDM festival attendees from this sample tend to be between the age of 19-27, with an equal representation between males and females. Most respondents in this study have been to five or more EDM festivals. Therefore EDM festivals are not typically one-time destinations, they are an event that young Dutch people in this sample visit frequently.

## The Personal Realm

### 6.2 MOTIVATIONS

In this sample, people went to EDM festivals for different reasons and by knowing and understanding these reasons; one can understand the EDM culture and festival experience better. Many different motivations were present in the interview data, these motivations were analysed with and divided into push and pull categories as seen in Table 2. Some of the main motivations to emerge from the interviews include: to have fun with friends, to escape daily life, good musical line-up, great atmosphere, to enjoy EDM live and safe place to do and experience the effects of drugs.

**TABLE 2 MAIN PUSH AND PULL FACTORS FROM INTERVIEW DATA**

Main Push Factors	Main Pull Factors
To have fun with friends	Good musical line-up
To escape daily life	To enjoy EDM live
Great atmosphere	Great atmosphere
Safe place to do drugs	Intense drug effects
Seeking new experiences	Set-up of festival
Peer influence	Summer/Outdoor festival
Word of mouth	Familiarity of festival
	Reputation of festival
	Proximity and Location

### **6.2.1 To Have Fun with Friends**

The top motive, 'To have fun with friends' matches up with the findings from the questionnaire data (Chapter 5). This motive can be defined as a push factor because people are enticed to go to EDM festivals to spend more time with their friends outside of their usual socializing habits and places. Most of the interviewees mentioned this as their top motive for attending EDM festivals in this sample. This is a likely choice considering the age group of the EDM sector, people between the age of 21-27, this age group commonly likes to spend more time with friends over family or colleagues. Overall, EDM festivals are sought after to provide a unique and exciting setting to have fun with friends.

"Yeah my two main motives are that I want to go with my friends and to a festival I like. But I think the most important is to be with my friends. Because when they are there, you are with them and it's so nice to be with them. Not going on your own to a festival. (Respondent #3)."

"My main reason to go would be if my friends are going. And if it was an experience that they wanted to do and were excited about (Respondent #12)."

EDM festivals are not only necessarily for EDM fans, they are also a fun place to go to hang out with friends (who may or may not be EDM music fans). Most respondents did consider EDM to be one of their favourite music genres but a small portion of the respondents noted that they often go simply because all of their friends are going. EDM festivals provide an alternative location to have fun with friends, rather than the 'same old' bars or usual hangouts they usually go to.

### **6.2.2 To Escape Daily Life**

'To escape daily life' is an interesting finding from the interview data because it ranked very low in the questionnaire results. This motive is also a push factor that induces people to want to leave their everyday life to enjoy something more special for a while. During the interviews, many respondents isolated this motive as the most important reason to go to an EDM festival. This could be because during an interview, respondents are more likely to have more time to reflect and think more clearly than when they are filling in a quick questionnaire. The motive to escape everyday life is one that requires deeper self-reflection as to why they really go to these events. EDM festivals seem to be a good place to get away from the routine and boredom of daily life.

"I guess it's just enjoying the moment and not like really focused on stuff that's on your mind like, "Oh I have to do this, I have to do that." When you're at a festival, and it's a good festival, you're just enjoying the moment there and the music and you forget about your troubles (Respondent #8)."

"Yeah definitely. Even when I leave on the last day, we say, "Oh now we have to go back to the normal world." It's kind of like a perfect world. You want to stay there every day (Respondent #15)."

### **6.2.3 Musical Line-Up and To Enjoy EDM Live**

'Good musical line-up' and 'To enjoy EDM live', also found in the questionnaire findings, are very important motivational factors for EDM festivalgoers in the Netherlands according to this sample. Both of these motives represent pull factors that draws people into attending these



festivals. These motivational factors are related to the music style of the event and this is understandably, a common motivation factor for people going to music festivals. Most of the respondents enjoy EDM music and therefore have knowledge about their favourite DJs and go to the festivals to enjoy the music they find appealing. The respondents who placed this motive as their most important factor, were all very big fans of EDM and have all been to many festivals.

You've said a few motivations, can you choose one main motivation that is why you go to EDM festivals? "Yeah well I think I'll stick with the artists playing (Respondent #7)."

"I think more about the music, like the festival has to be really good and then the price doesn't really matter. I would rather go to one really expensive festival that is really good with really nice music and DJs, than do like four small festivals which are not really up to standard (Respondent #13)."

There are some respondents that go to EDM festivals specifically for the artists playing at the event. This is a big factor for deciding between different festivals to go to. They would rather go to a good festival with good artists than to one with substandard artists, simply because their friends wanted them to go. 'To enjoy EDM live' is similar to the main motive of going for the musical line-up but in this case, it is meant that festivals are a great place to enjoy the music genre the way that it was supposed to be enjoyed: loud, live, surrounded by lots of other people, visual effects to add to the excitement and intense lighting performances.

"Especially if you really like EDM, if you go out to a regular bar or club, most of the time the music is not really that great. Like if you're really looking for EDM. But at these festivals most of the time it's guaranteed that the music is really nice. (Respondent #8)."

EDM festivals are the best place to hear EDM music according to this respondent and this fact was also found to be an important physical influential factor and it relates to the overall atmosphere and set up of festivals.

#### **6.2.4 Great Atmosphere**

Great atmosphere appears to be a very important component of the EDM festival experience. Table 2 shows that great atmosphere appears to be both a push and pull factor for EDM festival visitors. The great atmosphere of EDM festivals can push people to leave their homes in search of a more exciting and memorable experience.

"I really liked the music and the whole atmosphere. I liked the music they played and I liked the atmosphere they gave to the people cause you really see people electrified by the music, it gives them energy and they're willing to dance all day and that's really nice. So that's the main thing. The music and the atmosphere that the people have there (Respondent #5)."

The atmosphere that EDM festivals can provide for people is also very enticing because of how different it is from daily life. This respondent notes the energy of the atmosphere and the ability to dance all day long. This relates to the other push factors: to escape daily life, new experiences, relax outside and meet new people because they all offer experiences that push people away from their everyday home life.

However, it seems as if the respondents in this study also see atmosphere as a *pull* factor of EDM festival events. Respondents described EDM festivals as a place to go and enjoy the music and atmosphere that is exciting, social, non-violent and socially accepting. EDM festivals provide this kind of setting, with an entirely different kind of atmosphere that most nightclubs or bars lack.

“What pops in mind first I think, is the great atmosphere because there’s so many people at one place but still I haven’t been in a fight or seen a fight or anything like that. At most parties it’s really common. Because I live in Eindhoven and just if you went out clubbing there, there’s always fighting, knife stabbings and even shooting each other and I’ve never seen anything like that at a dance festival (Respondent #5).”

Besides offering a physically safe place, EDM festivals have very open and accepting social atmosphere that allow people to be themselves and to let loose of their inhibitions.



Image: MysteryLand Festival from <http://www.festicket.com/festival/mysteryland/>

### *People being themselves*

“Everyone is just enjoying themselves and being themselves. That’s really nice about these festivals everyone can be themselves and want to be themselves. So you see people dancing like their crazy moves and they don’t care what other people think and that’s really lovely I think (Respondent #5).”

“But in general people are kind of loose if you know what I mean, like they dress up funny and they carry signs with them and all kinds of creative, like funny stuff. That you wouldn’t just find in the street. So I guess for some people it’s kind of a place to act like a child I guess. Like being really playful (Respondent #8).”

### *Letting loose/Opening up*

“The way I see it is like normally in day to day life people are more focused at work and what they have to do to survive so I can imagine they are more closed off but when you’re at a festival you’re just there to just enjoy yourself and have a good time so then I think it’s also natural to be more open (Respondent #9).”

“But that’s kind of like, going there and just releasing all the energy and just dancing with my eyes closed and just enjoy the music and I grab everywhere around me but that’s not important because everyone is just enjoying it so much (Respondent #15).”

Participants described the EDM experience as a time to get rid of their regular personal inhibitions and decide to be free to move and behave without restrictions or judgement. All of these findings represent the EDM experience as a unique setting to escape from the daily life of acting a certain way and keeping yourself and your actions reserved. EDM festivals seem provide a place for people to escape the routine and constraints of their everyday life and to find intrinsic rewards at the festival itself via the great atmosphere, social setting and liberty of behaviour and expression.

### 6.2.5 Drug Use

Drug use is another motivational factor that has emerged from the data as an interesting finding in relation to the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands. According to this sample, EDM festivals are a socially acceptable place to do drugs. It allows people to let loose and to really experience escaping real life for a while. The push category, *Safe place to do drugs* explains the concept that some people are *pushed* to go to EDM festivals because it is different from daily-life since it provides a more socially acceptable place to take drugs free from the normal criticisms and negativity this activity brings in everyday life. EDM festivals seem to allow people to let loose and to really experience escaping real life for a while.

“That’s the one day that you’re allowed to do it (drugs) because when you do it in the daily life it’s not as fit because there it is magical. Because at Hardstyle its mostly ecstasy and cocaine but not psychedelic. And at house festivals it’s more like speed and ecstasy and then at Psy-Trans it’s more like acid and truffles. The kind of things that give you visuals more that fits with the decorations and the music and its ok to do it there (Respondent #14).”

#### *Intense drug effects*

On the other hand, drug use at EDM events is also considered a pull factor because EDM festivals attendees from this sample describe the festivals as places that unofficially promoted the use of drugs as part of the experience. Respondents were *pulled* to go to EDM festivals because of the intense experience they can have there while experiencing the festival and listening to the music under the influence of drugs. The effects drugs have on people create a more intense experience that can only be had at an EDM festival event with the correct atmosphere surrounding it. The link between EDM and taking drugs is very strong and well documented. Earlier we explained that these festivals provide a safe and socially acceptable place to do drugs but here is it more about the actual effects of drugs on the experience.

“You fall in love with everyone, the music sounds better and your feet don’t hurt (Respondent #6).”

“It’s like your senses are getting sharper and everything hits you more emotionally (Respondent #9).”

“For me the thing I remember the most after taking drugs is more like the total feeling, but also the music sounds better, the lights are more beautiful. It’s more intense in a very positive way (Respondent #14).”

Drugs seemingly add to the experience and make it better, and this is why the link between EDM and drug use is so popular and widespread. The music sounds better, the lights are more intense, your social connections are deeper and you feel more emotionally positive overall.

### 6.2.6 Set-up of Festival and Summer/Outdoor Festival

The setting and set up of EDM festivals in the Netherlands are incredibly important to the overall experience for visitors. EDM festivals are known for their elaborate stage designs and decorations, and this provides an out-of-worldly experience for the visitors to the event.

“Well I think when it comes to the total festival experience I think that TomorrowLand was the best because the location was just perfect, you have the camping and you set up your tent and you have to walk around a kilometer to the festival but once you get on the festival terrain there are a lot of people and suddenly there’s a huge hill which goes down and you get goose bumps because you see maybe 50,000 people just standing there and looking at the stage (Respondent #7).”

EDM festivals are well known for their ‘set-ups’. This can be seen in all the major event promotion images for various EDM festivals. They often show large, elaborate stages with intricate designs and decorations as well as bright, intense and large-scale lighting effects. Most festivals are located outside, on interesting geographical locations such as hillsides, beside a lake or in a desert. This elaborate ‘set-up’ style of EDM events is an important quality of EDM festivals and it does affect the overall experience of people at the event and therefore their overall motives to attend as well. The ‘Summer/Outdoor festival’ code was often mentioned by participants and it was clear that outdoor EDM festivals are preferred over indoor events.



Image: Set up of EDM festival Defqon 1 from <http://www.mtviggy.com/articles/festival-report-the-hardstyle-cult-descends-on-defqon-1/>

“I just like to be outdoors, and especially when the sun is shining of course, you can just sit in the grass and relax and enjoy the good weather. Music on in the background and yeah, that’s what I like (Respondent #5).”

“Yeah the festivals are the nicest during the summer and then it is outdoor and you have the whole atmosphere there (Respondent #13).”

“I prefer outdoor because the you have all the space and you can go everywhere and you don’t have to be in one room with all the people and you can sit, hula hoop, drink somewhere (Respondent #15).”

Summer, outdoor festivals are very popular because it adds an extra feature to the festival: being able to spend time outside. This is a limited activity for people nowadays, considering that most jobs and education take place indoors, so it is a popular motive for this sample to consider when attending EDM festivals. Both the setting and the set-up of a festival can be considered pull factors for the event because they give people reasons to go to this particular event to enjoy a certain kind of entertainment.

#### **6.2.7 Familiarity of Festival and Seeking New Experiences**

Two other important, contradictory motivational codes were 'Familiarity of festival' and 'Seeking new experiences'. Familiarity of a festival is an aspect of a particular festival that pulls people towards revisiting it, whereas, the seeking new experiences code is an internal push factor that pushed people to go out and experience new things. Familiarity of festival was an interesting code because it seems as if people enjoy going back to the same festivals again rather than always going to new ones.

"Yeah there are more festivals over the years that I go back to again. Most of the festivals I go to over the year are festivals that I've been to before. And I really enjoy it and I know I have a good time there (Respondent #8)."

"Yeah because you know how it's like and you know other friends are going too. Like Psyfi, it's going to be my 3<sup>rd</sup> time this year but I'm sure I will go there again in future years. Yeah I have such a good feeling about this festival (Respondent #10)."

Due to the fact that there are hundreds of EDM festivals in the Netherlands with lots of variety, one could think that people would be interested in experiencing as many as possible over time. But it seems as if returning to the same festival, if it was enjoyed the first time, is a common practice among some EDM festival attendees. The safety in the fact that you know what to expect, comforts people when deciding which festivals to go to.

Contrarily, the 'Seeking new experiences' factor demonstrates that some people enjoy going to new festivals, for new experiences instead of going to the same festival multiple times.

"Mostly the first year you go somewhere, like the first time you experience a festival, it's the best experience (Respondent #7)."

"I think the whole complete experience. Yeah because I like to listen to the music, dance to the music. But I also try to do something new every year (Respondent #9)."

It seems as if, depending on the person and their motives, people can either want to go to a familiar festival with a familiar experience or to a new festival with new experiences.

#### **6.2.8 Reputation of Festival and Proximity and Location**

Reputation of festival is a strong pull factor because popularity and portrayal in the media can have a large effect on people's motivations to go.

"Uhh, well where it is and what I know about it. I learn more about festivals thanks to aftermovies or people who've been there tell me about it, maybe friends who've visited it and also yeah which, what the line-up is, which artists are coming. And sometimes you

have new festivals and just how they are presented in the media also influences me in some way (Respondent #7)."

"It's a well-known festival in the region where a lot of my family and friends are and they always talk about it and so I was going to be around there and I thought I also wanted to experience the concert and go and have fun and enjoy it with my friends (Respondent #12)."

The idea that people want to experience something famous and legendary is a very strong pull factor that gets people to go to certain events or destinations. Another very strong pull factor is proximity and location. If a festival is happening nearby, people are more likely to attend it because it does not require a lot of planning or travel. Furthermore, it is likely that other people (friends/family) in the area would be going as well (Respondent #12) so it would be a nice social experience for someone living close to a festival location.

### **6.2.9 Peer Influence and Word of Mouth**

Other meaningful results found in the transcripts, are the concepts of peer influence and word of mouth motivations. Both factors are considered to be push factors that drive to go to EDM festivals. Peer influence was found in respondents who explained that they would sometimes go to EDM festivals because their friends swayed them to go.

So with the group I am with now like, many of them all do the same things over the years and we have the same kind of feelings and within that there are some differences and we can also influence each other so it's like when one likes specifically that, they try to influence the others to go (Respondent #9)."

Similar to this motive is word of mouth, when respondents would hear good things about a festival and would be then internally motivated to go experience it themselves (with or without their friends). A lot of respondents mentioned that they heard about a festival from a friend so they wanted to go themselves and this seemed to be a common idea amongst many of the respondents. This can be considered a push factor because people's suggestions are helpful in pushing people to go to a certain festival.

"I heard from many people that it was really nice. And I think I only missed the first addition. But then I heard so many good stories so I wanted to experience it myself (Respondent #1)."

"I really would like to go to Qlimax sometime because friends of mine go there as well and they had really great experiences (Respondent #5)."

A lot of respondents mentioned that word of mouth was important to their decision making process of which festival to attend. EDM festivals are frequented mostly by youths, who are connected entirely by cell phones, Facebook, Twitter, etc., so the influence of word of mouth motivation is incredibly powerful.

## 6.3 EXPECTATIONS

An open question about expectations was posed during the interviews, “Do you often go to festivals with expectations? If so, where do these come from?” The main response was to say that they just hoped it would be a fun experience, with good music and weather. Overall, there were not any clear expectations for the festival itself besides hoping that the music would be nice or to simply have a good time. A typical response was to go to a festival without any expectations because that would lead to a better experience.

“I don’t know I don’t think I really have a lot of expectations in general. I try to approach things without having too much expectations because it could just spoils the experience (Respondent #8).”

“No not really I think. Only when I’ve been there before because then I think ok that was fun and it must be the same or something. Then I have an idea but when I don’t know the festival I don’t really have expectations of something. My only expectation is that it has to be fun or something (Respondent #11).”

Therefore, the overall expectation was to have no expectations, in order to enjoy the festival as much as possible.

“Usually I did (have expectations) but I’m trying to let go of that because I noticed that when you have an expectation of something and its different, you don’t enjoy it as much. Because different is not always negative or positive it’s just different. But when you expect something else its different negative. So I try to go open minded because I had that last summer I was going to a party in Croatia and I was going with a such a good friend and we were going hitchhiking and it was paradise and then we came there and it was not as much fun as I had expected and the music was louder and different than I had expected so I did not enjoy it as much and I kind of blame myself for that because I had such high expectations. So I’m trying not to, just go and make the best of it. I know there’s going to be music but I don’t really have expectations of what the music is going to be and I don’t really have expectations of how the environment and the decorations will be, I just go. Because then it’s all new and it doesn’t have to add up to something (Respondent #15).”

The overall expectation of most EDM visitors was to have no expectations in order to enjoy the festival as much as possible and to avoid dissatisfaction. This shows that EDM festivals are really a place for people to go to be amazed, surprised, enjoyed and carefree.

## 6.4 SATISFACTION

During the interviews, an open question on satisfaction was asked to see if people were generally satisfied after attending an EDM festival. A large majority of respondents responded that they have never had a bad experience. This is also related to the expectation section above where it was stated that most people go to EDM festivals without expectations so that their chances of high satisfaction levels after the festival, are higher. For the three respondents that did have an experience that was not satisfactory, their reasons are as follows:

“I had a great time but it was the worst festival experience I had. They had the two biggest stages as far away from each other, so you had to walk for 20 minutes, on small roads with 60,000 people (Respondent #6).”

“Yes once I was at a festival, one of my first, and there they really badly organized the buses back to the train station and there were not enough buses (Respondent #13).”

These respondents were not satisfied in a more logistical or organizational way. This means that festival organizers must ensure that the organization of a festival is well thought-out because it has the potential to influence attendee’s opinions on the overall festival experience in the end.

“Well I went to a TikTak festival once, and at one question I answered that at some festivals it’s just for the money and you can see through and in my opinion that festival focused a bit too much on the money. It’s just that they booked some nice artist but those artists were on the same stage and they didn’t really fit together. While if you have a good festival, they will book artists with different artists that will fit on the same stage. Like a DJ that plays more softer tunes will begin and it will advance to more harder music. Which is a logical transition but at TikTak festival is was all over the place. In my opinion they just booked well-known artists instead of their own passion for music, music that they really want to play there (Respondent #7).”

This respondent was not satisfied with the organization of the festival and thought it was focused too much on the money. The respondent picked up the sense that the festival line-up was contrived or forced rather than a real authentic festival experience. This respondent prefers festivals with a natural performance order and musical progression that can be found in authentic EDM festivals with well thought-out and planned musical line-ups.

#### **6.4.1 Satisfaction Related to Drugs**

One interesting finding that emerged from the analysis was the notion of having a bad experience at a festival related to drugs.

“There must be one but I can’t think now. Last year I had a bad trip on LSD but it was really, really not nice so I screwed the festival up for myself. But it was not the festival. It had nothing to do with the festival. But it was a really bad experience (Respondent #10).”

“Yeah most of them, I don’t remember a bad experience. Oh it was one time! But it was with drugs that was not a good thing. It was New Year’s Eve and we went to a festival and it was my first time I tried (ecstasy) but I didn’t know what to expect what I was feeling and it was so weird that I just stood against the wall and just watched but it was so not me because I always like to dance and that evening I didn’t dance at all. It was very weird and I didn’t like it (Respondent #11).”

These quotations show that drug usage has the potential to affect people’s satisfaction levels. Festival organizers cannot change this unless they tightly monitor the drugs involved at their festivals but drugs have been shown to be a major part of the EDM experience so this poses a problem.



## 6.5 EDM FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

TABLE 3 MAIN ACTIVITIES AT EDM FESTIVALS FROM INTERVIEW DATA

Activities at EDM Festivals
Dancing
Take drugs
Drinking/Eating
Talking
To enjoy EDM
Relax outside
Camping experience
People watching
Walk around
Workshops

During the interviews, respondents were asked what types of things they did at EDM festivals. The answers were coded and the main codes that appeared during this part of the interview were as follows. The top responses were (1) dancing, (2) take drugs, (3) drinking/eating, and (4) talking. The rest of the activities mentioned during the interviews can be seen in Table 3. What is interesting is to see that drug use is quite high amongst the list. Another interesting result is the activity of People watching. This was not an expected result but a very interesting idea that promotes the thought that EDM festivals are not only spectacles for DJ's, lights and stage design, but also for people to perform and be watched in some way. This concept is further explained in section 6.6.2 which explains the social influences of EDM festivals.

## 6.6 THE INFLUENTIAL REALM

### 6.6.1 PHYSICAL

The physical aspects of a festival are incredibly important. As seen in the motivation section, the set-up of a festival was ranked as the second most important pull factor for people at EDM festivals. Most of the activities present at EDM festivals are related to the physical aspects of the festival. Walking around, relaxing outside, attending workshops and camping experience (from Table 3) are all connected to the physical set-up of a festival. Depending on the location of the festival (near a lake or river, on a hill, in a desert, etc.) and the set-up (distance between stages, pathways, relaxation areas, campground, etc.) festival activities are created. The set-up of the festival and the location are equally important physical aspects of the EDM festival experience. One recurring physical aspect of EDM festivals in the interview transcripts was planning the festival to be location *beside a body of water*.

"But Extrema had this very nice atmosphere, but also the location was perfect because it was on a nice beach with, yeah like a created one, but it's a great lake and you have a beach there (Respondent #5)."

"Yeah it's got a lake and the festival didn't start until later in the day and it was really, really hot so during the day you could just go for a swim in the lake and cool down. It was really nice (Respondent#8)."

"Well it was sort of surrounding a lake so it was really beautiful and there were all kind of stages and wherever you walked you saw the lake and the camping (Respondent #13)."

This not only improved the setting of the festival, but it also gave visitors another activity to do while they were there, therefore adding another dimension to the festival experience. It also provided another place to socialize and have fun with friends, which are both important features of festival events.

Another physical aspect of EDM festivals that was important was *proximity* and the actual location of a festival. Quite a few respondents mentioned that they preferred when the festival was close so that they did not have to travel far to get there.

“I really liked it and it’s kind of close to my house so it’s easy to go there (Respondent #1).”

“I prefer somewhere close to where I live. So I don’t have to travel very far (Respondent #4).”

This concept has been seen before as one of the middle-ranking pull factors in this study (See Table 2). EDM fans tend to go to multiple festivals in one year, instead of only experiencing the event once in a lifetime. If people go to multiple festivals during one summer, then it would make sense to choose ones that are nearby so the travel costs are less. One respondent also mentioned that there was a link between multiple-day festivals and distance to event.

### **6.6.2 SOCIAL**

The social aspects of a festival are equally important as the physical aspects. Considering the top motivation results, the social atmosphere of a festival must be up to par so people can be able to ‘have fun with friends’. Festivals are meant to be social places for people to go and have a good time and to celebrate.

“Yeah that’s a strange thing people are really open minded and really genuine to each other and if they like something, how you move, what you wear what you do, they don’t hesitate to talk to you and that’s really in today’s society you don’t see that every day. Because if you walk in the street here with your iPod on and your music in and nobody talks to you and over there just people talk to each other and before you know it you’re talking to a person you’ve never met for half an hour about anything (Respondent #5).”

“You can talk to everyone, you can enjoy the sun and I meet friends I don’t see that often (Respondent #10).”

The main activities at EDM festivals (Table 3) are heavily related to the social aspect of festivals. All of the activities are related in some way to social interaction between festival guests. Dancing, talking, taking drugs, drinking, eating and people watching are all related to being with other people while being done. Interestingly, a third of the respondents mentioned ‘people watching’ as a festival activity at EDM events.

“It’s also sometimes nice to see how other people act at different stages for example at the Hardstyle part more people take drugs and there acting really funny sometimes. So when you’re tired of the dancing it’s nice to go there and see, just watch people (Respondent #1).”

“At most festivals people are on ecstasy and you really see that and it’s also really funny to see because sometimes I don’t take anything and I just watch people because it’s really

funny to watch and they are really happy with their smiles and making eye contact with everyone (Respondent #10)."

This study found that people watching is an important behaviour at EDM events. This demonstrates the open and accepting, yet playfully critical views people have at dance events.

### **6.6.3 FESTIVAL PRODUCT/SERVICE**

Considering EDM festivals as a product, there were a few aspects of a festival that were apparent in the results that are preferred by EDM fans. Summer/outdoor festivals were the most popular type of EDM festival according to the respondents in this study.

"I just like to be outdoors, and especially when the sun is shining of course, you can just sit in the grass and relax and enjoy the good weather. Music on in the background and yeah. That's what I like (Respondent #5)."

"Yeah the festivals are the nicest during the summer and then it is outdoor and you have the whole atmosphere there (Respondent #13)."

"I prefer outdoor because the you have all the space and you can go everywhere and you don't have to be in one room with all the people and you can sit, hula hoop, drink somewhere (Respondent #15)."

Furthermore, the set-up of the festival also included the number of days of the event. Many respondents mentioned that they preferred multiple day events.

"Yeah. I like whole weekends more... I think they're more fun because you have to leave early in the morning and then your home in your own bed and that nothing for me. I like three-day festivals. It feels like a vacation and I don't like going home after such a great evening. Cause it's never close home so usually it's like at least an hour of travelling. You have to get home at 11 and there are 50 000 people all in the same train...its...and if you, if all those people go to the camping everybody is still like oh great day. We're going to have a party on the camping. So it's an extra experience I think (Respondent #6)."

This is related to the idea that multiple day events resemble more of a vacation than a one-day festival outing. Multiple day events include camping, an extra enjoyable aspect of multiple day festivals.

"It feels like a vacation and I don't like going home after such a great evening. Cause it's never close home so usually it's like at least an hour of travelling. You have to get home at 11 and there are 50 000 people all in the same train...its...and if you, if all those people go to the camping everybody is still like oh great day. We're going to have a party on the camping. So it's an extra experience I think (Respondent #6)."

"We stayed at this campsite, which was walking distance from the festival terrain. During the day we would mostly just relax, swim in the lake, chill by the tents and socialize with our neighbours. And then we would go over to the festival terrain that started around 4pm and ended around maybe 6am or something (Respondent #8)."

The camping experience at an outdoor festival was an important part of the festival experience for some respondents. It expanded their festival experience into something that included vacation-like qualities such as; living away from home for a few nights, drinking and eating different foods that normal, socializing with others while living alongside them and allowing

themselves to be as close as possible to the festival action, while also diminishing travel time and frustration. This physical aspect of festivals is an important part of modern music festival culture in more genres than just EDM.

The final code that emerged from the interview transcripts relating to festival product, was ticket price. There was a divide between hard-core EDM fans and people who simply enjoy going to EDM festivals for fun but not so much for the music.

“But also the price when it’s very expensive or far away then I think well no, I’m not going (Respondent #3).”

“Yeah well I think every day about it (EDM) so I don’t really mind the price (Respondent #6).”

This mentality is common for people who spend more money on the things they love, as opposed to things they do not like very much.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The results section outlined the main findings from this study's sample, regarding the total EDM experience in the Netherlands including; festival motivations, expectations, satisfaction levels and influential realm factors. Overall, the results linked up to past studies on festival experiences but some differences and unique findings were present. This section will discuss and examine the major findings and their importance to the understanding of the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands.

### Questionnaire Findings

This research project aimed to understand the EDM festival experience in the Netherlands by studying the motivations, expectations and satisfaction levels of its attendees. It also examined the different physical, social and product/service factors of the EDM experience. This study's sample population included males and females between the ages of 19-27, which matched the findings from the questionnaire data in Chapter 5. The large majority of the Dutch people studied, have been to multiple festival events (mostly in the summer), and have been attending these festivals for several years already.

### 7.1 MOTIVATIONS

Many motivations were found to influence interview participants when they decided to go to an EDM festival. This study highlighted the main motivations that the interviewee's had for going to these events and in turn, these motivations helped to explain and inform the EDM experience. The two motivational theories used to understand these results were the push/pull theory and the escape-seeking dichotomy. A deeper analysis of the main findings was completed using these theories to uncover the underlying meanings and realities of EDM festivalgoers the Netherlands.

#### Main Push Factors

The main push factors that the respondents have for going to EDM festivals are: to have fun with friends, to escape daily life, to enjoy the great atmosphere of the events, to have a safe place to go and use drugs, to seek new experiences, and because of strong peer influence and word of mouth incentives. These are all important internal reasons respondents had for going to EDM festivals.

Most of all, the respondents in this study desire to have a relaxing and memorable place to *have fun with their friends*. According to this study, this is both the main overall reason people go to EDM festivals in the Netherlands and the most important push factor. This finding matched previous studies on festival motivation, which found that socializing with friends and family is important across all festival types (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). This motivational factor is considered a push factor that drives people to leave their everyday life in search of more interesting and significant places to have fun with friends. Considering the age group of the people who attend EDM festivals, this is an understandable motive because people between the age of 19-26 are often students or young professionals/workers who still enjoy 'partying' with friends and having a good time, as opposed to adults with young children or older people who generally do not 'party' as often (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Uysal, Zimmerer, & Bonn, 1990). Past socio-demographic studies related to tourist motivation found that marital status effected motivation because single subjects tended to place more importance on 'having fun' and 'being entertained', whereas married subjects tended to put more value on 'spending time with someone special' and 'family togetherness' (Uysal et al., 1990).

The next top push factor is to *escape the everyday routine* of real-life. EDM festivals are known for their out-of-worldly settings and atmospheres where people can experience different things from normal life (dancing, drugs, loud music, bright lights) and they can act differently compared to the standard behaviour of the professional and modern world. This motive can also be found in other past festival studies (Li & Petrick, 2006). Iso Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy can further explain this result because escaping described as the desire to leave the everyday environment behind oneself (Iso-Ahola, 1980). The hyper-social atmosphere, intense decorations, extremely loud music and accepting attitudes at this kind of events allows for a great place to escape from everyday life. EDM festivals provide this setting, where people can escape their problems and simply enjoy themselves for a while.

*Great atmosphere*, is another important push factor found in this study, that lures people to go to EDM festivals and this same idea has been found before in previous studies (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). This suggests that festival organizers should consider rearranging their focus from delivering a service (live music), to creating an atmosphere that promotes a sense of escaping everyday routine as well as a sense of excitement and leisure (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). In this case, atmosphere can be defined as an escape from a mundane environment or any destination that is physically or socially different from a potential attendee's normal environment (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004). In this case, EDM festivals provide a setting with a whole different kind of atmosphere that most nightclubs or bars lack. This is one way that the atmosphere at EDM festivals provide an escape for its visitors. Great atmosphere was largely mentioned by all members of the interview sample, making it an incredibly important finding.

The push factor *safe place to do drugs* explains the concept that some people are pushed internally to go to EDM festivals because they allow people to indulge in experiencing drugs within a socially acceptable place. EDM festivals provide a more socially acceptable place to take drugs, free from the normal criticisms and negativity that this activity normally brings with it in everyday life. The link between EDM culture and drug use has been established in the literature, but it has never been mentioned as an important motivational factor for going to a festival event. This finding is unique to the EDM festival and provides great insight into the EDM culture within the Netherlands. This will be discussed further in section 7.5, Unique Findings.

Some respondents who mentioned *seeking new experiences* as an important push factor, had a strong sense of exploration and were searching for something new each time they went to an EDM festival. This again, is a common motive for people going to other music festival events (Li & Petrick, 2006). The people who prefer experiencing something new are likely to be bigger, more hardcore EDM fans than those who prefer some kind of familiarity. This can be related to Cohen's tourist experience modes and will be discussed further in section 7.3.2, Cohen's Modes of Tourist Experience in Relation to EDM Festivals.

*Peer influence* and *word of mouth* motives are related in the fact that they are both internal push factors that have influence from other people's opinions of an event. The concept of word of mouth in tourism has been studied before. A good explanation of the concept is that depending on the positive or negative experience someone has of a product, service or experience, it will determine their likeliness to return and their word of mouth recommendation has the potential to influence their friends and families opinions as well (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). This factor is important because it is quite often one of the main factors in choosing a festival to attend. Word

of mouth recommendations can be taken as the most reliable information source for potential tourists and word of mouth recommendations are one of the most often sought after types of information for people interested in travelling (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). A festival could have the best line-up, the best set-up and a great reputation but if your best friend went the year before and had a bad experience and advised you against going then it could have a powerful effect on your future motivation to go to the festival. Considering the most important factor for attending EDM festivals was to have fun with friends, friends play an important part in EDM culture, as does the power of peer influence and word of mouth.

Many of the push factors mentioned above relate to the findings of past motivational studies of different types of festival events. The main difference here is that some people are pushed to go to these kinds of festivals by the need to have a safe and acceptable place to enjoy the positive effects of drugs. It is important to note that push factors differ between different people. Not every person at an EDM festival takes drugs or even likes to dance but on average, these are the common and noteworthy motivational trends of the EDM festival experience.

### **Main Pull Factors**

The main pull factors that respondents had for going to EDM festivals were: good musical line-up and live EDM experience, the open and accepting atmosphere, the intense effects that drugs have on the experience, the elaborate set-up and setting of the festival, as well as the familiarity, reputation and location of the festival. These event-specific attributes help pull people into attending the events.

*Musical line-up* and *to enjoy live music* are typical motivational findings for a festival study (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). These motivational factors are related to the music style of the event and this is understandably a common motivational factor that pulls people into going to certain music festivals depending on their taste (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). The musical line-up refers to the particular DJ's playing at the event that are found to be desirable to the attendees. To enjoy EDM live is a motive that refers to listening to EDM in a live, exciting way while at the festival. The latter motive that was mentioned is very important because EDM music is one genre of music that is considered to be best enjoyed live. This is because of the atmosphere at festivals and because this genre of music comes with a lot of cultural characteristics that bond with the music and strengthen its significance in a live venue, which will be discussed further in section 7.5, Unique Findings.

*Atmosphere* is an interesting finding because it was also listed above as a push factor. Atmosphere is an important pull factor because EDM festivals are known for their great atmosphere and vibe that pulls people to the event, according to the respondents in this study. People who go to EDM events enjoy their time there because of this great friendly and social atmosphere that allows people to be themselves and to let loose and have fun. The greater implications of this finding will be discussed as a unique and important finding in section 7.5.

People are also pulled to EDM festivals because of the *intense experience* they can have there while under the influence of *drugs*. The effect drugs have on people create a more intense experience of the festival, which is enhanced because of their incredible atmosphere and set up of the events. This is a unique aspect of EDM festivals because people see them as a 'place to go' to experience particular feelings and emotions that can only be felt at these events (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010).

The *set-up* of EDM festivals is also a common pull factor of EDM events because EDM festivals are known for having spectacular visual displays to accompany the musical genre. According to the interviewees, this includes such things as large stages, decorations, video screen, lights and lasers, as well as the added effect of having other people around exhibiting similar behaviour while under the influence, all making the total experience more worthwhile. This elaborate 'set-up' style of EDM events is a unique quality of EDM festivals and it does affect the overall experience of people at the event and therefore their overall motives to attend as well.

Another major pull factor of EDM events is that most are set in the *summer time* with *outdoor* venues and activities. According to the interview data, Dutch people love being outside and love to enjoy the warm weather during summer time, so this pull factor is especially important for them. Spending time outside is a limited freedom for people in modern society because of work and school dominated perceptions of reality, which are mostly indoors. Getting to spend a whole day or more outside is often a luxury and a major part of leisure and tourism activities (Morgan et al., 2010). Spending time outside is seen as a reward for going to this event, making it an important pull factor for EDM festivals.

*Familiarity* can be categorized as a pull factor that assures people that they will have a good time at an event that they have been to before. Some respondents from this sample mentioned that they prefer to go back to the same festivals because they enjoyed it the first time. Those that mentioned festival familiarity, are people who enjoy knowing what to expect and having some sort of prior knowledge, whereas the respondents who preferred new experiences were searching for something else each time and had more of a sense of exploration. This can be related to Cohen's tourist experience modes and what each person is looking for in a festival experience which will be elaborated on in section 7.3.2.

*Reputation of festival* and *proximity/location* are two common motivational codes in festival research (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). It is common knowledge that large, popular and long-standing festivals have a significant advantage over smaller, less well-known festivals considering their ability to create a strong pull factor (Gelder & Robinson, 2009). Some EDM festivals are more popular than others, for example MysteryLand and TomorrowLand. These festivals will have stronger reputational pull factors than newer, less well-known events. On the other hand, proximity was another key pull factor that made people want to go to certain events because of its location near to their own homes. This allows for easier travel and lower costs for people going to nearby festivals and it an important pull factor to consider in all festival motivation studies.

### **Escape-Seeking Factors**

The escape-seeking dichotomy is also an important theory that helps to explain the motivations involved with people going to EDM festival events. According to this sample, EDM festivals provide a place for people to escape the routine and constraints of their everyday life and to find intrinsic rewards at the festival itself via the atmosphere, social setting and liberty of behaviour and expression. Respondents mentioned going to EDM festivals to escape the everyday environment in search of something new and exciting and different from ordinary life. EDM festivals can provide this through their beautiful and exciting festival set ups and designs. EDM festivals are events with loud and exciting soundtracks for people to walk through and experience with their friends. From this study, EDM festivals can also provide an escape by their



great atmosphere and free spirit attitude. Furthermore, EDM culture is known for allowing and promoting drug use to enhance the effect of the music and surroundings and to be able to feel overwhelming happiness for a certain amount of time (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). Not only is this allowed, but the general atmosphere is very open, friendly and exhilarating so people can feel free to be themselves and let go of their problems and anxieties.

People from this study also mentioned going to EDM festivals to seek intrinsic rewards, such as being able to spend time with friends to make lasting and unforgettable memories together. They also go to be able to experience something new or familiar, depending on a person's preferences and desires. Some respondents loved to try new things and explore new festivals and DJs but some were more comfortable knowing that they could have a good time by going back to the same festivals again and again. There were also people who did both these things, such as going to a few of the same festivals over and over again and then trying one or two new ones each year. From this study it seems as if EDM festivals also allow people to let loose and relax. The most common comment in regards to a reward of the Dutch people in this sample, was being able to spend time outdoors, in the warm summer sun. Finally, EDM festivals are places where people go to express themselves physically (by dancing , hula hooping, etc.) or socially (by meeting a lot of like-minded people). This is an intrinsic reward for some people because they feel as if they cannot do this is normal, everyday society.

## **7.2 DRUG USE AT EDM EVENTS**

The relationship between EDM culture and drug use is a standout feature of the EDM experience. This effects the motivations, expectations, satisfaction levels and entire experience of the festivalgoers who use drugs while at the event. The questionnaire completed during this study suggests that up to 78% of festivalgoers partake in this activity, which is an incredibly high percentage of total festivalgoers. This changes the whole experience of a music festival and gives it a whole new category of drug-related leisure activities.

Risky tourist behaviour has been documented before in several areas of research, including backpacking, adventure tourism, sex tourism, gambling and sunshine holidays (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Most of these studies concern the question as to why individuals are ready to take risks while on vacation as opposed to everyday life. The literature suggests that risk-taking tourists perceive their holiday as a "license for thrill" (Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). However, the difference between taking risks far away from home (on holiday) and closer to real life, is getting smaller by the day. According to this sample, youths in the Netherlands' are taking drugs at one-day festivals, multiple day festivals and even one night-long rave parties. It is no longer correct to assume that risk taking behaviour by some people is solely done while far away from home. The link between leisure and tourism risk taking practices should become more clear and should be studied further to understand modern youth society better.

Consequently, there must be a sense of safety that people have when deciding to partake in a risky activity. This study found that EDM festivals provide that sense of safety in both physical and social means. During the interviews, there was limited discussion relating to the risks involved with taking drugs at EDM festivals. The respondents were aware of the negative effects drugs can have, including death, but they were confident that they would not become one of the statistics of deaths caused by overdose at an EDM event. This shows that the respondents in this

study are aware of their limits and seem to know the boundaries of the drugs themselves and trust their using habits.

The more interesting finding related to the feeling of safety of using drugs at EDM events, is the social acceptance of such activities and behaviours. People reported that the great atmosphere at these events allow them to dress, act and dance the way they want. People have the sense of freedom and the ability to let loose within a safe environment at EDM festivals and this is one of the main factors as to why they are such a popular place for youth to go nowadays. EDM festivals allow people to be themselves, experiment with drugs and to let loose away from their normal, everyday life because of the light and accepting atmosphere that they provide and promote. As opposed to other festivals that also have great atmospheres, EDM festivals have this added sense of opposition from the norm and deviance, which strengthens the solidarity of the festivalgoers.

### **7.3 EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION**

The overall expectation for EDM festival attendees in this study was to have no expectations in order to enjoy the festival as much as possible and to avoid dissatisfaction. Using the Expectation Confirmation theory to help explain these results, this response shows that people enjoy going to EDM festivals with no expectations because then they have the possible outcome of being satisfied because the experience exceeds their expectations (Oliver, 1980). This would lead to the state of being positively satisfied and this is in line with the most common expectation that most Dutch EDM festivalgoers have in this study.

In relation to this, overall satisfaction levels for people who have been to EDM festivals are incredibly high. The respondents tended to really enjoy these festivals and were rarely disappointed. The only ways in which the respondents reported being disappointed with a festival experience was because of organizational problems on behalf of the festival organizers or by the over commodification of the events which threatened its authenticity. A relationship between the level of which the respondents favoured EDM and authenticity emerged. Those who consider EDM to be their favourite genre, that they devote a big part of their life to, would only be the ones to recognise problems with the authenticity of an event. The respondents who didn't consider EDM to be their most favourite genre, did not notice any problems with the music or musical set up of an event.

Commoditization can become a problem regarding the authenticity of a festival depending on the mode of experience individual festivalgoers were searching for. This study found that only a few hard-core EDM fans were searching for a higher sense of authenticity at a festival experience. They reported that some festivals felt over commoditized by the organizers and that this threatened the credibility of the event (Cohen, 1988). This can become a problem for people who are searching for authentic experiences at EDM festivals, however only a few respondents mentioned they could see through the authenticity of a festival, meaning that most EDM festivalgoers are recreational or diversionary tourists, who only search for fun, rest, recreation and/or excitement (see Section 7.3.2).

One final remark about satisfaction at EDM festivals according to this study, is in relation to drug use. A few people stated that drugs were sometimes the cause of an unsatisfactory experience because it made them feel unwell or because it negatively affected their experience. Unfortunately, this concept is hard to address for festival organizers unless drugs can somehow

be successfully banned from these events. However, the association between EDM culture and drug use is very strong and will continue to be linked together. Ecstasy remains strongly associated with rave culture (EDM music parties) and it will remain in association for a while to come considering its history and deep linkages with the genre (Kelly et al., 2013). This fact must be accepted to understand the true EDM culture and experience in the Netherlands but of course, it is also an area of improvement for the EDM festival organizers and event promoters to keep their attendees safe. This has nothing to do with the organization of a festival by the event coordinators, nor to the people who use the drugs, so it is a difficult issue to comment on but it is an important part of the EDM experience.

### **7.3.1 EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY**

Authenticity is a concept that emerged from the results section and this concept can be used to help describe the EDM festival experience more clearly. Existential authenticity refers to a state of being that is activated by people when they are searching for an authentic state of being within the boundaries of a touristic experience (Wang, 1999). According to this study's findings, this concept of existential authenticity can be used to describe the EDM experience. People who go to EDM festivals often go because they are searching for a great atmosphere, where they can be themselves and interact with others who share similar interests and demographics. The results from this study showed that people who go to EDM events search for a place to have fun with friends, escape daily life, to enjoy a great atmosphere that is different from everyday life and of course, to listen, dance and enjoy EDM music. Existential authenticity, under the condition of modernity, allows people to release their authentic self that is otherwise suppressed by the dominant, rational order of the mainstream institutions (Wang, 1999). EDM events are nostalgic because they allow people to be themselves and to behave, dress up, and enjoy themselves outside of the normal, everyday boundaries in place by modern society. EDM festivals are also romantic because they allow people to act the way they want to act and feel the way they want to feel, away from the constraints of real-life. Therefore it is safe to assume electronic dance festivals provide an ideal location for people to experience existential authenticity and this is why it is such a popular leisure activity for people in the Netherlands.

### **7.3.2 COHEN'S MODES OF TOURIST EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO EDM FESTIVALS**

Cohen's five modes of tourist experience also appeared in the results and can be used to help explain the variety of people that frequent EDM festivals and how each of their experiences is different considering their desired mode of experience, which is related to their fondness of the EDM music genre.

There were a variety of modes present in this study's findings that explain the EDM experience and those who visit these festivals. The two most extreme modes on either end of the spectrum (recreational and existential) are the least represented in this study, but they do exist. The recreational mode in this instance is when people pay little mind towards authenticity but just want to enjoy time away from home (Cohen, 1979). This is only found in people who go to EDM festivals because their friends wanted them to go, they were available and they wanted to relax and have fun. This was mainly found in respondent #12 and #4. Hard core EDM fans who find themselves listening to EDM music and experiencing the festival can be considered part of the existential mode because they consider EDM festivals as places that form their elective centres in life. Not all respondents fit this mode but a few did represent this mode, such as respondent

#6 and #7. These people listen to EDM music everyday as a way to escape 'real life' and they plan to go to multiple EDM festivals throughout their lives because it is a way of life for them. They can find their true selves while at these events and while interacting with fellow-minded people.

The rest of the respondents seem to be a part of the diversionary mode. The diversionary mode includes people who want to leave their centre to escape boredom or the ordinary, but they do not want to recreate their centres or search for meaning (Cohen, 1979). EDM festivals are then sought out as a meaningless source of relaxation and pleasure for these kinds of people. This also helps to explain why most respondents reported feeling satisfied after an EDM festival. Respondents in the diversionary category did not pay enough attention to the details of a past festival to have any critique about it or its state of authenticity. Considering the fact that many respondents went to EDM festivals to escape daily life and to have fun, this mode is the most suitable to describe the EDM experience for people.

The other two modes, experiential and experimental, are not easily found or represented in this study. Cohen's work was designed to understand and describe tourist experiences, not for experiences that can be considered leisure experiences for some people. This is why not all of his modes were represented in this study. For example, the experiential mode is for people who are unable to lead an authentic and fulfilling life at home and who search for meaning through travel and experiences to try and capture some sense of meaning (Cohen, 1979). This mode doesn't fit well with the leisure-related activity of going to a festival (leisure activity at an event that disappears after completed) and back home again after one day or one weekend. Considering this study is a leisure-focused study, Cohen's phenomenology of tourist modes can only match up so far before the differences between leisure and tourist experiences become too great. EDM festivals are not long enough, or far away enough from Dutch people's centres, to fit into all of the categories so this framework of tourist experiences can only be used to understand the processes more clearly, not to fully match and explain the tourist functions of festivals.

## **7.4 INFLUENTIAL REALM IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZERS**

### **Physical**

The most important influential aspects of a festival experience can be divided into physical, social and service/product categories. EDM festivals should have interesting physical set-ups and settings that to add to the festival experience in general (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). This study found that having a distinct geographical feature at the event was beneficial to the satisfaction of its visitors. Large bodies of water, such as lakes, were often mentioned as a positive object to have at a festival, but also having a festival near or on a hill or mountain side is ideal (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

Another physical aspect that is important to EDM festivals is proximity. This concept has been seen before in previous festival research studies such as Gelder and Robinson's study on V Festival in the UK. It was also ranked as one of the middle-ranking pull factors in this study (See Table 2). EDM fans tend to go to multiple festivals in one year, instead of only experiencing the event once in a lifetime. If people go to multiple festivals during a summer, then it would make sense to choose ones that are nearby so the travel costs are less. One respondent also mentioned that there was a link between multiple-day festivals and distance to event. This means that

marketing and promotion of the festival should be done the most heavily around the area of the Netherlands that is hosting the festival because a lot of people enjoy going to festivals close to home.

### **Social**

The social aspect of an EDM festival is known to be the most important feature of the festival experience, according to this study, because the main motive for people going to these events is to have fun spending time with friends. Additionally, festivals are meant to be social places for people to go and have a good time and to celebrate according to the basic literature on the subject of festivals (Getz, 1991). Social aspects refer to the social setting, personal relationships, interactions with personnel, interactions with other tourists and host/guest relationships (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Considering the top motivation results, the social atmosphere of a festival must be up to par so people can be able to have fun with friends and so that the basic motivations and expectations of EDM festivalgoers can be met.

One peculiar finding in this study was the social activity of people watching. This activity was never mentioned before in previous festival motivation studies. It was mentioned, however, in the study by Jaimangal-Jones et al (2010) in their work on EDM rave experiences. This study also found that people watching is an important behaviour at EDM events because EDM attendees seem to derive enjoyment from watching people, their actions and style (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). This finding represents EDM festivals as spectacles that include the attendees into the overall sights and displays of the festival experience and performance.

EDM festival organizers should create adequate opportunities for people to have a good social experience at the festival because the overall importance of the social aspect at EDM festivals. This includes spaces slightly away from the stages where people can sit and chat with friends or meet new people. These social setting should help enforce the social atmosphere of EDM events and should promote the additional feature of visitor performance.

### **Festival Product and Services**

The last influential aspects of EDM festivals are the services and products offered by organizers. Summer/outdoor festivals are the most popular types of EDM festivals for the respondents in this study. Multiple-day events are also favoured because they add a lot more to the overall experience, such as camping and a longer, more intense experience. However, the majority of respondents go to one-day events because there are so many of them and because they are easier to plan into their schedules.

Ticket price is an interesting concept for EDM festivals because most people who attend them do not have a lot of expendable cash considering they are students or young adults. Most people prefer the lowest ticket price possible considering the popularity, line-up and reputation of a festival. This means that depending on how popular the line-up is and how good the reputation of the festival precedes it, the more money people are willing to pay. Furthermore, there are some who are willing to spend a lot of money on a three-day festival because they see it as a vacation and they are the most hard-core fans of the genre. This mentality is common for people who spend more money on the things they love, as opposed to things they do not like very much. This concept has been studied in relation to Jazz festivals by Christer Thrane in 2002. He found that visitors that reported to rate musical interest as very important, spent more than those who reported musical interest as less important (Thrane, 2002). This factor along with length of stay,

income and being from out of town (a tourist), are all positively linked with higher spending (Thrane, 2002).

## **7.5 UNIQUE FINDINGS**

The EDM festival experience does resemble other music festival experiences in its general purpose and objectives. Good atmosphere, spending time with friends, proximity, reputation and music/artists are similar motivational factors between all festivals no matter the genre. This is because, as a business and a product, music festivals do have general underlying similarities. However, the EDM experience does exhibit some unique qualities that make the experience distinct from other music festival experiences.

The EDM festival atmosphere is key to providing festivalgoers with the unique experience they crave at these events. This includes (1) the socially safe and accepting atmosphere where people can be themselves (existential authenticity). This relates to the concept of solidarity, which is a main theme within event festival literature and EDM culture literature (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). EDM festivals are a place where young people congregate to enjoy spending time with like-minded people and to enjoy a particular kind of music and lifestyle (including drug-use) together within the atmosphere of a fun and exciting event. Dance events are places that exist within, yet outside existing social structures, where alternative norms and values hold sway and everyday identities become largely invisible in the eyes of others (Jaimangal-Jones et al., 2010). The temporary staging of dance events also contributes to their construction as transitional spaces and experiences that are not permanent but sites of fleeting experiential opportunities where individuals congregate for the event and then return to their everyday life when it is over (Wilson, 2006). This relates to the sense of place that forms within an EDM festival. Dance events only last for a certain amount of time and then dissolve when the event is completed. This short amount of time, where people can find solidarity and community, is what makes EDM festivals a popular place for Dutch youths to spend their free time and money.

Additionally, (2) the importance of atmosphere at EDM festivals is the exaggerated escape-focused experience that exists there, which is centred around drug use. The EDM festival atmosphere is considered a great place to experience the positive effects of drugs because of the surrounding environment. Here, the set-up of EDM festivals becomes increasingly important because it is this that creates this heightened sense of escape. The spectacular visual displays and stage designs really add to the overall eccentric environment of EDM festivals. This is what creates the strong sense of escape at EDM festivals and this is what is unique about EDM festivals. Furthermore, listening to dance music live is an important part of the EDM festival experience because EDM sounds best under certain circumstances that match the atmosphere and set-up of festivals (loud speakers, other people to dance with, intense visual effects, etc.)

EDM festivals do share general qualities with other events, but the overall experience is very much different than a rock or pop music festival. These two main atmosphere-related factors explained above make the EDM festival experience a unique festival experience when compared to other kinds of festivals.

## 7.6 EDM FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE: RECREATIONAL OR TOURIST EXPERIENCE?

Past studies suggest that festivals are considered to be more recreational offerings than tourist offerings because their seeking dimensions are stronger than the need for escape (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Li & Petrick, 2006). The results from this study show that EDM festivals may be different from other types of music festivals because the respondents highly valued the sense of escape. Two very strong pull and escape factors that were found to be quite important to the EDM experience in this study were the pull of the great atmosphere and intense experience with drug effects.

Considering the fact that some EDM festivals are only one day long, it is hard to imagine that it can be considered a tourist experience. But if you look at the tourist experience definitions found in the book, *"The Tourist and Leisure Experience"* you can see that a one day or multi-day festival may be considered a tourist experience.

*"Tourist experiences are different from everyday experiences (Cohen, 1979, 2004; Grayburn, 2001; Vogt, 1976). The act of tourism offers complex experiences, memories and emotions related to places (Noy, 2007), and it is arguably this experience of place or self in place that the individual seeks. Larsen (2007) argues that the tourist experience should be defined as a past travel-related event which was significant enough to be stored in long-term memory (Morgan et al., 2010)."*

EDM festivals experiences do differ from everyday experiences, offer complex memories and emotions related to place and they do involve more than just the tourists at the event, it involves the people who set up and design the festival experience as well. It seems as if visitors to EDM festivals, even if close to home, can be considered a 'tourist' at EDM festivals because of the motivations they have for going to these festivals. EDM festivals allow people to be themselves and to escape from their normal, everyday life. This is largely from the light and accepting atmosphere and the high incidence of drug use at these events. It is socially acceptable to be high at an EDM event, this allows people to have the sense of freedom and independence from society's norms. EDM festivals, as opposed to other festivals with great atmosphere, have this added sense of opposition from the norm and deviance, which tends to strengthen the sense of escape and solidarity amongst the festivalgoers.

## 7.7 BROADER IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings have potential to influence the leisure and tourism field and the general study of cultural geography because of its unveiling and analysis of an important phenomenon happening throughout the world. This study focussed on the Netherlands, but EDM festivals are very popular throughout Europe, North America, South America and other parts of the world. Youth culture today enjoys dance music and dancing to it, either at parties, raves, large-scale events or festivals.

The popularity of EDM festivals illustrates that modern-day tourism and leisure market are specific and niche-related. EDM rose to worldwide popularity during the 2000's, notably in America, where the music industry is the most powerful and influential in the world (EVAR, 2012). This changed other genres of music, such as pop, into more electronic and dance based-tunes. These changes have also changed youth behaviour and activities in general, as seen in this study of EDM festivals in the Netherlands. Young people go to them to escape real life and to

hang out with friends in this alternative environment and atmosphere. They are also liberal towards recreational drug use and enjoy being able to express themselves and to be themselves around other likeminded people their own age.

The findings in this study also show that work needs to be done on the role of safety in tourism experiences. Tourists and leisure participants need to feel safe when participating or attending certain events and destinations. This includes the feeling that you can be yourself and express yourself in front of others present at the event. In the instance of EDM festivals, this also includes the use of drugs and the safety precautions and stereotypes related to this. Dutch youth participating in EDM events, should no longer be categorized as reckless or unconcerned with safety, but the future studies should look at this behaviour with other suggestions as to how these behaviours can be explained.

Finally, the last implication is that tourism approaches and theories seem to greatly outweigh the leisure related literature on peoples' experiences and motivations while at events. Furthermore, the boundaries between leisure and tourism are somewhat blurred, making studies such as these more difficult to conduct. Music festivals can be both leisure and tourism activities and the past literature uses theories and approaches from both leisure and tourism backgrounds but a clear distinction would be beneficial to the future development of both studies.

## **7.8 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

The main limitations for this study include: respondent bias, time restraints, difficulty finding respondents (Snowball technique), language barriers and memory recall.

The process of interviewing a small sample has limitations. This method could lead to a bias or an under-representation of the actual population of study but does provide an in-depth look into the EDM experience in the Netherlands, which is the purpose of this study. This study is comprised mostly of higher education level students in the Netherlands. This could have biased the results because other types of people go to EDM events such as; high school students, young workingmen and women in the age group of 19-27, people from outside the main age range of 19-27 and anyone else who fits into other, smaller categories not mentioned in this report. The sample is not 100% representative of the total population of Dutch EDM festivalgoers however, considering the main age of EDM festivalgoers is between 19-27 (the main age group of University students in the Netherlands), this sample is a good place to start for this master thesis study.

This study took place outside the 'normal' festival season (June, July and August) and was kept under a time restraint of six months. Therefore completing interviews and collecting questionnaires from people at an actual festival was not possible, nor was the possibility of collecting more questionnaires or interviews because of limited time.

This study used broad theoretical approaches heavily related to tourism studies, such as Cohen's modes of experience. Considering this study is a leisure-focused study, Cohen's phenomenology of tourist modes can only match up so far before the differences between leisure and tourist experiences become too great. It would be useful to develop event-focus or festival-focused theories so this subject area can grow and develop academically and more specifically overtime.



Finding participants was, at times, difficult. Students have busy lives and sometimes finding people to participate was difficult. In order to avoid this problem the snowball sampling technique was used to ensure enough interviews were completed. However, the snowball sampling technique can limit researchers to a small data collection pool because one person can suggest another one, who then suggests another friend within their group of friends. This may lead to sampling bias, when the respondents tend to share the same traits, which means that the study only focuses on a certain sub-group of the population, not a true sample of it (Boeije, 2010). Snowball sampling does not guarantee representativeness of the sample and this leaves the researcher with no idea as to how well the sample fits the overall population of the study (Boeije, 2010).

Another limitation was the language barrier. The population of this study are people living in the Netherlands who have attended an EDM music festival but because the interviews had to be completed in English, it limits the study to only English-speaking people that live in the Netherlands.

Because this study relies on the memory of people and their experiences in the past, the limitations of memory must be explained. Memories are not explicitly reliable. Studies have shown that memories change overtime and can be inaccurate. Memories of an experience seem to be remembered better when they were either very positive or very disappointing (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). This means that when people fill in a questionnaire or participate in an interview, they may be giving false information. This is a common limitation for any study dealing with people and memories. To control this I made sure that the interviewee seemed relatively sure about their answers while participating in an interview. If they seemed unsure or unable to remember exactly what happened, further prompts were added to allow the respondents to explain their thoughts more clearly.

Throughout the study, evidence to suggest that a more specific EDM genre study would be beneficial. There are many different kinds of EDM (hard style, psy-trans, house, techno, etc.), this study focused on EDM in general but really there should be multiple studies done to see the differences between the different music styles and the experiences at these various events. This research project was simply an initial look into the EDM world within the Netherlands. There is indication to prove that different kinds of EDM festivals provide slightly different experiences.

## **7.9 SUGGESTIONS FUTURE RESEARCH**

A much larger sample could have revealed further trends and significant results on this topic. It would also be useful to study a different region in order to compare results to see if the overall findings are similar from different regions or countries. The open-ended structure of the interviews produced the best results for this study, so a suggestion would be to continue this method for future studies on this topic. However, it could be beneficial to study this topic at different phases of the experience, for example right before or right after a festival. This way participants could provide input in relation to the different phase of their experience and this would also rely less on memory recall. Finally, event research is lacking in theoretical approaches forcing this study to be conducted with broader tourism related theories and approaches. It would be useful to develop event-focus or festival-focused theories so this subject area can grow and develop academically and more specifically overtime.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

EDM is a popular genre of music that has gathered enormous global success over the past decade. Nowadays, EDM festivals are one of the most common types of music festivals and the growing festival industry is an important sector of the current world leisure and tourism industry. EDM is also a type of musical sub-culture that comes with a specific package of socially created meaning and associations. This study focused on the EDM experience at music festivals and gathered important information about the significance and practices that are associated with the cultural phenomenon.

Considering EDM as a tourism experience, there was little known about the theoretical and conceptual approach to the topic and it required further development to be able to match its level of significance in the field. This study aimed to look at the total experience to get an inside look at the processes and approaches involved in order to understand it better. Two methods were used to complete this study, a questionnaire to frame the research and interviews to collect more in-depth data on the topic.

Through these two methods the research questions were realised. The main experiential aspects of EDM festivals in the Netherlands were collected from a larger sample in the questionnaire data. This method found that the average age of an EDM festivalgoer in the Netherlands is 22.5 years old and that EDM festivals are enjoyed evenly between the sexes. It also found that EDM festivals are not a one-time visit event but are seen as places to go more often than once. The top motivations for going to an EDM festival according to the questionnaire were to have fun with friends, the musical line-up and the overall reputation of the festival. The main activities reported at EDM events were dancing, drinking alcohol, socializing and taking drugs and almost all EDM festivalgoers report being satisfied after attending an event. These findings were helpful in framing the research project and provided a good reference to check and compare with the qualitative research.

The interview method was used to gather more in-depth knowledge on the topic. The findings produced similar results to the questionnaire but provided a much more comprehensive view into the actual processes involved with EDM festivals. The demographics of this qualitative study matched those from the questionnaire data. The motivational section was the most developed, which is largely due in fact to the well-established literature on festival event motivations and to the two major theories regarding motivation in leisure and tourism research, the push/pull model and the escape-seeking dichotomy. This section found the main motivations of EDM festivalgoers were to have fun with friends, to escape daily life, to enjoy the musical line-up, the great atmosphere, and live EDM, and to have a safe place to do and enjoy drugs. The other main push factors of EDM events were: to seek new experiences, peer influence and word of mouth incentives, whereas the other main pull factors were: the elaborate set-up and setting of the festival, as well as the familiarity, reputation and location of the festival.

Comparing this to the questionnaire data, a much more personal explanation of motivation could be discovered which exists much deeper than the basic findings in the survey. To have fun with friends, to enjoy the musical line-up and live EDM, and good atmosphere, reputation and proximity are understandable and common music festival results. The most interesting findings of this study include the understanding of the EDM festival atmosphere, the link between EDM and drug use and the notion of escape. EDM festivals are famous for providing an alternate reality and sense of escape by way of their intricate designs, decorations and set up at the

festivals. This helps to promote the free and liberating atmosphere of the events that are an important motivational factor for many people attending the festivals. It is at these festivals that many people feel free to let go and unwind from daily life. Furthermore, the atmosphere at EDM festivals is open-minded about drug use and the positive effects it can have on a person's experience of the festival. All of these findings prove that the EDM festival experience is more than just going to listen to EDM music for a day or two, but that it does involve deeper, more meaningful underlying motivations to do so.

The expectations and satisfaction levels of EDM festivalgoers were closely linked because the respondents tended to go to these events with an open mind in search for a good time and a positive experience. This study found that people go to EDM festivals with no expectations to avoid dissatisfaction. However, there was an interesting finding related to drug use, in that the reported instances of bad experiences, were often tied to a bad drug-related experience. This shows that drug use is an important part of the EDM experience, not only in a positive way but also with important safety concerns for organizers. It is a constant struggle for the EDM industry worldwide to deal with drug-related concerns and issues and it will continue to be so in the future.

The expectation and satisfaction factors related to festival experience also uncovered an interesting finding that links level of EDM devotion with Cohen's modes of tourist experience. The fans with extremely high opinions of, and connections with the EDM music genre, expected different things than people with a lesser-developed opinion of EDM. The whole meaning of the festival experience differed between these kinds of people, depending on their opinion of EDM. Most EDM festivalgoers fit within Cohen's diversionary mode of experience, which aims to leave their centre to escape boredom or the ordinary, but they do not want to recreate their centres or search for meaning. This means that EDM festivals are then sought out as a meaningless source of relaxation and pleasure for these kinds of people. This would represent fans of EDM who simply enjoy listening to the music and having a good time away from the hassles of daily life for a while. The other two findings were the recreational mode and the existential mode, which fit both people who do not particularly enjoy EDM and those who love it and find it extremely meaningful and important to their lives. These findings were less common because most people consider themselves simply a fan of the music and not on either ends of the spectrum. For those that did fit the more extreme ends of the spectrum, their experiences were different because of their underlying emotions and perceptions of the music genre. Another way musical importance was significant, was in the search for authenticity at EDM festivals. An authentic experience was more important to those searching for a higher level of experience and who valued EDM music more than others. This study found that over-commodification of a festival could destroy the authenticity of an event for those who placed a lot of importance on EDM as a significant part of their lives.

Existential authenticity emerged as an interesting finding throughout the analysis of the EDM festival experience. Existential authenticity allows people to release their authentic self in a way that is usually suppressed by societal norms, so people search for experiences that allow them to experience their authentic state of being. EDM festivals fit within this concept well because at EDM festivals people get to be themselves and enjoy themselves in a way that feels authentic and natural as human beings which is sometimes outside of the normal, everyday boundaries set in place by modern society. This includes the liberty to dance freely, wear what they want and socialize amongst like-minded people.

This study also looked at the various influential aspects related to EDM festivals, including the physical, social and product/service impacts. Physical factors are important to the EDM experience because the setting and set-up of the festival is incredibly important, as it adds to the atmosphere, which has already been described as crucial to the overall EDM experience. Having an interesting physical feature (lake, mountain, hill) at a festival is a positive addition, which will attract more visitors. Furthermore, summer festivals that are multi-day events are considered to be the most popular kind of EDM festival event.

Finally, the last noteworthy finding of this study was the debate of festivals being either recreational or tourist offerings. While past studies found that music festivals are more likely recreational offerings because of their seeking-focus, this study tends to disagree considering the escape-focused nature of EDM events. EDM festivals may be fundamentally different from other types of festivals because of their two very strong pull and escape factors: alternative and liberating atmosphere and the possibility of intense drug-enhanced experiences.

Overall, the EDM experience is a fascinating leisure and tourism topic because of all its underlying features and unique qualities. This deeper understanding of EDM culture helps to explain current leisure and tourism trends and the cultural phenomenon of youth dance culture. These findings tell us that generally speaking, Dutch youth are going to EDM festivals in search of a fun, friendly experience that takes them away from normal, everyday life and allows them to experience the open, liberating feeling of life without borders and rules.

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## APPENDIX 1 – SOGoSURVEY QUESTIONS

### The EDM Festival Experience

Dear Respondent,

I am a Master Student at Wageningen University and I am conducting a survey to gain insight into the motivations and experiences of people attending electronic dance music (EDM) festivals. EDM festivals are events that feature electronic dance music and famous DJ's such as TomorrowLand, Sensation, Qlimax, Defqon 1, Mysteryland, etc. It does not matter how long the event you attended was, as long as it was considered a festival.

Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential. Please make sure you fill out each section correctly, there will be directions after each question. This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete, thanks a lot for your time!

### The Electronic Dance Music Festival Experience

1. How many EDM festivals have you attended in total? Please **choose** one option below.
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 5+
2. What was the name of your most enjoyed and memorable EDM festival? Please **write** down the full name of only ONE event, the one you remember best.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In which country did this festival take place? Please **choose** one or write your response in the Other category
  - a. The Netherlands
  - b. Belgium
  - c. Germany
  - d. France
  - e. The USA
  - f. Canada
  - g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. When did you attend this festival? Please **write** down the full date as accurately as possible. If you forget the actual day(s) then try to just write down the year and month.  
Day/Month/Year \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long was the duration of the event? Please **choose** one of the following options.
  - a. 1 day
  - b. 2 day
  - c. 3 day
  - d. 4+ days

6. **If** the event was longer than one day, did you stay overnight at the festival location? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark your answer.
- Yes
  - No
7. What activities were present at the event? Please **choose** any of the following options to mark your answer. Choose all of the activities that you witnessed at the event or that you know occurred at the event.
- ☐ Dancing
  - ☐ Socializing
  - ☐ Drinking alcohol
  - ☐ Taking drugs
  - ☐ Festival games
  - ☐ Camping
8. How did you hear about this festival before you went to experience it? Please **choose** one of the following options that is most applicable to mark your answer.
- From friends/family
  - From the internet (website, forum, online article)
  - From social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
  - From the media (TV, magazine, newspaper)
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Would you be willing to return to the same festival again? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark your answer.
- Yes
  - No
  - Maybe
10. Would you be willing to go to another EDM festival similar to this festival? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark your answer.
- Yes
  - No
  - Maybe

### **Motivations**

11. What was the main feature of the festival that lead you to choose this event? Please **choose** one of the following options that best describes your desire to attend the event.
- Musical line-up
  - Festival location
  - Reputation of the festival experience
  - Attractions other than the music (festival games, camping, alcohol, drugs, decorations or set build-up of festival)



12. What was your main personal reason for choosing this festival? Please **choose** one of the following options that best describes your desire to attend the event.
- Desire to escape “real-life”
  - To meet new people
  - To enjoy a particular genre of music that you find appealing
  - To experience something new
  - To have fun with friends
13. What was your main overall reason to attend this event? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark the one that best describes your main motivation to attend to this event.
- Musical line-up was appealing (favourite DJ(s) were playing at the event) \*
  - Wanted to escape ‘real-life’ for a while \*
  - Reputation of festival, wanted to experience all of the hype
  - To meet new people
  - To experience something new
  - Location of the event
  - Other experiences related to the event (festival games, camping, alcohol, drugs, decorations or set build-up of festival)
  - To have fun with friends
  - To enjoy live EDM music
14. Please rate each item from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important) based on how important these factors were to motivate you to attend this music festival.

***To socialize with friends and family***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

***To see and experience the music and artists playing at the show***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

***To witness a new and exciting experience***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

***For general entertainment purposes***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

***To escape everyday life***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

***To explore a certain musical culture***

1	2	3	4	5
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very important

15. What was your overall level of satisfaction after attending the festival? Please **choose** one of the following options.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High

**Demographics**

16. How old are you? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark your answer.

- a. <18
- b. 19-22
- c. 23-26
- d. 27-30
- e. 30+

17. What is your gender? Please **choose** one of the following options to mark your answer.

- a. Male
- b. Female

18. What is your current nationality? Please **choose** one or write your own in the Other category.

- a. Dutch
- b. German
- c. Belgian
- d. French
- e. American
- f. Canadian
- g. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

19. What is your favourite kind of music? Please **choose** one below or write your own.

- ☐ Electronic music
- ☐ Rock music
- ☐ Pop music
- ☐ Rap/Hip Hop music
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for participating in my study!**

## APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW GUIDE

### EDM Festival Experience: Interview Guide

#### Introduction:

Dear Student,

I am a Master student from Wageningen University and I am conducting a survey to gain insight into the motivations and experiences of people attending electronic dance music (EDM) festivals. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and will be used to give me insight into the current trends and motivations behind EDM festival attendees. This interview will take approximately 20 minutes of your time.

I will try to keep my comments and personal opinions out of this interview so that you can describe your own thoughts and opinions clearly. Please try to elaborate and explain yourself as much as possible for each question and feel free to ask me to repeat the question if need be. Please try to speak loudly for the recording device. Is it okay for me to begin recording this interview?

#### The Electronic Dance Music Festival Experience

1. So to begin, tell me about yourself a little bit. How old are you, what do you do?
2. What you think of Electronic Dance Music in general? *Do you listen to it often? Or do you prefer it at events? Are you a fan of EDM in general? Do you listen to it often? Prefer dif styles?*
3. Do you enjoy going to festivals?
4. How many EDM music festivals have you attended? All in NL?

#### Experiences

5. IF MULTIPLE: Can you explain your favourite festival experience to me and why it was your favourite experience?
6. IF ONE: Can you tell me about your experience at this event? *Who did you go with? What did you do? Did you like it?*
7. While you are at one of these festivals, what types of things do you do at the event?
8. What are some activities that other people do?
9. How do people act at EDM festivals? How do they dress?
10. Are there any major similarities between different festivals that you've noticed?
11. Are there any major differences between different festivals that you've noticed?
12. What are some differences you notice between EDM festivals and non-EDM music festivals?

#### Motivations

13. Why do you go to EDM festivals? What motivates you to go?
14. What is your main motivation for attending an EDM festival?
15. When deciding to go to a festival or not, what factors do you consider?
16. *What specific factors about a festival attract you to attend? (location, price, musical line up, friends were going, etc.)*
17. *On a personal level, why do you go to festivals? (Liked the music, wanted to escape, wanted to meet new people, wanted to have fun with friends)*

#### Expectations/Satisfaction

18. Do you often go to festivals with certain expectations? Where do these come from?

19. Considering your past experiences, were you satisfied with your festival experience(s)? Anything you would change?
20. Would you be interested in attending certain festivals again? Why or why not?
21. Would you be interested in attending other EDM festival? If so which one(s) and why?
22. Do you have any final comments or questions for me before we end this interview?

Thank you for participating in this interview, you have made a huge contribution to my research. I will remind you that your answers will be kept confidential and I will turn off the recording now, thanks again for your participation.

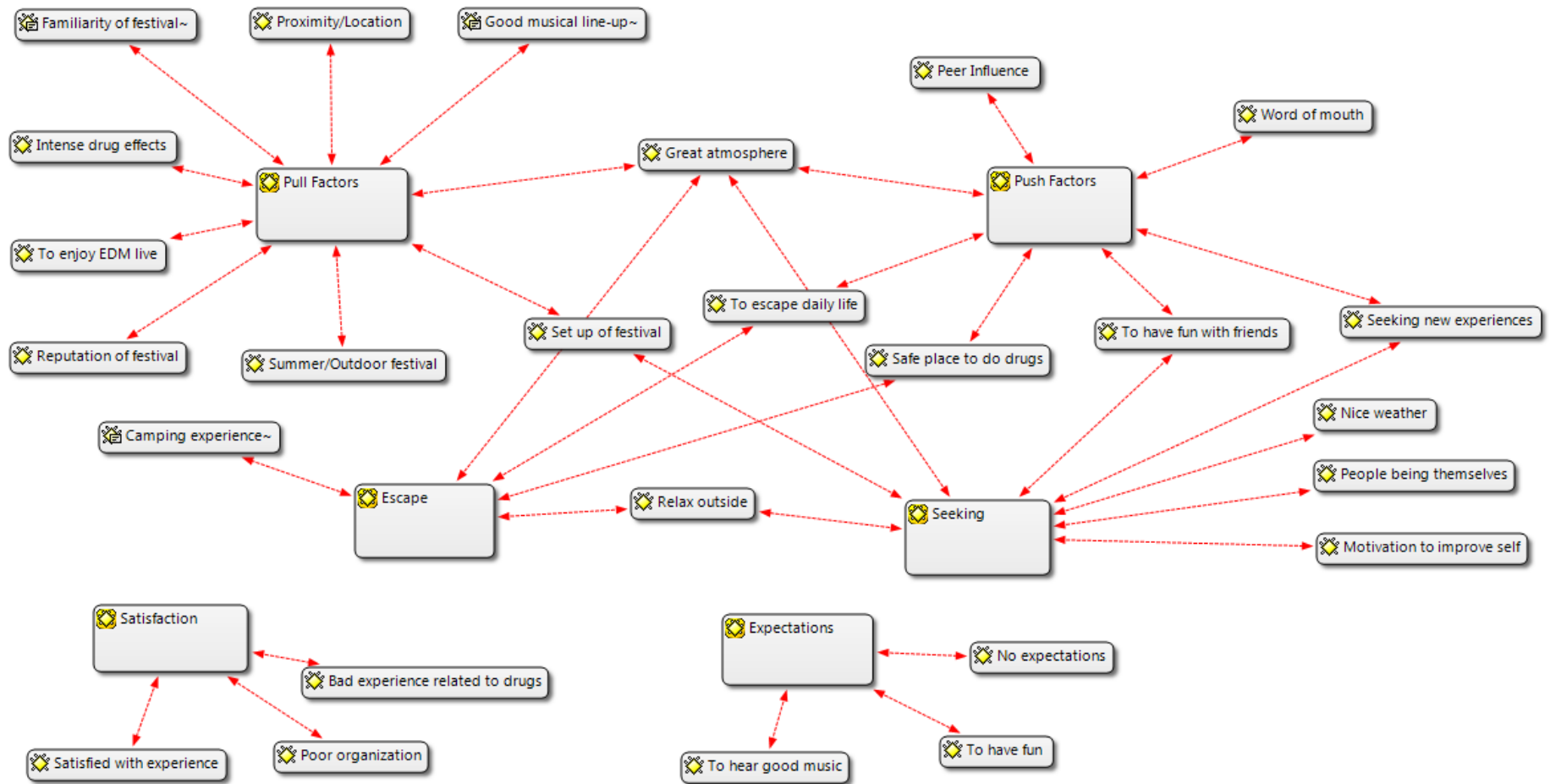
#### **After the Interview**

23. Do you know anyone else I could interview on this topic?
24. Have you filled in my survey?

## APPENDIX 3 – CODE TREE AND NETWORK VIEW

Qualitative Code Tree			
Realm	Theme	Code Family	Code
Personal Realm	Motivation	Push Factors	To have fun with friends
			To escape daily life
			Great atmosphere
			Safe place to do drugs
			Seeking new experiences
			Peer influence
			Word of mouth
		Pull Factors	Good musical line-up
			To enjoy EDM live
			Great atmosphere
			Intense drug effects
			Set-up of festival
			Summer/Outdoor festival
			Familiarity of festival
			Reputation of Festival
			Proximity/Location
		Escape	To escape daily life
			Great atmosphere
			Intense drug effects
			Relax outside
			Camping experience
		Seeking	Seeking new experiences
			Relax outside
			Nice weather
			To have fun with friends
			Great atmosphere
			Set-up of festival
			People being themselves
			Motivation to improve self
	Expectation	Expectation	No expectations
			To have fun
			To hear good music
	Satisfaction	Satisfaction	Satisfied with experience
			Poor organization
			Not authentic
			Bad experience related to drugs
	Activities	Activities at Event	Dancing
			Take drugs
			Drinking/Eating
			Talking
			To enjoy EDM
			Relax outside
			Camping experience
			People watching
			Walk around
			Workshops
Influential Realm	Physical	Physical	Set up of festival
			Summer/Outdoor festival
			Body of water
			Proximity/Location
	Social	Social	To have fun with friends
			Great atmosphere
			People watching
	Festival Product	Festival Product	Great atmosphere
			Summer/Outdoor festival
			Multiple day event
			Reputation of festival
			Good musical line-up
			Camping experience
			Ticket Price
			Different kinds of EDM

## Personal Realm Network View



## Influential Realm Network View

