DO YOU CONFORM TO THE NORM?

‘Conformity and Nonconformity of Individuals within Different Environments of Triple J presented Music Festivals’

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Introduction

“As a teenager there was always the ‘in’ crowd. You had to dress and behave a certain way to be part of that. If you didn’t conform then you were simply brushed aside.”¹

Music events are traditionally defined as an entertainment event featuring a number of music performers or bands of a certain genre of centred on a theme. Though over time, these music festivals and events have broadened past this definition and are seen as an experience full of different aspects in the eyes of every individual where conformity and nonconformity take place. These music festivals thrive in both rural and city locations within Australia, many of which are presented by Australian radio station Triple J.

“Triple J is the national youth broadcaster for young Australians. We aim to bring you the latest, greatest music and the stories that matter on the radio (covering over 98% of the nation), online, on your phone, and in your ‘hood for special events”² states Triple J’s website.

Splendour in The Grass, Groovin’ The Moo, One Night Stand and Listen Out are just some of the Triple J presented festivals on offer in various types of locations where culture is displayed and transformed by each individual through their fashion style, values and behaviours.

I was always continuously aware that the topic I was to pick for my Personal Interest Project was to be something specific to myself, my life and my own individual interests that reflect my personal and social identity. After a brief discussion with my teacher and thorough thought I realised it would be best to focus on an area of my life specific to my own life experiences to create the PIP topic: Conformity and Nonconformity of Individuals within Different Environments of Triple J presented Music Festivals.

I have been fortunate to have an extensive variety of experiences while attending music festivals over eighteen years of my life. Through these festivals I have visited a diverse range of locations; both rural and city, which has broadened my own perception of the conformity

¹ Interview findings: Anonymous female, age 40
and non-conformity that takes place in all locations. Due to the experience of just one local festival I blossomed from a shy fifteen year old girl, to an outgoing individual with a new perception on not just music festivals but also on life. Hence, this topic interests me so much.

As a major fan of live music, I have witnessed many festival-goers in the environment of music festivals conform to aspects such as peer behaviour and illegal activity, yet also not conform to other aspects by challenging government law and festival rules. Does this differ between locations, or is it based purely on the individual themselves?

Furthermore, in my research is directly related to some issues we have discussed in Society and Culture class, especially the Year 12 Depth Study ‘Social Conformity and Nonconformity’ and Preliminary Course Depth Study ‘Personal and Social Identity’. These issues includes the dot points of these syllabus’s such as environment, identity and culture as my PIP focuses on the change of aspects within individuals in differing locations.

Additionally, in analysing the course concept identity there will be an extra emphasis on the social and personal identity of individuals which will need to be observed. Research I have done recently has demonstrated that the dot points ‘power’ and ‘authority’ are also particularly related as my chosen topic emphasises the major impact government and law have on the rules and regulations of music festivals. Also, key concepts such as the self and self-concept, social construct, values and social cohesion are prominent in my PIP and a sophisticated understanding of these will enable me to explain the increasing emphasis on conformity and nonconformity within music festivals.

To explore my hypothesis, I have chosen to undertake three primary methodologies; interviews, a questionnaire and participant observation. A semi-structured interview would help receive in depth responses and personal information and experiences from participants. A questionnaire will help discover a broad range of opinions of particular topics and aspects to easily create statistical information. While participant observation was chosen as it is the most critical way to achieve a deep understanding and be able to identity reasons for changes in perceptions through own experience. The methodologies will provide detailed insights into possible reasons for conformity and nonconformity in individual’s behaviour, dress and values at music festivals.

I decided to have a cross-cultural perspective based upon location differences. This decision was made because a major focus of my research is the variety of aspects which change across rural and city locations.
Log

As any fan of live music would notice, when in the environment of a music festival many festival-goers conform to aspects such as peer behaviour and illegal activity, yet also do not conform to other aspects by challenging government law and festival rules. The basis of my Personal Interest Project was formed through a strong interest in the Year 12 Depth Study ‘Social Conformity and Nonconformity’ and the ability this aspect of society has to influence an individual’s behaviour, values and dress. A further interest in social and personal identity in the macro and micro world led to my topic ‘Conformity and Nonconformity of Individuals within Different Environments of Triple J presented Music Festivals’.

In the beginning process of choosing my PIP topic around November I was continuously aware that my chosen topic must be specific to myself, my life and my own individual interests reflecting my personal and social identity. Initially I had an interest in discovering more about heartbreak in adolescence, yet due to the sensitivity and broadness of this topic I decided against it. Due to my personal experiences, I developed a proposal to look at conformity and nonconformity within Triple J presented music festivals in regards to fashion and behaviour in rural and city locations and was able to achieve a great understanding of this. My exact topic was continuously changing until mid-June due to constantly narrowing down my topic to create an easier process for myself and a more informed outcome overall.

Extensive secondary research was conducted from the beginning of November to allow for a thorough understanding of the topic. This initially included a very diverse and broad range of research until narrowing my topic specifically to Triple J presented music festivals, where I discovered specific content needed to gain an informed understanding of my topic.

Whereas, for my primary research that was undertaken within April and May I chose a semi-structured interview, questionnaire and participant observation. These methods focused more on personal opinions and individuals attitudes towards music festivals, while also helping me achieve a greater perspective of the values, behaviours and fashion of the festival-goers around me during my participant observation.

Firstly, the semi-structured interview was conducted in early April to receive in depth responses from my participant concerning their own experiences. Throughout early January, I compiled a list of draft questions and discussed these with a fellow Society and Culture
student to ensure my questions were clear and no adjustments needed to be made. Once completed a few months later, the findings proved to compliment my research thoroughly. Though I am disappointed that I did not take extensive note on body language throughout this interview.

Secondly, a participant observation was initially difficult yet I continue to believe it was the best option for my topic. The inability to attend a certain music festival in late January forced me to postpone this method until late April when Groovin’ The Moo took place.

Lastly, a questionnaire consisting of 4 open ended questions and 3 closed ended questions was distributed to 181 participants at the beginning of April, providing both quantitative and qualitative data on attitudes towards behaviour and fashion within music festival environments. Due to a response bias the questionnaire had much more restricted validity and it was useful to conduct further methods.

Over the course of completing this project I aimed to complete each section of my PIP in order of the contents table. I was surprised to experience very little stress throughout this time. My pure enjoyment and passion for my chosen topic made me able to continuously work on striving for a well-constructed and thoroughly researched PIP.
Chapter One

Festival fashion is a major phenomenon all over the world. Is it a common thing that festivals are a place “where privileged teenagers and young adults flock, not so much to appreciate the music, but to socialise and flaunt festival fashion”? ³

Has the Triple J crowd completely forgotten about the music? Is fashion and socialising becoming more important than the music itself?

Music festivals presented by Triple J thrive in both rural and city locations within Australia. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2005-06 a quarter of the population (25%) attended a popular music concert in Australia and were equally popular among males and females. Attendance rates at popular music concerts were generally higher among younger people, with forty (40%) of 18-24 year olds attending which is the crowd Triple J aims at⁴.

Splendour in The Grass, Groovin’ The Moo, One Night Stand and Listen Out are just some of the Triple J presented festivals on offer in various types of locations where culture is displayed and transformed by each individual through their fashion style, values and behaviours. The physical environment can have a major impact on a person’s identity. Is it common that the location, size and status of a festival influences an individual’s view of importance on clothing?

My research suggests that there is most definitely an ongoing unwritten dress code for music festivals in the last few years. It seems that festival dressing today has become very predictable. The ‘Racked’ article by Nicola Fumo states that,

“Everybody looks the same. It’s just a mass of generic festival-bots. That’s what mainstream is – everyone wearing slight variations of what everyone else is wearing”⁵.

An online article by Rachel Lubitz states “Can’t this year be the year that people realise that going to a music festival doesn’t mean you have to conform to any one look at all?”

Through my primary research an anonymous respondent commented that “Girls tend to dress in a way that will make them stand out from a crowd, which is usually what everyone does so they all end up looking the same anyway”. The only thing likely to stand out was if someone was to wear clothes they would wear on a regular day outside of a festival.

Though outfits may be drastically different, it appears they largely follow the same style and vibe. Woodstock is the most popularly thought reason in this fashion defining style that has continued into present time. Held in August 1969, close to half a million festival-goers descended upon the paddocks. Many of which were kids who “were rebelling against an America in turmoil” as they wrapped themselves in the country’s flag or a khaki military jacket being both a “political and fashion statement”. Woodstock festival-goers were generally going against the mainstream, and it is interesting to think the rebellious fashion has come back as a trend in those who choose whether or not they will conform within the somewhat rebellious crowd of a music festival.

Yet despite levels of conformity evident, I believe festival style is slowly transforming within Australia’s festivals like Splendour in the Grass and Groovin’ The Moo due to levels of nonconformity in addition to technology producing different festival fashion trends. Certain styles are strived for, particularly the bohemian or grunge looks, but it is becoming more and more popular for risks to be taken. According to one 18 year old female respondent, “Girls are going above and beyond to stand out in different outfits that you wouldn’t wear anywhere but a festival, they’re going very risky.” It seems people are progressively taking the leap to try and look as different from each other as possible, and though it usually follows the same style it can be argued that it is sometimes successful. Many are daring themselves to wear

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6 What to Wear to a Summer Music Festival Without Looking Basic. 2017. What to Wear to a Summer Music Festival Without Looking Basic. [ONLINE] Available at: https://mic.com/articles/149609/what-to-wear-to-a-summer-music-festival-without-looking-like-a-basic-b*tch#.OasVNINW0

7 Anonymous Questionnaire respondent from “Conformity in Music Festivals”


10 Anonymous Questionnaire respondent from “Conformity in Music Festivals”
what’s less expected and aim to follow fashion trends that turn as many heads as possible. Another 20 year old female respondent commented:

“For women yes, often wear things you wouldn’t in day to day life. You definitely wouldn’t see it along the street, there are certain styles that would only be acceptable at music festivals”.

“New trends arise each year in what to wear” stated an 18 year old female respondent. According to my questionnaire, many trends were commented on including glitter, colourful, eccentric clothing, and different textures. Each year brings out a new trend for festival fashion.

“There are trends that immensely influence what people wear, for example, any form of glitter was a trend I noticed this year” commented an 18 year old male respondent. Though many trends of today are commonly influenced by past eras. As stated by my female interviewee, aged 40 years old,

“Girls have always tried to dress in the latest fashion, hottest labels and current trends. These trends for me twenty years ago were more grunge than anything: ripped jeans, rock t-shirts, Doc Marten boots.”

Interestingly, this trend has slowly been creeping back into fashion today. Both females and males are seen sporting vintage t-shirts such as Harley Davidson brand, ripped jeans, fish net stockings and Doc Marten boots like stated by my interviewee. Correspondingly, a 21 year old female respondent asserted “Different trends often inspired by culture or past eras, for example, body jewellery, crochet, fish net stockings, bell bottom pants and 70s influenced clothing”. Though why do fashion trends always return? “The media was the spark that lit the fire that brought this revival” states Gregg Hall. Old school fashion is on our television, within our movies, and all over media. When considering the power of media to spark current festival trends, it is hard to reject the resurfacing of previous fashion trends. While current

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11 Female 20 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
12 Female 18 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
13 Male 18 year old Anonymous respondent Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
14 Interview finding: Anonymous female, aged 40
15 Female 21 year old Anonymous respondent Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
fashion can be predictable, just as Mel Carrero states in her article maybe it is refreshing to see people “express themselves in ways they might not if it wasn’t a festival.” 17 Similarly stated by a 15 year old male respondent; “Festivals give you a place to express yourself.”

With the progressing popularity of music festivals, there certainly is an unwritten dress code in place for individuals to express their identity through fashion, especially for females. Yet my research suggests this dress code differs for each festival each year. “Girls look for festival inspiration and it changes in each season and venue. fashion changes” 19 asserts a 19 year old female respondent; this corresponds with other data that reveals individuals fashion choices have been largely affected by technology and environment. There is a different acceptance for various fashion trends at each music festival. The possible fact remains that these ‘unwritten dress codes’ differ upon location. For example, located in capital cities like Sydney, Daily Mail argues Listen Out “is arguably as much about the fashion as it is the music” 20. While festival-goers go for bold choices, they are noticeably different to the fashion trends seen at festivals such as Splendour in the Grass and Groovin’ The Moo which are in much more rural locations. Cities are less likely to follow the bohemian style, and more likely for individuals to sport minimalistic clothing, short shorts, denim jackets, ripped jeans, plain dresses and bralettes.

Additionally, while many trends are in place for females, my observation suggests males tend to follow the same trend of clothing wherever they go; most popularly wearing striped t-shirts, ripped jeans and a cap. If you were to ask a male what they’re wearing to a festival some would likely say it were something pulled out of their wardrobe, with no planning and minimum effort overall. “I think I found my outfit the morning of Groovin’ last year. This year I put a bit more effort into buying something new” 21 stated an 18 year old male respondent. Though interestingly, some males do get involved in fashion sometimes as much as females.

18 Male 15 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
19 Female 19 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
21 Male 18 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire findings: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
“In my own experience, I have witnessed males take a different approach to girls by wearing matching outfits, matching suits in various colours and outrageous costumes” 22 stated my interviewee. Recently at Splendour in The Grass 2017 many males were sighted in outrageous attire. One in particular wearing no clothing apart from an adult size diaper, a crying baby mask and sneakers. This is arguably a point which favours an idea that while majority of females aim for desirable fashion, males vary between effort levels with some simply dressing for humour.

Moreover, while in rural locations, it would be common to witness a boy wearing overalls, printed button up shirts, and surf or skate inspired fashion. Whereas, within city locations there is much more of an acceptance for males to walk shirtless wearing extremely short pants, while others may dress similar to their favourite artist or rapper. The rural festival Groovin’ The Moo attracts an indie line-up with a varying range of artists, the capital city festival Listen Out is predominantly rap artists and DJ’s, further influencing the fashion chosen for each event. It seems as though each location has different acceptance for different fashion trends. Though is it really the location that influences the fashion, or is it the actual music itself?

“Rural festivals usually have more local artists and less internationals, smaller line-up generally, and different crowd demographics creating a different atmosphere. Rural sometimes not as big, and affects the line-up and what artists go” 23 stated an anonymous 19 year old male respondent.

If a line-up of rap artists played within the indie capital Byron Bay where Splendour in the Grass takes place, would you still see indie outfits or would the outfits be more influenced by the rap music itself other than the location? Another female twenty year old respondent stated,

“For some festivals I go to in Sydney the current festival wear is often sheer with bodysuits or playsuits underneath, fishnets and heavily accessorised, while in rural locations like Groovin’ The Moo there is usually inspiration form Native American fashion, henna, and boho vibe”. 24

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22 Interview finding: Anonymous female, aged 40
23 Male 19 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire findings: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
24 Female 20 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire findings: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
While location appears to have some influence on clothing, my research still suggests majority of the conformity evident emphasises the growing importance of fashion in today’s individuals. According to The Fashion Spot article,

“Splendour In The Grass really is one big fashion parade. The minute punters buy their tickets to the 3-day festival at North Byron Parklands, they start organising their outfits”.

The day Groovin’ The Moo tickets got released I can recall the only thing a friend contributed to the conversation was her excitement about outfit planning – nothing about the line-up. Yet not only did this person only mention their outfit, when I mentioned artists on the line-up they did not know them. Similarly, on the day of the line-up release many Facebook status’s stated they did not like the Triple J influenced artists joining the festival, yet interesting enough they had still bought tickets. Is it forgotten that these events are promoted and presented by Triple J? In my opinion, this emphasises that some attend festivals purely for social and fashion aspects, and not due to the music itself. Yet interestingly, in response to my questionnaire sixty eight percent (68%) of my respondents stated that a major reason they attended music festivals was for the line-up and music in addition to other aspects. While one in particular stated they attend festivals for;

“The atmosphere definitely, if it’s local enough I’ll attend despite how much I personally enjoy the line-up because they’re still always such a good day, once you buy tickets you’ve got something to look forward to! The process of getting your outfit sorted is all so exciting too.”

Additionally, in correspondence to the above-mentioned statements, my interviewee stated,

“Music festivals are becoming more about the fashion in my opinion. An outfit would be planned a week or a day in advance, not months in advance like some today. We were excited to see the bands, what songs they were going to play; not what we were going to wear months and months in advance. It’s all about the labels now instead of how great a band is.”

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26 Male 17 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire findings: “Conformity in Music Festivals”

27 Interview finding: Anonymous female, aged 40
This statement reflects the drastic continuous change in the importance of fashion across time. The heightened engagement with social media and technology continues to support the concept that those who utilise technologies in today’s time experience a major influence in their fashion choices, unlike individuals in previous generations.

“I personally believe today’s generation are more focused on the fashion aspect of music festivals due to social media” stated my interviewee. Many social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook emphasise the importance of fashion at music festivals. During festival season, it is much more common for individuals to upload photos of their outfits with friends onto social media instead of photos of the artists they saw perform.

Additionally, my interviewee asserts “If you go onto online shopping sites there is a whole section just for festival fashion. We didn’t even have online shopping for clothing twenty years ago so it definitely has had an impact on influencing today’s generation.” This is arguably a point which can be emphasised in concurrence with secondary research done to discover online shopping site ‘Princess Polly’ who ran a ‘Qween of The Festival’ competition allowing people to vote on their favourite festival fashion icon. Along with their site featuring an entire section labelled ‘The Festival Shop’ providing shoppers with a range of items on sale classed in the festival style.

There appears to be two possible reasons why location affects dress for females within the environment and crowds of Triple J presented festivals. Firstly, within the rural locations, technology and media provide a gateway for current trends to launch and move into the festival scene. For example, individual’s social media posts on outlets such as Instagram and Facebook provide others with inspiration for their own future outfits, creating a movement in trends. Both Splendour in The Grass and Groovin’ The Moo have depicted this significantly through my observation of this year’s events across social media and the internet.

Secondly, it seems to be evident that within rural festivals, many festival-goers are influenced by past eras, fashion and idols. Through both my secondary and primary research it appears that rural located festivals such as Splendour in The Grass and Groovin’ The Moo are heavily influenced by previous trends from past festivals and events such as Woodstock Music and Art Festival in 1969. Observations show that past fashion trends from this era such as bell bottom pants, crotchet and psychedelic clothing are popularly woven into the ‘unwritten dress

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28 Interview finding: Anonymous female, aged 40
29 Interview finding: Anonymous female, aged 40
code’ of festival fashion today. The similarity in location and overall environment between some past and present music festivals provide a possible explanation as to why these previous events from times such as the 70’s are influencing the present-day festival fashion.

Within city locations where festivals such as Listen Out take place, both technology and social media pair together with the celebrity culture to influence city festival fashion. Individuality is not emphasised as much in city festivals like it is within rural festivals, as many individuals opt for much simpler trends that are most popular at the moment. The influence of celebrities such as popular rap artists, fashion icons such as the Kardashian’s and Jenner’s, and social media celebrities, is depicted through the minimalistic clothing and trendy contemporary look that many festival-goers in this environment aim for. This new age industry of music and technology in addition to the modernistic city location pair together to provide a possible explanation as to why the present trends influence festival fashion in city located music festivals; contrasting how the past events influence rural located music festivals.

Additionally, there is also one key reason why location affects dress for males within music festivals. Through my primary and secondary research it overall appears that majority of males tend to not be affected by location when choosing an outfit for either rural or city located music festivals. Nevertheless, some values differ in both locations. Within both locations some boys seem to be socialised to believe to achieve status they must conform and try to not stand out from the crowd. Through my findings I have recognised the point that rural music festivals such as Groovin’ The Moo and Splendour in The Grass seem to be more accepting of individuality and non-conformity of males in comparison to city music festivals such as Listen Out.
Chapter Two

Both conformity and non-conformity is evident within fashion in the environment of both rural and city located music festivals. Though in regards to individual’s behaviour and values, conformity is evident in aspects such as illegal activity and peer behaviour, yet non-conformity is also present in aspects such as challenging festival rules and government law.

There is a “No tolerance” policy regarding the use of illicit substances at all festivals. Yet in the past few years the numerous drug related deaths and incidents at festivals across Australia has continued. Despite multiple government funded programs, advertising campaigns and warnings, young Australians evidently have either completely ignored or been largely unaffected by the associated risks of drugs and alcohol. Groovin’ The Moo, Splendour in The Grass and Listen Out for example all list illicit substances as ‘what not to bring’ to their events. As stated on Groovin the Moo’s website, “Police sniffer dogs are a regular Groovin the Moo, so to ensure you won’t miss out on any of the fun don’t bring anything illegal”\(^\text{30}\).

Similarly, though most of the venues are licenced to sell alcohol, no BYO alcohol is permitted.

According to Emily Smith’s article on The Vocal she interestingly states,

> “The strange thing is, most of my friends would never do drugs on any other occasion. Yet they think doing drugs at music festivals is something entirely different.”\(^\text{31}\)

So the ultimate question is, why are festivals still such a hotspot for drug use and alcohol abuse? “Doing drugs at festivals, it goes hand in hand”\(^\text{32}\) stated a 19 year old male respondent of my questionnaire. Is the music itself really not enough to enjoy the festival? As dangerous and frowned upon as it may be, the fact still remains that many risk their health just to “enhance the experience”. The influence of peer pressure and conformity is ultimately evident. Conformity is adjusting thinking or behaviour to match the rules of a social group. Whereas non-conformity is when a person chooses not to follow the demands of authority and/or behaves in a way that challenges norms. Within the environment of music festivals,

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\(^{30}\) Groovin The Moo. 2017. Faqs - Groovin The Moo. [ONLINE] Available at:
https://www.gtm.net.au/maitland/info/faqs/


\(^{32}\) Male 19 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
festival-goers seem to conform to aspects such as peer behaviour and illegal activity, yet also not conform to other aspects by challenging government law and festival rules. In developing our social identity we experience new social experiences with our growing independence. We have less involvement with family and become more influenced by our peers. Peers can have a strong influence on behaviour, values and levels of rebellion. While law and governments place restrictions on appropriate behaviour. These influences on conformity are both present on individuals within music festivals. Both informational and normative conformity is evident within this environment.

Individual behaviour is socially constructed and is influenced by social expectation. Our behaviour is shaped by social expectations. In our behaviour we aim to conform, to avoid offending others. An infographic titled ‘Conformity in drug usage’ created by 12 Keys Rehab\(^33\) discusses the causes and effects of conformity in drug usage among teens. Causes include reasons such as curiosity; thrilling and daring behaviour, doing it because of others, to feel good; create new feelings, sensations and experiences, and to feel better; lessen anxiety, worries and fear. It is stated that sixty-five (65%) of teens reported that ‘feeling cool is a motivator for drug abuse’. Hebert Kelamn, a Harvard University academic, identified three responses to social influence; including acquiescence which is relevant within this situation. Acquiescence is giving in, there generally may be a change in behaviour but not in attitude. The more an individual is attracted to the group, the more likely they will acquiesce to adhere to the groups norms. Also, sixty-five percent (65%) of teens also reported that feeling better about themselves is a motivator for drug abuse. An individual’s personal and social identity including their personality, self-concept and self-awareness may be a major contributor to this finding. It can be argued that social behaviour is all about satisfying needs and our needs change as we develop. Maslow’s Theory of Social Development assumes that our motivations drive our behaviour and these needs vary with age. It is suggested that in early adolescence there is a clear goal of belonging. If a person does not feel fully part of a group, they are unlikely to attempt to satisfy the ‘status/recognition’ need. This may suggest why many adolescence at music festivals take many risks simply to feel fully part of a group.

Most interestingly, Sarah states “you see someone having such a good time just listening to the music and feeling so involved in it, it makes you want to be a part of that too”34. Similarly, when on the topic of ecstasy, Dillon says “it enhances the environment. So the music sounds different, the lighting is enhanced – you want to touch, talk, communicate, hold people around you”35. This is a situation where normative conformity is evident; where individuals are conforming because they feel the need to be accepted. This generally may be because a person may fear possible negative comments, desire acceptance and wish to avoid conflict and rejection. Drug use to conform and as a method of enhancing the experience is significant among many young people. Are people really ignoring the risks to enhance their experience and connection with the music and crowd?

The questionnaire responses mirror the aforementioned trend, with forty percent (40%) of respondents stating they took illegal substances as it was their choice and they wanted to, eight percent (8%) did it ‘to fit in’, sixteen percent (16%) ‘because everyone else was doing it’, and similar to Sarah’s statement; twenty eight percent (28%) did it because ‘it enhances the music and environment’. These alarming statistics reflect the dramatic trend in today’s time, especially when explored in conjunction with other elements of conformity and nonconformity at music festivals. One male 23 year old respondent states that “Doing drugs at music festivals is admissible if you want to have a gnarly time with the people around you”36, arguably a point favouring the idea that people are ignoring the risks to enhance their festival experience and conform to the crowd.

Media also has a major influence on shaping individuals. There are many songs which have a major influence on its listeners to perceive drugs positively. Adolescents may model their values and behaviours on celebrities. A$AP Ferg featured on the Groovin the Moo 2015 line-up. He raps about “Everybody going to this cocaine castle”. Also, Triple J’s popular artist Dune Rats are featured on many Triple J presented festival line ups including 2017’s Splendour in the Grass. This bands song ‘Scott Green’ charted at #34 on Triple J’s Hottest 100 and became an anthem for many young people’s nights of fun. This song is purely all about drug use, containing lyrics such as “Cocaine or ecstasy, cigarettes and LSD”. The

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36 Male 23 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
popularity of these songs create positive associations and a normality towards drugs, encouraging many to try and identify with their favourite artists.

But considering the publicity about overdoses at festivals, individuals charged for possession, and the risks associated, why do people still continue to do drugs?

Drug use has become such a common thing in today’s time that taking drugs is compared to be “In the same way that one can socialise with friends over coffee or drinks”\(^{37}\). Every individual knows that there will be sniffer dogs and police, and that they may face the possibility of arrest, though this is not a big enough deterrent. According to my primary research, almost fifty percent (50%) of the respondents stated they believed the possibility of arrest or being in trouble with the police was not big enough of a deterrent for individuals to risk taking drugs into festivals. While only thirty five percent (35%) disagreed with this statement, and fifteen percent (15%) were unsure.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald, 20 year old Samuel stated,

“I was at Listen Out Festival at the beginning of October. The police sniffer dogs at the entrance did not detect the water balloon with three capsules of MDMA in my mouth, nor did they detect the pills in the clothing or other bodily cavities of my friends and other festival-goers”\(^{38}\)

The majority of festival-goers take extreme measure to conceal their drugs into festivals. One individual told ABC “I’d rather the embarrassment of being overly cautious than being caught... It’s worth the risk”\(^{39}\). Though, not only is it drugs people are sneaking in, but alcohol also. Most music festivals contain licensed bars to provide individuals over the age of 18 with alcohol. Though a large majority of festival-goers ignore the ‘No BYO’ rule and attempt to sneak alcohol in. This is generally due to two major reasons; being underage and unable to legally purchase the alcohol, or the prices of alcohol being noticeably more expensive inside the venue. I have witnessed festival-goers sneak prohibited alcohol into


events. At the most recent Groovin’ the Moo festival there were two particular methods most popular to sneak in alcohol, which are continuously attempted and done successfully each year. Sealed water bottles are tampered with to be filled with clear vodka, and squeeze yoghurt packets are emptied to later be refilled with alcohol and hid on the person. Both of these methods are done with ease, year by year.

Traditionally, the New South Wales Police Force have used sniffer dogs and police presence to attempt to deter drug smuggling and use in music festivals. “Police and security have always had a high presence, but not like today. Higher police involvement and tightening of security and checks have increased majorly” 40 stated my interviewee commenting on their own previous experience. Yet even though there is a higher police presence in today’s time, this continuously fails to achieve a 100 per cent success rate against drug smuggling and use. As this remains, the government unremittingly threatens to shut down music festivals if drug overdoses do not stop. According to Music Feeds, they also “flat-out refused to do anything about it themselves, such as implement a harm minimisation strategy” 41. The debate on drugs have shifted in the eyes of society more recently; as seventy-five percent (75%) of the respondents of my questionnaire agreed that they felt majority of festival-goers ignore the ‘No drug’ policy at music festivals.

Considering the failure rate of the governments approach and festival-goers behaviour, should a harm minimisation strategy be favoured? According to Dr Alex Wodak, the President of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, pill testing should be rolled out on music festivals across Australia, saying “what we want to do is reduce death, reduce severe illness and we want to do that as cost-effectively as possible” 42. If change occurs within the government, is this what the future of drug use at music festivals will be? The government could continue to exclaim “people should not take drugs”, but despite this, conformity is still consistent and it is going to continue to happen regardless.

There appears to be two possible reasons why location may affect values and behaviour of festival-goers towards drugs and alcohol at music festivals. Firstly, I have found that the disregard of police and choice to not conform to government law and festival rules differs

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40 Interview findings: Anonymous female, aged 40
between rural and city environments. Within both locations police do not detect a large majority of illegal substances going in to the festival grounds. Through my primary research I found that within city locations my respondents believe there is a larger police presence, yet this rarely stop individuals from rebelling against the law, it just forces them to take higher risks and more precautions. A male 18 year old respondent said,

“*There’s much less police presence at rural, like Groovin’ The Moo as opposed to ones in Sydney like Listen Out. There’s like 1 sniffer dog at the gate of Groovin’ but there’s so many with police officers at the gates in Sydney and patrolling nearby.*”

In contrast, a number of my respondents believe rural music festivals are more relaxed and laid back. One female 19 year old respondent stated,

“*It’s often a more ‘anything goes’ kind of environment. While bigger festivals make people feel as though they are less likely to be caught if they are doing the wrong thing.*”

While it seems that city locations have more police presence than rural location, through both primary and secondary research I have developed the perception that police presence is not a big enough of a deterrent and individuals will continue despite the risks. Once illegal substances are past the entrance of the festival and the major police presence is gone a large majority of the risk of getting caught is vanished.

Secondly, whether the music festival environment is rural or city, the influence of peer pressure and conformity tends to be similar. Though my findings suggest that the values and behaviours of festival-goers are affected by the music festival environment in general. Drug use within most music festival environments seem to be to conform to groups and as a method of enhancing individuals experience and connection with the crowd. Interestingly, it seems that location in regards to rural or city had little to no effect on this for festival-goers in contrast to police presence.

Individual behaviour and values are generally socially constructed and shaped by social expectations. Within a festival environment, individuals are faced with the opportunity to choose to either conform or not conform to aspects such as government law, festival rules, illegal activity and peer behaviour.

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43 Male 18 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”

44 Female 19 year old Anonymous respondent from Questionnaire finding: “Conformity in Music Festivals”
Conclusion

As I progressed through this experience, I have found it extremely rewarding as I have rid myself of ethnocentric prejudices regarding the portrayal of the levels of conformity and nonconformity in individuals within different environments of Triple J presented music festivals. I have further enriched my passion and interest in social and personal identity.

Through my primary and secondary research, I validated my hypothesis that both conformity and nonconformity is evident within Triple J presented music festivals, and the environment does have an impact on this in a large majority of cases. An examination of the influences of peer pressure, conformity, nonconformity, power, authority and technology over time and in both rural and city locations, allowed me to discover how these factors along with additional external factors shape individuals behaviour and their social and personal identity.

The primary research methodologies chosen; a questionnaire, participant observation and an interview, propagated a thorough investigation and in depth understanding of the effect that conformity and nonconformity has and how this has changed over time and within different locations. The results of the questionnaire proved to be most useful in gaining a variety of responses from individuals who had attended specifically Triple J presented music festivals and were within the age group that Triple J aim at. Though bias did prevail within the questionnaire as a result of the questions and viewpoint of myself. The qualitative results of my interview provide insight from an individual respondent which allowed me to further create a continuity and change aspect to my project. A central flaw of my interview process was my focus upon only one participant instead of multiple. I believe in hindsight the statements from multiple interviewees would have proved great to use in comparison. The participant observation was limited by the bias of only attending a rural festival, though this was unavoidable it still provided thorough insight into my personal perspective of the effects within rural located music festivals. Additionally, the secondary research proved to be extremely useful as it created the basis of my ideas for my central material.

While initially daunting, I gained confidence in conducting research as this project progressed. I discovered that careful planning and attention to avoid bias is particularly important to gain valid information.

The entire journey of the PIP has been extensive and time consuming, though it has been enjoyable to be provided with the opportunity to enhance my knowledge and understanding.
on a topic chosen that I am so passionate about. I have grown as an ethical researcher, while also learning valuable lessons presented to me through my secondary and primary research. Having completed this process of research, I can certainly agree that music festivals are an ever-evolving environment which is continuously effected by various factors within both a rural and city location. After evaluating conformity and nonconformity within music festivals, I have become more involved and interested in issues of personal and social identity and behaviour within the lives of various individuals exposed to the diverse environment of Triple J presented music festivals.
Resource List

Internet Sites


ABC News discusses the continuous danger arising of drug use and overdoses within New South Wales music festivals. I find it particularly interesting knowing that there was a heavy drug use around the time of Woodstock yet it was not focused on to the extent that it is now. I believe that government and laws have struck down on drug use within festivals increasingly as there is an obvious use of illicit drugs at events. It is explained that music festivals may be potentially shut down by government if organisers do not improve their safety standards. The quotes and quality information included in this website article give a very factual description of the drug use at festivals which makes it useful.


This source was able to be used in conjunction with other findings to provide a clear relevance to my topic. ABC News’s reported on Splendour in The Grass as a missed opportunity for pill testing. Many statements of experience and also quotes from government officials and police officers provided an understanding of government, technology and social identity proving it to be a useful source of secondary research.


This article is very basic and does not provide enough information to make a general reliable idea or opinion. There are no statistics or dependable facts included. Most of the information
in this source only helped me think of my own experiences and link some sentences back to my own ideas.

**Groovin The Moo. 2017. Faqs - Groovin The Moo. [ONLINE] Available at:**

Groovin’ The Moo’s ’Frequently Asked Questions’ page only served one particular purpose of addressing the ‘No tolerance’ policy regarding the use of illicit substances at its festival. This information provided insight which proved useful in creating my own questions and ideas for my primary research.


This source is highly beneficial for me to gain a greater understanding into some society and culture concepts which surround my topic. Within this article contains certain concepts like ‘rite of passage’, age, location, macro world, continuity and change. There is major bias as the article is based around one certain festival and is trying to make it sound as good as possible, but the information included is all still reliable and helpful.


Booton’s article helped inform my understanding of the evolving idea of festivals coming into the modern world. The inclusion of quotes and statistics gives a greater factual insight into the change within the 45 years since Woodstock. A broad variety of examples are included which are expanded on to provide a better perception into the economic side of festivals. Though it is quite biased as it explains more about the price raise of admission and the profit that festivals rake in each year.

**Journalist Stephen Stockwell. 2017. The pill testing plan for Australia's winter festivals - Hack - triple j. [ONLINE] Available at:**
Stockwell’s article provides an in-depth description of the plea to reduce death, illness and injury from illegal substances at music festivals through pill testing. This source was very useful as it included statements from reliable individuals such as the President of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation.


Junkee’s article written by Sam Sidney proved helpful in giving a general analysis of a continuity and change aspect on festival fashion. The comparison of 1969 fashion within Woodstock Music and Art Festival and present time does give my secondary research more depth, as well as advanced itself to a more thorough examination into the concepts that I chose to investigate in my primary research methodologies, in particular the interview.


Daily Mail’s article focused specifically on the Triple J presented festival ‘Listen Out’ in Sydney, which was a major focus of my personal interest project. The relevance of this article to my topic helped me develop a greater understanding of city located music festival fashion. While this article was useful due to relevance, it could have been more detailed yet instead it largely focused on photographs.


Similar to a range of other sources used for my secondary research, this source provides an insight into the expression of identity through fashion. Though unlike some other sources, many examples of trends and essentials are listed which was useful to include in my writing in order to create comparisons.

The relevance of the source gave me the ability to form the basis of my understanding on the governments stand on their approach to stop drugs at music festivals. Music Feed’s article outlines the various aspects of the evolving behaviour of festival-goers and the external factors which the behaviour is shaped by.


This article presents an interesting take on various aspects of festival fashion and provides a number of Society and Culture concepts to offer reasons why individuals are dressing in the way they do. Technology, conformity, nonconformity and environment are integrated through this article in order to give the reader a greater in depth understanding of the research. This source was extremely useful in providing a general overview in relation to festival fashion, though it did not focus specifically on Triple J presented festivals. Therefore, additional sources were needed.


This article proved useful in writing my central material for Chapter One as it also focused on a Triple J presented festival. Though it also focused majorly on photographs instead of informative description and analysis which was a disadvantage. The images allowed me to include visual descriptions within my project to offer an explanation of festival fashion as examples.


This source explains how festivals have changed from peace and love to a more stylish affair. There’s a major increase in luxury camping, facilities and services. It is explained that many
artists make more money from live performances than from record sales; live music has become a key route to profitability. A range of statistics and quotes make this source more interesting and reliable to take information from, as it has facts to back it up. This article also talks about the large music festivals and the smaller events and the differences between them and their profit. This source was not useful by the end of my PIP process as I narrowed down my topic but it still gave me a deeper understanding of different aspects of a music festival.


The Sydney Morning Herald’s article provided an interesting aspect I had not given though to prior to my secondary research; a different approach to the war against drugs at music festivals. This article addressed the concept of government in extreme depth. Though the most useful aspect of this article proved to be multiple statements from individuals interviewed, as this personal experience helped myself gain a greater understanding of different perspectives of festival goers in regards to pill testing at music festivals.


Smith’s article on ‘The Vocal’ proved to be the most useful source during my research for Chapter Two of my central material. Smith addressed own personal experience and provided interesting points in the conformity of individuals in regards to drug use at music festivals. This source helped me develop a particular hypothesis that music festivals seem to be a hotspot for drug use, and the two go hand in hand. Majority of the information provided within this article was used to explain the influence of peer pressure and conformity which was ultimately evident.


Overall I didn’t find this source very useful apart from one quote from the author. It was very biased and stereotypical, especially towards females. The focus of this article was purely on America which was a disadvantage to myself. Throughout my research process I have gained
the impression that Australian festival fashion does vary to American festival fashion which is why I did not use much information from this source.


This source added significant historical depth to my personal interest project. ‘Old school’ fashion is addressed, as well as a very informative take on the influence of media and technology in bringing about the resurface of previous fashion trends. In particular, this source was useful as it developed my central material through the relevance in concepts chosen.


This website source expresses the pure enjoyment that is generally experienced at a festival juxtaposed against the environmental cost of running one. Though I decided to take a different direction with my PIP, it was interesting to read this article to develop a thorough understanding of additional aspects within music festivals that may relate to my research. The images included impact the reader highly as you get a visual perspective of the atrocious effect on the environment and land that a festival takes place on.


While Kaye’s article is quite informal, it supplied a number of relatable points that could be linked back to my own personal experience. This provides a slightly stereotypical view on fashion within music festivals which meant I needed additional sources to prevent bias within my project. Kaye mentioned the ‘unwritten dress code’ within this article which became a significant part of my central material in Chapter One and helped develop my understanding of this aspect of music festivals, therefore making it very useful.

This statistical infographic described the experimentation of drugs within the younger generation. The reason this source was found to be useful was it addressed the reasons why, further stating within the article “One question that we don’t ask enough is why?” These findings were used in attempt to explain individuals behaviour influenced by social expectation.


The Australian Bureau of Statistics presents a clear overview of various statistics regarding the music attendance in Australia. A thorough description was made of each statistical finding and addressed multiple factors such as age, sex, employment, socioeconomic status and education, giving a particularly strong insight into the nature of these findings.

**Primary Research**


The interview conducted provided great insight and statements of personal experiences which allowed me to expand on the continuity and change aspect of my personal interest project. While all information I received was useful, I would have liked to interview at least two more individuals to be able to use their statements and experiences in comparison with each other.


This questionnaire proved to be an extremely useful part of my primary research throughout the completion of my PIP. This questionnaire consisted of 4 open ended questions and 3 closed ended questions and was completed by 181 participants. The closed ended questions resulted in statistics providing ease for comparison. Though the most useful was the open ended questions as many of these statements were then used as a basis for my central
material. Response bias resulted in the questionnaire having restricted validity and it was useful to conduct further methods such as an interview.