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***What lessons can be taken from the Hay Festival's response to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic; a case study.***

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## **Abstract**

With the world economy facing the coronavirus pandemic, business from all sectors are having to reassess their working practices and move away from the 'business as usual' attitude, due to the regulations and restrictions brought in to protect communities from the spread of the virus. Tourism businesses and organisations were one of the worst hit industries, with a predicted loss for the year of up to 78% decline in international tourism (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer 2020). While many tourism organisations have had to temporary close down or had to re-purpose their business to financially support their business and survive, the Hay Festival Foundation – annual arts, culture and literature festival in Wales – had to move respond quickly and innovatively to avoid going into administration due to devastating predicted financial loss that would have been waiting for it should it have to cancel. Which would also result in economically impacting the tourism ecosystem in Hay-on-Wye, which the festival has been a key stakeholder in previous to this. The festival founders, with the help of generous corporate donations and sponsorship, as well as donations from ticket prices, decided to take the festival completely online – reducing coverage and operational costs, keeping the festival in their target audiences minds and creating further opportunities to recoup some of their financial loss.

The aim of this study is to evaluate what can we take from the 2020 Hay Festival, to develop a festival which is resilient, and therefore supports and is able to be active as thriving tourism ecosystem? Considering;

- What was the Hay Festival's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and how was this different to normal?
- What value is created by the Hay Festival pre-2020, and the value created by the 2020 online programme?
- What impact does this response have economically, culturally and environmentally?

Through considering the value created by the 2020 Hay Festival, its economic, environmental, social and cultural impact we are able to develop an understanding of the festivals true purpose and how the festival can become sustainable and resilient.

Deliberating on how it can be further developed into the next stage of maturity, following a festival life cycle model. The study will meet these objectives through a theoretical framework developed from previous research in the academic field of festival studies, and a mixed methodologic approach which is most suited to studying a cultural phenomenon within the tourism field.

The study aims to understand the importance of the Hay Festival within the public sphere, the impact the response had economically, environmentally and culturally; and role the festival has within the tourism ecosystem of Hay-on-Wye. Considering what this could mean for arts and culture events of the future, building upon research into what the needs of the festivals as a source of tourism could look like and the development needed to reach these aims, therefore building on the research field of festival studies.

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## Introduction

In 2020 the economical world, and society, faced one of its largest challenges within the last century, the global Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Whole industries came to a halt, some of which may never recover, and businesses not only had to temporarily close for a number of months, but they also have to learn a new way of working, 2020 was not businesses as usual. The impact of this pandemic is one that the economic world will be facing for years to come, with some countries facing, without intervention, the largest economic recession of this decade. One of the largest sectors hit, particularly within Europe, is the Tourism, Arts and Culture Sector, with some elements of the sector facing the possibility of not carrying out business until 2022. The result of this is that has enforced the need for tourism businesses to be resilient, adaptable and supported by all areas of the industry – Destination Management, Policy and society - to be prepared for the challenges of the future.

This paper will consider the response of one area of the Tourism, Arts and Culture sector, festival events, to the Covid-19 pandemic and what this can teach the industry about becoming resilient and what support is needed to develop a thriving tourism ecosystem that can overcome challenges of the future. It does this through the case study of the 2020 Hay Festival, one of the UK's largest annual literary festival events and one which supports and plays a large role in the tourism ecosystem of the village Hay-on-Wye, in Wales. Using a theoretical framework developed by the academic field of festival studies and a mixed methodological approach of a case study, to analyses the importance of the festival within the public sphere through the value it creates and how this understanding can be used to develop the festivals in the future to become resilient and sustainable, culturally and economically. Through the evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of the case study, the research will consider what lessons can be learnt from the Hay Festival's response to produce a resilient festival, and also assess what actions can be taken to take the steps towards a thriving and adaptable tourism ecosystem. Therefore, it considers the following questions; 'What was the Hay Festival's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and how was this different to normal?' What value is created by the Hay Festival pre-2020, and the value created by the 2020

online programme?’ ‘What impact does this response have economically, culturally and environmentally?’ With the aim of answering the overall research question; What can we take from the 2020 Hay Festival, to develop a festival which is resilient, and therefore supports and is able to be active as thriving tourism ecosystem?

The following will outline the literary theories, models and concepts that have informed this study, considering perspectives of the academic field festival studies, that has roots within the field of tourism studies; which have then been used to frame the results of the data collection in the analysis section of this paper. Through using this framework to analyse the data findings, the paper will then set out what we can learn about the impact of the 2020 Hay Festival on its stakeholders through the value it creates and therefore the role the festival plays in Hay-on-Wye’s tourism ecosystem and the implications the Festival’s response to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic can have on the wider tourism economy. To do this, it is important to first have an understanding of the context of the Hay festival which the following introduction will do. As this research is focused on the 2020 Festival and its response to the pandemic, a situation where ‘business as usual’ is not the approach taken by the festival, the following introduction will provide a basic overview of how the festival typically operates and the influencing factors it has had on the tourism ecosystem in the village of Hay-on-Wye.

While this research focuses on a contemporary festival, it is important to state that the focus and perception taken is that of a European approach, and therefore Global North. The researcher acknowledges that this framework and findings may not be applicable to other festivals, areas of the industry or parts of the world, this is because it is focused on the current economic framework used within the UK and Europe. These perspectives therefore result in a particular viewpoint which impact the definitions, theories and findings selected, and that the aim of the research is to work towards action which sets out to change the current economic tourism model and is framed by ideas of a regenerative tourism ecosystem. While the Hay Festival has concluded for the 2020 period and is no longer active as an experience – outside of streaming the sessions on digital platforms – the impact of the global pandemic is still on going, as well as the impact and implications it has on

businesses and organisations, including the Hay Festival Foundation and the market town of Hay-on-Wye.

## The future of tourism

Over the last decade, tourism researchers such as Hall, Higgins-Besbiolles and Dredge have demonstrated the challenges that the tourism industry faces and the impact of the challenges on the industry; such as seasonality, top down policy applications, lack of resources, inequality, digitalisation and monopolies of value ownership. Demonstrating that there is a need for the industry to change how it operates, to become one which shares the value created from tourism with all stakeholders, and one which allows it to be adaptable and resilient at all levels – particularly for the many small and medium-sized businesses that make the industry up. Meanwhile, economists such as Raworth (2015), and environmentalists, have found and warned that the global and local economy could face increasing and more devastating challenges in the future due to the current approach taken to the economy, to the devastation of the world's resources and the rise of environmental disasters. From this research, thought leaders in the area of the regenerative economy and in subfields of tourism development, such as tourism event management, have stated that there is a need for a new approach to tourism; how it is measured, managed and the support provided. Forming a tourism eco-system that is flexible, resilient and is able to adapt. These challenges have included the tourism economy facing the impacts of climate change on the tourism supply chains in multiple ways, environmental disasters and economic recessions.

It is these future challenges, and the necessary steps to overcome them, along with the current devastating effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on the industries small and medium sized businesses, that has inspired this research. While the researcher believes that there needs to be a whole industry shift in tourism to overcome this challenges and create a thriving and resilient tourism economy, the research understands that it is through industry leaders and individual organisational examples and successes that are needed for the industry as a whole to take the steps to make this systematic change. Through the example of actions outlined in



the research conclusion, drawn from the findings within the research, the research hopes to explore how festivals such as the Hay Festival, as major culture events which drawn a large tourism audience to the festivals destination, can be leaders in this industry change. Coinciding with the value of the festivals themselves, who often aim to bring about thought leaders and future trends to the attention of the public.

## Hay Festival



Image 2

The Hay Festival of Literature and Arts (The Hay Festival), is an annual Arts, Literary and Culture summer festival in the village of Hay-on-Wye, Wales (UK). Since its establishment in 1988, the 10-day festival has become a key part of the British festival scene and an important player in the tourism industry in Wales, regularly attracting 80,000 visitors to the region over the two-week period it runs for. Speakers include Nobel Prize-winner, novelists, scientists, politicians, performers and thought leaders from around the world. The festival aims to inspire, examine and entertain, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and it might be' (Hay Festival 2020). It does so by using a mixture arts, literature and cultural events, both free and paid, to 'bring readers and writers together to share stories and ideas in sustainable events around the world (Hay Festival 2020).

During the festival period, the Welsh town of Hay-on-Wye becomes a festival settlement, with events taking place across the town, and the involvement of

bookshops, cafes, accommodation and more all coming together to produce the atmosphere the Welsh 'Book Town' is famous for. Within the festival base, just on the edge of the town, is the main hub of activity forming its own enclavic space, with popup bookshops, cafes and multiple stages. However, the town itself is a key player within the festival, with the towns many bookshops and unique characteristic drawings festival attendees to return year on year.



Image 3



Image 4.



Image 5.

The festival places its values at the heart of its work, with education, access and sustainability playing key roles in everything it does, with sustainability a main focus of many of its events and the work the festival does to reduce its own environmental impact. For the opening two days children from schools across the area are invited to attend, the festival holds a number of events focused on learning at every age including 'Hay-Levels' aimed at supporting those taking their A level education in the UK. Alongside the festival and the work it does in Hay-on-Wye, the Hay Festival Foundation runs a total of 7 cultural festivals across the globe and also supports a number of educational programmes to providing arts programmes, materials and resources to children and young people of all ages, much of which is funded through the Hay Festival proceeds and donations – 70% of the festival's annual income depends on the money earned from ticket sales (BBC News, May 2020).

Demonstrating that the Hay Festival is more than just a festival, it is an organisation which has social and economic importance, creating economic, educational and cultural value on a domestic and global scale.

#### The Hay, Tourism & Covid-19

The Hay Festival is located in the historic market town of Hay-on-Wye, in the Breconshire region of Wales and sits on the border of Wales and the English county of Herefordshire. The town has a population of 1900 (2018) and in 2017 was named

as the best place to live in Wales. Classed as a micronation, due to a publicity stunt in 1977 where it was declared an 'independent kingdom' and has since gone on to develop a tourism industry based on the town's literary interests, with the town being named the National Book Town of Wales due to the town's 20 plus bookshops and is the home of two major festivals dedicated to arts, culture, philosophy and music with the *Hay Festival* and *HowTheLightGetsIn Festival*.

In 2019, the Festival was reported to have directly generated £83 million for Hay-on-Wye's economy over the previous ten years, bringing a multimillion-pound boost to the town's independent businesses (Hereford Times, 2020). Not only does the festival attract thousands to its events, with around 80,000 attending yearly, but it also results in boosting the local tourism economy with visitors staying at accommodation providers, eating and drinking in local hospitality businesses and spending money within the community.

In 2020 the world faced a new challenge, one which showcased the reality of the economies the lack of preparation for large scale disruption to business, the global Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

*"This is by far the worst crisis that international tourism has faced since records began. The impact will be felt to varying degrees in the different global regions and at overlapping times..." (UNWTO)"*

On the 30th January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency, caused by the acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus (COVID-19) first identified in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019. On the 11th March 2020, the WHO declared the outbreak a pandemic, with more than 3.52 million cases of COVID-19 reported across 187 countries and over 248,000 deaths by 4th May 2020 (WHO.int 2020). The virus spread between people during close contact and with symptoms that appear in the later stages of the disease, the declaration of a pandemic by the WHO resulted in many countries resorting to a national lockdown in efforts to tackle the viruses spread. Other preventive measures taken to reduce the chances of infection include staying at home, wearing a mask in public, avoiding crowded places, keeping distance from others and washing hands with soap and



water regularly (WHO.int 2020). This 'lockdown' included the closure of all non-essential shops, places of public gatherings, tourism and hospitality organisations, the cancelation of events and also the many organisations having to lay off their staff, have them work from home or place them on furlough leave. In the UK a lockdown was announced on the 23rd March and was lifted in June, with restrictions to travel, working and socializing still in place well into August, when some restrictions around socialising were relaxed to help support the tourism and hospitality industry.

Across the world the Tourism, Arts and Culture Sector was one of the biggest hit industries by the Covid-19 outbreak and continues to suffer 6 months since the start of the pandemic. Alongside the main lockdown restrictions that took place, once the restrictions began to ease and residents were able to move more freely around local areas, there was a psychological 'fear' generated by the spread of Covid-19 and the possibility of contracting the virus outside of the domestic space, which made some residents reluctant to travel even locally or visit businesses which attract high numbers of visitors - such as tourism attractions. With a predicted loss of for the year of up to 78% decline in international tourism and up to US\$1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer 2020), the tourism industry can be considered one of the worst hit economically by the pandemic. Between March and July of 2020 many countries shut down borders, placed travel restrictions in and out of the country, restrictions on businesses operations and also put into place regulations around quarantining. Resulting in an impact on both international and domestic tourism in countries across the globe. In March tourism dropped sharply by 57% following the start of lockdown in many countries, as well as the widespread induction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders. (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer 2020). The impact of the protective actions taken by the UK Government have led to many tourism industry organisations to speak out about the long term economic impact COVID-19 will have on the industry on a micro and macro level, with the tourism and hospitality sector being most vocal about the fear that many businesses and regions that make up the tourism sector may never be able to financially recover from the crisis without the correct support.

“The coronavirus pandemic will deeply affect the tourism and travel sector. It is already clear now that its economic impact would be more severe than in the case of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-2003.” (Strielkowski 2020)

While the UK government put measures in place to try to protect the UK economy, such as following a European model to fund 80% of the wages of all furloughed PAY member employees through a Job Retention Scheme between March to October 2020, Small Business Grants and loans for businesses and a ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ scheme providing tax back to hospitality businesses in an effort to encourage people to eat out locally in August. Many organisations and key bodies in the UK tourism industry do not believe these measures are good enough. Visit Britain's scenario forecast for inbound tourism to the UK in 2020, as of August 25th, is for a decline of 73% in visits to 11.0 million and a decline of 79% in spending to £6.0 billion, representing a loss of 30.7 million visits and £24.0 billion spending over the year of 2020 (Visit Britain, 2020).

In April, the Scottish Government's Chief Economist declared that the current lockdown restrictions had cut the economy output by a third, leaving the question how the economy and those sectors that make it up, can continue to be resilient during these times. The impact on the UK tourism economy has been that many small and medium size businesses or emerging attractions have had to adapt their priorities in the short and long-term from growth and expansion to survival. Many tourism businesses have low levels of staff, with inadequate resources, which have been made further depleted due to the loss of over 80% of their income (The Scottish Tourism Alliance 2020).

*“We've seen it hit tourism and hospitality, food, and the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors particularly hard. Even where sectors have continued to trade, turnover is down, resulting in precarious cash flows. And where sectors have started to reopen, it cannot be a business as usual approach now or possibly for some foreseeable time...we must support businesses to adapt and ensure that people have the right skills and opportunities to thrive in these difficult circumstances.”* (Sturgeon 2020)

Tourism in Wales contributes 6% of all Gross Value added to the Welsh Economy, with an estimated worth of £3 billion, and supports around 120,000 jobs (BBC News; August 2020). The tourism sector in Wales sector is largely made up of small or medium sized businesses; made up of accommodation providers, hospitality, transport services, tours and tour guides, travel agencies, cultural services, sports and recreational activities and retail. Within this structure, under traditional economic condition, the industry faces the same challenges as many tourism destinations of a similar nature, such as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Northern England; resulting in a reliance on a tourism economy that is seasonal operating mainly from April to September, and which lacks the access to resources such as training, tools and staff. Pre-2020 the tourism industry in Wales had been on course to increase its overnight spend by visitors in 2020 by 10%, compared with 8 years ago (BBC News: August 2020). However, with the coronavirus pandemic resulting in over at least 7 months of limited or non-existent business for most tourism organisations, it is unlikely that this goal will be realised.

In a report by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport select committee, MPs found that the government has consistently failed to recognise the size of the task facing the sector, and that its responses – including a £1.57bn support package and a five-step roadmap for reopening – could have saved jobs and cultural institutions from closure if they had been released sooner and with more clarity (Lanre Bakare). The result of this failure has been that businesses have had to change not only the way they operate, but also how they engage with their stakeholders and to reorganise their priorities. With this instability and uncertainty in the tourism and arts industry, this thesis aims to consider how organisations - in particular the Hay Festival organises - have taken the lead in pathing the way to overcome the impact of Covid-19 and how this could translate to a new approach which is not 'business as normal'.

## Hay Festival 2020

This section will answer the first research question;

*What was the Hay Festival's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and how was this different to normal?*

'In 2020, with the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic in March, many events across the word watched and wait to see how the pandemic would affect the events economy. Without the knowledge that a lockdown would be put into place in the UK within weeks, many events still planned to go ahead, including the Hay Festival. However, with the announcement of a lockdown in the UK on March 23rd, and Wales and Scotland advising stronger restrictions, the Hay Festival organisers quickly had to put a new plan in place. With only two months until the festival was due to take place the timing of the pandemic and lockdown put the festival in immediate financial jeopardy, having reached the moment in the year when the organisers had reached their maximum outlay with over a £1million spend already committed, and tickets only just having gone on sale. Peter Florence, the Festival's director stated:

*"We had to claw back - we were starting from a ropery position." ... "It was an existential crisis for about a month. And we were absolutely blown away by the response of our audiences and our sponsors," (BBC News, May 2020)*

In April the festival organisers announced that the festival would not be going ahead in its traditional format, issuing refunds to those who had purchased tickets. To try and crawl back some of its financial loss the festival offered its customers, who had already purchased tickets, the opportunity to donate the price of their tickets to the foundation as an option instead of a simple refund and began the process of an online donation campaign. With the need to cover the festival's committed financial expenditures, cover the festivals operational costs for the its other commitments throughout the year and also so that it can recover enough to take place in 2020, the organises needed to find a quick, cost effective way to be able to keep the festival in the public view and also bring in some income.

In April the festival announced that for 2020 it would be taking place with the festival programme being streamed via a digital platform, donated by Baillie Gifford – one of the festival's sponsors- and for the first time in its history, the whole programme would be free for all those attending. Thanks to the help of donators, the festival was



able to raise £350,000 resulting in them being able to go ahead with the digital format and they launched the new programme and opened a pre-subscription service to allow attendees to register their interests in the sessions in advance, providing a priority link to watch the session live and further opportunity to donate to the foundation (BBC May 2020).

“Thousands of Haymakers donated money and sent love to keep us in business, and Baillie Gifford have given us a digital platform. Our glass is way more than half full. Let it rain in May this year. And we might be delivering our first ever carbon-negative gig. And there’s this last, perfect irony. The festival is the very opposite of “social distancing”. It’s all about being together, about contact and exchange.” Peter Florance (theguardian 2020)

The festival took place between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of May on the digital platform Crowdcast, during the day between 10am and 9pm UK time. Attendees who had previously signed up via the presubscription were given advance notifications of their chosen sessions, and if the virtual ‘room’ for the session became ‘full’ attendees were redirected to a ‘overflow’ streaming service on the video streaming platform Youtube, which was a few seconds behind the live session. While, those who had not pre-booked were able to join sessions that were not ‘full’ live, or follow the session on Youtube. The sessions were then all uploaded to Crowdcast for 24hr, and then placed on Youtube and the Hay Player (the Hay’s subscription-based video player). The programme included writers, policy makers, historians and activists taking part in the sessions that they would have been involved in at Hay-on-Wye, from their own homes across the global, often answering questions from viewers as they were typed. It also offered the opportunity for speakers to bring in thoughts on current affairs and issues in connection to their writings, as events occurred throughout the two-week period.



Image 6.

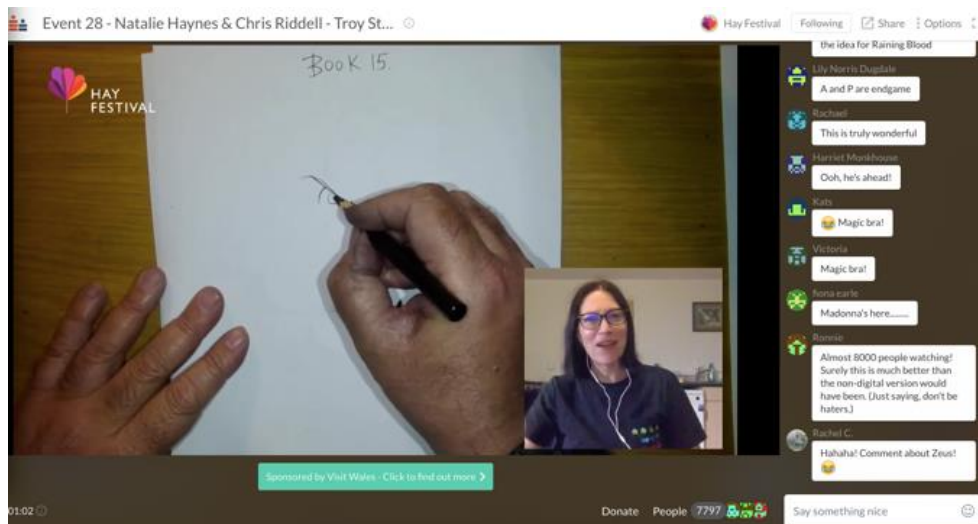


Image 7.

Alongside the sessions, the Hay Festival joined with bookshop chain Waterstones to feature books from the Hay's selection of speakers, as well as an online festival shop on the Hay Festival website where customers could buy branded Hay Festival merchandise.

However, with the festival occurring fully online, the wider network within Hay-On-Wye and the value creation associated with the festival typically, is was still missing for the rest of the wider festival community. The Chairman of the Hay-On-Wye Chamber of Trade, Josh Boyde-Green, stated

“it was a huge blow to the town that the festival was forced to go digital. {...} in the immediate, it’s very detrimental to the town. A few businesses got a little bit of trade online as the festival was generous with sharing details of businesses, but that’s very minor in comparison.” (Hereford Times, 2020).

While it is believed that the festival going ahead online would bring the benefit of press coverage and furthering the ‘reach’ of the festival and tourism region, in the hopes that it will bring about recovery for 2021. For the small and medium sized businesses that makeup the economy of the Hay-On-Wye region, a selection of the sector which traditionally do not have the resources or finances to cover long periods of closure or the costs associated with Covid-19 measures, then without a set plan, policies to protect the industry and support from the local it could be too little too late for the regions recovery.

The following research will therefore consider how the festival can learn from the response it took, the economic, social and environmental impact it had by moving online, and how these lessons can be used to provide guidance for the future of the festival so that it can become resilient, adaptable and continue to be a pillar of support for the tourism ecosystem in Hay-on-Wye. Allowing both the festival and the town economy to thrive.

## **Literary Review**

The below section will outline and reflect upon the literature and research that has informed the perspective and approach that it is to take in analysing the events of the Hay Festival 2020 and the data collected. It considers literature from the academic field of festival studies and acknowledges the role and value created by festivals within the tourism ecosystem. It will contemplate what it means to be a festival and the development of the field, to evaluate the key areas of focus which form the building blocks of this research's framework. Due to the nature and complexities of festivals, and the challenges they pose to particular methodological approaches, the perspective this research takes is through a sociological and anthropological lens, evaluating the festival based on the value it brings to its stakeholders and the wider public sphere through the value it creates at its annual festival events and in its 'purpose'.

As this research focuses on a contemporary European festival, its response to the impacts of pandemic from an economic, cultural and social perspective and its role within a tourism ecosystem, the below will draw upon three key areas of festival studies which have emerged from the development of festivals as a profession and their role in influencing the public sphere. It will consider the value created by festivals, on an economic, social, cultural and environment scale for all its stakeholders. The idea of festivalisation, and how festivals can be seen as a cultural influencer to navigate change and transformation through the ideas and experiences they provide. And finally it will consider how these two previous concepts come together to help a festival understand where it is in its 'life cycle', allowing it to determine its current and future needs, as well as how it can mature into the next phase and work towards a more sustainable and 'purpose' defined pathway. In doing so, it shows that a festival is not one dimensional and that for a festival to be sustainable and impactful it needs to acknowledge the plurality and multifaceted nature, work in collaboration with its stakeholders to share its value creation and also determine a clear independent purpose.

While the following does not give a comprehensive overview of the multiple areas of interest researchers have studied within festival studies over the last sixty years, it does provide an understanding of the themes and ideas which have influenced the research development. It acknowledges that this area as an academic field, festival studies, is still an emerging and has many gaps and areas to still be researched. This research hopes build upon the areas already developed, considering the economic and environmental impact, but also to further develop the field from a tourism perspective. With the objective of using the theoretical framework it builds below, it analyse the Hay Festival and considerer how festivals can be used within the tourism sphere, using its value creation, to transform and support a tourism ecosystem, becoming a mature organisation which is able to adapt to the challenges it faces and be sustainable.

The below charts the following structure, it will define what we mean by 'festival' and how the festivals themselves and the field of study have developed since World War II, as well as the main areas of focus that have driven it through each period. Then it will outline the concept of the types of value created by festivals and why they are important to understand, the role that value plays in the public sphere. From this, it will consider festivalisation and what an importance drive this is for art and culture festivals such as the Hay Festival. Finally, it reflects upon the understanding of a festival's 'life cycle' and how this knowledge can be used to guide development and expansion.

## What makes a festival

Before assessing the developments within the field of festival studies, it is important to understand what defines a festival, what the characteristic are and why it is important to study them. According to Caves (2004), the basic definition of a festival is that it is an event celebrated by a community, marked as a local or national holiday, typically of a religious or cultural focus and has elements of relationships with glocalization and high culture/low culture. Falassi (1987) also defines a festival within the realms of a 'sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances. However, these definitions are very broad and do not explore the full

complexities and eclectic nature of festivals. Although, from them we can see that it requires a community, a marked period of time and that it celebrates a theme of some kind, be it cultural or religious. In basic terms, the Hay Festival fits into this definition, as it is conducted annually over a period of ten days, and celebrates art, literature and culture. It also brings together, not only the community that it is located in, but also the community that makes up its stakeholders and the community of people that come from across the globe to attend – speakers, attendees and organisers.

While festivals can be seen to have been a part of culture since early society, over time as society has changed festivals have broadened and the understanding of what makes a festival have also developed along with it. It is only common elements and characteristics of a festival which can be agreed upon within the field, with the definitions marked above, being the main understanding of how to define a festival. This in part is due to the complexities and multiple typologies available within the concept of a festival. In regard to the characteristics which make festival, festivals are first and foremost social activities, a place where people come together with similar interests and ideas into one space. Alongside this, festivals also occupy a place in almost all cultures, playing an important anthropological and sociological role in society by inspiring creativity, attracting tourism and generating emotional responses through the encounters and experiences.

Festivals therefore serve a purpose rooted in collective experiences of those that attend, they are public facing and are embedded within social and cultural life. This can be seen through the Hay Festival's theme and programming based upon 'imagining a world' in both its current form and what it could be in the future, its attendees are attracted based on their collective experience of attending sessions lead by authors, scientists and politicians to gain an understanding of the world around them through attending the session topics that interest them. By developing these 'experiences', the appeal of festivals is that it is also a place for attendees to 'escape' from their routine, much like to the attraction of a holiday or vacation, festival's provide attendees with a feeling of 'time out of time', a place to escape everyday life. While for the organisers a festival is more complex, it is a series of negotiations and actions, within the context of the wider political, economic, social

and cultural climate (Newbold et al. 2015). The Hay Festival collates the experiences, considering the different areas of interest of its demographic, and develops the experience to meet these needs, for example, using political ideas of the moment and inviting experts from different perspectives to talk about that view.

According to Olsen (2013), the purpose of a festivals can be divided into four typologies, they can be; civic in their nature, prioritates community self-celebration, a place artistic promotion and development, or exist principally for profit. Embedded within these, the core aims of the festival could range from being a; source of artistic innovation, transformative, a challenge to the status quo, a source of local cohesion, a form of advancing cultural democracy or to change local or global consciousness. These, however, are not mutually exclusive and a festival can be a combination of the four types as well as having one or more core aims. These typographies have become more developed and more complex as festivals themselves have developed and matured, moving from a platform of just celebration to one which is multifaceted and aims to be disrupt the normal. As mentioned above, the Hay Festival in its traditional format, has aimed to be a source of artistic promotion, celebrating new ideas and developments in the arts, literature and culture community. As a festival it uses its profits from ticket sales to further its core aims of being a source of transformation by giving a stage to new political, social and cultural ideas; as well as driving access to education and driving for environmental sustainability. This acknowledgement of the complexities of festivals has also led to the widening focus of festivals, as a field of study, understanding that festivals as having a much wider role in society. Hertling (2015) stipulates that all festivals should be a unique response to a unique situation, becoming a process integrated into the changing situation of its political context and therefore able to contribute more than may be achievable as an isolated event. They should be responding and serving the demands of an audience who are looking to enjoy the latest developments in international art and culture.

However, it is Pieper's (1999) broad definition of what is behind the value of a festival that is most relatable to the field of festivals from a tourism perspective, that a festival lies in the contrast both to everyday life in which we undertake useful work and to the uselessness of the activity, a means to do something which is in no way

ties to other goals of the attendees. It brings with it economic value for its founders and the community of stakeholders, while also providing social and cultural value through the mixing of nationalities, ideas and cultures; thirdly it also provides value culturally through its influence on policy and place making. Therefore, by staging a festival, as an event marked by taking place only over a small period of time, we could understand that as a concept, a festival is a sense of disrupting the normal and every day. It is within these broader understandings of what makes a festival, its values, core purpose and the value it creates for stakeholders and the public sphere, that this research understands the Hay Festival and its values. Gaining an understanding of the Hay Festival, its values and purpose as a festival that is aimed at inviting participants and visitors to 'imaging the world as it currently is and how it will be in the future' the future of the world, responding to the changing political and cultural climate and challenging the way society works – working as a source of innovation, transformation and to challenge the status quo. Alongside these aims, it works to be a source of local cohesion bringing together the values and interests of the historic town of Hay-on-Wye, as a 'book town', through the economic, social and cultural value it creates. In the analysis, the researcher will use this understanding to evaluate how the 2020 Hay Festival, which was fully conducted online and for free, fits into this idea, and the impact it has on the Festival's purpose and values are they being strengthened or weakened by doing so; and what does this mean for the future of the festival.

### The evolution of festival studies

The academic field of festival studies is a fairly recent field of study, largely forming out of the areas of business and events studies, coming about as its own area of focus with the establishment of the publication *Festival Management and event Tourism* in 1993. Previous to this publication, the main focus of research in this area had been a part of events tourism subsection of tourism studies and event management; Within the core areas of interest being centred around the themes of economic impact, management, marketing or trends (Getz 2005). However, research was typically in and around occasions within the focus of sports or cultural events. Since then, the study of festival studies has continued to grow, and with it the



interest in sponsorship and event marketing has reduced, while interest in economic development and impact of the events on all stakeholders and communities has increased. Festivals are of particular interest to scholars across a number of disciplines because of the universality of festivity and the popularity of festival experiences (Getz, D. 2010). However, the majority of this research have still been focused around cultural or sporting events, and in particular from a global north application of festivals. And only 13% of research carried out within festival studies has been from a tourism approach (Sherwood 2007).

### Perspectives in festivals

There are four major areas of interest which have been identified within the field of festival studies, the broad issues and perspectives around the role of festivals within the public sphere; festivalisation and sustainability; leadership and managements, business practises and policy perspectives; the impact of festivals and its role in transforming landscapes, society and culture; and the future of festivals (Newbold et al, 2015). Outside of these common areas of interest, Getz (2005) identified that there are particular gaps within the research field in the areas of risk management, social, cultural and environmental evaluation, value profiling and recommended behaviour. Through research into festivals, an awareness of the multifaceted nature and complexities has developed, showing casing the intrinsic role of festivals in society, being a source of innovation, transformation, community pride and achieving change on a local and global scale. The following will delve further into the areas of the role of festivals within the public sphere, festivalisation and the impact of festivals on, considering the value festivals bring to its stakeholders.

It was the period post World War II (in Europe) that festivals as a 'professionalisation' began to happen, with the emergence of 'arts and culture' festivals, such as that of both Edinburgh and Avignon in 1947, bringing with them heightened awareness of the role of festivals in society. With audiences being providing with a variety of experience which widened their social, cultural and intellectual knowledge. As the cultural politics of Europe developed with the 1960s and 1970s, festivals became known for their themes of expression, reconstruction and cultural awareness, acting

as a symbolic form of resistance – gaining a political and cultural agenda aimed at developing citizen consciousness and new ideas of the world. Key to this was the idea of free access and open to all, taking over whole cities to provide access to all classes, and with it came the ‘festivalisation of cities’ with festivals becoming less enclavic in nature and instead becoming a reflection of the community they were based in. Therefore, becoming a reflecting of, and responding, to the cultural movements in society at the time, locally and internationally. By the 1980s and 90s festivals became more involved with the private sector, becoming more commercial and economic orientated as a sector. Alongside this explanation of interest came the potential for businesses development and opportunities in using festivals in tourism promotion and in the process of place and city making. With it, festivals began to attract the attention of local authorities and tourism management organisations, who looked to use the economic and cultural value that festivals created at a local level for their own profit, expanding the festival’s community of stakeholders by providing sponsorship or other resources such as publicity.

Most recently, within the post-millennial period, 2000 onwards, festivals have become a focus for differentiating between individuals and communities in terms of physical, intellectual, cultural and emotional access (Bourdieu 1984). They have had to respond to the changing environment around them, political, economic and in some cases environmental. An economic factor in Europe, was the European economic crash of 2008/7, where festivals found that they needed to redefine not only their relationship within the public sphere but also the need to focus on more than their economic impact to continue to thrive and develop. Festivals needed to once again have more than just economic value as their purpose, they needed to become a place which is focused on providing encounter and challenging the local and global. Something which their audiences were also looking for, as the demographic and politics of society developed through the period, society became concerned with the impact of climate change, the negative value created by businesses and the tensions in society. Audiences, therefore, looked for wider purpose from the experiences they participate in. This era has also provided opportunities in digitalisation, entrepreneurship and the ability for festivals to provide a platform for the sharing of ideas and a place where ‘debate is free from the influence of power, traditional authorities or dogma’ (Habermas 1974). Driving

festivals to be innovative in their approach to how they engage, reach and explore their purpose and audience.

### Value creation of Festivals

The first concept that will be explored is that of the value that is created by festivals, taking into consideration the value they provide on an economic, social, cultural and environmental level for their organisers, stakeholders; and on a local and global level. Within the study of festivals, the focus of studies on the value that is created by festivals has typically be that of a festivals economic and environment impact. With little investigation into the wider and more complex levels of value created. The small areas of consideration that have taken place, as mentioned above, have been based on values that are quantifiable measurements, such as the economic and environmental. This is partly due to the research trends and interests, but also due to the challenges and limitation of studying the possible other value outcomes, typically considered unquantifiable; challenges such as the fact that festivals take place and are active for short periods of time. There is, therefore, there is little understanding of the long-term benefits and challenges of the value created by festivals.

In studying role of the festival within the public sphere and what impact it has on this sphere, it allows us to have an understanding of the value festivals bring at different levels. Including the symbolic affirmations of communities and welfare, through the artistic, cultural, social and economic aspects that are interwind and reenforced by each other through the festival experiences (Klaic 2008). The most researched value created by festivals, is that of the economic and environmental impact a festival has for its stakeholders and the community. However, it is the harder to measure aspects of the value created which have had little study, such as the long-term impact of the value created, the cultural and social impact or how it can work in collaboration with its stakeholders to share this value. Other non-economic benefits from festivals include community engagement and the preservation of local culture and traditions are also acknowledged (Schwartz and Tait, 2007; Crespi-Vallbona and Richards, 2007; Moscardo, 2008). However, traditionally, festivals are expected to create value for the local economy that they are based in, providing a material and symbolic boost

to the local economy and prestige to the local community. Events and festivals are recognised as being instrumental in building destination image and attracting tourists, having a symbiotic relationship, encouraging investment, generating revenue and boosting the economy (Getz 1991; Derrett 2003). Within the realms of tourism, we know that festivals over a multiday bring economic value to the local community, particularly festivals which are based within a town or city, as they provide the tourism economy with opportunity for business in accommodation, hospitality, retail and other services such as tour guiding. From the previous 'place based' Hay Festivals, this economic value has helped to bring about community cohesion, because the festival's objective 'to celebrate arts, literature and culture' match the interests of the 'book town'.

However, Klaic (2014) argues that to be successful in the new millennium, festivals need to be seen as a specific response to globalisation and its ambiguous cultural impact. Therefore, the festival formulae needed to be reinvented so that it is able to act as an inspirational and encouraging force that reassures of the promise of a peaceful future, that therefore advances society through values of culture. In researching the value created by festivals for its stakeholders and society, considering more than those that are currently seen as measurably, it allows researchers and the industry to gain an understanding of the ways in which the sector might develop further. Not only does it provide insight into the sector, but also into the changing trends within society and the extent to which cultural experiences inform the individual and the understanding of the world (Sassatelli 2015). This study, therefore, hopes that by focusing on the symbolic and cultural value that has been created by the 2020 Hay Festival, we can consider how these differ from its 'traditional' impact. From understanding what value is created by festivals, and in particular that of the 2020 Hay Festival, we can then analysing how it has created a sense of festivalisation and the festival's life cycle, evaluating what areas fit the festival's core aims and purpose, and where it can work to develop so that it can become sustainable and resilient in the future.

## Festivalisation

The second concept which will be investigated in this section and used to consider and analyse the Hay Festival, is the idea of festivalisation. As festivals have developed and an awareness around the power and impact festivals have within the public sphere, one concept which has emerged is around how we experience the developments that affect our relationship with culture, the idea of festivalisation. This can be defined in a number of ways, however it is seen as the process that cultural activities which usually occur in a pattern are reconfigured to form a 'new event', allowing a cultural organisation to orientate its programme around particular themes, or event (Négrier 2015). From this perspective, the Hay Festival has used the theme of #ImageTheWorld to develop a series of experiences connected by interest and which take place yearly over a 10-day period. This establishment has led to a place-based 'festivalisation' of not only the market town of Hay-on-Wye, which has developed a 'sense of place' based on its interests in books and literature; but also one which brings a community of people from all over the world to celebrate it. The 2020 response to the Covid-19 pandemic, can be seen as the festival taking this one step further, to develop a 'new' event or new festival, which is fully online and is one which has no limitations of place.

Within this sense of festivalisation attendees are able to assess their own ways of thinking of themselves, their community and the world, to redefine or enhance it. This is based on the idea that an individual's relationship to culture is thought to be influenced by a very wide range of social factors; education, relationships and more, all contributing to the cultural path they follow. Leveratto (2010) writes that the festival experiences that people can play a key role in providing the influencing factors in following their 'cultural path'. A 'cultural path' which is defined by the individual's tastes, politics and cultural interests in the deciding factors of what festivals they attend and therefore what festival experiences they have. Therefore, providing cultural, educational and social value to the public sphere and impacting the local and global consciousness through providing these experiences. As mentioned above, the Hay Festival in its typically place based format, is one which heavily plays a part in the impact it has on the 'cultural path' of its attendees, well known for its events by politicians, thought leaders, scientists and Nobel prize winners, the festival's whole purpose is to challenge the way 'we' its attendees think about the world.

It is the festivalisation 'of contemporary life, and the cultural outcomes achieved when community is involved in an immersive experience as a result of the interaction among themes, making a festival experience 'unforgettable' ' (Steriopoulos 2017). It is therefore in the festival organisers interests, when looking to define their audience, the typography of their festival and what themes make up their programme, to consider what festival experiences their target audience are looking for.

Festivalisation therefore involves both the consumers practices and tastes, and the political and economic strategies of many stakeholders (Négrier 2015). To understand festivalisation, it combines a understand of the plurality and complexity of a festival and consider the empirical approaches which can be taken to gaining this understand, as the phenomenon involves the practices, tastes and behaviours of festival consumers, but also the political and economic strategies of the festival stakeholders. Results of which may not be considered to be linear or positive for the festival individual interests, which could be why it has not been the focus of many studies. This concept provides a part of the literary framework for this research in analysing the 2020 Hay Festival, considering how the festival fits in with the perception of festivalisation and in considering how the festival supports and fits into wider society through providing festival experiences for its attendees to explore their 'cultural path'; and what impact this has economically, socially, culturally and environmentally.

### Festival Life Cycle

The final concept which will inform the framework for this research, and which incorporates the two models discussed above, it that of the festival life cycle.

Through analysing a festival through the perspective of the impact they have on their organisers, attendees and stakeholders, in comparison to their values and purpose as an organisation, we are able to understand what stage it is within the its life cycle and therefore what needs need to be met for it to matured and develop. This model has been developed, much like many models within the festival's studies field, from models borrowed from tourism studies, in particular the widely use Tourism Area Life Cycle (Butler 1980). The TALC the model functions as a way to understand the

development cycle of tourism destinations as a product. Providing a focal point for what leads to destination change and in many developed destinations, where traditional tourism in its maturity phase is suffering from intense competition, it offers differentiation and revitalising stages to revive and prolong the tourism life cycle (Holmes & Ali-Knight 2017). By extending Butler's model researchers can include additional trajectories and accompanying critical factors to explain and predict the nature of festivals. Allowing them to use the model to suggest potential opportunities and risks for festivals and result in outlining areas of growth and consolidation.

While Butler's model has six stages; exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and rejuvenation or decline, Adizes (2004) who argues that organisations follow predictable lifecycles, sets out four key functions to understand at which point in a life cycle a festival is. These are functions include; the purpose, administration, entrepreneur, integration. Through considering the life cycle of a festival, organisers are able to set out which factors can lead to success or failure, with festival success typically identified as continuing to grow, while failure results in the cancellation of the festival (Getz 2002). Not only this, but research shows that successful events are seen to have strong ties to their local communities and stakeholders, and that they are rooted in within their destination. By analysing the Hay Festival and at which point in its life cycle it is we are able to consider how it can be developed further, what areas need to be refined for it to carry out its purpose and how it can be supported to become more resilient and sustainable. It is only in its own awareness of where it stands and once it has reached matureness with in the final aspect of its life cycle, integration - the purpose of fully understanding whom the festival is for and for whom it is done for - that long term sustainability can be truly gained. Allowing a festival to expand its purpose to incorporate its stakeholders as well as its founders.

Key to this understanding and matureness is the festival working in co-creation and collaboration with its stakeholders, while still being independent. Négrier's (2015) considers the conditions under which festivalisation has developed to share the expectations of festivals to influence personal and community development and economic prosperity. Therefore, bringing together the models from festivalisation and

value creation, through an understanding of the festival life cycle, to develop a new modality of cultural practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> century through festivals.

The research framework for this study, therefore, looks to unity these three areas of theory from the field of festival studies, to gain an understanding of how the 2020 Hay Festival has impacted its stakeholders and wider society, through its response to the 2020 covid-19 pandemic. It aims to do this to understand what lessons can be learnt from this year's festival, so that an understanding of how it can develop in the future, so that it becomes resilient and is able to therefore, use its value creation to be an active member of the tourism ecosystem in Hay-on-Wye. Allowing the festival to harness its resources wisely, avoiding slipping into a routine response to the world in the future, and using this period of disruption, caused by the pandemic, to assess their own life cycle position and what their aspirations for the future are. Ensuring that their needs are clearly defined and that their programme clearly adds value to not only the life of all of its stakeholders and community, but also wider society.



## Methodology

Having established the theoretical models which have informed the framework of this research, the following section will now outline the methodological approach that the research has taken, the types of methods used and the reasoning behind it. As the object of this research is to investigate a festival, investigating the case study of the Hay Festival's 2020 online programme and the impact it has had and the value it has created within the public sphere; researching festivals offer its own methodological challenges (expanded on below) the research has been guided by previous research into methodological approach that works best for explore the value created by festivals. It has also considered its methodological approach based on the types of value it is trying to measure, while quantitative data is fairly easy to measure, qualitative data can be harder to put into measurable terms as it is often not tangible. This section will therefore consider the researchers methodological approach, how it has been applied and its validity.

As mentioned above, the academic field of festival studies has faced a number of challenges in measuring the impact and value created by festivals, due to the complexity and eclectic nature of festivals. While the economic and environmental impacts of festivals is quantifiable, it is traditionally seen that the other areas of value creations – social and cultural – are not as easy to measure. Alongside this, the ability measures the impact of festivals face practical challenges around being able to collect data. This is partly due to the complexities associated with festivals, the multiple-entrances, multiple-days and the shortness in the length of a festival as an event. This has resulted in the established research, such as Campbell and Fiske (1959), Goffman (1961) and Steinmetz (1977) within the social sciences, that there is a need for studies to use a multiple methodological approach (Ralston & Stewart 1990). It is this reasoning, along with the objective of this research to explore the response of the Hay Festival to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of the festival being based full online, which have influenced the methodological approach taken by the researcher. This type of study requires a methodological approach that is able to measure the material and the immaterial aspects which it creates. The researcher, therefore, has taken a mixed methodological approach in carrying out a case study, while also selecting data collection methods that are both qualitative and quantitative

in their nature – participant observations and a structured survey with open and closed questions.

Another problem in studying the Hay Festival 2020 programme, which is impacted the methodological which has been used, is the lack of data trend available around the impact of a full digital programme long-term on all of the festival's stakeholders since this is the first time that the festival and the UK tourism sector has had to face this particular challenge – set by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the method collection has been done via digital methods, as not only was the festival fully held online, but the country of Wales and England – where the majority of the stakeholders are based – were in lockdown and travel was restricted for all citizen in these areas. Alongside this, the festival programme being fully online and the restrictions around the UK lockdown, have provided their own challenges in collecting data. To combat these challenges, the researcher has therefore had to use digital methods to select, contact and carryout these methods or investigation, with the main approach that has been taken in applying the theoretical framework models, outlined the literary review, to the Hay Festival is that of a case study. Furthermore, it is important to stress that secondary data sources have also played a large role within this research due to the nature of the pandemic and also the interest in the Hay Festival's response and its impact by the media and tourism management organisations.

## Case Study

Case studies are commonly used within festival studies and event studies research, as it is considered that it is the context of the festival under which is under investigation, in this case the Hay Festival and its material and immaterial values; which is vitally important gain an understanding of; resulting in the need for a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of a case study as a research design is highly relevant and illuminating when exploring key issues and seeking to introduce new research areas (Yin, 2009). Therefore, through presenting and analysing the empirical data through a case study approach, it is the aim that the validity of the data is extended as case studies provide the opportunities to examine

why and how contemporary phenomena occur. Jennings (2001) sets out that the advantages of a case study approach is that in-depth data is collected, via single or multiple cases, evidence is grounded in the research environment, researchers can check for accuracy; thus removing or being aware of the researchers bias from the study, and methodological triangulation can be used (Holmes & Ali-Knight. 2017). It is these advantages in using a case study format, that have influenced the researcher's decision to use the Hay Festival 2020 programme as a case study for understanding the changing role festivals play in the public sphere under the new condition set by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Typically, case studies use multiple forms of evidence within the collection process (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2009). In order to collect data for this case study, the researcher has used three types of data collection; participation observation – taking an active part within the festival as a participant, a survey carried out with a sample-size of the festivals 2020 attendees as representatives of the demographic; and secondary data sources drawn from existing research and media discourses. This secondary data includes data from interviews by the festival organisers and stakeholders with the media, social media platforms, event websites, personal communications with participants of the festival, and tourism data reports, to provide further understanding to the context of the festival, in areas that may not be easily measurable.

## Observations

In terms of the actual data collection methods within this research, the study has primarily used the method of active participant observations as a research method that involves the research joining the daily lives of the Hay Festival 2020 programme and becoming an active member of its community. This method has been selected as the research believes it to be the best method in this context to provide an understanding of the context of the Hay Festival's 2020 online program and its relationship with its community and the public sphere. To understand how the festival works in practice, the online sessions, and also the challenges that the format of this program presents. Observations are a type of ethnographic study, and most often

used in anthropological study as it consists of mixtures of different techniques to make the observations including direct observations, participation in the life of the group, self-analysis and notes; and in this case screenshots of the events as they happened (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). It is typically used to uncover and investigate observable details, group dynamics and other areas of hidden detail that might not be achievable through other data methods such as interviews or surveys. Therefore, observations are effective in exploring the underlying realities of a situation, allowing the researcher to discover discrepancies between the theoretical and the reality of a situation. The research took part in the festival as an attendee, attending all but three sessions of the full programme over the ten-day period, acting as a 'normal' audience attendee and pre-subscribed to the sessions in advance. The researcher was also an active participant within the session they attended, using the chat function and submitting questions.

The main aim of using this form of data collection is that it helps to achieve a sense of validity and true organic reflection of the phenomenon as it occurs. Participant observation does not prejudge issues and events (in the way a questionnaire may, for example) and, for these reasons it is possible to argue that such a method provides data that has a high level of validity (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). However, it is also important to understand the biasness which can be formed through this type of data collection, as it is the researcher who is forming these observations, the researcher's opinions and ideology can result in influencing the outcome of the observations and therefore create a biasness within the study. Participant observation (whether overt or covert) is not the most reliable research method as such studies, by their very nature, are impossible to repeat and reliability can be further questioned in terms of the extent to which the presence of the observer actually changes the behaviour of those being studied (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). This can also be seen as an advantage or a disadvantage of participant observations as a research method as it is flexible and open to interpretation. It therefore requires an open mind by the researcher and can take them down a number of pathways depending on what happens at the moment. Allowing the researcher to follow up on different directions or ideas that occur, and in this case identify opportunities for further data collection by other methods – as an opportunity to find participants more likely to take part within the survey collection.

While the programme sessions themselves have been available to re-watch and revisit online by the Hay Festival organisers, the comments, interactions and questions that were provided by the 'live' audience at the time are not included in this. The researcher has therefore documented these observations made during each session, through a mixture of diary formatted notes and screenshots of the conversations as they happened, to be able to preserve and consider any patterns of behaviours or areas of value creation that occur. Within this paper, only the relevant extracts of these notes have been used in providing evidence and context, this is due to the high number of sessions that the researcher attended and that this is just one area of data collection. The screenshots, and therefore personal data within them, have not been altered or made anonymous, as the only personal data provided is a name, as seen in the image below.

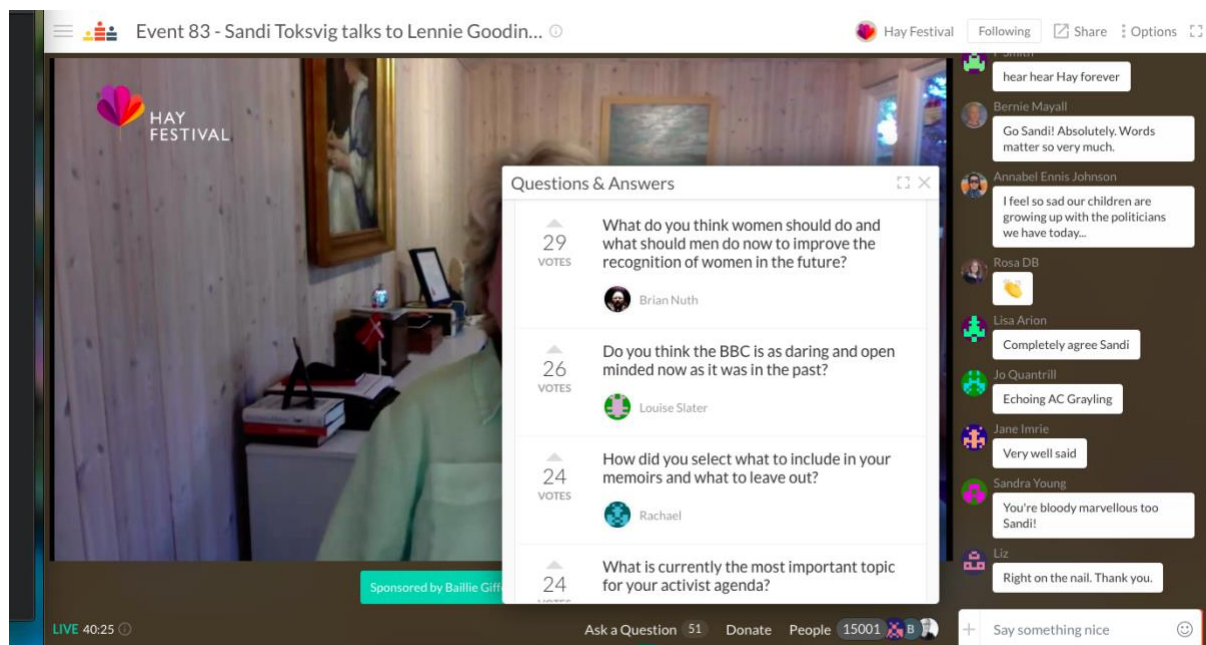


Image 8.

Through using participant observations and being an active participant in the sessions that the researcher attended, there are four key advantages to this form of data collection. It is able to produce a rich qualitative source of data, using mixed media to give a picture of how people 'live' and interact within the context of the Hay Festival and a first-hand knowledge of the value a festival can create for the

individual. Therefore, give a deeper sense of validity to the research. Secondly, it allows the researcher to gain empathy through their personal experience, gaining insight into the viewpoints of both attendees and the festival organisers, understanding of the values of the festival on a small scale; and to also understand the problems and challenges that are faced by this form of response. An example of this can be seen in the being able to witness first-hand the technique issues that the festival experience in some sessions and the impact this had not only on the ability for the sessions to work, but in how it caused tension and frustration with attendees and organisers; and the way these tensions then impacted on the experience and value created. The result of this, is that the data collected has a sense of feeling more authentic and reflective of the time.

The final advantage the researcher found to using participant observations, was within the realm of practicality when it came to attempt to measure and access the attendees of the festival. Since the festival was occurring fully online and not place-based, this limited the opportunities the researcher had to naturally engage with other participants outside of the programme sessions – where had the festival been place-based the researcher could have used face to face methods to build trust and select participants for interviewing or carrying out other forms of data collection. The researcher therefore only had access to assess the festival and everything it entails during each of the one-hour sessions – considering the live chat function, the way the session leaders interacted with each other and the audience and the behaviour displayed at these times.

There were also disadvantages to using participant observations as a form of data collection, raising questions around the ethical nature of observing and documenting behaviours encountered; the lack of a truly reflective representation of the attendees; the time consuming nature of attending each session; and finally risks a sense of biasness as to provides opportunities for the researchers to become 'too involved' or use their presence to influence the natural flow of the experience. Despite these challenges, the researcher did not make their intentions to study their fellow attendees or the festival known when taking part in the session, until the final three days of the festival. This was to keep the intention of the only interaction as natural as possible, without the attendees feeling that they were being assessed.

## Observation Findings

In carrying out the participant observations, there were a number of key themes and elements to the festival that stood out. These have been split into themes of the social and cultural, economic and environmental value that is provided through participating in the festival programme.

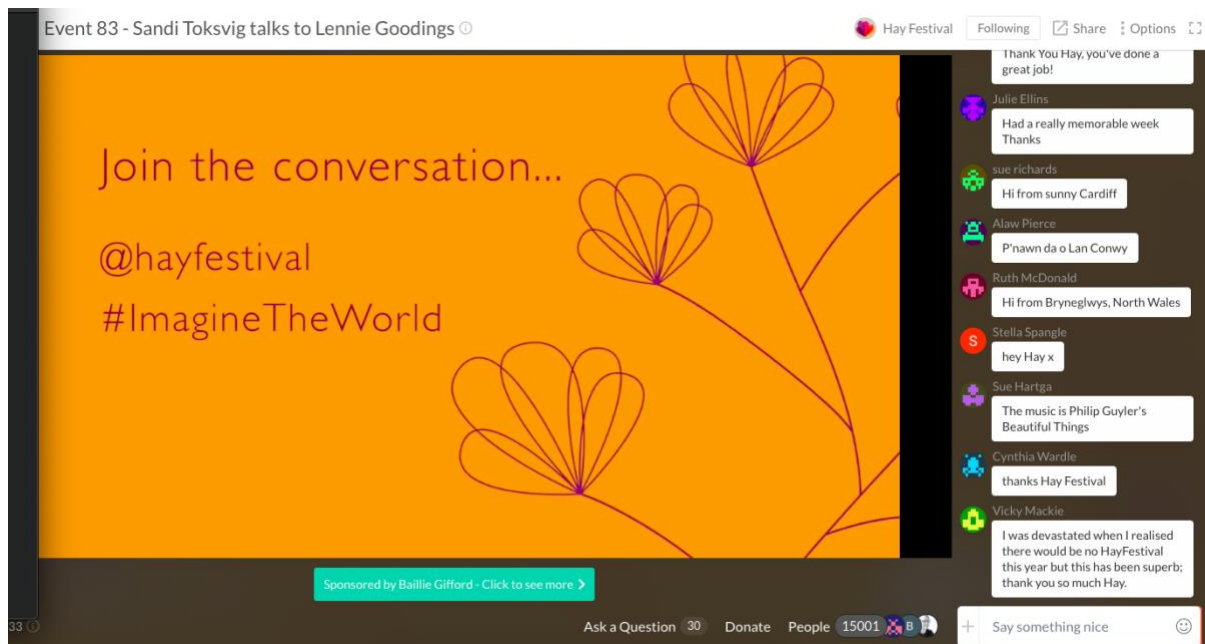


Image 9.

## Social

The first was the importance of the chat function for participants, and the social aspect of having a 'live' chat function for each of the sessions allowed audience members to interact with each other, the festival organisers and in some cases the session led; no matter where the audience member was watching the session from. Many of the sessions began with the festival organisers posting to direct people to the 'ask a question' tab or providing information about the session – such as if it was running late and when it would be starting. Some attendees then took it upon themselves to introduce themselves, say hello and where they were watching from. Examples of these can be seen in image 9, 10 and 11, where festival attendees are interacting with the information they are seeing and being told live. Something which,

had they been attending in person, would not have been possible due or at least not on this scale.

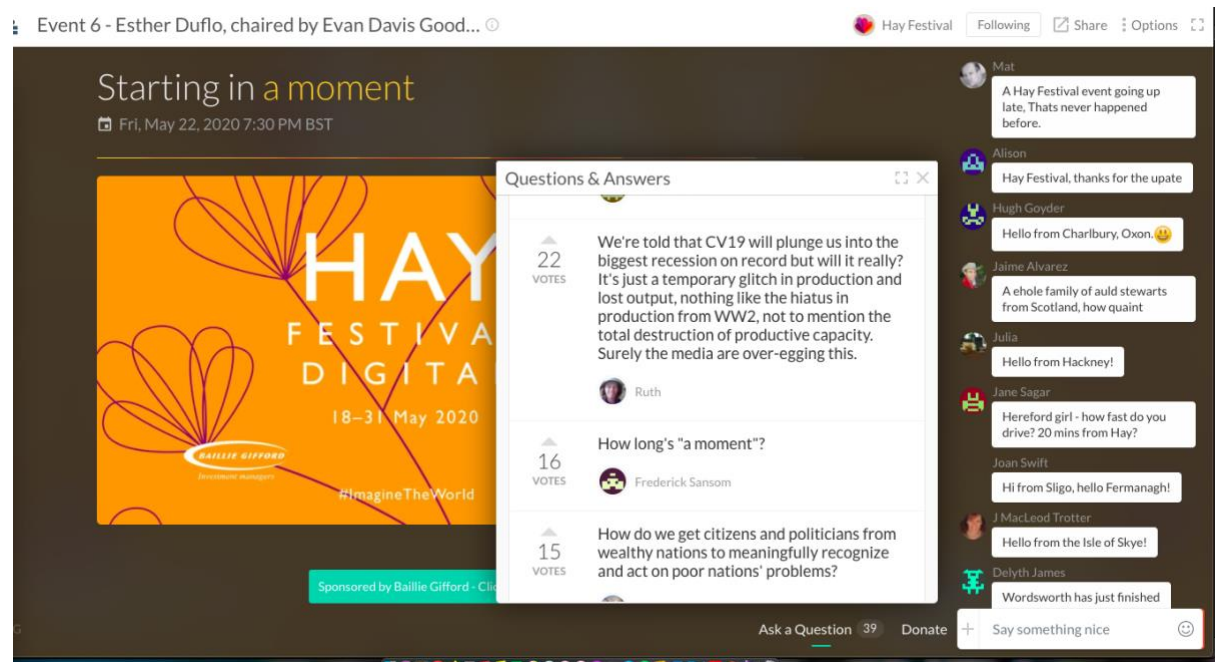


Image 10.



Image 11.

The researcher also observed that through the chat function, people with similar interests, ideas or even just in similar locations were brought together by the



sessions, allowing them to group off – often seen sharing contact information to take the conversation ‘offline’.

Another social element of the festival was that it also allowed, through the streaming platform, participants to ask the question to the speaker in writing, throughout the sessions, rather than at the end as is typical with a speaker event. Other participants were then able to ‘vote’ up and down the question based on their interest in hearing the answer (Image 9). Providing an intimacy between the speaker, the participants and between the audience themselves. However, the chat functions and question function were not monitored and in some of the festival sessions, this resulted in tension between the participants. With arguments, name-calling and bad language being aimed at other participants or the anonymous question asker. Despite this, as there was no ‘real’ interaction with the speaker outside of what they controlled – reading out loud any comments or the questions they wished to ask – much of this was overlooked by the organisation.

The festival also encouraged its audience to take the conversations its audience was having ‘wider’, image 8. Having reminders and prompts at the start and end of each session of the social media information for the Hay Festival, a hashtag for them to use to join in the conversations across other platforms – and therefore encouraging engagement between its community who may have been at different sessions or not typically interacted – and also encouraging to spread the word about the Hay Festival through social media (image 12).

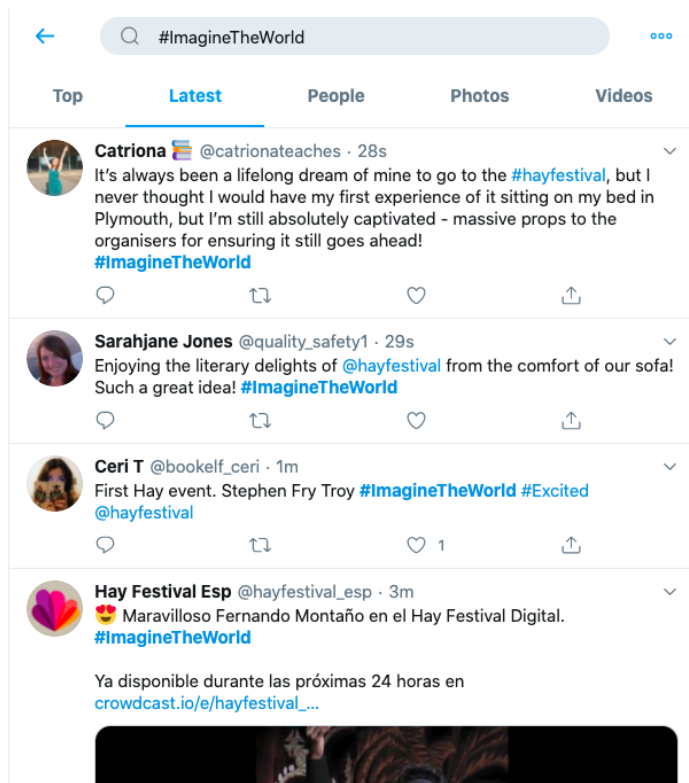


Image 12.

## Cultural

From a cultural point of view, the festival was able to carry out its traditional programme around showcasing a variety of cultures and topics of interest. While the programme itself did not vary much from the original one published in March, many of the speakers used the platform to reflect on the current global situation and impacts and the relationship between politics, culture, education and action in relation to the work they were there to speak about. From the chat function and questions asked, it was clear that the participants were interested in furthering their knowledge within these areas – first in the fact that they were attending the session, secondly that they were actively engaging others in debates or sharing ideas and thirdly that the questions they asked were aimed at exploring the speaker's topic or idea further. In image 13 we can observe the author Jonathon Bates discussing William Wordsworth. However, it is the questions that are being asked around the ideas and concepts he shares by the participants which demonstrate the transference of knowledge and sharing of cultural ideas.

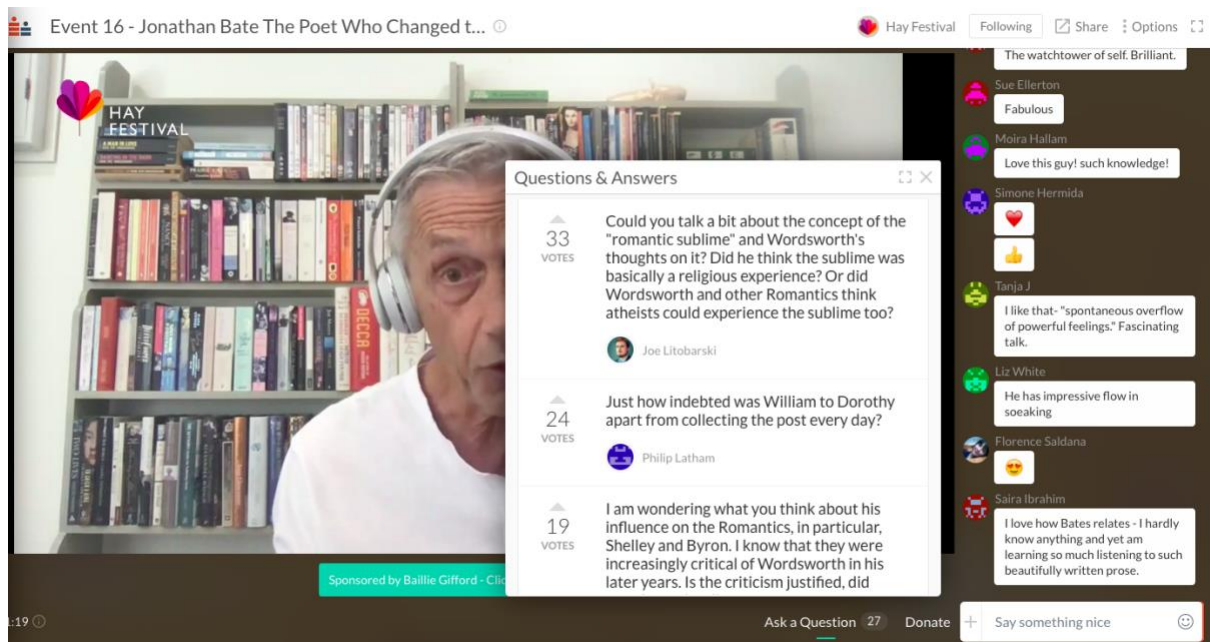


Image 13.

The festival also covered local and international topics, with a session on the future of Wales and its political landscape, scientific research collaborations between researchers from Mexico, England and the US, gender issue in the Far East and environmental changes occurring in all parts of the world. Alongside this, the attendees, as observed from the chat function, were clearly as international as the session topics, with people identifying from Africa, American, Latin America, Denmark, Wales and Egypt. Each session was introduced by the festival founder Peter Florence, in both English and Welsh, reminding people that the session was live from Hay-on-Wye (where he lives) but that exploring other cultures, languages and philosophies is a key purpose of the festival.

## Economic

Each of the sessions opened and ended with a video aimed at reminding its audience of the importance of the festival, the different work it carries out thanks to the festival program and its need to be supported financially through this difficult time. The video was produced by the Hay Festival Foundation and featured some of the Hay's most popular and famous speakers, many of who are part patrons of the festival, such as author Margaret Atwood and actress Vanessa Redgrave and

Stephen Fry. The video included the different ways to donate to the festival and also how to shop the Hay Festival's merchandise and subscribe to the Festival's own paywalled video streaming and podcast service. Alongside the video, built into the streaming service was the ability to donate live throughout the session, allowing people to donate quick and easily, in any currency and without taking them away from the live stream. The donation link was also regularly published on social media and in the email reminders of sessions beginning. Automatically at the end of each session, a donate now box appeared before allowing the screen closed. Providing a push to its views to support the festivals work.

The sessions also included thanks to organisations who had helped to make the festival happen and thanks to those who had already donated (image 13 & 14). And regular reminders of the shop and partnership with Waterstones bookshop was published within the session, on the chat and on the festival's social media.

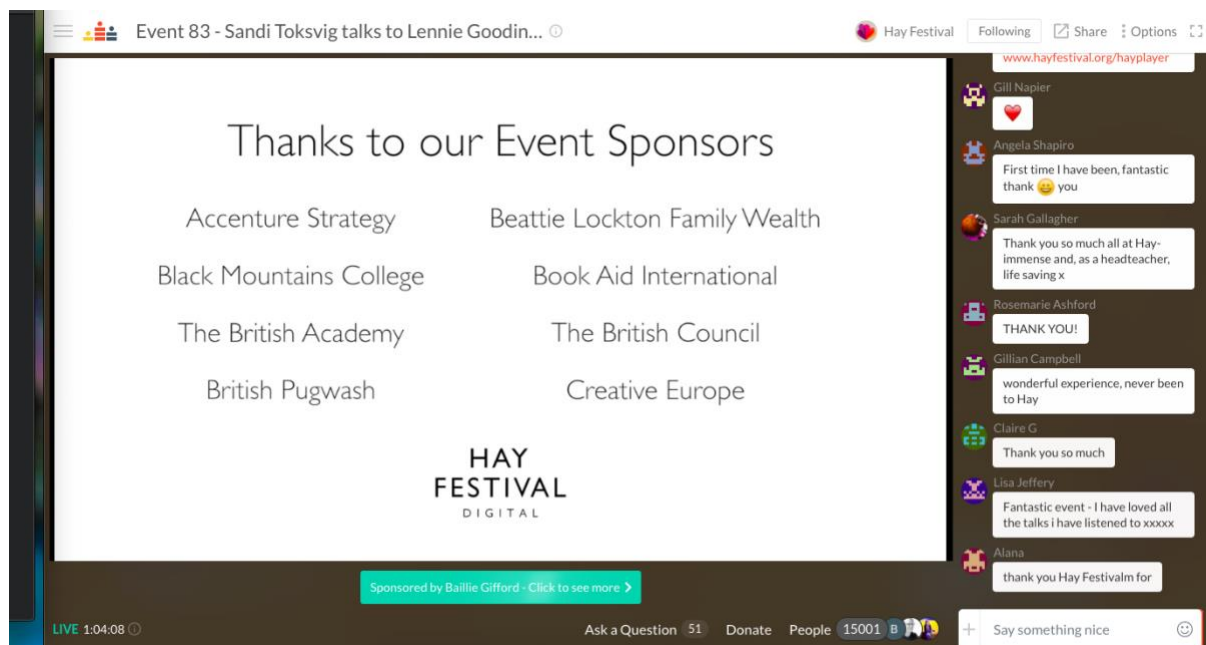


Image 14.



Image 15.

## Environmental

In regard to environmental and technique elements of the festival, the festival sessions which were streamed over the 2020 festival, did not differ appear to differ from the typical session which would be hold. With many of the sessions being the same as the ones billed in the original program set in March. In fact, sessions which would have not been able to take place had the place-based festival gone ahead, where able to still occur thanks to the technology, such as the session with activist Gloria Steinem, who was in 'lockdown' in the United States and had not been able to fly out for the festival as originally intended. This session was streamed live despite the time difference and the geographical separation.

Secondly, the lack of holding the festival in a physical space, allowed it to be accessible to more people. While the sessions were divided into 'break out rooms' and as a streaming service, were not as limited by how many can fit into each 'room', it was observed by the researcher that typically each session was attended by around 500 to 2000 people. However, there were exceptions to this, with Stephen Fry's session, which took place at 8pm on the first weekend, having over 12,000

watching it live and over 17,000 watching it across the three different platforms (Crowdcast, Youtube and Hay Player) within the first 24hrs.

However, one observation by the researcher was the lack of the festival's traditional location, Hay-on-Wye, either as a visual or as a sense of place. It was only session which were hosted by the festival's founder Peter Florence, that were streamed from Hay-on-Wye (where he lives). Despite being the location where his was based, the only indication that he was in Hay-on-Wye was his greeting 'Hello from Hay-on-Wye'.

## **Survey**

While the main form of data collection has been through the researcher's participation within the festival and the observations and encounters that occurred during this period, a second form of data collection was selected by the research to further explore particular observations they made. Although the participant observations allowed the research to observe the behaviours of the attendees, this was only on a surface level and wasn't able to provide particular levels of context or more in-depth investigation to how the attendees reacted to the experiences or the background of the attendees. A survey was therefore picked as the secondary data collection method. Social surveys are a questionnaire-based method of research that can produce both qualitative and quantitative information depending on how they are structured and analysed (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). As part of the uniqueness of the 2020 programme was the need it had to raise awareness of its work and funds so that it could continue that work in the future; as well as considering the festivals wider purpose of bringing people together through their shared experiences and interests, the research decided to carry out a survey as a secondary form of data collection (Appendix 2). Surveys can be used within a range of settings and to gather a wide range of types of information, gathering views, measuring the impact of a community and can explore more details of the first form of data collection.

Carrying out a survey with attendees brought with it a number of advantages as a form of data collection, providing insight into the behaviours of the respondents and evaluating their actions through the predetermined set of questions that are asked to

all respondents. Secondly from a more practical point of view, a survey is not limited by how it is accessed, they can be carried out in many formats such as by phone, in person or online, providing the researcher with the opportunity to reach and engage with respondents from all over the world with ease. Thirdly, the respondents of a survey are able to act as a sample size of the target audience and therefore able to act as representatives of the Hay Festival 2020 population – their interests, attitudes and general behaviours – allowing the researcher to look for patterns or trends within the behaviour and actions of the respondents. Resulting in the research being able to generalise their findings based on the surveys sampling of the festival population.

The data that is produce from a survey is very much dependent on how the questionnaire is constructed and therefore is fully influenced by the researcher's assumptions, the language used and what is not explored. In constructing the survey, the researcher therefore needs to take these into consideration when forming the survey, which can be a challenge for the researcher if they are not adverse in creating a survey. However, the data can be very useful for providing an overall picture of the way in which a programme is being implemented and how effectively it is impacting upon its target audience (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). The researcher created a basic survey, using Google Forms, to develop a virtual survey which could be accessed via a link, which the researcher posted on social media platforms, within the chats of four of the Hay Festival virtual sessions and also within online groups associated with the Hay Festival.

## **Survey Findings**

The survey asked a series of 19 questions around how the attendee was interacting with the 2020 festival, aiming to understand their knowledge and history with the festival, as well as their economic relationship with the festival and its stakeholders. To establish a connection with the respondents and gain an understanding of their make-up, since the survey was done digitally, the survey started by establishing the how the respondent fit in to the festival's demographic – location, age range, previous attendance/awareness of the Hay Festival. It then focused on how the respondent had experienced the 2020 programme, how they had accessed it, what

they had enjoyed or disliked and if they have engaged with other areas of the festival outside of the events – such as buying merchandise, using the online bookshop or chat functions, or donating. Finally, it tried to gauge how the festival had or if it had resulted in a connection being formed socially or culturally – gaining a basic awareness of the possible long-term opportunities that the festival may have for further investigation in the future.

Overall the survey was responded to by 52 participants, ranging from regular Hay Festival attendees to those who were experiencing the festival for the first time. Out of the 52 responses, two of these were not valid, with the respondents either not filling in the questions or writing disparaging comments not related to the study. These two responses have therefore been ignored in the collation of the data and classed as invalid; and the below Responses are worked out based on 50 respondents rather than 52. Respondents included people from all over the world, the majority of them were UK or European based, with England being the most popular location. 76% of respondents were over the age of 50, while only 11% of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 40. Out of all who answered the survey, 59% had previous experience of the Hay Festival or had been before, many of whom had attended on multiple occasions. While for 13% of the respondents had never experienced the festival before the 2020 programme – when questioned on their motives for joining this year, a key motivation for attending appeared to be the free access and ability to attend from their 'home'. In general, the respondents were 'attending' at least five of the 2020 programme sessions, across the three digital streaming platforms that Hay was providing access to. Over 20 the respondents had donated to the festival, ranging from the donation size of £10 to £100. Out of those who had not donated, a third of them indicated that they would be donating at the end of the festival. Key themes of attractions and experiences of the Hay Festival 2020 programme included its accessibility, being able to watch the sessions straight after they occurred, interacting through the chat function with other attendees and the opportunity to attend that wouldn't have been available for those international attendees if the programme had been in its traditional format. Themes around the respondents' dislike and frustrations of the festival 2020 programme, came from the technique issues, lack of personal interaction with the session speaker as an audience member, loss of atmosphere, lack of 'Hay-on-Wye', the sense of place and



the 'other' elements which make up the overall festival experience. Out of the respondents who had attended the festival previously, they were asked about how much they would typically expect to spend when attending, including within the local economy – tickets, accommodation, travel, hospitality and retail – with respondents indicating a spending range of £500 to £2000 each.

The outcomes of this survey and the observations made during the researcher's participation as an attendee, will be explored full and analysed using the framework model as mentioned in the section above, as part of the section investigating the researchers findings from the perspective of what value has been created and the festivals impact. They will then be transformed into lessons which can be learned and taken from this unique situation, with the idea of considering how the festival can continue to develop, refining its purpose and transcending into a festival that is sustainable and resilient. Therefore, how it can move towards its next stage of the festival life cycle.

## **Existing data**

This method refers to the review of existing information, and in the quantitative context may involve the manipulation of statistical data, differing from primary research techniques as the researcher does not collect the data directly and cannot control the actual data collected, but can bring to bear new insights through interpretation or presentation (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). As mentioned above, this research has also used a selection of secondary data sources to help support and inform its investigation. The information gathered from secondary data analysis can produce various outputs depending on the type of information collated and reviewed, the information may show how changes have occurred over time in a particular area.

These sources include interviews with the British press that the Hay Festival organisers and stakeholders have given between the period of January and September 2020, statistics and data collected by tourism organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Visit Wales, the Scottish Government and Visit Britain; as well as

previous research and archival data. Due to the studies focus on the Hay Festival and due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, much of the secondary data used has been collected itself in response to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and has therefore faced its own challenges around data collection. It also means that there is little long-term data available since this is an ongoing global pandemic and situation.

The main use for this sort of information is that it can provide a starting point for an evaluation or analysis to gain some background knowledge and understanding. Secondary data collection is also useful for contributing to the analysis and commentary throughout a research report (MacDonald & Headlam 2009). Much of this secondary data has therefore been used to provide further context to the situation or in the case of the media interviews, as a source of understanding around the impact of the Hay Festival not occurring as a place based event, as under the restrictions relating to the lockdown in England and Wales, the impact of the lockdown and the temporary closure of many businesses during this period, access to stakeholders was limited.

## **Method of analysis**

In terms of analysing the data that has been collected through these three methods of data collection, the section following this will be analyse the data collected from the anthropological and sociological approach outlined in the literary review. It will carry out this analysis through considering first the research questions established at the start of the paper, and then within that it will subcategorise the types of value and impact of the Hay Festival in theme. Based upon the key areas of focus produced by Holmes & Ali-Knight (2017) Festival Life Cycle model which is an expansion of Butler's (2006) Tourism Area Life Cycle; relating the festival's impact and the value created to the following typologies – cultural, social, economic and environmental – as explored in the literary review. As the data collected is mainly qualitative, the analysis will be based upon language, images and observations, with the findings being collated under the above-mentioned themes. This will be done allocated based on the researcher's beliefs around what themes are most appropriate for that value.

However, these beliefs are based on a discourse analyse of the data and their context.

## **Analysis**

The following will provide an in-depth analysis of the collated data, collected through the observations and survey results carried out as part of the mixed methodological approach of the Hay Festival 2020 case study. Considering the value creation of the festival, not created and the impact it has had on its stakeholders, to understand the opportunities and steps needed for the festival to mature and become an organisation which is resilient and sustainable. Therefore, more capable of overcoming challenges that might impact it economically, environmentally or socially, and allow it to play an active and collaborative role in within the tourism ecosystem that it is based, in Hay-on-Wye. By evaluating the response of the Hay Festival to the Covid-19 pandemic and how they have attempted to overcome the challenges that the global pandemic have provided, we can gain an understanding of the festivals purpose and role within the public sphere; and what it needs to do to continue to develop be it on an economic, environmental, social or cultural scale. The data which has informed this analyse, as outlined in the findings above, includes qualitative and quantitative information, to best provide a wider context to the value and impact of the festival.

The objective of this case study was to answer the following three research questions; 'What was the Hay Festival's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and how was this different to normal?' 'What value is created by the Hay Festival pre-2020, and the value created by the 2020 online programme?' 'What impact does this response have economically, culturally and environmentally?' Building upon the existing research around festivals, their role in society and within the tourism ecosystem. As the first question has been answered within the introduction, and the data collection findings show case the value creation based on the social, cultural, environment and economic impact observed from the 2020 festival on its stakeholders. This section will answer the third question by analyse the impact of the value created, in relation to the theoretical framework and approach informed by the literature explored earlier. In answering these first three questions, we are then able

to evaluate 'What can we take from the 2020 Hay Festival, to develop a festival which is resilient, and therefore supports and is able to be active as thriving tourism ecosystem?' Providing a suggestion of these lesson within the conclusion, with the hope that action can be taken to move these findings into reality. The following will elaborate on the value created by the Hay Festival and the implications of this.

What impact does this response have economically, culturally and environmentally?

With the shift from a place-based festival to one that is fully online and for free, there is a clear change and simplification of the Hay Festival' purpose and its role in the public sphere, although it may only be a small change. Traditionally, the festival's purpose works within the four typologies identified by Olsen (2013), being a place of artistic promotion and development and community self-celebration. While it does not exist for the principal reason of profit, the profit it does make is used to benefit and transform areas of civic pride on a local and global level – education. Prioritising the education of children and young adults within their programme by providing free access to some of its events and working in collaboration with local schools to run festival events with them – such as the 'Hay-Levels' education talk. The reason shift is caused by the festival's need to reduce its spent resources, such as organisational costs, staffing, while working within the limitations and new boundaries set by the Covid-19 pandemic – lockdown restrictions, now meeting of groups and the need for social distancing and regular sanitisation.

### **Motivation and purpose**

By moving to an online platform, the festival is able to simplify the work it does, showing that while it is an active member of a larger ecosystem, it has assessed an aware of its own needs and what the impact is if these needs are not meet. Key it this is its understanding of its own economic needs, to spend as little as possible while creating opportunities for financial income – sale of merchandise, sponsorships, and donations. In an interview with the BBC, Hay Festival Founder Peter Florence stated that the consequences of the festival not being able to go ahead under the current conditions "had forced the organisers to 'trim down

massively', cutting operations to about a third of its normal size and putting 50% of the workforce on furlough" (BBC May 2020). As by not meeting these need the festival will not be able to cover its expenses and would be unlikely to continue, the impact of this would be that it's foundation partnerships would also lose financial support and resources, the community of Hay-on-Wye would lose a large source of economic income –losing the spending power of the regularly attracted 80,000 people who come annually to the region; along with the loss of celebration and advancement within the artistic community and the opportunities for individual development from the sharing of political, scientific and philosophical ideas that the festival promotes. The need to generate finances may be the Hay Festival's motivation for the festival to go ahead still under the global conditions of 2020, but their purpose and values are still clear and at the core of the online programme.

*"The festival aims to inspire, examine and entertain, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and it might be" (Hay Festival 2020).*

The new format of the festival takes the festival's traditional programme themes – science, literature, philosophy and politics – and continues to explore the themes and the development in these areas, with speaker events exploring climate change, current American politics, new literary works and even the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only continuing its aim to 'invite participants to imagine the world as it is and might be', but also responding to the changing interests and needs of society – people looking for more information about Covid-19, understanding about the political ramifications of the pandemic and also what impact it could have on society.

The festival also takes into consideration the need that, in the UK, under the Covid-19 restrictions its traditional audience are now based at home (either not working or working from home) and so may have more time, less finances and are looking for intellectual challenges and entertainment. Which the festival is able to provide and does so for free – widening not only its audience by being physically accessible thanks to technology, but also becoming financially assessable. From the survey 27 of the respondents estimated previously spending around at least £200 in one visit to the Hay, with other spending annual £2000 to attend the festival. While those who were attending the Hay for the first time in 2020, indicated that one of the main

motivations for this and why they have not attended before was due to the high cost to attend and physical location of the festival. Tickets for most of the original planned events costed around £15 per person, meaning that attendees rarely attend every event due to the financial cost. On top of this survey respondents indicated that the other costs associated with the festival also made the festival expense to attend – food, drink, shops, travel and accommodation. Showing that access to economic resource is clearly needed for attendees. When asked how many sessions they had attended (live) or watched 42 of the survey respondents had attended at least 5 sessions live and 11 had attended more than 10.

This move to make the festival free, and to showcase it across multiple platforms – Crowdcast and Youtube (live) and Hay Player - shows a clear emphasis on widening the festival's access, transcending class, geographic location and economic barriers of its attendees. Traditionally the festival sells around 275,000 tickets, while for the digital festival programme before the festival started there were over 200,000 pre-digital registrations for the festival (BBC May 2020). The festival itself actually attracted over 490,000 people over the 10 day period, bringing people together from over 70 countries (BBC June 2020). Allowing the 2020 Hay Festival to be a unique response to the unique situation – the covid-19 pandemic – becoming a process integrated in the changing and developing situation of its political context as a festival which promotes and shares ideas, opinions and knowledge from across the world, while no longer being a physically isolated event due to the loss of its physical location (Hertling 2015).

### **Implications of an online festival**

The implications of the festival being online can be assessed using the value it has created, and in some cases not created, for its stakeholders. These will be broken up by themes of economic and environmental value, and social and cultural value.

A clear loss of value for both the festival's local community and its audience who have been to previous Hay Festivals, is that the festival did not occur physically in the town of Hay-on-Wye and that it did not feature elements of the festival within the programme for 2020. When asked about what they disliked about the 2020

programme a occurring theme was the loss of 'place' which came with the festival being online, with respondents expressing the lack of atmosphere typically associated with the Hay Festival due to not having the other areas of the festival outside of the festival sessions – such as the social aspects, the ability to take in the town and its shops, the uniqueness of the town as a location and the fondness for the local community. While for the respondents, much of what they did not get from the 2020 programme was what can be considered as the emotional and sentimental attachments to the town's festivalisation. For the town they faced both social and economic loss, with the town receiving none of the economic value the festival would traditionally receive through the tourism generated by the festival. With the festival typically bringing an economic boost of £28million every year to the town which is mainly made up of small and medium sized businesses, many of whom are independent businesses (BBC May 2020) Although it did receive a small donation by the Festival organisation and schools were given free and exclusive access to particular events. For the Festival, while it did not make what it would typically make financially from its place-based programme, it was able to receive the funds necessary to generate the programme, receiving £350,000 in donations and sponsorship, as well as the donation of the streaming platform for it to take place. Its community of attendees even set up a crowdfunding campaign which raised over £95,000. (BBC May 2020).

Outside of the financial implications and economic value of the festival, for itself, local community and the tourism and arts sector, the 2020 Hay Festival has helped it to achieve environmental success, not only transcending borders as mentioned above with attendees from over 70 countries. But the festival, which has been a champion of environmental sustainability and work within the research of climate change may as founder Peter Florence stated: "we might be delivering out first ever carbon-negative gig".

## **Social/cultural**

The social and cultural implications of the festival is that the combination of intimate conversations and the global audience able to participate online has reinvented the festival (BBC June 2020). The Festival's collated experiences were able to bring

together not only its traditional community and audience, but through an online experience it opened it up to people from all over the world who had shared interest no matter their location, language or background. It brought together people from over 70 different countries and as stated by survey respondents it had the benefit of providing a network for people to engage with like-minded people during a difficult period of time for many. The ability to 'chat' and discuss the sessions live as they happened allowed for the sharing of ideas, debate and opinions, as well as opening up new areas of interest for its audience and for some of its speakers. Providing an 'escape' from the complexities of life under a global pandemic, bringing people together and inviting them to imagine the world, as it was, is and in the future. Creating a sense of connection and community, despite not having a physical location. While this is a value which is often created by the festival for its audience who have attended previously and is the reason many return each year, and its success as a festival, the scale on which it has been able to achieve this in 2020 is unmeasurable. However the taggable benefits that this brings with it are publicity, a development of audience for future events (online or on location), a community with a sense of connection and wish to support the festival financially or as active members of the community; and finally a festival which is most likely able to continue its work and return in the future. Creating sustainability independent business for itself but also as a source of support within the tourism ecosystem it is embedded, through the value it creates for the Hay-on-Wye community, the Welsh economy and the arts, literature and culture sector.

## **Conclusions**

The objective of this research study was to consider the case study of the Hay Festival 2020 programme. Gaining an understanding of the context - the implications of the pandemic on the festival - behind the move to a fully online and free programme, the value created and the impact of the Hay Festival's response to the coronavirus global pandemic. The aim of this was to build upon the little studied academic field of festival studies and the relationship festivals have within the tourism economy, to consider how festivals may work to become a mature organisation which is sustainable, resilient and an active player within the tourism ecosystem. Through establishing the a mixed methodological approach, which analysed the festival



through the cultural, social, economic and environmental value that it created (and didn't create) for its stakeholders based on the theoretical model of the festival life cycle and the concepts of value creation and festivalisation, the study answered the following questions:

- What was the Hay Festival's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and how was this different to normal?
- What value is created by the Hay Festival pre-2020, and the value created by the 2020 online programme?
- What impact does this response have economically, culturally and environmentally?
- What can we take from the 2020 Hay Festival, to develop a festival which is resilient, and therefore supports and is able to be active as thriving tourism ecosystem?

From these considering the festival from these perspectives and in relation to these questions, the study was able to establish that while the festival's 2020 digital programme which was in response to the covid-19 pandemic, was able to maintain and develop the cultural and social aspects of the value it creates and the role it plays within the public sphere for its attendees – being free for all and online made the festival more accessible and increased its reach internationally. Overall the festival in its 2020 formation showcased that it was unable to maintain or contribute the level of economic, social or cultural value that it has traditionally done for its stakeholders and community based within the town of Hay-on-Wye or the tourism economy in Wales. By being fully online, and not able to physically bring its attendees to Hay-on-Wye, the measurable value creation for the local community which it normally contributes was severely lacking and could have the ramifications of long term economic damage to the region – if businesses are unable to recover from the drop in economic profits and if there is now recovery plan put into place to support and ensure tourism is encouraged once the pandemic is over. However, it was clear that in response to the current political climate and the social restrictions that it was responding to, the festival as an event was a success and one which has allowed it to broaden its social and cultural reach. Not only being able to widen its

accessibility for people of all nations, classes and backgrounds to attend by making its programme free, but also in the fact that its digital format introduced chat functions which brought about debate, the sharing of ideas and social connect which would have not been possible if the event had been just recorded or had not gone ahead. The implications of this reach is that the festival was received over £350,000 in donations and financial support, it had nearly 500,000 attendees (compared with its traditions 200,000) and it was able to continue to showcase, support and develop new ideas and our understanding of the world. Values which, although may not be tangible in the short-term, may result in long-term value that the festival can continue its foundation and charity work, develop its other international based festivals, develop new audiences and most importantly “come back, and keep working with, and surviving and thriving with all the people who make Hay” (Florence 2020).

The study therefore asked,

What can we take from the 2020 Hay Festival, to develop a festival which is resilient, and therefore supports and is able to be active as thriving tourism ecosystem?

As established by previous studies in the area of the festival success and the festival life cycle model, that if the Hay Festival wants to become sustainable and resilient itself, to avoid further financial risk and impact from further future challenges, it needs to establish a deeper connection with its stakeholders that encourages the destinations own tourism area life cycle to develop, mature and transform into one that is resilient and thriving. To do this, the festival may look at putting on further festival based events within the town once the lockdown restrictions are relaxed, work with the local authority and tourism management organisations to develop policy and support – training and resources – to support the local economy during this time in transitioning their businesses to meet the current and future needs of society; and also consider using elements of live digital festival in its future events, to continue developing its reputation, purpose and economic income.

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Images:

Image 1: Wales is closed. *'Welcome to Wales, sorry we're Closed'*.

Rogers, J. (2020) The Guardian (17<sup>th</sup> June 2020), 'For the first time, Wales has been able to flex its muscles' – could coronavirus tear England and Wales apart?'

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Image 2: Hay Festival Publicity Shot. *Hay Festival*

BBC iPlayer "Hay Festival." (2019) [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zh5jj](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01zh5jj) Accessed 26 August 2020.

Image 3: Attendees relaxing at the Hay Festival – Standout Magazine.

Image 4: Hay Festival talks taking place in one of the staging areas. Good energy (2018) <https://www.goodenergy.co.uk/blog/2018/06/05/hay-festival-2018-why-small-may-be-beautiful-again/> Image 6. *Festival Yurts, Hay-on-Wye*

Image 5: Festival accommodation yurts at the Hay Festival camping site.

Booking.com. "Festival Yurts Hay-on-Wye." *Booking.Com*, 2020, [www.booking.com/hotel/gb/riverside-festival-camping.en-gb.html](http://www.booking.com/hotel/gb/riverside-festival-camping.en-gb.html). Accessed 8 Sept. 2020.

Image 6: Screenshot, write and personality Stephen Fry gives a reading from his new book *Troy* and carries out a live Q&A with viewers.

Image 7: Screenshot, writer, comedian and historian Natalie Haynes gives her introduction to the Ancient Greeks during the 2020 Hay Festival online, while it is live illustrated.

Image 8: Screenshot, Sandi Toksvig session, with the Q&A box open and the chat function live.

Image 9: Screenshot, Hay Festival Session holding screen with 'Join the conversation #ImagineTheWorld'

Image 10: Screenshot, Welcome to the Hay Festival holding screen and Q&A function, chat box and donation options clear.

Image 11: Screenshot, Welcome to the Hay Festival 2020 introduction to the session by founder Peter Florence'

Image 12: Screenshot, Twitter feed for #ImagineTheWorld

Image 13: Screenshot, Wordsworth the Poet talk. With Q&A box open.

Image 14: Screenshot, Hay Festival Sponsors acknowledgement screen.

Image 15: Screenshot, Hay Festival 'with thanks to sponsors and donators' screen.

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